



CEdMA Blog

Carrying On Business During A Pandemic

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The global pandemic threw everyone for a loop and has left us all feeling uncertain about the future. How long will it last? What happens if my family or I get sick? Will I be laid off or furloughed?

Companies were similarly hit with this uncertainty as they navigated the new normal for themselves and their employees. Some managed to pivot, riding out the downturn relatively well, while others struggled.

At a recent CEdMA board meeting, board members discussed how their organizations have changed their education programs in response to the pandemic. Here is a quick overview of what they changed and what's working for them now.



5 Ways Education Orgs Have Responded To The Pandemic

1. Moved Certification Testing Online

Many companies offered online proctoring as a testing option before the pandemic, and therefore did not have to scramble when in-person testing was no longer an option. Those who did not quickly looked to add online proctoring to their certification testing options.

But with the increase to online proctoring came the need for certification vendors to change their rules and guidelines to consider the challenges test candidates were facing. Candidates sitting at home with poor internet connections needed more support, and potentially easy access to start an exam again if booted out, without having to repay a registration fee. And how about not disqualifying a candidate from an exam session because another person (like a child) entered the room. Pre-pandemic, to prevent cheating, the candidate's session would have been terminated.

2. Chunked Training To Smaller Increments

With everyone moving to online for everything, the need to be aware of screen time became a concern. Companies had to look at their online offerings to make sure they had content that could be consumed in under an hour, or preferably less time. This meant some repackaging of content.

In some cases, simple chunking was not enough. The smaller pieces of content needed to have instructional value of their own. Therefore, in those cases, some redesign or rework was required.

3. Moved From Paid To Free Online Learning Programs

Many companies already had online training available. But requests from their customers was to provide more free content. This caused CEEdMA board members to revisit their portfolios. What could they move from paid to free? Could they create streamable videos for their most popular topics and make them available for free?

Companies with multiple revenue streams (subscriptions, online self-paced, online live, instructor-led, on-sites, etc.) had an easier time staying afloat during these times when some streams dramatically dried up.

For smaller companies with limited revenue streams, for example, instructor-led training only, it was more of a challenge to ADD new revenue streams. In some cases, with limited technology, it came down to talking head videos. But something was better than nothing.

4. Added More Subscription Options

With so many people working from home or having additional time on their hands because they're not commuting anymore, people may be looking to up their skills. Or perhaps they've been furloughed or laid off from their position and want to learn a new skill to find a new job.

Learning organizations that added different subscription options or tiers to their offerings captured more of these students. For example, instead of a 12-month subscription, how about a 3- or 6- month one?

5. Tempered Leadership Enthusiasm

Because the pandemic hit everyone hard, everyone was in crisis mode. For those still employed, they found themselves working all the time. Maybe it was fear of potentially losing their job in the future if the company did not do well. Or maybe it was to show their value to their employers in case decisions needed to be made regarding layoffs and furloughs.

Companies in these circumstances found themselves encouraging their employees to take better care of themselves: take breaks during the day, end online meetings early so as not to be in meeting mode all day, and yes, take vacation – even if it need to be a stay-cation. This is advice we can all heed.

Final Thoughts

We are in these challenging times together, so it's essential for learning organizations to focus more on the people who need or want to learn, rather than how companies can make more money. Offering different programs is fine, but if you're only focused

on the financial side, you're letting your students down. This pandemic has affected everyone, and the way you respond will dictate the next phase of business.

How has your organization adapted to the pandemic? Share your experiences in the comments.

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