HOW TO INCREASE STAFF PRODUCTIVITY

By Greg Marsello, LERN Vice President of Development

The question I have been asked most frequently during the last six months when visiting and/or communicating with continuing education units has been "How do we increase staff productivity?"

Due to budget cuts, a push for financial self-sufficiency, and the need to do more with less, increasing staff productivity has become much more critical. Mission is important, but without money, mission is hard to accomplish.

When dividing fee-based revenue by full-time equivalent staff you should get a staff productivity number of $125,000+. The winning continuing education units are at $150,000-$250,000. If you are not at these numbers, the recommendations above will help.

My top 20 Increasing Staff Productivity recommendations:

1. Centralize operational tasks so everyone is not doing everything.

2. Allow revenue generators the time to generate revenue.

3. Require accountability by using measurable benchmarks and goals.

4. Reduce staff meetings to 10 percent or less of staff time. Use a virtual office to communicate what you have done or are doing.

5. Streamline the catalog production process. For help, contact Mary Lynch at www.datatodesign.com.

6. Centralize customer questions with an information specialist, someone on staff who can answer most questions or find out the answer. Stop revenue generators from having to answer questions.

7. Support telecommuting so revenue generators can work from home, away from the day-to-day.

8. Develop a contract sales structure allowing salespeople to sell 75 percent or more of their time, by including product development, inside sales, and operations support.

9. Don't hire staff when you can contract out a service such as graphic design, catalog distribution or proofreading.

10. Collect the right data and analyze the data so decisions are data-driven.

11. Develop and follow a one-year business plan with specific goals, dates, strategies and so on.

12. Allow staff to work during peak times. Some people are more productive earlier in the day, while for others, later in the day is a better time.

13. Do not implement too many new initiatives in a year. For most continuing education units, one new initiative with the potential of $100,000 by year three is enough.

14. Everyone cannot do everything, so specialize and then cross-train.

15. Increasing staff intellectual capital is important. Dedicate 5 percent of your budget to staff internal or external training.

16. Cut the dogs! A great deal of time is spent dealing with underperforming instructors, promotions, processes and so on.

17. The director of the continuing education unit must serve as a buffer and ensure staff do not get overly absorbed in non-continuing education tasks and committees.

18. Make sure you have the right people in the right seats and recognize those people who are performing above expectations.

19. You cannot be everything to everybody. Determine your primary market segments and focus resources on those market segments.

20. Let software do most of your work. Software like Lumens is designed to reduce staff tasks, provide data-driven information and help keep the continuing education unit focused.

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