

**Planning Tale #1
Community Center Classes**

Articulate

Underlying: Unhappy with the size of the audience for their overall message.

Immediate: Number of course registrations fell below a critical limit for the program.

Mission

Want to reach a bigger audience

Goal

Visionary thought - switch to innovative online courses

Challenges - will the online courses be successful?

Research (Data Step)

Survey people who took first two classes.

1. Develop survey questions with other administrators, and input from teachers
2. An additional staff member has programmed surveys before - task this person to program an online survey
3. A staff member has taken a workshop using Excel Pivot tables - task this person to do some analysis of the survey data, in particular to identify the most important changes suggested, and some notion of whether younger students had different ideas from older ones.
4. The Marketing staff gets involved in writing a short report, using attractive and understandable charts.

Benchmark

A quick look online showed a few other online classes that looked similar to theirs. Took notes of ideas their organization hadn't thought about and added them to the list of changes to consider.

Present Report

To both the Executive leadership of the organization, but also to the adjunct teachers who will be doing the classes. Both groups provided valuable feedback.

Planning Steps:

Developed some substantial changes to the way that classes will be taught, but also how they will advertised.

In addition, the survey responses led to the use of social media to create a group of class-takers - allowing them talk to each other online about the classes within the structure of the organization.

Implement

The changes were implemented incrementally over the next few months.

Assess

After 4 months, the overall program goal was evaluated to their own standards. They had hoped for some moderate but significant increases:

Are more people taking classes? They were looking for a 15% increase.

Are people more likely to return to take additional classes? They did not have a standard for this, but the answer was 'yes!'

Unintended consequence - as there are indeed more students, the small class fee is bringing in money that can be used for other programs.

Modify and Resurvey

At this point, they did another short survey, asking new questions about some of the new features.

The feedback was used to continue perfecting both the online class concept and its delivery.

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