

FEASIBILITY STUDY OF A "UNIVERSITY" CONCEPT
FOR GOODWILL INDUSTRIES OF NORTH CENTRAL WI, INC.

by

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ABSTRACT

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Goodwill Industries of North Central WI, Inc. in many ways is a unique non-profit organization. Two unique characteristics are the functioning groups within the Goodwill family and the non-profit collaborations sought by Goodwill Industries of North Central WI, Inc. The functioning groups consist of programs and services, retail stores, a warehouse, leased team members, corporate team members, board members and volunteers. Each of these functioning groups and the non-profit collaborations present competency development opportunities. One consideration is to develop a "university" concept to meet the various educational needs of team members and other non-profits.

The purpose of the feasibility study was to gather information from for profit and non-profit organizations in North America regarding the status of a “university” concept. The study focused on four development stages that included planning, implementation, performance evaluation, and future growth plans. The study also requested participants to provide best practice advice for implementing a “university” concept.

The review of literature presented ideas and checklists to include in the development of a “university” concept. The literature included: needs assessments, organizations level of activity, alignment to the strategic plan, individual stakeholders, competencies to develop, courses to be developed and measurements, staffing needs, learning methods, equipment needs, vendors or consultants, internal communication system, marketing the concept, budgeting, and organizational best practices. A common theme in the literature indicated a strong customer focus when planning, measuring effectiveness, implementing and evaluating long-term results.

In conclusion, this study revealed that 17% of the volunteer participants responded and assisted with meeting the objectives with primary participants representing consumer goods, financial, and technology areas. The results indicated that eight of the fifteen respondents have a “university” concept in place. Due to the limited responses, Goodwill Industries of North Central WI, Inc. may desire to incorporate additional literature and outside organizational feedback for guidance.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

A Methodist minister named Reverend Edgar J. Helms founded Goodwill Industries in 1902. Goodwill first began in south Boston due to Helms' missionary work with a parish, a run-down chapel in a Boston slum. Edgar J. Helms was concerned about improving the lives of people and knew the parishioners could also help themselves. Helms set out to affluent neighborhoods such as Back Bay and Beacon Hill in Boston with burlap bags to collect unwanted goods for parishioners to repair and refurbish while being paid a wage. Day after day Helms continued to collect cast-off clothing and household items to help the poor, needy foreigners, plus the economically and physically handicapped survive. Helms had been quoted to say "These people must be helped and taught - not by words, but by deeds! The church belongs to the poor.... Let us help clothe and feed them. Let us give them the right-of-way to life...to a chance!" (Plumb, 1965, p. 106)

Goodwill Industries expanded across North America and in foreign lands once the word had spread about the Goodwill concept. The philosophy first spread to Brooklyn, NY in 1915. From there Goodwill Industries was formed in San Francisco and St. Louis in 1916 and then Los Angeles in 1917. By 1934 fifty-six Goodwill Industries had been created. The Goodwill model of the 1940's went from relief of financial struggles to rehabilitation for the physically handicapped. In particular, military men were returning from the war disabled and unable to compete for employment with the physically normal workers (Plumb, 1965, p. 223).

Goodwill Industries of North Central Wisconsin, Inc. is a not-for-profit organization located in Menasha and is one of 207 independent Goodwill's internationally located. The Menasha Goodwill was established January 8, 1971. In 1997 the Menasha Goodwill built a

Community Center that is also referred to as the Menasha Campus. Other non-profits have formed partnerships with Goodwill Industries of North Central WI, Inc. and assumed office space within the Menasha Campus. The vision of having many non-profits under one roof created a one-stop shopping concept. The collaborative partnership may include office space along with services such as accounting, payroll, maintenance, information technology, human resources, and conference rooms.

Statistics for Goodwill Industries of North Central WI, Inc. in 2003 included 6,582 people being served through programs and services plus 2,412 people received vocational training in the stores, and 782 team members from the stores/training centers received paychecks. In addition, Goodwill Industries of North Central WI, Inc. received 601,326 donations totaling 24,053,041 pounds, which is nearly 12,027 tons donated to 17 retail stores (Goodwill, 2003). Sales of these goods generated funds to help people and prevented tons of materials from ending up at community landfills.

In 2004, Goodwill Industries of North Central WI, Inc. operated 17 retail stores spread across a 35-county service area with several leased office spaces for other programs and services plus one warehouse named the Ralph B. Shiner, Jr. Center in Appleton, WI (Goodwill, 2004). Regardless of the location in North Central Wisconsin, the mission is the same: Goodwill Industries of North Central Wisconsin, Inc. will improve the community by improving the lives of its people through services, partnerships, collaborations and the responsible use of community resources (Goodwill, 2001). With this amount of not-for-profit activity taking place, there is no doubt in the minds of the leaders within Goodwill Industries of North Central WI, Inc. that competency development is essential.

Statement of the Problem

With this said, Goodwill Industries of North Central WI, Inc. executive leaders have declared that as part of the mission, competency development will be provided to the direct team members, team leaders, board members, volunteers and program participants and other community non-profits. Knowing that other organizations have successfully implemented a “university” concept, the leaders of Goodwill Industries of North Central WI, Inc. wanted to pursue the feasibility of also designing a “university” concept within the Menasha Campus. The vision includes offering courses to other non-profit organizations that are unable to afford staffing a trainer for broad perspective competency development.

Where does Goodwill Industries of North Central WI, Inc. begin? This study will examine for profit and non-profit organizations in North America whom either currently operate a “university” concept within the corporation or have experience with such an adventure.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to provide Goodwill Industries of North Central WI, Inc. with guidance in determining if a “university” concept is feasible along with suggested best practices from those organizations that have experienced the planning and implementation of a “university” concept.

The objectives are:

1. Gather information from for profit and non-profit organizations in North America regarding the “university” concept.
2. Evaluate the information from the four stages: planning, implementation, performance evaluation, growth and best practices from other organizations that have implemented a “university” concept.

3. Determine if the study and literature reviews have provided enough information for Goodwill Industries of North Central WI, Inc. leaders to arrive at a decision regarding the implementation of a Goodwill University.

Significance of the Study

Creating a learning track for each stakeholder is a roadmap for opportunities in an organization. A stakeholder is able to obtain valuable employment information regarding organizational expectations up front while preparing for incremental advancements and rewards both personally and professionally. This study may also benefit other organizations when considering the creation of a “university” concept-learning environment.

Limitations of the Study

1. The survey tool was sent via email to reach North American participants. This method may pose limited responses.
2. With limited survey responses, the writer may need to depend on prior written information from literature reviews to guide Goodwill Industries of North Central WI, Inc. through the decision process.
3. Team members of Goodwill Industries of North Central WI, Inc. are not being surveyed to determine individual needs and views of a “university” concept.
4. Local non-profits are not being surveyed, at this time, to determine organizational needs in competency development.

Definition of Terms

Corporate University – “A corporate university is an educational entity that is a strategic tool designed to assist its parent organization in achieving its mission by conducting

activities that cultivate individual and organizational learning, knowledge, and wisdom” (Allen 2002, p. 9).

Competency – “Any knowledge, skill, set of actions, or thought patterns that reliably distinguishes between superior and average performers. In other words, a competency is what superior performers do more often and with better results than average performers on the job” (Meister, 1998, p. 104).

Leased Team Members – Are team members of Goodwill Industries of North Central WI, Inc. but work with another non-profit who pay Goodwill for payroll services (Goodwill, 1997).

Program Participants – Persons who volunteer or work through a special program at Goodwill Industries of North Central WI, Inc. to receive services specific to their needs (Goodwill, 1971).

Programs and Services – One of the departments within Goodwill Industries of North Central WI, Inc. that coordinates services for the communities in North Central Wisconsin (Goodwill, 1971).

Ralph B. Shiner, Jr. Center - Goodwill Industries of North Central WI, Inc. warehouse where donated and new good items are stored as well as subcontracting services are performed (Goodwill, 2003).

Team Leaders - Goodwill Industries of North Central WI, Inc. name for supervisors (Goodwill, 1999).

Team Members - Goodwill Industries of North Central WI, Inc. name for employees (Goodwill, 1999).

University - An institution of higher education that awards undergraduate and graduate degrees. Often used interchangeably with "College" (Kantrowitz, 2004).

Volunteer – “A person who freely offers to do service. To offer, or enter into, by choice” (Word Dictionary, 1947)

Methodology

The data collected for this study will be measured both quantitatively and qualitatively with a non-probability sampling of North American organizations who are either for profit or non-profit. The survey questions were designed to gather information from organizations who have experience related to a “university” concept. The questions are organized around four phases; planning, implementation, performance evaluation, future growth and then identifying best practices.

Chapter Two examines other organizations who have implemented the “university” concept along with literature review to support the research.

Chapter Three describes the methodology used for the research and the selection of human subjects.

Chapter Four is an analysis of the survey data with results and interpretation of the information provided.

Chapter Five is a summary of the research limitations, conclusions and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of the feasibility study is to determine if a “university” concept is appropriate for Goodwill Industries of North Central WI, Inc. Today’s emphasis is on promoting and encouraging self-development through job specific competencies with clearly defined career paths. Creating a workforce that is aware of the business operations, motivated to fulfill the mission and flexible with the organization is essential for career growth. One way of defining and communicating career paths is by implementing a “university” concept. Included in the literature review are five common themes found in the literature review for developing the “university” concept: planning, implementation, performance evaluation, future growth plans and organizational best practices. The stages are fewer, but not unlike George Steiner’s strategic planning process (Steiner, 1979, p. 17) which includes: the plan to plan, expectations and assessments, master strategies, medium and short range plans, implementation of plans, plus the review and evaluation of plans. Also, there are similarities with the ADDIE model which stands for Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation. The initial blueprint for developing a “university” concept is critical in determining the overall fit for any organization. This chapter will focus largely on the planning stage to assist with identifying essential components for the development of a “university” concept and organizational experiences.

