Chapter 19
Marketing Services Globally:
The Benefits of E-Learning

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

E-learning and distance learning technologies have accelerated tremendously during the last decade. Changes in development and delivery include altered instructional methods and the expansion of support services for e-learning activities. Many business and political leaders speculate that globalization is indeed connecting international political, economic, cultural, and social life. These new Information Technologies significantly affect most aspects of higher education. Changes in teaching/learning and administration have impacted everyone associated with applying technology to global delivery of services. E-learning has increasingly become the vehicle of choice for many corporate clients who are actively engaged in creating diverse international markets for their goods and services.

INTRODUCTION

The United States is facing a new and unique demographic shift in population. The population change coupled with the globalization of the world's economy has now created new opportunities, as well as challenges for the United States and the world. These challenges have become the new mission of many institutions of higher learning, some of which are uniquely placed to become the change agents of the future in a diverse, multicultural and global society (Teichler, 2003).

In the United States, the traditional path to obtaining a college degree is quickly becoming the exception rather than the rule (Adams & Eveland, 2007). In short, universities are now faced with providing educational opportunities to not only

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more students, but to a more diverse population of students (Bates, 2000). To realize their purpose, university administrators construct rigorous analysis to ensure that educational opportunities are available to underrepresented or non-represented groups (Bratianu, 2008). Universities implement practices to bridge the educational gap using creative activities to reach out to nontraditional students and a diverse and global population (Bates & Poole, 2003). Universities are constantly turning to technology as one of the primary means for initiating and maintaining contact with a diverse student population (Blin & Munro, 2008).

Higher education institutions are now confronting a very complex society characterized by eight ominous patterns: (1) Lack of funding for higher education; (2) increased demand for educational services; (3) changing relationships between government and education; (4) changes in the development and articulation of knowledge; (5) an increasingly global society with increasing educational demands; (6) dramatically increased accountability for services and productivity; (7) increased diversity of clients and providers; and (8) increased competition for scare resources. (Altbach & Balan, Brown, 1997; Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 1998; Keegan, 1986; Marginson, 2002; Stofer & Meyer, 2006; Teichler, 2003).

Alexander (1999, p. 415) stated, "governments increasingly view postsecondary education as a stakes game too important to leave to the universities themselves or to traditional peer faculty and governance processes." Since the mid-1900s, universities have displaced knowledge from a public good to an economic good. The knowledge-based society accents skilled labor prepared by new techniques and strategies. Due to the incomparability of knowledge as commodity, higher educations institutions have become entrepreneurial (Baldwin & James, 2000).

SETTING THE STAGE

Technology

"Technology is constantly changing and new technology developments can have profound effects on education, as in the case of the web" (Bates, 2005, p.1). Technology has been present for more than a century, but vast and rapid changes have made the utilization of technology the "in thing" for colleges and universities (Berge & Muilenburg, 2001). " There is a revolution which the Information Communications Technologies (ICT) are presently driving, moving in many cases from print at the core of a variety of media, to the virtual environments carried through the Web, computer-mediated conferencing (CMC), and CD-Rom" (Tait, 2000, p. 288). With this rapid expansion of network access worldwide, vast arrays of distance learning programs permit educators to reach a more globally diverse clientele (Altbach, 2004). Advancements in technology have created opportunities for higher education institutions to extend educational opportunities beyond the traditional "brick and mortor" buildings and deliver educational services to geographically and culturally diverse audiences internationally (Antonelli, Geuna & Steinmueller, 2000).

With this new technology for distance learning programs, higher education institutions are faced with the challenge of competing globally for diverse clientele (Baker & LeTendre, 2005). In order for a program to be marketable, higher education institutions need to take into consideration: students, instructors, evaluations, cost and maintaining the academic quality of distance learning courses to insure the comparability and quality of the degree, as well as the higher education institution's philosophy of distance learning (Bartlett, Fredrick & Gulbrandsen, 2004).