

TESTIMONIAL



Jonathan Hensman

Director/Mentor in the education sector. Extensive experience as a CEO/Headmaster in two highly respected independent schools in Australia and NZ. Currently serves as a Non Executive Director on the Fraser Coast Anglican College Council as Chairman and at Activ8, a company offering a Holiday Sport program, based in Brisbane

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“the proof of the pudding is in the eating”

-MIGUEL DE CERVANTES SAAVEDRA (DON QUIXOTE) TRANSLATED

In the autumn of 1995 I was appointed as the Headmaster of Wanganui Collegiate School, and I also started to work with John Wilkinson on developing a fit for purpose, world class catering facility for day and boarding students for their dining experience.

From the start John engaged with staff and students readily through a collaborative process in order to determine the nature of student preferences and attitudes. From the findings a new food service was offered which met student needs. Without a doubt, expectations were exceeded.

John has the rare ability in a food service professional to be able to relate to everybody, be it one of the on-site catering staff, a board member, a parent or teacher. His manner allows people the knowledge that they have been listened to. It was this skill that was instrumental in a consultative group functioning well together; subsequently delivering a totally new approach to what had been a long-standing concern.

Over the medium term, the financial investment in improvements was offset by productivity improvements. The morale boost to student satisfaction however was worth more to the school as we all know the value to any residential community of sumptuous meals delivered effectively.

John knew from his experience, that to excel, the catering service had to adopt a professional approach. This meant the food was not just served, but it looked superb; the staff welcomed and interacted with the students; recipes and menu choices reflected the young people's tastes and lead them unwittingly into eating more healthily. For some students, it is a challenge adapting to living away from home, so a warm welcome in the dining room helps. John's approach was refreshing with his staff training program phrase “Look at me, Smile at me, Recognise me and Thank me.”

It has been many years since leaving the School and John has now established “Consultant Catering.” It is a testimony to John that we remain professionally associated and that I regard him highly. His skills and manner created something special many years ago. My experience is shared by others, as John has enhanced the catering facilities and culture of many schools and organisations. These talents will serve new places equally well through “Consultant Catering.”