Planning

The planning process, as many may realize, is a crucial step in developing the overall scheme or projection of any project. This step enables developers to articulate sequentially the design for others to follow and to also purposefully communicate to the organizations stakeholders. “Planning provides a basis for measuring the performance of the entire company

and its major parts” (Steiner, 1979, p. 48). The planning phase, at minimum, should include the following:

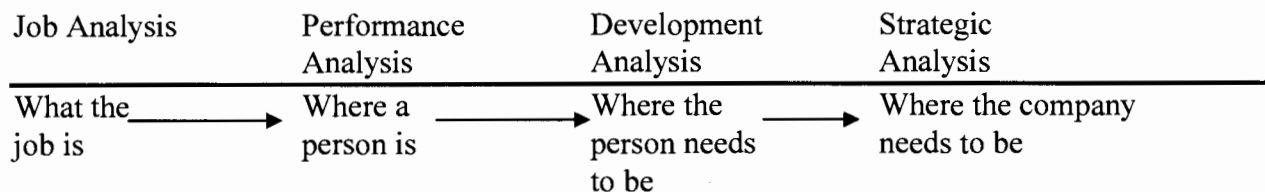
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|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Needs assessment | <input type="checkbox"/> Learning methods |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Organization’s level of activity | <input type="checkbox"/> Equipment needs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alignment to the strategic plan | <input type="checkbox"/> Vendors or consultants |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individuals involved/stakeholders | <input type="checkbox"/> Internal communication system |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Competencies to be developed | <input type="checkbox"/> Marketing concept |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Developing courses & measurements | <input type="checkbox"/> Budget |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Staffing needs | <input type="checkbox"/> Organizational learning experiences |

Needs assessment

A needs assessment is considered a front-end evaluation that assists with measuring the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to help the organization achieve strategic goals. This process is often an overlooked step in the planning process or any process where crucial information could be established prior to spending large sums of money. A needs assessment determines gaps in performance, organizational areas in need of training and budgeting needs. A needs assessment need not be elaborate, but content rich in order to drive at the actual needs of the organization and the people who will fulfill the organizations mission. A “skills assessment begins with job or competency analysis and an understanding of the major responsibilities and duties in each job” (Rothwell, Lindholm, Wallick, 2003, p. 82). Figure 2-1 indicates the levels an analyst would approach during an assessment (Rothwell, et al., 2003, p. 84). Overall, the analyst function is to provide evidence of the necessity of training and the projected shifts in employee behaviors (Rothwell, et al., 2003, p. 83). During the assessment stage an organization

might also consider surveying other organizations to enrich the learning process of developing a corporate university of what did and did not work for them. Once surveys are reviewed and a decision to continue the process is established, an organization will need to complete the rest of the planning phase.

Figure 2-1. Levels of Analyst Roles



□ *Organization's level of activity*

Deciding which level or stage an organization wishes to start a university concept would include taking into consideration Allen's (2002, p. 4) four levels of activity list:

1. Training only
2. Training plus managerial and / or executive development
3. Courses offered for academic credit
4. Courses offered that lead to an academic degree

Many organizations are either level one or two initially and may develop into level three. Few organizations offer academic credit due to the difficulty in obtaining accreditation. Also, organizations can easily send their staff to traditional colleges or universities to obtain a higher education while avoiding obstacles of eligibility and federal funding. Typically organizations have found colleges willing to enter into partnerships to customize curricula and provide the

needed flexibility with delivery (Allen, 2002, p. 4).

□ *Alignment to the strategic plan*

Another item in the planning process would include tying the training needs with the strategic planning process to help the organization meet its goals. A strategic plan identifies goals and objectives that are loosely stated and then prioritized according to level of importance. Many strategic plans are developed around the organizations mission statement. A corporate university should be viewed as a means of helping the organization to achieve its goals through its people. It is unlikely that dramatic results will occur with profitability, strategy innovation or competitive advantage unless courses are connected to the organization's goals and objectives (Allen, 2002, p. 111). Brinkerhoff & Apking (2001, p. 46) stated,

if we work with a company to develop a training plan, we would first work to understand the organization's strategic direction. We would determine where we could score the biggest win through high-impact learning by identifying the most critical

- business goals, that are driven by
- processes, which are linked to
- job/team results, in order to develop a
- plan to support learning of the most critical (but not all) competencies that will drive
- performance improvement and goal achievement.

Along with the strategic planning process an organization might want to use an analysis called SWOT which stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The SWOT analysis is a valid approach to most projects. In Steiner (1979, p. 19), this analysis was once referred to as the "WOTS UP analysis, an acronym for weaknesses, opportunities, threats and strengths underlying planning." Analysis of the strengths and weaknesses would explore the

internal culture, values, leadership, people, technology, etc. Opportunities and threats would examine the external customers, shoppers, suppliers, economy, technology, and so on. Several critical business areas to measure would include: on the job training; soft skills development; leadership development; executive development; financial growth; customer satisfaction; culture/organizational awareness; diversity awareness; recruitment/retention; mission, vision, values and ethics; strategic plans; market focus; technology advancement; product knowledge; and consulting skills. Determining the strengths and weaknesses of the organization are just as important as the external opportunities and threats in the planning process. Strategic planning forces leaders to ask and answer the tough questions while encouraging deep reflection of the new challenges and desired goals coming ahead.

Through the alignment to the strategic plan and the “university” concept learning, knowledge and wisdom should be cultivated for organizational growth.

Learning refers to change. Individuals change, both internally and in their behaviors, when they undergo learning. *Knowledge* refers to specific facts, procedures, and skills that can be possessed by an individual or an organization (and that are typically acquired through the change process called learning). The highest rung on the ladder is *wisdom*, the ability to effectively apply knowledge to organizational goals. (Allen, 2002, p. 10).

In addition, Teare (2002, p. 2) provided insight from Dixon (1998) that while the corporate world is already fast paced and becoming even faster some key questions should be addressed by the executive leadership team.

1. Is our organization sufficiently flexible and adaptable to keep up with change?
2. Do our people understand the key business priorities?
3. Are we harnessing intranet/extranet power to learn effectively?

4. How do we capture what we learn? (Dixon, 1998).

In most cases, organizations that commit to the creation of a corporate university/business school begin by reviewing what is hopeful to achieve. The point here, of course, is to sketch out the big picture in the hope of minimizing the risks associated with offering an unrelated collection of popular courses. At Motorola, NYNEX, and General Electric the learning is viewed not only as a means of personal and organizational development but as a tool for initiating cultural change and sustaining competitive advantage during periods of internal re-organization (Arnone, 1998).

□ *Individuals involved/stakeholders*

Taking into consideration the number of personnel or outsiders who would be affected and actively involved with the “university” concept need also be determined. Successful organizations have designed “university” concepts with total personnel ranging from a couple of hundred or more (Allen, 2002, p. 11). In regards to outsiders this may include other businesses, suppliers, community organizations, or family members of the organizations personnel. Whether an organization decides to include persons from outside the organization will depend on whether the courses should be developed specific to the organization or mutually beneficial to those who may not need to be directly employed to benefit from the courses developed such as dealers for the organizations products.

An organization should not only identify the key stakeholders but also begin assessing the level of impact and commitment these persons will have on the new process of learning and individual concerns associated with the change. At this point the goal is to assess the percentage of people who may be advocates for the process, fence sitters who are unsure; those opposed to the new concept or misinformed and unclear in regards to what will happen (Jaffe & Scott, 1999,

p. 152 & 153). Once the stakeholders have been categorized in the levels of support, leaders of this change process can begin to understand stakeholder expectations, skills, and the varying degrees of communication needed.

❑ *Competencies to be developed*

Capturing the desired competencies through job analysis and then aligning them to the organization's strategic plan is very important in order to determine courses needed. During the analysis an organization would not only prioritize organizational needs but also the underdeveloped competencies per individual. This will help eliminate the thought process that "one-size-fits-all". "An organization whose business units have great autonomy benefits from a content structure that replicates that individualism" (Allen, 2002, p. 48). Common areas of consideration include core competencies, skills specific to the business units, plus leadership and/or executive development. Meister (1998, p. 13) mentions that several companies have identified seven workplace competencies essential to their business and the planning of the "university" concept. The list includes:

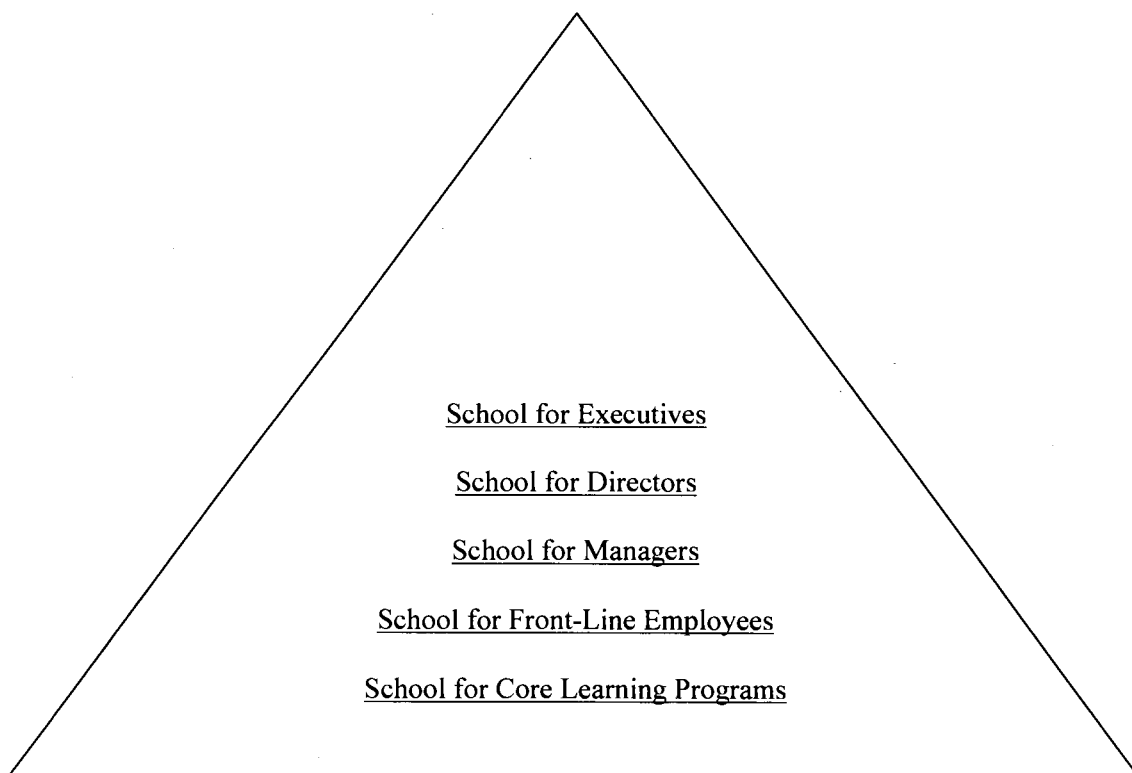
1. Learning to learn.
2. Communication and collaboration.
3. Creative thinking and problem-solving.
4. Technological literacy.
5. Global business literacy.
6. Leadership development.
7. Career self-management.

