

Chapter 13

Strategic Planning for Online Learning

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ABSTRACT

Globalization has brought along competition, and thereby, the concept of strategic planning. Strategic planning is of paramount importance in terms of minimizing uncertainties of the future and achieving sustainable competition superiority. Strategic planning which involves participation of each person from a every level within an organization and full support of organization manager and aim at achieving results mean stakeholders' playing an active role in determination of requirements and expectations, stakeholders' and policy makers' opinion, mission, targets and performance measurement of organization (Küçüksüleymanoğlu, 2008). It is not possible for organizations to have sustainable competition superiority without strategic planning and although it is not a type of plan that is drawn for one time only, planning process is a type of process which requires participation of all stakeholders within and outside organization (Demir and Yılmaz, 2010). A different path is pursued when strategic planning is applied at education organizations; because education organizations are not managed like private institutions, therefore, strategic planning at education must be able to respond to surrounding cultural, social, technological, environmental and economic changes. This study has focused on importance of strategic planning for online learning and variables affecting planning have been considered.

INTRODUCTION

It is getting more and more difficult for the organizations to survive and succeed due organization' getting more and more complicated, seemingly endless change in the environment, increase in

uncertainties and hesitations, economic reasons, increased competition, technologic deprivations, changing social-political and legal conditions, and market conditions. Therefore, all organizations from public and private sector are in need of managers who are able to see changes in time and respond to them quickly, and managements that will apply this. Basic factors in strategic plan-

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ning getting important can be listed as change's becoming universal, rapid changes in technologic field, increase in competition and democratization (Öztop, 2007).

Like all organizations of society, education is undergoing a rapid change. Therefore, education institutions must make their strategic plans. Ereş (2004) defines education strategy as "all of objectives, targets and duties describing what job education institution is doing, or wants to do, what sort an education institution it is or wants to be and methods necessary to realize them." In other words, education strategy is defined as "a movement manner to be applied by an education institution that is trying to achieve its targets". As can be understood from definition, questions like what is the objective of education institution, targets, what does it want to achieve, and what has to be done in order to realize the objectives lead us to the human resources where we will gather these data. Because it will not be possible to talk about a plan that facilitators do not participate at an education institution.

Online learning that offers equality of opportunities, and offers education opportunity independent of space and time must make strategic plans by taking into consideration education programs, presentation of program, persons attending the education and technologies used to apply learning together with the seemingly endless change in society and technology. However, strategic plans are not stable and unchangeable. Along with change in technology and needs, plans also change rapidly. Therefore, plans must be structured in a way that will reflect mission and vision of the institution, and contain a managerial activity that is flexible and can effectively use the human resources.

Preparation of strategic plans within online learning includes development, updating of learning programs, identification of strategies and plans to be observed in accreditation of them with the other learning programs and presenting them to the market. Assisting teachers and students, assuring general security, and establishment of confi-

dentiality policies are among important matters. Therefore, who will make the strategic plans in online learning that will meet several needs, who will support, and how they will adapt to changing and emerging technologies becomes an important question. In other words, why human resources are important in preparing strategic plans with online learning and allocation of duties comprise the basic framework which this study will focus on.

MAIN FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER

Today's societal life, increase in information and rapid advancement in technology has rendered our life so complicated. The only way of dealing with this complexity is seen as education. Education is a field dealing with modification of human behaviors in line with the societal requirements. Education is not only an activity that is conducted behind school walls, but also is a process that aims to effectively manage the lives outside the school and continues for a life time. Therefore, in this process that continues for a life time, an individual needs to learn the techniques for self-learning and effectively use the technology. Apart from these competencies expected from learners, there are some differences in duties and responsibilities of the education institutions. Such institutions have several responsibilities and duties like organizing new information, preparation and use of technological infrastructure and rendering resources suitable for conditions of the era. Therefore, education institutions are under a great pressure and must undergo a total change. 5 to 10 years from now, education won't be like it is today, and will force humans and institutions to make drastic changes.

According to Frey (2010), developments that will make drastic changes in the education world are as follows;

- Transition from teaching to learning
- Rapid increase in information
- Attractiveness of education investments

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