

The first objective of building a new website is a much needed change. The website that is currently online is not very user friendly and often contains out-of-date information that should be updated on a regular basis. As many of the students who use our website are not located in Bakersfield, having a website that is easy to use and contains important information is critical. The website should be available for students to use as a resource for general policy and procedure information, to locate forms, and to find information on program and course requirements. Providing accurate, reliable information to our students at all times will help to improve our customer service greatly.

We are currently completing the paperwork to hire an individual who will be able to build the shell of a new website for us. Once the shell is built, the end users, at least one person from each department of the EUD, will be able to insert all of the information that we would like to have available online and make links to any forms or websites as needed. We will also be able to make updates and changes to the website in order to insure that all information is current and up-to-date. The hiring of this individual will take place within the month and we should have the shell of the website within another month.

While the shell of the site is being built for us, the EUD can begin to look at the information we have on our current site to determine which of that information we can use for the new website and what will need changed or disregarded. Doing this will help to insure that all information available online is accurate and contains all relevant information. The more of this work we can

complete prior to the shell's completion, the less time it will take us to implement the new website.

Once the shell is complete, it should take us up to two months to finalize the website and have it available for students to use. The new site should include detailed and accurate information about all of the programs that we offer, with pages for different types of students such as Santa Clarita, online, continuing education, and certificate students. Each page will contain the pertinent information for that group of students, including application and registration processes and forms, program or course requirements, links to class schedules, runnemail, WebCT, and Bannerweb program information, as well as other important dates and times such as application deadlines and registration dates. The website will also include contact information for our office and each staff person, as well as campus maps and directions. Being able to maintain and update the website ourselves will help us to make sure that all information is keep up-to-date and accurate for the students. We will also ensure that the website is laid out in such a way that students can easily find the information that they are looking for and they do not have to navigate through several pages in order to find it.

The other objective that will help to improve our customer service focuses on one specific group of our customers. This objective is to run a new student orientation meeting for our students in Santa Clarita. Although there are meetings like this available to the main campus students in Bakersfield, as well as the off-campus students in Antelope Valley, this has never been the case for the

students taking classes in Santa Clarita. The implementation of these meetings is a big step in improving our customer service and quality in that particular area of the EUD.

The new student orientation meetings will be required for all students who are admitted to our programs in Santa Clarita, starting with the Spring 2006 Quarter. We will keep track of all students who are admitted beginning with that quarter through a database and information will be sent to them with their admissions letter in regards to the date and time of the next orientation. Students will be required to attend the orientation at least by the second term that they are taking CSUB classes or an academic hold will be placed on the student's account, preventing them from registering for classes, ordering transcripts, or viewing their account information online until they attend an orientation.

The new student orientation will give students an overview of the policies and procedures of the University, will introduce students to WebCT, Bannerweb, and their runnermail account, as well as allow students to take their picture for a student identification card. Students will then have the opportunity to ask any questions that they have about the program and the steps they need to take to be successful. The orientations will also help to build a sense of belonging and unity with the CSUB campus for these students who are based off-campus.

Students in the past have complained that once they began attending the CSUB classes in Santa Clarita, they were not aware of all of the policies and procedures and did not know about all of the different computer programs that

they were to be using. Requiring an orientation that provides this information will help to eliminate that problem.

Once students have been taking classes for a few quarters, they will be able to obtain information such as registration dates, Santa Clarita office hours, course schedules, and other important information through the website. An EUD staff member is also available once a week at the College of the Canyons office in Santa Clarita to give students an opportunity to meet with someone face to face if they desire.

The third objective that we wish to accomplish within the EUD is improving the unity between all employees of the Extended University. In order to encourage unity, we will implement bi-monthly staff meetings for knowledge sharing. Each department within the EUD will have one representative share with the group any recent changes within their department and any changes they are anticipating could be coming. These meetings will help to make certain that all employees have a general knowledge of what each part of the organization is doing. Individuals can also ask any questions as needed about how their department or job position might be affected by those changes. The staff meetings will also give an opportunity for all employees to get together as a team, since this may not always happen as we perform our daily jobs.

At the staff meetings, an opportunity can be given to all employees to express any ideas or suggestions they might have on ways to improve the EUD or of new programs that they think would be worth offering. This will help the EUD with innovation and experimentation, as it gives an opportunity for new

ideas to come from anyone in the organization. Ideas that are brought about can be explored to determine if they might be beneficial to the EUD. This will also give each employee the sense that they play an important role in the overall organization and are part of the team. These meeting should begin with the new quarter in January 2006 so that we may begin building a better feeling of unity and belonging among the employees of the EUD. When a person feels that they are part of and belong to the group, they are more willing to give all that they can for the organization. All of this will help lead to more improvements in the quality and overall service of the Extended University.