These competencies have been identified to communicate the skills, knowledge and know-how required to outperform the competition.

The old implied social contract – you work hard and we will give you a job for as long as you want – does not exist. Job security no longer comes from sticking with a single company but from maintaining a portfolio of job-related skills. This shift signals a ‘new psychological contract’ between employer and employee. Under the new contract, employers provide learning in place of job security. (Meister, 1998, p. 9)

Figure 2-2 from Allen (2002, p. 54) displays The Pyramid Model for curriculum development. The model provides a picture of upward movement of learning and potential promotions. “The key is showing that learning is a part of the passage from one job to the next, along with managing employee expectations”.

Figure 2-2. The Pyramid Model



Does this then determine that a person will automatically receive a raise or promotion once the courses have been completed? An organization will want to ensure the communication is clear regarding the link between receiving a raise, promotions and the next steps in personal development.

□ *Developing courses and measurements*

Common areas for development include, but are not limited to, leadership development, executive development, safety, security, soft skills, technology skills, and product knowledge. The courses should be reflective of the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to assist the organization with achieving strategic goals. Along with the development of courses that support competencies, an organization ought to respectfully consider the desires of adult learners. Adult learners are particular in knowing why a course is essential for development and how it will impact overall job performance. In Brinkerhoff & Apking (2001, p. 100), six guidelines have been derived from high-impact learning.

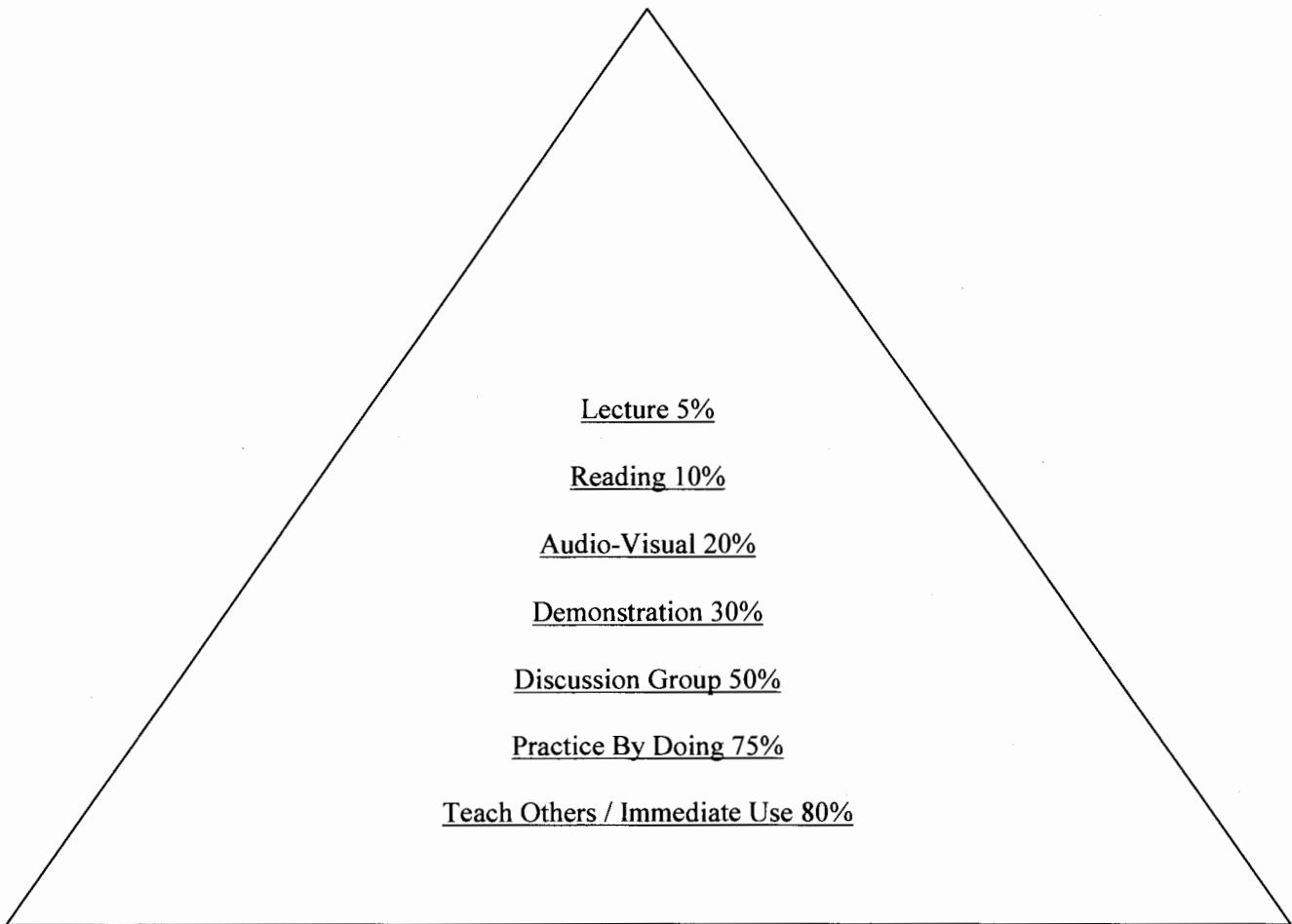
1. *Adults demand a clear and relevant 'need to know'.* Adults feel the need to know why attendance is required and the relevance to workplace performance, objectives and organizational goals. Competency models assist with communicating what is required for each position.
2. *Adults need to be able to exert control over the learning experience.* Adults like to maintain control over learning methods, options for feedback, schedules and so on. The 'one-size-fits-all' approach does not necessarily appeal to adult learners today.
3. *Adults want their experience to be recognized and respected.* Adults prefer to apply prior experiences when learning new methods and to interact during the training. During

the training, adults like to practice what has been delivered and also provide feedback.

4. *Adults need to be ready to learn.* This guideline is the action planning before the fact that builds readiness in an adult's busy life.
5. *Adults want to see the usefulness of learning.* Again, learners seek clarification as to 'why' training is essential. At this point an organization will need to communicate the performance, organizational goals and business results desired and tie in all stakeholders.
6. *Adults prefer learning to be connected with something that motivates them.* Adults need clarification in the 'WIIFM', or 'What's in it for me?' What are the rewards and incentives? "If learning focuses on performance improvement that will not be recognized, then we know that we are in violation of this adult learning guideline, as well as the fundamental precepts of effective performance management" (Brinkerhoff & Apking, 2001, p. 102).

Meister (1998, p. 37) offers a learning pyramid from Motorola University in Figure 2-3. Ed Bales, who has since retired as the director of Educational Alliances at Motorola, stated "We, as adult learners, concentrate our learning at the top of the pyramid, spending time in lectures and reading rather than in the bottom of the pyramid where we practice by doing or teach others" (Meister, 1998, p. 36).

Figure 2-3. The Learning Pyramid



Brinkerhoff & Gill (1994, p. 155 & 156) identified key reasons an organization would want to measure training success which includes:

- ✓ To identify opportunities for training
- ✓ To determine customer deficits in needed knowledge, skills, and attitudes
- ✓ To enhance the learning process
- ✓ To manage critical value-adding events
- ✓ to identify training problems and their potential solutions
- ✓ To assess the business impact of training
- ✓ To provide accountability for the use of resources

- ✓ To monitor changes in attitudes and perceptions related to training

When determining the measurements for success of the different development levels of the learning pyramid, the following might be considered:

- ✓ Pre/post testing
- ✓ Course evaluations
- ✓ Department growth indicators
- ✓ External customer satisfaction surveys
- ✓ Organizational culture surveys
- ✓ Personnel course utilization indicators
- ✓ Personnel development plans
- ✓ Personnel exit interviews
- ✓ 360 degree feedback

All measurement tools are not necessary, but the tools used will depend on the information desired by the organizational leaders. Brinkerhoff & Gill (1994, p. 118) have also noted that measurement begins during the assessment phase by learning about the different customer needs.

Staffing needs

Staffing a training and development department can be unique on its own. An organization will need to choose whether or not the training and development is a function of human resource or a separate entity within the organization. Whether or not the training and development function operates within the human resource department is clearly about building teams and strategizing to meet the organizations goals, mission and budget. Many organizations have chosen to separate training and development from human resource for reasons that include allocation of department funds, staff accountability, development of training staff, corporate

culture of creating a learning environment versus a training only function, the size of the organization, and future projections. “Corporate universities that reside in human resources must gain executive commitment by pushing the idea and initiative up the chain of command and laterally throughout the rank and file” (Allen, 2002, p. 46). “The success of corporate universities has demonstrated that the learning experience needs to be kept separate from traditional human resource processes. The relationship with human resources should not override the corporate university’s day-to-day operations (Allen, 2002, p. 113).

❑ *Learning methods*

Location, location, location. Who has not heard this statement before? The location or method used to gain information can vary with varying levels of interest or excitement. In Brinkerhoff & Apking (2001, p. 107) the variety of learning methods include the traditional instructor-led, structured meetings, on-the-job coaching/mentoring, self-paced workbooks, print documentation and audio/videotapes. In addition, there are the e-learning methods of virtual classrooms, webcast/satellite broadcasts, interactive television, audio/video conferencing, on-line chats, web-based training, computer-based training, on-line documentation, electronic performance support system, audio/video broadcasts, and on-line discussion groups. Training and development has taken on new dimension over the past several years with the development of the internet, intranet and e-learning. Training expenses have been reduced in regards to travel, and the time it takes to pass along knowledge has also decreased. E-learning is a sound concept and can be used to significantly improve training when used properly. In Meister (1998, p. 77) it is noted that Van Kampen American Capital University’s Dean Tamara Scott suggests asking three questions early in the process when considering technology-based products:

- ✓ Does the technology fit the learner’s needs?

