Chapter 14
Considerations for Marketing Distance Education Courses in Health Education:
Five Important Questions to Examine Before Development

Michael Stellefson
Texas A&M University, USA

ABSTRACT

This chapter discusses considerations for marketing select distance education courses in health education. Five questions and answers are provided regarding: (a) implementing feasibility analyses for course development; (b) course augmentation strategies using distance education offerings; and (c) identifying important developmental aspects of proposed course offerings. Creating an inimitable process for effectively marketing prospective distance education courses enhances a health educator's ability to appropriately use educational technology within both pre-existing and emergent course offerings. In addition, various health education courses especially conducive to distance education will be discussed based on current trends. Marketing concepts such as: demand, course management, course visibility, and branding will be discussed within the context of higher education courses in health education. The importance of relationship marketing between various stakeholders in the course development process will be discussed to enable positive experiences in course enrollment and create mutually beneficial experiences for students, faculty, and administrative personnel. Finally, distance education quality indicators will be suggested for future course evaluation protocols.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, numerous advancements have been made using distance education technologies to deliver select health education and health promotion courses to both undergraduate and graduate students seeking degrees in the field. By using enhanced course delivery methods through the sound implementation of technology, scholars in health education and health promotion have been able to capitalize on the burgeoning need to offer courses related to lifelong wellness.

The recognition of the role of disease prevention and health promotion in increasing longevity and health-related quality of life, and reducing health care expenditures, have led to the integration of distance education offerings in many traditional health education and health promotion curricula (Chaney, Chaney, Stellefson, & Eddy, 2008).

Courses in health education, health promotion, and public health assist in training future practitioners in a variety of fields such as: occupational therapy, nursing, physical therapy, dietetics, genetic counseling, addiction support, substance abuse prevention, home health services, and mental health counseling.

Enrollment in online courses across all academic departments in higher education has been growing significantly faster than rates of enrollment in more traditional on-campus courses. In the fall of 2007, Allen and Seaman reported that colleges saw a 17% increase in online enrollment, with more than 25% of students taking at least one online course.

This report, which has become a widely cited benchmark of distance learning, found there were more than 4.6-million online students, with the majority (82%) being undergraduate students. Moreover, 73% of institutions reported increased demand for existing online courses, compared with only 54% for face-to-face; and, 66% of institutions surveyed reported increased demand for new online courses as well (Allen & Seaman, 2008).

Thus, numerous colleges and universities across the country have recognized the need to develop sufficient distance education course offerings for the burgeoning field of public health. The institutions include, but are not limited to: Johns Hopkins University, the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, East Carolina University, the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, Emory University, Tulane University, The University of Alabama, Mississippi State University, Texas A&M University, the University of Florida, Walden University, National University, Capella University, Western Governor's University, and the University of Phoenix.

In order to enhance the instructional capability of higher education institutions to prepare students looking to enter the rapidly growing fields of health education, allied health, and the medical professions, health education departments are beginning to explore offering pre-existing core and elective courses either online or using hybrid forms of distance learning.

The utilization of distance education applications allows health education departments to broaden the reach of their programs to fit the evolving needs of the modern day college student (Chaney, Chaney, Eddy, & Stellefson, 2008).

It has become evident that sufficient instructional experiences to retool the public health workforce to needs to be delivered not only to traditional college students, but also to mid-career professionals already working in a wide range of allied health fields. Distance education course delivery provides instructors in health education with a menu of methods to reach various populations with appropriate training.

Research focusing on training the public health workforce, conducted by Allegrante, Moon, Ault, and Gebbie (2001), Boedigheimer and Gebbie (2001), Gebbie and Hwang (2000), and Tilson and Gebbie (2001), all emphasized the need to utilize distance education instructional technologies as "a mechanism to upgrade the skills of the workforce in place" (Tilson & Gebbie, 2004, p. 349).

Related Content

An Assessment of the Impact that Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction Possess on Customer Loyalty in Internet Banking
Tahir Iqbal (2020). *International Journal of Online Marketing (pp. 58-71).*
www.irma-international.org/article/an-assessment-of-the-impact-that-service-quality-and-customer-satisfaction-possess-on-customer-loyalty-in-internet-banking/243468

Improving Personalization In E-Learning Systems
Assma Bezza, Amar Ballaand Farhi Marir (2014). *International Journal of Technology and Educational Marketing (pp. 75-84).*
www.irma-international.org/article/improving-personalization-in-e-learning-systems/116441

Consumer Sentiment in Tweets and Coupon Information-Sharing Behavior: An Initial Exploration
Chen-Ya Wang, Yi-Chun Lin, Hsia-Ching Changand Seng-cho T. Chou (2017). *International Journal of Online Marketing (pp. 1-19).*
www.irma-international.org/article/consumer-sentiment-in-tweets-and-coupon-information-sharing-behavior/182688

Marketing Strategies in the Era of COVID-19
Meenu Kumari (2022). *Developing Relationships, Personalization, and Data Herald in Marketing 5.0 (pp. 192-202).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/marketing-strategies-in-the-era-of-covid-19/306104

Memory Politics and Archive in South African-Russian Relations
Nkholedzeni Sidney Netshakhuma (2023). *Global Developments in Nation Branding and Promotion: Theoretical and Practical Approaches (pp. 105-123).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/memory-politics-and-archive-in-south-african-russian-relations/326660