To further unite the staff, it would be beneficial to have at least annual or semi-annual events for the staff to get together. These should be events that are non-work related, in order to give the staff a chance to mingle, interact with one another, and build relationships, other than their working relationship. This could be as simple as having a Christmas lunch or dinner each year. Such interaction will help to improve the unity between the EUD, as employees are encouraged to build relationships and trust between one another not only because they must rely on each other's jobs, but because they value one another as individuals. Other events that could take place that would help to promote this unity and team building are as simple as having a potluck lunch or allowing the entire EUD to go out to lunch together. Such an event can also be used as a reward or incentive to show employees that they are doing a good job and are working to meet their goals and objectives. For example, it would be a great reward to the EUD if we were all allowed to go out to lunch together to celebrate once the new website

has been completed and implemented. Gestures such as this lets the employees know that they are appreciated and that their work and accomplishments are noted.

In addition to staff meetings and group events, group-based intervention is a more formal approach that might help the EUD to become more united and able to work together as a team. Group-based intervention is an approach to organization development, as discussed in Waclawski and Church's *Organizational Development*, which might be beneficial in improving team interaction within the EUD.

This approach studies groups within an organization in hopes of building effective teams and helping groups to function more efficiently. There are five elements listed in *Organizational Development* that are critical in order to be successful in a group setting. These are directioning, organizing, exploring, converging, and executing. These elements encourage teams to work together to determine what they are trying to accomplish, how they will best be able to accomplish it, and then follow through by doing it. Group-based intervention works with a group or team to help them reach this goal, as well as exploring the group dynamics and types of teams that are working together.

It would be very beneficial to improve the group dynamics and the ability for everyone to work well together toward the common goal of improving the EUD. Group-based intervention would be another way to help develop the way we work as a group and as individuals within a group.

The fourth objective that the EUD can begin working on is to develop business training programs for local companies in Bakersfield and Kern County. There will be three different types of trainings that will be offered. The first is management training for managers and executives of local businesses. This will focus on leadership development and styles, being an effective leader, and self-assessment. Top executives and academic instructors will run these trainings to help leaders determine what type of leader they are, what their strengths and weaknesses are, how they can improve themselves and be a more effective leader within their particular organization. These training sessions will also give managers and executives a chance to meet and build relationships with other local leaders.

The second type of business trainings that will be offered will be for local small business owners. As with the management trainings, it will give small business owners a chance to meet one another and encourage them to build relationships and partnerships with each other. The trainings will give the business owners education and skills needs to ensure that they will be successful.

Finally, employee-training programs will be offered to local businesses. They would be set up specifically to meet the needs of one organization at a time in terms of training needs, team building exercises and information that needs passed along. These trainings can be held for new employees, for all employees for either team building or to inform them of new policies or procedures, or for

certain groups within an organization as needed. They will be individualized for each specific organization that would like to hold them.

These programs will reach out to the community to help fulfill some needs that are not currently being met. By offering our services to local businesses, we are also working to build a reputation and make a name for the Extended University and CSUB in the community. As the community learns that the EUD provides quality services and education courses and programs, this may lead more individuals to take a step in their educational career to receive a higher education whether they take just a few courses or enter a certificate or degree program.

Alignment Strategy

In order for the Extended University to begin making changes within its organization, there must be a strategy put in place. A strategy will help to encourage each employee to move toward the new mission, values, and goals that have been set forth. The strategy for the EUD will include a slight restructuring of reporting lines and job duties as well as some cultural changes.

The current structure of the EUD has the Dean at the top with the Assistant to the Dean, Marketing Director, Program Developer, Director of Regional & Online Degree Programs (ROP), and the Director of Extension Programs all reporting directly to them. The front office staff, consisting of the records and accounting staff members and a couple of student assistants report directly to the Assistant to the Dean. The Director of ROP has an Evaluator and a

Coordinator, along with one student assistant, reporting to them, and the Director of Extension Programs has only a student assistant reporting to them. The Marketing Director and the Program Developer are the only employees within the EUD that do not have anyone reporting to them.

The current structure of the EUD has too many individuals reporting directly to the Dean. Although it is important that the Assistant to the Dean and the Directors of both the ROP and Extension Programs report to the Dean, it is not necessary that the Marketing Director and Program Developer report directly to that individual. These two individuals work directly with all areas of the EUD and thus they should be reporting at the directors' level of the organization.

The Program Developer should be reporting to both the Director of the ROP and the Director of the Extension programs, since they will be assisting with each of these areas in researching and working to develop new programs. Their findings and ideas should be reported to the Director of the appropriate area for them to determine if they should work on implementing new programs and courses. The Directors in turn can report to the Dean on ideas and developments that seem to be worthwhile. The Dean would then be responsible for deciding which programs and courses will be implemented.

As the Marketing Director's job is to promote all programs within the EUD, whether they are from the front office, ROP, or Extension, they should be reporting to the heads of each of these areas. Their time and energy should be shared between each of these departments in order to offer the needed support and materials to all of the EUD's programs. Although this individual will ultimately

be working under both Directors and the Assistant to the Dean, they should be assigned as a direct report to the Assistant to the Dean in order for there to be one person responsible for the supervisory duties of the Marketing Director.