- ✓ Is it available and justifiable?
- ✓ Does it simulate real working conditions? (Meister, 1998, p. 77)

The traditional way of learning includes “classroom” which is the conventional instructor-led training. Instructor-led can also be applied in the world of technology, but in this case “classroom” refers to the physical space involving participants in a live setting (Brinkerhoff & Apking, 2001, p. 19). Typically, “classroom” is not only a set space, but also scheduled for a particular day, time, instructor and location.

In addition, there is another concept called “blended-solution” learning. This is a mixture of learning opportunities which combines e-learning with classroom learning, communication and support tools to create an ideal learning and performance improvement experience. At QUALCOM, classroom training is dedicated to interactive skill building while ‘information’ training is provided electronically (Brinkerhoff & Apking, 2001, p. 20). The “blended-solution” approach adds convenience and power to the learner on where and how learning will take place. The location of offerings can make or break the success of a “university” concept. Regardless of the expense or inconvenience of developing multiple avenues for people to learn, keeping in mind that people do not all learn the same will be important for acceptance of others being different and inclusion for everyone. In addition, Brinkerhoff & Apking (2001, p. 107) cited Bloom’s taxonomy of learning objectives (Bloom, 1956) which states there are four levels of learning (awareness, knowledge, understanding, and skill). As course objectives are put into place the blended approach that includes a mixture of awareness, knowledge, understanding, and skill requirements will efficiently and effectively meet the range of needs of adult learners. Also, an organization should be aware that learners do not want to purchase the resources as much as learners would like to purchase the results from training as noted in Brinkerhoff & Gill (1994, p.

113).

❑ *Equipment needs*

Next, what are the equipment needs? The thought of determining the equipment required to deliver the desired courses can be overwhelming. Not only is equipment a concern, but also the facility. Equipment needs can include the basics of a dry erase board and markers to paper to full technology of computers, software and internet access. Outside experts can be of assistance if an organization is inexperienced in this area. Due to the expense of equipment an organization may develop incremental steps when adding technology to the learning environment to defray some of the initial expenses and continue future growth.

❑ *Vendors and consultants*

Not only are outside experts, in regards to vendors or consultants, helpful with the equipment or learning technologies, but also with content, instructional design, subject matter experts, executive education, and program evaluation. Sometimes organizations work through universities for this expertise or contract individually. Individual consultants, consultants coming from larger organizations or universities, are each going to have a variety of pricing and levels of expertise to offer. Some of the best sources are going to be organizations that are already operating a “university” concept and can provide their ingenuity and focus on industry specific issues while also sharing best practices (Allen, 2002, p. 100). Other options for partnering include a university for classroom learning, a technology provider for distance education or other vendors where content has been developed for immediate use by internal trainers. Very few organizations can perform all of their functions in-house and do them well (Allen, 2002, p. 103). “There are plenty of people and organizations out there that are willing to not only sell you their products and services but also to work with you to help you achieve your

goals” (Allen, 2002, p. 113). Consultants and experienced organizations will be most helpful with the tools needed to communicate the corporate university to employees.

□ *Internal communication system*

Communicating the strategy of developing and educating employees, customers, suppliers or others outside the organization need a strong communication plan that is ongoing with top leadership support. The communication footprint should include the goals and overall objectives of becoming a lifelong learning organization. Ten goals and principles offered in Meister (1998, p. 31& 32) to assist with articulating the overall message is:

1. Provide learning opportunities that support the organization’s critical business issues.
2. Consider the corporate university model a process rather than a place of learning.
3. Design a curriculum to incorporate the three Cs: Corporate citizenship, Contextual framework, and Core competencies.
4. Train the value chain, including customers, distributors, product suppliers, and the universities that provide tomorrow’s workers.
5. Move from instructor-led training to multiple formats of delivering learning.
6. Encourage leaders to be involved with and facilitate learning.
7. Move from a corporate allocation funding model to one ‘self-funded’ by the business units.
8. Assume a global focus in developing learning solutions.
9. Create a measurement system to evaluate outputs as well as inputs.
10. Utilize the corporate university for competitive advantage and entry into new markets.

(Meister, 1998, p. 31& 32)

Create a vision and mission with a consistent message that is compelling and inspires

stakeholders to be involved. In other words, brand the concept so that when people see the logo or symbol the concept is easily identifiable and pulls people into the programs. Demonstrate that the value of the corporate university is critical in meeting business objectives, providing exceptional leadership, customer service and innovation. In Figure 2-3 the Corporate University Xchange has identified the frequently asked questions by employees.

Figure 2-3 Ten Frequently Asked Questions about the Launch of a Corporate University

1. What is the corporate university?
2. Why is learning important to our company?
3. Where will learning at the corporate university take place?
4. What types of learning programs will be available through the corporate university?
5. How is the corporate university different from our company's training department?
6. Who pays for the learning programs reflected in the corporate university catalogue?
7. When will the corporate university be operational?
8. Who is in charge of the corporate university?
9. How do I enroll in the corporate university?
10. Are the learning programs in the corporate university eligible for college credit?

© 1997 Corporate University Xchange, Inc. (Meister, 1998, p. 81)

❑ *Marketing concept*

Well-designed corporate universities can become an ongoing advertisement for an organization in the respect of new employees, customers, suppliers and partners. Organizations who measure market share, profitability, employee and customer satisfaction, plus employee and customer retention will invariably advertise and market the success of the "university" concept. Organizations are also taking advantage of branding the "university" concept to demonstrate

expertise in both customized and general learning solutions and enable them to defray operating expenses and generate revenue for the organization (Meister, 1998, p. 252). Operating the “university” concept as a business is a value-added approach to sustaining the learning organization and leveraging value in the marketplace. At this point many budgetary items should be evident and documented.

Budget

One of the most important elements of the planning process is evaluating perceived expenses and then determining the budget to enable the concept to come alive. Utilizing the expertise from organizations that have already begun the “university” concept may be most helpful in highlighting the essential expenses versus the nice to have items as well as incremental steps and future trends. Many of the basic items to include in the budget are salaries, research and development, equipment and software needs, vendor services, office supplies/furniture, facility expenses, advertising, postal services, capital expenditures, travel expenses, training materials, and promotional items. Budgets may be tightly or loosely linked to the first year of a functional program. If the environment alters during the first year, the budget needs to remain flexible (Steiner, 1979, p. 227). Also, other organizations willing to share budget information can provide insight into whether it is more feasible to fund the training within the training and development area or create a charge-back system for training delivered to the respective departments. “Saturn University maintains its own budget and funds corporate training. For Saturn, the delivery of corporate training is funded centrally (Allen, 2002, p. 113). Figure 2-4 provides observations from one organization that wanted to develop a corporate university.

Organizational Learning Experiences

Figure 2-4 Toyota’s Planning Stage of a “University” Concept

The following provides notes of the planning phase from one organization who wanted to implement a corporate university. In 1998 Toyota began the planning stage of a “university” concept. Mike Morrison, Ph.D., Dean of the University of Toyota, initially decided he needed to get his arms around several thoughts:

- A strategy to move us beyond a centralized training function to a unique corporate university organization
 - A means of building a true team and organizing my staff
 - A strategy for identifying and structuring our real ‘centers of excellence’
 - A means of organizing and aligning our current and future curricula to ensure quality service to our ‘customers’
 - A way to transform our loose collection of courseware into well-purposed, well-integrated curricula
 - Some way to give my team input into and ownership of the direction of my vision
 - As the bottom line, a shared understanding of who we are (individually and as a team), what our strengths are, where we’re headed, and how they we’re going to get there.
- (Allen, 2002, p. 16)

In other words, Mike needed a plan for the future. Mike and his team identified several factors in the planning stage which included:

- Clarity in values.* What are we? Who are we? What are our beliefs or norms? Does our mission statement capture our purpose fully? What does “lifelong learning” mean? What do we bring to the part to add value?
- Shared vision.* What is our picture of the future? What are our goals? What does it look like when we meet those goals? How do we treat one another? How does our

mission support Toyota's?

- ❑ *Client focus.* Whom are we serving? At what levels? Are we responding to their requirements? How are we serving them now? How should we be serving them? How are we structured to serve them? Are we aligned correctly to do so? What are their real and perceived needs? How do we assess those needs?
- ❑ *Unified strategy.* How do we achieve our mission/vision? What are our priorities? What are our core competencies, our centers of excellence? What are our products and services? What are our curricula and courses? How and where are we aligned and integrated?
- ❑ *Alignment with business results.* What are the business goals of the College of Associate Education and Development? Are we aligned correctly? Are the goals achievable?
- ❑ *Operational consistency.* How does our work get done? What are our core processes (e.g., efficient communication)?
- ❑ *Measure of success in performance improvement.* How will we know if we're successful? What evidence is needed? How do we hold ourselves accountable? (Allen, 2002, p. 20).

Implementation

Prior to implementation the organizations designers of the university should make sure that all questions have been answered, stakeholders have been identified and involved, support from leadership is in place, and alignment to the strategic plan has been achieved. Implementation is then the next step in the process by which a model is launched and then managed. After all, a well-defined plan should be implemented. When preparing the implementation of the plan, the following questions should be addressed:

- What is the timeline for meeting the goals defined in the plan?
- Who is responsible for monitoring the achievements in the timelines?
- Are the professional development strategies defined?
- Is staff development ongoing to include time to practice and learn new technologies?
- Is there a plan for networking and acquiring hardware and software for the facilities?
- Has a plan been established to deal with the rapid changes in technology?
- What is the current cash flow available?
- How will funding be granted over the life of the plan?
- Will you need a variety of funding resources to support the plan?
- How will you deal with unforeseen issues such as changes in leadership and budget?
- Is there a plan for who will receive the highest priority in the new program?
- Who will be responsible for implementing the plan?
- Will there be incentives for participants to achieve the highest level of proficiency?
- How will accessibility to the new training be ensured?
- How will the instructional use of technology address issues such as compliance, curriculum, special needs, minority populations and equity issues?
- Are new policies needed to support the implementation of the plan?

Source: <http://www.ncrtec.org/capacity/guidewww/imple.htm>

Questions to consider after implementation include:

1. Are the programs reaching the target audience?
2. Are the goals established during the planning phase supporting the strategic plan?
3. Has learning been transferred to the work needed to be performed?

4. Has the concept and employee participation been supported throughout the organization?
5. Is feedback available to provide information as to what is and is not working well?
6. What needs to change to keep the goals in tact?

