Chapter 14
When Going Online Isn't Going

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the last few years, Southern State University (SSU) has experienced a decline in enrollment and state funding. However, one aspect that holds promise, based on past enrollment data, is the potential movement towards providing online degree programs. While SSU provides rewards and encouragement for the development of online courses and programs, and students consistently are quick to fill the online sections, there has only been a small cohort of faculty who embrace teaching online. Therefore, there has been little to no growth in the number of online courses compared to other schools in the area, and not a single program has been established as being offered completely online. SSU is now faced with the issue of how to convince the heavily unionized faculty and other stakeholders that movement to the offering of online programs is a vital aspect of the university's future success.

INTRODUCTION

Online education has become commonplace in the educational market. According to Seaman and Allen (2010) more than twenty-five percent of all higher education students are enrolled in at least one online course. Their report also shows that as students continue to look for ways to balance their ever increasing schedules and react to the economic downturn, online courses and programs have sustained continued growth, even in light of the limited or reduced growth in traditional college enrollments. As universities continue to move towards online education, they are faced with a variety of responses from faculty including those who are resistant, if not opposed to the concept.

Even though many faculty members are now comfortable with technology, using email to communicate and other Internet tools for research and information, many are resistant when it comes to incorporating technology into their classrooms. Brill and Galloway (2007) noted two limitations

to the use of technology in instruction: inadequate availability of technology, and technology that is not adequately supported. This information is important for universities moving into the online environment, as it shows that technology must be readily available and fully supported if faculty members are to integrate technology into their classrooms.

Other research has shown various factors that contribute to the decisions of faculty to adopt technology into his or her teaching: feelings, attitudes and perceptions towards technology (Albion & Ertmer, 2003; Christensen, 2002; Dusick, 1998) and the individual faculty member's teaching style (Grasha & Hicks, 2003; Ferguson, 2004). Fully understanding these feelings, perceptions, and teaching styles will be necessary to provide the type of environment that encourages faculty to explore the potential that technology can have on teaching and learning.

Additionally, research has found that instructors' beliefs about technology use are formed "during time spent in the classroom either as teachers or students" (Albion & Ertmer, 2003). Therefore, if faculty members form their pedagogical beliefs about using technology in instruction while they were students or early in their teaching career, efforts should be made to guarantee that new faculty members' experience with technology is successful. These early experiences should be positive and reinforce the benefits of technology integration.

Finally, research discusses how the lack of skills is another factor negatively influencing faculty members' motivation to adopt technology. This lack of skills is mainly due to faculty members not being trained or having technology properly modeled during their academic career (Ertmer, 2004; Ertmer, Conklin, & Lewandowski, 2003; Rosenfeld & Martinez-Pons, 2005). Consequently, creating technical competency among faculty through training, modeling, and mentoring is crucial if an organization wants to make technology an "organic" part of the learning environment.

All of these factors - availability and ease of use of technology and faculty members' attitudes, beliefs, and skills - contribute to the decision of faculty members whether or not to integrate technology into their courses. Therefore, a university wishing to expand or leverage technology use in teaching, such as online education, needs to develop a specific plan to "sell" the concept to the organization. In this plan, marketing will play a vital role.

When it comes to establishing a new idea or paradigm, such as online education, within the culture of a university, the fundamental principles of marketing cannot be overlooked. Even though the "customer" base is internal and policies can be put in place to force compliance, the intelligent organization will take a softer approach and create a plan that generates buy-in and approval. This is especially important when the customers are faculty members who are used to a high level of autonomy and self-governance.

Leveraging the 4P's of marketing with faculty members requires some adaption of the usual definition of product, price, place, and promotion. This starts by understanding the needs and the desires of the customers (Seybold, 2001). Once an understanding of the customers' needs is understood it quickly becomes as issue of showing how the new idea, in this case online education, can help them meet their needs.

For instance, the product of online learning must be shown as an effective tool that will help faculty accomplish the tasks involved in teaching more efficiently. The price of online education is not measured by faculty in terms of monetary cost but in time. How much time will be needed to incorporate the online tools determines the "price" of the tool. Placement for online education has to be shown as easily available to faculty members where ever and whenever they need it. Finally, the promotion of online education needs to be multifaceted and appeal not only to the individual faculty member's needs of effectiveness, efficiency, and ease of use, but it also must

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