These slight changes in the organizational structure of the EUD should help all employees to work together a little better and should further support the efforts of unity and team building among all employees. The changes in reporting lines for the Program Developer and Marketing Director ought to help them both to provide better assistance and support to all of the departments within the EUD.

Other than changing the structure within the EUD, looking at the culture of the organization and how we can adjust that culture to further support the mission and goals of the EUD is another important aspect of the strategy to change. Culture can be defined as the predominating learned and shared attitudes, behaviors, beliefs, and assumptions that characterize the functions of a group or organization and produce predictable behavior and decisions among that group. Cultural behaviors typically develop as a method of solving problems that come up in an organization whether they are economic, political, or social. These problems do not necessarily have to be big, one time problems, but can even be the day-to-day activities that employees perform. The cultural behaviors continue and are constant over time, as they are found to be acceptable and rewarded by the company and fellow employees. Employees may also be reprimanded in some way if they do not follow these behaviors. Willie Pietersen, author of *Reinventing Strategy*, has identified three different elements of organizational culture. These elements are underlying

assumptions, values, and behaviors and artifacts. Underlying assumptions are at the core of every individual. These are the assumptions that most of us have held on to since birth – such as ideals and beliefs about life and death, how the world works, and other such fundamental issues. These types of assumptions are usually widely shared among members of a culture.

Built on these underlying assumptions are our values. These are the values and beliefs we hold about what is right and wrong, and what we believe is important and makes a good, successful life. Based on these first two elements, we are led to the cultural behaviors and artifacts. These are the only visible aspects of organizational culture. The behaviors are the actions that are taken by individuals and groups, while the artifacts are the physical signs of the culture such as a certain way of dressing and preferences in food that is eaten and products that are used.

When looking to change an organization's culture, the change is not necessarily with the underlying assumptions and values that individuals hold. These aspects of culture are usually principles and ideas that should be held onto and are valued within the organization. The changes that need to take place are most often ways of dealing with problems and doing business activities. Examples of such changes are: becoming more risk-taking instead of being conservative, becoming customer-based instead of product-based, and being more innovative and experimental. All of these are reasonable changes that can take place with careful planning and strategy.

Although we are currently a customer driven organization, we can improve on this aspect of our culture as we work toward completing our mission. Being in the educational field, we need to recognize that we exist to serve the customer, which is typically the student. Focusing on customer service is very important, as we would not exist without them. Whether we are completing paperwork, developing courses, or speaking directly to students, the employees of the EUD must make sure that the customer's needs are being met in all possible ways. By following the values that we have identified as being important and working toward the mission of the EUD, such as improving our customer service, we will be able to adjust our cultural behaviors to be in line with our goals.

Continuous Improvement

In order to help the Extended University remain successful and competitive in the field of education, it is important that we not only follow the changes mentioned above to work toward the mission, goals, and values that have been set forth, but that we are constantly looking for ways to improve. There are many ways in which we can do this as we continually learn and make improvements to our efforts.

For the employees of the EUD, it is important that we continue to have staff meetings to keep everyone informed of the changes and advances to the EUD. This along with periodic staff get-togethers will help to maintain the unity and sense of belonging among everyone in the organization. Managers should also allow staff members to attend appropriate training for their jobs and personal

growth. Trainings help staff to interact with other individuals who may do similar jobs at other institutions and well as provide them with education and skills that will help them to better themselves. Training can also help employees to stay up-to-date on changes within the educational field and can help give them ideas of how they can deal with and capitalize of these changes.

In order to continually improve the quality of our programs, the EUD should constantly be looking for advances in technology so that it is can be utilized to make improvements to our services, website, resources, and especially our courses. Staying up-to-date with technology is one critical aspect of our success and we must be sure to use it to its full potential.

We also need to continually be asking for and receiving feedback from our customers in regards to our services and courses. This can cover areas such as the website and other information received, our courses, instructors, and course materials and books. This feedback should be read by the heads of each department and used to make changes as needed. If there are consistent problem areas, it is critical that they be taken care of immediately. Attention to these details will help to keep the quality of our services and programs high and will show our customers that we do care about them and take their comments and suggestions seriously.

One final area that we need to be continuously work on is our program development. We need to be working with local businesses and groups to provide courses and trainings that are beneficial to them. As new needs arise, we need to be responsive to determine if we are able to provide a service or

program to help meet those needs. We will also need to respond to feedback that we receive from the community to be sure that we are fulfilling our mission to provide our services to them.

Overall, it is important that we continually strive to meet our mission and hold our values high. As we continue to offer high quality programs to meet the educational goals of the community and outlying areas, we will continue to work toward improving the quality of our programs as well as providing services that are customer-driven and oriented.