Answers to these questions are important for three reasons. First, this information will impact the development of continued work with the university concept. Second, the training and development staff will be able to adjust to the needs of the end user efficiently and timely. Third, the overall plan will add value to the organization and help stakeholders remain confident plus stay on task.

Some barriers noted by Meister (1998, p. 268) that may prevent the launch of the “university” concept include:

1. Lack of commitment to the model.
2. Lack of consensus as to what is needed to complete the model.
3. Inability to develop a link to the strategic plan of the organization.
4. Lack of visibility by employees as to what they may gain from this concept.
5. Inability to prove the value of the corporate university to the overall success of the organization. (Meister, 1998, p. 268).

An organization may need to also review the funding to support the model and establishing “pay-for-services” approach for customers from outside the organization. To ensure a successful launching of the “university” concept, the organizations leaders need to be fully involved, supportive, and aware of the positive impact on the organization. Involvement should not only include the planning stage, but also participating or teaching in the university courses, and supporting staff when attendance is required or desired. Leaders should ask for feedback and monitor the learning and performance of the teams once courses are completed.

Performance Evaluation

How is the university concept performing since implementation? What are the metrics used to evaluate the performance or what are the indicators of impact? “Examples of metrics required include percentage of payroll, student days, tuition fees, courses delivered, programs conducted, reduction in turnover for those receiving training, increased productivity (pre and post behavior assessment), increased skill in managing savings, instructor payroll cost savings, increased sales due to training targeted toward key selling programs, expectation versus proficiency, expectation versus performance, expectation versus importance, and profits versus performance” (Allen, 2002, p. 112). Other measurements include a three-month check-up on persons who have received training and determining implementation from the feedback received. Determining the level of understanding during the communication stage as to what a corporate university concept is and how it may affect employees is also important. Meister (1998, p. 78) added from the feedback obtained by Jay Zimmerman, the manager of Research and Quality at the Bank of Montreal’s Institute for Learning, that an organization should also consider Kirkpatrick’s Four Levels of Measurement known as:

- Level 1: Participant assessment (do the trainees think they’ve learned anything?)
- Level 2: Knowledge/skill acquisition (can they pass a test on the materials?)
- Level 3: Transfer to the job (do they apply the learning when they get back to work?)
- Level 4: Return on investment (is the new skill saving or making money for the organization?)

Zimmerman also adds that an organization should keep in mind the kind of change that is desired and realize the indicators needed to measure success.

Organizations may need to observe external indicators through customer satisfaction surveys or business units to understand if the training has helped with resolving particular business challenges. This type of measurement would be very common in the service industries such as hospitals, restaurants, retail stores, etc. Desired measurements should be determined in the planning stage and then utilized during the performance phase for benchmarking statistics both internally and with other organizations. This will provide meaningful conversations for future strategic planning that is both specific and measurable.

Individual performance evaluations include documented conversations by peers, leaders, and customers. Organizations will typically add commercial 360-degree feedback instruments to enable stakeholders to understand the performance goals, gaps between current performance and the goals to assist with achieving desired performance. These insights, along with coaching by a leader, help motivate employees to begin the process of self-development. This may include a blended approach of self-study along with formal courses conducted in a classroom setting or by e-learning (Allen, 2002, p. 77).

Brinkerhoff & Gill (1994, p. 152) speak on behalf of continuous measurement to achieve continuous improvement through total quality management (TQM). Most trainers know and understand that effective training programs must have goals, active participants, a facilitator, instructional materials, and an opportunity to practice new skills. Knowing this, feedback must also be a part of the process and performance measurement. In order for training to achieve its maximum effectiveness, measurement must occur throughout the learning process.

Future Growth Plans

The words of organizational “future” and “growth” also include organizational “change”. Many people within organizations are not comfortable with change. Recognizing that “change” is uncomfortable to many and addressing the issue up front in regards to organizational growth and culture will be crucial when altering the concept for whatever reason. What may change from the planning and implementation phases?

The strategic plan will have a direct impact on the growth of a corporate university as well as the economy, changes in leadership, technology, plus the training and development field. During the planning phase an organization may have decided to take their already “training only” level to the “training plus managerial and/or executive development” level at the point of launching the concept. Part of the plan may have included that the future growth opportunity would included taking the organization’s “university” concept to the “courses offered for academic credit” level and so forth.

Two organizations share the “change” experience, General Electric and Motorola.

1. General Electric (GE) sold medical imaging equipment and training courses to Columbia/HCA Healthcare Corporation for several years. General Electric then developed a deeper relationship with the healthcare organization by consulting with them in regards to how to design more effective equipment and not just on the equipment that was purchased. John Trani, CEO of GE Medical Systems says, “Our goal is to create a business by teaching our customers how to take costs out of their operations” (Meister, 1998, p. 46). By partnering with customers, GE has changed and grown their philosophy to do more than just “train the value chain”.
2. As Motorola was entering into new markets and establishing a chip-making plant in

Richmond, Virginia, Motorola University established a relationship with J. Sargent Reynolds Community College. The goal was to have Motorola University faculty teach at the community college for establishing future workforces and recruiting quality students. As seen here, companies are establishing partnerships with community colleges and universities whose graduates will fill their future positions (Meister, 1998, p. 47).

Steiner (1979, p. 104) referenced conclusions made by one company in regards to change.

The guidelines listed helped the people within the organization be more agreeable to changes required in the planning process:

- When change is understood it is more acceptable.
- Minus the threat of security, change is more acceptable.
- Those persons affected by change generally accept the process if involved in the course of events.
- Change is more agreed upon if not dictated.
- Employees generally accept change when it shows success versus failure.
- Additional change is accepted after the first steps have been digested versus adding more change during a state of confusion.
- Generally change is accepted if planned and not introduced as a trial.
- Employees who have been with a company for shorter time periods accept change more easily than veterans.
- Employees who share in the benefits of change will accept it more easily.
- If an organization is accustomed to planning for improvements, then change is typically accepted versus an organization that remains static.

Generally, a new system requires people to think differently. Try to ease employees into a

transition instead of a complete transformation (Steiner, 1979, p. 105).

Organizational Best Practices

How does an organization capture “best practices” or “big lessons”? One way of capturing the best practices is to refer to others in the industry to benchmark organizational experiences and compare results. Each industry expert has stories that may be shared providing insight into what could have been done differently from the onset of developing a corporate university. There are also organizations that consider the “big lessons” to be proprietary and will deny access to this information.

For an organization trying to establish a “best practice” list after implementation, these are items to take into consideration:

1. Ability to recognize the impact of the “university” concept. Honest evaluation.
2. Discovering what is being talked about through feedback sessions either by groups or one-on-one. Perception is reality and views may differ between leadership and the rest of the organization.
3. Reviewing the clarity of the mission, vision, values, alignment to strategic planning and other related goals.
4. Identifying the achievements and gaps between the plan, implementation and future goals.
5. Developing a revised plan to get additional results and hold people accountable.

One organization shared the “best practices” in Allen (2002, p. 32). Mike Morrison from Toyota kept a journal of the creation of the “University of Toyota”. Mike’s last noted entry included his lessons learned after three years of planning, implementation, performance evaluation and growth and provides advice to those embarking on the process of launching a corporate university:

- ✓ *Lead with your strengths.* In terms of launching a corporate university, stick to your competencies and outsource the rest. The strengths of my team were (and are) in management and administration, not in curriculum design, development, or delivery. As a university, we fully leverage the talents of our strong strategic partners.
- ✓ *Serve others.* We recognized early on that our own interests in education and development – i.e., new technology and delivery, offerings were thought provocative, etc. – were not nearly as important as the ability to meet the great needs of clients.
- ✓ *Engage fully.* We have never been satisfied, and ‘good enough’ never is. Our content is as dynamic as the ability of our partners to shift and change with us. We continually drive for mastery, and ‘fast pilot’ is one of our hallmarks. Is it a risk not to wait for consensus? Sure, but it’s an intelligent risk, and a risk that allows us to lead the organization ‘from the middle,’ as it were.
- ✓ *Think big.* We reinvented the concept of lifelong learning, and it became the driving force behind everything we do. It has become our brand – and brands have no equity without trust, and no power without distinction.

✓ *Envision the future.* We never wanted to be a 'catalog'. We wanted to be more, much more. We set big goals, and we made them happen. We moved into the dream a day at a time, sometimes kicking, sometimes screaming, but all the while chasing tomorrow with our best effort.

Summary of Literature Review

In summary, the following key points have been established from the literature review:

1. Plan well by first to seeking information and aligning the "university" concept to the strategic plan. Determine the low hanging fruit. In other words, what is important today?
2. Ensure alignment and support exists with executive leadership.
3. Implement with an open-mind that changes are inevitable.
4. Evaluate performance fairly and understand the key indicators.
5. Consider other organizational best practices.
6. Create a "best practice" list to share with other organizations needing direction when considering the option of a university concept. This list will also help guide the organization when making future decisions so as to avoid the same mistake twice.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The intent of this study was to determine the common threads between North American organizations as “university” concepts were implemented. The common threads to be identified included the level of the “university” concept, budgetary needs, size of the organization at implementation, obstacles, successes and growth opportunities. Chapter three covered the research design, sources of data, data collection, and interpretation of the research.

Research Design

The goal of the research design was to measure both quantitatively and qualitatively the “university” concept with a non-probability sampling of North American organizations who are either for profit or non-profit. The information was collected through the University of Wisconsin-Stouts’ web hosting site.

The survey was designed to gather information in relation to other organizations and what the steps have been in implementing a “university” concept. The process evaluated four specific phases that included planning, implementation, performance evaluation, and future growth. The planning stage identifies the start-up costs, items included in the budget, and the number of personnel determined to participate. The implementation phase supplies information relating to the learning methods and course categories offered. The performance phase identifies the percentage of personnel participating, critical business needs that are being met, plus obstacles and successes since the implementation. The growth stage provides indicators as to the length of time the “university” concept had been in existence, the return on the investment indicators, who is eligible to receive the benefits of the “university” concept and the future growth opportunities

for each organization. In addition to receiving information in regards to other organizations, the researcher had included an open-ended question for participants to provide advice to Goodwill Industries of North Central WI, Inc. on best practices when creating this concept.

