

California Contract Education TAP Boot Camp

Slide 1: Unit One-- Marketing Contract Education to a District.

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Slide 2: This set of slides covers...

In this set of slides we'll be covering marketing contract education to a district, including how to prepare contract education marketing messages at the district level, how to demonstrate the value that we in contract education bring to those that we serve, how to use testimonials to act as evidence of the value of contract education, and finally, how to use a message-based integrated marketing campaign to prepare for the next steps of building relationships in contract education.

Slide 3: Action Plan

Try to find at least three things that you can do: action steps, just keep a little sticky note to the side of your laptop while you watch this presentation and try to capture one or two or three things that you could actually take out and implement.

Slide 4: Getting the Message Out

In order for contract education to be effective in its reach, the people that we're communicating to need to understand our purpose and our methods of working. Why do we exist? That needs to be clear, and that needs to be consistent. And then we need to explain to them how it is that we work because it's a little bit different than what they're used to inside our organization.

So the way that contract education works, is not the same way as the credit side of the house works. They also need to understand our array of services. So we have many, many kinds of services. Training is just one of them available at our disposal. And we need to be sure to indicate... to educate our industry partners so that they understand all the things that we can do for them. A lot of times it's the case that our contract education unit doesn't actually even understand itself what it has the capacity to do. So we need to get clear on that so that we can communicate it consistently and effectively.

We need to help people understand contract education's impacts on stakeholders. Now stakeholders in this case could be individual people. It could be clients that

we're working with. It could be industries that we're working with. It could be whole districts or regions.

We need to get clear on what our impacts are. And this is best based on past data and storytelling. They need to understand, if we can help them understand, that we must help them understand how to work with us, and how a partner with us--what we need from them, and then what we can do on our own. The role that they can play in helping contract education be successful is actually the role that they can play in enriching their own success. So we need to be sure that that we're clear about that and come forward with that information. What contract education partners have accomplished today and why it matters should also be communicated. Because this is a kind of proof of the pudding.

Slide 5: Audiences we Serve

So you had a strategic communications team. They produced a document and it listed 10 groups, 10 audiences, that contract education serves in California. Those groups included the chancellor's office, sector navigators and deputy sector navigators, the district business offices, college foundations, administration, the college president, deans, vice-presidents, contract education staff and faculty, current trainers, prospective trainers, both on campus and off, local businesses, prospective clients, past clients, current clients. So see, each of these things on this list, the way that we communicate with them--what we say to them, the impacts that we have and how they work with them--all of those messages need to be customized.

Slide 6: Tuning the Message for Each Audience

We need to tune that message just a little differently for each audience. We need to tell how contract education relates to this particular audience's own purpose for existence. We need to tell how contract ed is structurally related-- that is, are we a part of them? Are we separate from them? Are we separate but aligned? We need to relate contract education to the audience's own goals and metrics of success. So it's a little bit different if we're talking to a president than if we're talking to a family... a faculty member. And we need to say, "These we think are your goals. And this is the way you measure your goals. And this is how contract education relates to that." We also need to tell how contract education is similar to or different from or complimentary to the audience's role in achieving our shared goals. So many of those audiences in contract education actually have great overlap in their goals, so we really need to be vocal and conversant about that.

Slide 7: Examples of Activity at the Dean, VP and Staff Level

So I won't read you this slide, you can read it yourself. But these are examples of activity for a specific audience for the dean, the vice-president, and the staff level. So this is a kind of a conglomerate audience. And these are the kinds of things that we would do. So we would... contract education staff would attend meetings, provide updates on our work. We would sponsor initiatives. We would email success stories out so other people can know those stories and tell those stories. We would upload our statewide data to a website. So you can see all of these things. And we need a strategic communication plan so that those messages are given specifically and consistently out to each various audience so that we don't create confusion, but instead create clarity and buy in.

Slide 8: Consistency Across Channels

Really important that we also have consistency across channels. So by channels, I mean, for example, social media, website, print, media, and so on. So you want to lose... use the CCCCE collaborative marketing message guidelines and other work to help keep the messages consistent. And I would recommend the use and development of that document because I felt it was actually quite strong.

Slide 9: How to Demonstrate the Value-Added of Contract Education

So how do we demonstrate the value added of contract education? First of all, we have to decide what the shared goals of contract education and the partner institutions are. And by institution, I don't just mean educational institution, but also the industry institutions that we're serving. We need to decide what metrics or what stories prove that contract education is contributing to those shared goals. We need to provide specific and concrete and when possible, measurable proof of impact. So we've got to be collecting data on our work, and anecdotes on our work and be ready to tell stories using those things. We also need to educate district leadership about those contributions in such a way that they can ask questions and get clear what's actually happening. So we want to use this storytelling to drum up some buzz and some excitement about what's happening. But also to clarify any confusion that they might have. We actually do in this case, want to toot our own horn. Use storytelling wherever you can. So let's talk about what good storytelling looks like.

Slide 10: Sticky Marketing makes Stories with SUCCESS

I like this model, which comes from Chip and Dan Heath's work, and it's called sticky marketing. And if you look down the left hand side, the beginning letter of each of these pieces of sticky marketing, which is story based marketing that will stay in the mind, they... the first letter spells success. That way you can remember it. So the stories that you tell should be simple--people have a short attention span. So a simple story is better than a complicated story. There should be some aspect of the story that's unexpected, that wakes up the person's attention--makes them curious and interested. The story should be concrete, not abstract. They should be credible stories, that is really they should be true and believable. It helps if they have some kind of a tug on the heart. So emotional stories. And the story should be story based, that it should have a beginning a middle and an end. It should be actually a little narrative, but brief and simple.

Slide 11: Moving Forward from the Marketing Effort

Once the marketing campaign is mid-implementation, the contract education staff should begin to meet with relevant parties to strengthen business opportunities and sales. So we're not just doing marketing for the sake of marketing. But we're doing that marketing so that it will lead to more face-to-face time with these people and a stronger conversation about what it is that we can do together. We also want to start looking for collaboration opportunities. It's strong if we serve them. It's even stronger if we're collaborating. We'd like to have our partners be engaged. The more engaged they are, the more business you'll get. Shared solutions are almost always more productive and more widely talked about than a solution that was created by contract education on its own, that the industry partner didn't really have any role in. Engagement in marketing by all 10 audiences listed in this CCCCE document is really, really important. This is just again, the strength that comes from collaboration rather than individual effort.

Slide 12: Use Excellent Process to Move Forward

So if we're going to collaborate with our industry partners, we want to be sure that we have good process while we do that. So first of all, we should identify together, what success would look like. We should create ways to measure our efforts and then measure our successes. And we should have a strategy about how all these things will get done over what period of time by who. Who's going to do which tests?

Slide 13: Summary

So just to pull it all together, we want to establish relevant stakeholder audiences for contract education. We want to communicate to each through whatever channels are appropriate for them. We want to keep our message consistent. And we want to deploy that marketing with a very simple project plan that says who does what for whom, when and how.