The survey instrument was designed based on the review of literature from primarily (Allen, 2002) and (Meister, 1998). The review of literature began with professional magazine subscriptions and books centered on the “university” concept. Each piece of literature not only offered different levels of the “university” concept but also some common themes. The purpose of the survey was to capture as much information as the participants were willing to provide about the development of a “university” concept.

Sources of Data

As mentioned, the sources of data was provided from North American organizations that were either for profit or non-profit. The names of the organizations were primarily derived from professional membership lists from American Society of Training and Development (ASTD) and Society of Human Resources Management (SHRM), and the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, Inc. (SIOP). The researcher also included organizational names that have appeared in professional magazines indicating a “university” concept is part of the organization.

The professional titles of persons to who pre-survey introductions were directed included Human Resource COO/Director/Manager or Training and Development CLO/Director/Manager/Coordinator with an initial email to determine accurate deliverables and interest. After this process, the researcher emailed the survey to approximately 75 qualified and interested organizations.

The organizations surveyed identified themselves on the survey as being from one of the

following sectors:

- Basic Materials
- Conglomerate
- Consumer Goods
- Financial
- Health Care
- Industrial Goods
- Services
- Technology
- Utilities

Source: <http://www.stockmaven.com/sectorsmap.htm>

Data Collection Techniques

The survey was designed to be user friendly with 24 questions and took approximately 15 minutes to complete. The design goal was to ensure a high level of response to ultimately satisfy the research objectives.

The questions in the survey were primarily detailed for organizations to respond to the items that apply to them with an option to add information not listed. The respondents were also offered an opportunity to add best practice information to advise Goodwill Industries of North Central WI, Inc. as to what the participants learned from their initial stages of implementing a “university” concept.

To initiate the data collection process the researcher sent out a pre-survey letter via email to introduce the survey and its importance to Goodwill Industries of North Central WI, Inc. From this pre-survey exercise the researcher determined the email addresses that were deliverable and predetermine willing participants.

Interpretation of the Research

Interpreting the data consisted of information received from computer-generated responses and analyzed for frequency, mean and standard deviation. Open-ended questions were grouped

and sorted by commonality.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter reports on the data results from the Feasibility Study of a “University” Concept for Goodwill Industries of North Central WI, Inc. The survey was distributed to 84 organizations with 15 respondents and a 17% response rate. The purpose of the study was to provide Goodwill Industries of North Central WI, Inc. with statistics and benchmarking information relative to the “university” concept experiences from other organizations. The information collected was designed to assist Goodwill Industries of North Central WI, Inc. with the decision-making process of whether to add a “university” concept for competency development.

The data gathered from the survey was used to meet the objectives of this study. The objectives were to (1) Gather information from for profit and non-profit organizations in North America regarding the “university” concept, (2) Evaluate the information from the four stages: planning, implementation, performance evaluation, future growth plans, and best practices from organizations that have implemented the “university” concept, (3) Determine if the study and literature review have provided enough information for Goodwill Industries of North Central WI, Inc. leaders to arrive at a decision regarding the implementation of a Goodwill University.

The respondents who provided information assisted with the study objectives, but the limited amount of responses will require Goodwill Industries of North Central WI, Inc. to utilize more literature review information. In the survey, questions 1 and 2 assisted with demographic information; questions 3, 4, and 5 enabled businesses to share planning data; questions 6 through 11 clarified statistics from the implementation phase; questions 12 through 22 shared

organizational performance evaluation; question 23 asks if growth opportunities exist for the “university” concept; and finally, questions 24 through 27 provides organizational “best practice” feedback. The boxes below define the questions and respondent answers to the survey.

Results

Question 1: Demographic Information

This question helps Goodwill Industries of North Central WI, Inc. determine the business sectors of the respondents and to also associate the answers as needed. Below there are three main respondent sectors, “Consumer Goods”, “Financial” and “Technology”.

| 1. Mark the industry sector that best defines your organization. | | |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| | <i>% of Respondents</i> | <i># of Respondents</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Consumer Goods | 18.8 | 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial | 18.8 | 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health Care | 6.3 | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial Goods | 6.3 | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Technology | 18.8 | 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Government | 6.3 | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing | 6.3 | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Retail | 6.3 | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trade Association | 6.3 | 1 |

Question 2: Demographic Information

Question 2 provides immediate information as to whether the business sector participating currently operates a “university” concept. If answered “yes”, the participant would continue to question 3 to complete the survey. If answered “no”, the respondent could immediately forward to question 25 and provide input to best practices if known. Just over half of the participants stated a “university” concept is available at the time of the survey. Therefore, seven of the 15 respondents should have continued to question 25.

| | | |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 2. Does your organization currently operate a “university” concept? | | |
| | <i>% of Respondents</i> | <i># of Respondents</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (If yes, proceed to questions 3 through 24) | 50.0 | 8 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No (If no, proceed to question 25 on page 6) | 43.8 | 7 |

Question 3: Planning Phase

Question 3 allowed businesses to share planning data relative to the budget range for start-up costs. According to the answers, nine people responded to the budget question. At least 25% of the participants indicated that monetary start-up expenses ranged between \$50,001 - \$75,000 and 18.8% indicated expenses grew beyond \$100,001.

| | | |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 3. Indicate the budget range that best describes your organizations monetary start-up costs to launch the “university” concept. | | |
| | <i>% of Respondents</i> | <i># of Respondents</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$0 - \$50,000 | 6.3 | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50,001 - \$75,000 | 25.0 | 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$75,001 - \$100,000 | 6.3 | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100,001 + | 18.8 | 3 |

Question 4: Planning Phase

This question provided feedback on the primary expense areas. The most identified expense was the Vendor Services with 48.8%. Four areas were identified as being the next most frequent expense: “E-learning Software”, “Computer Equipment”, “Office/classroom Furniture”, and “Salary for New Position(s)”. Participants also contributed thoughts under the “Other” category.

4. Check the items your organization included in the initial budget.

| | <i>% of Respondents</i> | <i># of Respondents</i> |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tracking Software | 18.8 | 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> E-learning Software | 25.0 | 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Computer Equipment | 25.0 | 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Office/classroom Furniture | 25.0 | 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Office/classroom Supplies | 12.5 | 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Salary for New Position(s) | 25.0 | 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vendor Services | 43.8 | 7 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: | | |
| -all existed prior to university concept | 6.3 | 1 |
| -Costs only included staff time and some direct travel costs | 6.3 | 1 |
| -Hotel services & Graphic services to advertise the program | 6.3 | 1 |

Question 5: Planning Phase

For question 5, respondents could pick as many categories that properly identified the start-up courses for their organization. The top four responses included “Soft Skills”, “Leadership Development”, “Technical Skills” and “Product Knowledge”. The “Other” category was also utilized for additional input.

5. During the initial start-up, which course categories were offered?

| | <i>% of Respondents</i> | <i># of Respondents</i> |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership Development (front-line supervisors) | 43.8 | 7 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Safety (forklift, driving, fire suppression, haz com, etc.) | 12.5 | 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Security (weapons, threats, theft, etc.) | 6.3 | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Executive Development (CEOs, CFOs, & COOs) | 6.3 | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Soft Skills (customer service, coaching, team building, etc.) | 50.0 | 8 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Technical Skills (equipment & software) | 43.8 | 7 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Product Knowledge | 31.3 | 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | | |
| -Regulatory Compliance | 6.3 | 1 |
| -Sales | 6.3 | 1 |

Question 6: Implementation Phase

This question allowed respondents to pick more than one item. The top response indicates that organizations primarily focus on the “Training plus managerial and/or executive development” when implementing a “university” concept.

6. According to “The Corporate University Handbook” by Mark Allan, the “university” concept has been defined at four levels (noted below). At the point of the “university” implementation at your organization, which level(s) were introduced? (Select all that apply)

| | <i>% of Respondents</i> | <i># of Respondents</i> |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Training Only | 18.8 | 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Training plus managerial and/or executive development | 62.5 | 10 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Courses offered for academic credit | 12.5 | 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Courses that lead to an academic degree | 6.3 | 1 |

Question 7: Implementation Phase

“Classroom” is the number one answer identified in this learning methods question followed by “Self-directed” and “Web-based”.

7. Check all the learning methods offered at the implementation phase.

| | <i>% of Respondents</i> | <i># of Respondents</i> |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom | 62.5 | 10 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self-directed | 43.8 | 7 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> On-the-job | 18.8 | 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Web-based | 43.8 | 7 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> One-on-one | 0.0 | 0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: | 0.0 | 0 |

Question 8: Implementation Phase

This question provides us with an opportunity to determine a level of impact at the implementation phase. The number of respondents indicates that two additional people continued on with the questions beyond question number 2. By the answers below it appears as though most of the organizations are less than 100 employees or 1,001 plus at the time of the “university” inception.

8. Check the range that best describes the number of personnel at the point of the “university” implementation.

| | <i>% of Respondents</i> | <i># of Respondents</i> |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 - 100 | 18.8 | 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 101 - 250 | 6.3 | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 251 - 500 | 6.3 | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 501 - 750 | 6.3 | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 751 - 1,000 | 6.3 | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1,001 + | 18.8 | 3 |

Question 9: Implementation Phase

According to the answers in question 9, three of the eight respondents indicated that the participation level of the “university” concept is over half, but no more than 75%. The next highest selection by participants tells us that less than half of the employees participate.

9. After establishing the “university” concept what was the percentage of personnel participating?

| | <i>% of Respondents</i> | <i># of Respondents</i> |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0 - 10% | 6.3 | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 11 - 25% | 6.3 | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 26 - 50% | 12.5 | 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 51 - 75% | 18.8 | 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 76 - 100% | 6.3 | 1 |

Question 10: Implementation Phase

This question provides insight into the answers from question 9. Participants were able to identify all of the contributing factors to less than 25% participation. Only one of the answers available was used, which stated “Courses are billed out to personnel”. Otherwise, three additional thoughts were identified under the “Other” category.

10. If your organization experienced less than 25% participation after implementation, please indicate the contributing factors. (If this does not apply, please skip this question and proceed.)

| | <i>% of Respondents</i> | <i># of Respondents</i> |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of interest | 0.0 | 0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poorly designed courses | 0.0 | 0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Courses are not easily accessible | 0.0 | 0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel indicate lack of time | 0.0 | 0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel are not held accountable to participate | 0.0 | 0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Courses are billed out to personnel | 6.3 | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: | | |
| -dial up PC's | 6.3 | 1 |
| -This question not relevant, as university is outwardly directed | 6.3 | 1 |
| -travel can be prohibitive; we cannot accommodate everyone- the courses are over filled | 6.3 | 1 |

Question 11: Implementation Phase

According to the answers for number 11, the greatest success factors were “Courses were easily accessible” along with “Full leadership support”. The third popular response states “Courses are part of personnel development plans”.

11. If your organization did not experience participation difficulties with the “university” concept, please indicate the contributing factors to the success of this model.

| | <i>% of Respondents</i> | <i># of Respondents</i> |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Full leadership support | 37.5 | 6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Time is scheduled at learners convenience to complete courses | 6.3 | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel are engaged in learning | 18.8 | 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Courses are easily accessible | 37.5 | 6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Courses are designed to start and stop as needed | 12.5 | 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Courses are part of personnel development plans | 25.0 | 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Courses are designed around annual strategic plans | 18.8 | 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Courses are designed towards academic credit | 12.5 | 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No cost to personnel | 18.8 | 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: | | |
| -N/A | 6.3 | 1 |
| -ours is not a true “university” concept...it is a biannual seminar instead | 6.3 | 1 |
| -Regulatory requirements | 6.3 | 1 |

Question 12: Organizational Performance Phase

Question 12 provides insight into the timetable of the participant’s experience with the “university” concept. By the responses, five of the participants have indicated that the concept has been in existence for over one year, but less than five years.

12. Approximately how long has the organization’s “university” concept been active?

| | <i>% of Respondents</i> | <i># of Respondents</i> |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> < 1 year | 6.3 | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 – 5 years | 31.3 | 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5 – 10 years | 12.5 | 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10+ years | 6.3 | 1 |

Question 13: Organizational Performance Evaluation Phase

Early in the survey this question was asked to identify what happened in the planning stage to see what may have changed in the performance evaluation phase. Most of the responses indicate that at least half of the organizations are still at the “Training plus managerial and/or executive development” level. In comparison to question six, there was an increase in “Training only” and a slight decline in “Training plus managerial and/or executive development”.

| 13. As of today, which “university” level(s) does your organization offer? | | |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| | <i>% of Respondents</i> | <i># of Respondents</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Training only | 25.0 | 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Training plus managerial and/or executive development | 50.0 | 8 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Courses offered for academic credit | 12.5 | 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Courses that lead to academic degree | 6.3 | 1 |

Question 14: Organizational Performance Evaluation Phase

Question 14 was designed to provide feedback into whether the “university” levels are viewed as stages by developers of the “university” concept.

| 14. If your organization is beyond the “Training only” level, did your organization decide to implement the levels of the “university” in stages? | | |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| | <i>% of Respondents</i> | <i># of Respondents</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | 18.8 | 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No | 25.0 | 4 |

Question 15: Organizational Performance Evaluation Phase

Due to the low number of responses to this study, this question provides little value.

15. If “yes” to question #14, please indicate the timeframe it took to progress to the level your organization is at today.

| | <i>% of Respondents</i> | <i># of Respondents</i> |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0 – 1 year | 6.3 | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 – 3 years | 6.3 | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 – 5 years | 6.3 | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5 – 7 years | 0.0 | 0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7 + years | 0.0 | 0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: | 0.0 | 0 |

Question 16: Organizational Performance Evaluation Phase

Question 16 was designed to compare the implementation phase to the evaluation phase for number of people who may be directly affected by the “university” concept. By comparing question 8 to question 16, it appears as though the organizations have increased the number of personnel from the implementation phase. Most respondents indicated the organization is now over 1,000 people strong.

16. Identify the range that best describes the number of personnel in the organization today.

| | <i>% of Respondents</i> | <i># of Respondents</i> |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 – 100 | 0.0 | 0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 101 - 250 | 6.3 | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 251 – 500 | 0.0 | 0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 501 – 750 | 6.3 | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 751 – 1,000 | 0.0 | 0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1,000 + | 37.5 | 6 |

Question 17: Organizational Performance Evaluation Phase

Question 17 is a follow-up question to number 7 in the beginning of the survey. Provided an organization has continued beyond implementation there would be a response below. By the responses, there was a decline in “Classroom” and in increase in the “Web-based” instruction.

Also, "One-on-one" was added as well as in the "Other" category, participants offered the ½ hour during lunch learning opportunity, on-line meetings and collaboration, plus videos and CD ROM.

17. Indicate all of the learning methods offered today.

| | <i>% of Respondents</i> | <i># of Respondents</i> |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom | 50.0 | 8 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self-Directed | 43.8 | 7 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> On-the-job | 25.0 | 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Web-based | 50.0 | 8 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> One-on-one | 6.3 | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: | | |
| -Company executive speakers on an important, company business topic for ½ hour during the lunch hour | 6.3 | 1 |
| -Online meetings and collaboration | 6.3 | 1 |
| -Video, cd rom | 6.3 | 1 |

Question 18: Organizational Performance Evaluation Phase

This question indicates that 43.8% of the respondents utilize the "university" concept to meet two primary areas which are "Soft skills development" and "Leadership development". Second in line are "Customer satisfaction", "Diversity awareness" and "Mission, vision, values, and ethics". There are two business areas tied for third, "Financial growth" and "Product knowledge".

18. Since the implementation of the “university” concept which critical business areas are being met today? Check all that apply.

| | <i>% of Respondents</i> | <i># of Respondents</i> |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Initial on-the-job training | 25.0 | 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Soft skills development | 43.8 | 7 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership development | 43.8 | 7 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Executive development | 25.0 | 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial growth | 31.3 | 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Customer satisfaction | 37.5 | 6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural/organizational awareness | 25.0 | 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diversity awareness | 37.5 | 6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment/retention | 6.3 | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mission, vision, values, and ethics | 37.5 | 6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic plans | 25.0 | 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Market focus | 25.0 | 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Technological advancement | 25.0 | 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Product knowledge | 31.3 | 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Consulting skills | 6.3 | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: | | |
| -N/A | 6.3 | 1 |
| -Planning and administration | 6.3 | 1 |
| -Regulatory requirements | 6.3 | 1 |
| -Sales | 6.3 | 1 |
| -Time management and some project management | 6.3 | 1 |

Question 19: Organizational Performance Evaluation Phase

This question allowed participants of the survey to think in regards to the return on the investment process, and what is used to evaluate courses in the “university concept”. The number one answer, of no surprise, is the “Course evaluations” at 43.8%. Tied for second are the “Personnel course utilization indicators” and “Personnel development plans” at 31.3%. Tied for third are the “Pre/post testing” and “Organizational cultural satisfaction surveys” at 25%. Under the “Other” response, participants provided two additional ways that ROI is measured at their organization: cost savings by travel avoidance and word of mouth.

19. How is your organization measuring the return on the investment of the “university” concept? Check all that apply.

| | <i>% of Respondents</i> | <i># of Respondents</i> |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre/post testing | 25.0 | 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Course evaluations | 43.8 | 7 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Departmental growth indicators | 6.3 | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> External customer satisfaction surveys | 6.3 | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Organizational cultural satisfaction surveys | 25.0 | 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel course utilization indicators | 31.3 | 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel development plans | 31.3 | 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel exit interviews | 6.3 | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 360 degree feedback | 12.5 | 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: | | |
| -Cost savings by travel avoidance | 6.3 | 1 |
| -N/A | 6.3 | 1 |
| -Word of mouth | 6.3 | 1 |

Question 20: Organizational Performance Evaluation Phase

The answer to question 20 is split almost equally. The total respondents for this question are nine with five indicating other organizations and family members do not have access to the “university” courses.

20. Does your organization offer access to the “university” by other organizations or family members of active personnel?

| | <i>% of Respondents</i> | <i># of Respondents</i> |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | 25.0 | 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No | 31.3 | 5 |

Question 21: Organizational Performance Evaluation Phase

This question is to help determine what other organizations are doing in regards to charging people for courses who are not direct employees. According to the responses, one additional

person responded who was not part of the “Yes” response from question 20. By looking at question 22 it is possible that the additional respondent answered “No” for number 21.

| 21. If “yes” to question #20, is there a fee charged? | | |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| | <i>% of Respondents</i> | <i># of Respondents</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | 18.8 | 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No | 12.5 | 2 |

Question 22: Organizational Performance Evaluation Phase

Question 22 was designed for participants to fill in answers that would directly relate to the fee structure in the organization. As seen below, the three participants who answered “Yes” to question 21 offered fee structure information.

| 22. If “yes” to question #21, please indicate the fee structure. | | |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| | <i>% of Respondents</i> | <i># of Respondents</i> |
| -Based on cost of courses being resold by multiple providers through our online university | 6.3 | 1 |
| -Offered to other Chamber of Commerce member businesses if class is not filled. Each course is priced based upon the cost per student date paid to the instructor | 6.3 | 1 |
| -Same price as to internal employees we only extend to other PepsiCo companies...no companies outside of PepsiCo | 6.3 | 1 |

Question 23: Organizational Growth Opportunities

According to 37.5% of the respondents, growth in the next five years is not part of the strategic plan. As a follow-up question, question 24 could have asked for reasons why for both “Yes” and “No”.

| 23. From what you know today, does your organization plan to grow the “university” concept beyond the next five years? | | |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| | <i>% of Respondents</i> | <i># of Respondents</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | 18.8 | 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No | 37.5 | 6 |

Question 24: Organizational Best Practices

This question was designed to allow organizations participating to share what has and has not worked for the “university” concept. Out of the 15 participating organizations, only four of the eight who continued through the survey provided additional best practice information.

| 24. If you could advise Goodwill Industries on the development of a “university” concept, what are the key points or best practices that you would like to share? | | |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| | <i>% of Respondents</i> | <i># of Respondents</i> |
| -Avoid generic off the shelf courses if they don't meet your employee needs – that kind of learning can be achieved through other means. Use the university to provide learning that is specific to your organization and workforce. | 6.3 | 1 |
| -Consider using an already established learning platform that is open and allows you to create your own online university and select courses from those provided or add your own. This will allow you to save the considerable expense of finding a for-profit partner to provide an LMS and allow you increased availability of content. | 6.3 | 1 |
| -Employees in a two mile radius, we were able to get a state university to offer its own courses for credit, in our conference rooms, enabling many employees and employees of neighboring companies, to earn MBAs after work. | 6.3 | 1 |
| -Start small Build course offerings based on business strategies Like course offerings to individual development plans. | 6.3 | 1 |

Question 25: Organizational Best Practices

Question 25 was developed to capture the participants who were solicited for information and did not currently work with a “university” concept to avoid creating two different surveys. This question enabled participants to still participate and categorize the organizations by the responses below. According to question 2, seven participants should have advanced to question 25. As seen below, seven people did proceed to this question by indicating that over half will not be adding a “university” concept in the next five years.

25. If you answered “no” to question #2, please continue at this point. Have your organization’s leaders indicated they would like to implement a “university” concept in the next five years?

| | <i>% of Respondents</i> | <i># of Respondents</i> |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | 12.5 | 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No | 31.3 | 5 |

Question 26: Organizational Best Practices

While still needing to capture the level of participation by the respondents in the development of a “university” concept, ten out of fifteen people indicated whether or not participation existed. Six of the ten had not assisted with the development of a “university” concept.

26. Have you or someone else in your organization participated in the development of a “university” concept?

| | <i>% of Respondents</i> | <i># of Respondents</i> |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | 25.0 | 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No | 37.5 | 6 |

Question 27: Organizational Best Practices

Question 27 allows participants to once again, share best practices from experiences gained in developing a “university” concept. By the responses below, one of the three participants was unsure of what was needed to answer this question. When evaluating the first and third responses the information is generally the same. The first respondent stated that courses should be practical and efficient with additional details on how to proceed. Even though the organization that respondent three is from eliminated the “university” concept, the response indicates that courses are still available that are focused on the needs of the business.

27. If “yes” to #26, what advice could be offered to Goodwill Industries in the development of a “university” concept?

| | <i>% of Respondents</i> | <i># of Respondents</i> |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| -Be pragmatic. This can be done efficiently or expensively. Efficient implementation includes building many programs in-house and facilitating with your own people (including strong leaders in your organization). Another important component of efficiency is to provide a lean set of “core courses” – the essentials of orientation, supervisory training, leadership training, plus a few personal effectiveness programs, like time management and effective presentations. Provide other courses only after determining a broad need. Bias toward building skills, so include role-plays, prework and case study type material. Consider pre- and post-testing to focus participants on key learning points. Involve real leaders and other strong role-models to as great an extent as possible. | 6.3 | 1 |
| -Not sure what you want here. Thanks. | 6.3 | 1 |
| -We had one and have changed the concept. Went away when the org wanted to focus the offerings to those that helped the business. Resources focused on the real needs of the business. | 6.3 | 1 |

Summary of Findings

The results of this study indicate that each industry sector was represented by the participants with the top three coming from the consumer goods, financial, and technology areas. The demographic questions also inquired whether or not a “university” concept was in place at the time of the survey. The results revealed that eight of the fifteen respondents have a “university” concept in place.

The planning phase was represented by three questions regarding start-up expenses, items in the budget, and courses included in the “university” concept. Most of the respondents stated the start-up budget exceeded \$50,001. The items in the survey were all selected with the top five being vendor services, salaries for new positions, office/classroom furniture, computer equipment, and e-learning software. Additional feedback provided by the respondents indicated that staff time, travel, hotel services and graphic services were taken into consideration during the budget phase. The planning phase also included the courses for development. The top four courses were leadership development, soft skills, technical skills, and product knowledge.

The implementation phase included six questions reflective of the level of the “university” concept, learning methods, and number of personnel at the time of implementation, percentage of personnel participating, contributing factors with less than 25% participation by personnel, and then success factors for more than 25% participation by personnel. The survey resulted in over 62% of participants stating the level of the “university” concept was the “Training plus managerial and/or executive development”. The most popular answer for the learning method was the classroom with self-directed and web-based tying for second. The range of personnel at the time of implementation was either fewer than 100 or greater than 1,001. However, the percentage of personnel participating in the “university” concept ranged from 26% to 75%. The

questions asking for reflection on why there might be less than 25% participation yielded little input by the organizations participating in this survey. The primary success factors of the “university” concept conveyed the organizations had leadership support and the courses were easily accessible.

The organizational performance evaluation phase asked participants to respond to ten questions reflective of today. The majority of the participants responded by indicating the “university” concept had been in existence for one to five years. The current level of the “university” concept was still “Training plus managerial and/or executive development”. In addition, over half of the respondents indicated that the level of the “university” concept was implemented in stages. The question asking for timeframe thoughtful of the progression to get to the current “university” level yielded little useful responses. The number of personnel in the organization jumped to the primary answer of over 1,001. The learning methods today indicated that classroom and web-based are tied for first and then self-directed was a close second. This is a minor change from the planning phase. The critical business areas being met through the “university” concept are soft skill development; leadership development; customer satisfaction; diversity awareness; and mission, vision, values, and ethics. Just over half of the respondents indicated there is a fee for “university” courses with a combination of employees, families and outside companies paying for courses. The primary return on the investment measurements includes course evaluations, personnel course utilization indicators, and personnel development plans.

The future growth plans by the majority of the respondents indicated there are few plans in place for growth of the concept. At this point, since there was not a follow-up question to assist with why or why not growth of the “university” concept was being considered, assumptions

could be made. Speculation may include; lack of personnel interest, budget concerns, mission or leadership changes, or perhaps the organization is completely satisfied with the current results.

The survey ended with seeking input from the participants in regards to best practices in developing a “university” concept. Participant advice included; avoiding generic off the shelf courses, utilize and established a learning platform, seek local universities for credit courses, start small with business strategy courses linked to development plans, plus being pragmatic with in-house programs and core courses. One survey participant indicated the organization involved eliminated the “university” concept in order to focus on the real needs of the business.

As noted earlier, Goodwill Industries of North Central WI, Inc. may need to consider additional resources to create a conclusion of this feasibility study due to the minimal responses received via email. Secondary resources may include literature reviews plus personal interviews with other organizations who have implemented the “university” concept. The personal interviews would be an added benefit to the literature reviews in this document.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Summary

The purpose of the study was to provide Goodwill Industries of North Central WI, Inc. with guidance in determining if a “university” concept would be feasible along with suggested best practices from those organizations that have experienced the planning and implementation of a “university” concept. Today’s emphasis is on promoting and encouraging self-development through job specific competencies with clearly defined career paths. Included in the literature were five common themes for developing a “university” concept: planning, implementation, performance evaluation, future growth plans and organizational best practices.

The goal was to measure both quantitatively and qualitatively the “university” concept with a non-probability sampling of North American organizations who were either for profit or non-profit. The study was distributed to 84 organizations with a 17% response rate. The respondents who completed the survey assisted with the overall study objectives.

The results of this study indicated that each industry sector was represented by the participants with the top three coming from the consumer goods, financial, and technology areas. The demographic questions also inquired whether or not a “university” concept was in place at the time of the survey. Each organization had an opportunity to assist with the five areas of interest: planning, implementation, performance evaluation, future growth plans and organizational best practices. The results revealed that eight of the fifteen respondents have a “university” concept in place.

Limitations

The survey tool was sent via email to reach North American participants. As noted earlier, this method received limited responses. With limited survey responses, Goodwill Industries of North Central WI, Inc. may need to depend significantly on the literature review for guidance. Team members of Goodwill Industries of North Central WI, Inc. were not surveyed to determine individual needs and views of a “university” concept. Local non-profits were not surveyed, at this time, to determine their needs in competency development. Secondary resources may include literature reviews plus personal interviews with other organizations who have implemented the “university” concept. The personal interviews would be an added benefit to the literature reviews in this document.

Conclusions

Goodwill Industries of North Central WI, Inc. has been in existence since 1971. The leaders of the organization wanted to investigate the feasibility of creating a “university” concept that would benefit not only the team members but also other non-profits in the community. The research indicated that in order to begin this type of adventure many business areas would require exploration and development such as,

1. Assessing the needs of the organization
2. The organization’s level of activity
3. Aligning the concept to the strategic plan
4. Identifying the individuals directly involved, the stakeholders
5. Determining competencies associated to the business needs
6. Identifying courses and measurements
7. Identifying the staffing needs

8. Determining all of the learning methods needed
9. Identifying equipment needs
10. Itemizing the vendors or consultants needed
11. Determining the internal communication system
12. Marketing the concept both internally and externally
13. Determining other budgetary needs
14. Learning from the experiences of other organizations

A well defined plan may lead directly to implementation, performance evaluation, future growth plans and developing organizational best practices for Goodwill Industries of North Central WI, Inc.

Recommendations

Further research may include additional conversations outside of the survey with organizations that have had a “university” concept in place for a couple of years. This would assist with further details regarding other organizations including but not limited to the following:

1. Organizational learning needs discovered since implementation.
2. Has the “university” concept actually accelerated strategic planning and execution?
3. Stakeholder feedback on the concept and career growth opportunities since inception.
4. Culture changes since implementation.
5. Leadership changes due to lack of buy-in.
6. Competency adjustments and the reasons why.
7. The evolution of succession planning. Does this process only include certain positions?
8. How has ROI been achieved and is it completed for all courses?

9. Has a culture survey been completed since inception? If yes, does the survey include anything regarding the “university” concept for benchmarking?
10. Has the “university” concept philosophy changed? If yes, how and why?
11. Which resources have changed since launching the concept?

In addition to conducting further discussions, Goodwill Industries of North Central WI, Inc. has a great foundation to begin discussing and outlining the needs of the organization and individual team members. Creating a focus group from a variety of areas in the organization along with diverse team members to bring individual value and ideas in the onset would be rewarding. Also, Goodwill Industries of North Central WI, Inc. may want to strategize this development in the following fashion while being mindful that this process will not occur overnight.

1. Directly tie the courses to strategic planning with strong objectives while establishing ROI in the beginning of the process versus at the end of a course.
2. Start the concept out small to enable changes to be less discouraging.
3. Create a mission, vision and values statements to provide direction.
4. Determine internal subject matter experts who can assist with development and possibly teach courses.
5. Focus on success with smaller projects.
6. Create pilot courses with blended learning opportunities.
7. Determine team leaders and team members who are excited with the projects to assist with selling the idea.
8. Enable this process to be a team effort and value input.
9. Under promise and over deliver. Always keep the customer in mind.

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