

Business Development Ideas for Further Education

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About this Document

Each idea explains what the organisations are doing to achieve growth and some of the principles employed. We go on to discuss ways that FE could adapt these to aid College Business Development. Where possible we highlight examples of how Further Education Colleges are already applying these ideas, using national and local examples where they could be found.

Introduction

Given the current budget cuts and recession many colleges are looking at additional ways to bring in revenue and/or to find new funding streams. While income generation is as important as ever for FE there are challenges – there may be less demand for some FE employer services due to cuts in corporate training provision. At the same time there may be increased competition from organisations that are looking for new revenue streams themselves and are encroaching on areas that, traditionally, FE has been the main provider for.

While there are challenges it is this reports intention to highlight that there may be some new and interesting possibilities to consider. However in order to take advantage of some of these opportunities it may require us to consider some alternative approaches and places to look for ideas.

- **Where to Look** - While the economic outlook is bleak there are examples of organisations that are thriving. For ideas and inspiration for this report we looked at some of the practices from the corporate world and organisations that are experiencing growth, we have then tried to identify trends.

We believe we found 3 underlying principles that are enabling growth for these organisations – Quality, Community & Cost. We will argue that FE Colleges are well placed to utilise all 3 principles to generate additional revenue.

- **Alternative Approaches** - With the advent of social media and the development of "inbound marketing" techniques people are less tolerant of intrusions like "cold calls" and/or are less responsive to what is now considered to be junk mail/spam.

We look at the kind of sales and marketing approaches that seem to work for these growth organisations in attracting their audience's attention. We go on to suggest ways that Business Development Teams might be able to tailor these methods for FE Colleges. That is of course if the sector is not already utilising these ideas.

As colleges have had to focus more on income there may be concerns that some attention & resources may become diverted from the colleges' main activity of education. We have been keen to look for examples and make suggestions in this report that could support and complement the colleges' core activity of teaching & employment, our ideas should have the potential to expose more employers and decision makers to the college and their services. When writing this report and considering ideas regarding education, enterprise & business development the work of Fredrick Terman has never been far from our mind.

Professor Terman – Leadership & Enterprise in Education

During the Great Depression in the 1930's a University Professor called Frederick Terman was concerned at the lack of employment opportunities in the area for his graduates, it troubled him that they had to leave the area to find work.

Terman took action by encouraging his faculty members to get out and get acquainted with local industry and those who were doing interesting and creative things...the result?

The university that Terman taught at was Stanford and today Silicon Valley contains the densest concentration of innovative IT companies that exists anywhere in the world (approximately 2000 electronics & IT companies clustered in the area).

Fred Terman, an educator during tough economic times is largely credited with the creation of Silicon Valley. (The above extract was taken from Net Valley: [Fred Terman – Father of Silicon Valley](#) and is an inspirational article)

In the current recession we are seeing other education institutions establish similar enterprises: [Cornell Wins NYC Tech Campus Bid](#)

“When we set out to create a community of technical scholars, there wasn't much here and the rest of the world looked awfully big. Now a lot of the rest of the world is here.” Professor Fredrick Terman – Father of Silicon Valley

Background - Sales Then...and Now

Before the explosion of virtual online communities we used to have real communities – ones where people would look forward to a variety of visitors & chance encounters; The Avon lady calling & Tupperware parties etc. In business, buyers might have relied on sales reps to keep them updated with news from their sector. The personal touch of a sales rep calling was an effective way of generating new business, fostering brand loyalty and for the company to connect with their customers.

Today these same methods are less welcome as we can employ ways to prevent others from making “unwelcome cold calls.” People don’t seem to want to connect unless they invite you to interact with them, they use tools that allow them to;

- Skip through the ads;
- Use self-service check outs in shops
- Ignore calls if it is an “unknown number”
- Request “no cold calls” whether in person or on the phone

Add to this the fact that we have all the tools we need for finding out about products and services today so we don’t necessarily require advice from sales reps – online customer experiences & reviews provide more unbiased perspectives of products and services.

Regardless of the era there has always been a difference between buying something and being “sold to.” When buying something we research the item and compare models & prices online and in the shops etc, the buying process is an exciting and enjoyable experience.

Unfortunately, aggressive sales people have given “sales” a bad name and this may have an impact on a colleges’ business development teams’ efforts to attract new clients for the college.

Include the fact that training provision is one of the first casualties of budget cuts during an economic downturn, it’s easy to see how reaching your core audience in a way that is effective and welcome can be more challenging today than in the past.

An organisation that explains some of these shifts very well are our collaborators on this report Hubspot. Please find a short video featuring Hubspot’s CEO, Brian Halligan, who is also the author of “Inbound Marketing” detailing some of these changes:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4R49OWIMvBY>

A Word from the Sector

"This new report from Tech Stories is worth a few moments reflection and consideration for all of us in FE. Whether we are striving to maximise alternative income streams or promote ourselves in what can appear a crowded marketplace I believe the report certainly throws up some questions for ourselves. The research demonstrates that between us we have 1,274 commercial enterprises at 1,298 sites which are open to the public. With our collective drive to be centres of enterprise & entrepreneurship, it is a timely reminder of our collective brand identity." Mike Gaston, Principal, Totton College

INBOUND MARKETING

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DIRECT MAIL AND JUNK MAIL

DIRECT MAIL IS WHAT YOU SEND AS A MARKETER. JUNK MAIL IS WHAT YOU RECEIVE AS A CONSUMER.

“

OUTBOUND MARKETING IS EXPENSIVE WHILE INCREASINGLY LESS EFFECTIVE.

Growing Trends

While the economic outlook is bleak, companies like Apple, Google, You Tube, Facebook & Groupon and other “up-and-coming” innovators demonstrate that it is possible to thrive even under the current conditions. The companies that are experiencing growth at the moment appear to be doing so because of 3 main reasons, which are;

- Quality Products & Services
- Community
- Cost Savings

Quality

These companies have products that are so good that they don’t have customers – they have fans & evangelists who do most of the organisations marketing for them. These companies have enjoyed massive growth because their products are so good that their advertising material and sales force is their customers. For example consider;

- **Except for product launches, how many ads does Apple run?**
- **Have you ever seen a TV ad for Google, Facebook or YouTube? How did you find out about them?**

If any products or services are less than satisfactory to customers today then sales & marketing departments may find it more challenging to attract new users because people can effectively communicate that the quality of the service received was poor.

Community

Related to quality is community networks. Companies like LinkedIn, Twitter, Amazon and Pinterest have grown within a few months because the main method of distribution is through people who try, like and then recommend the service to friends.

Another form of growth through community networks is where companies are plugged into industry forums etc to gain a deep understanding of their customers and work with the sector to meet their needs. By understanding the customers’ issues and challenges and tailoring their services to help achieve their clients’ goals will give the community confidence in the company’s ability to deliver results.

As a result these specialists may get more “inbound enquiries” compared with organisations that provide more generic solutions. The sector may be more inclined to “buy” the suppliers services as opposed to a generic supplier who has to “sell” to these same customers.

In FE for example suppliers who only work with colleges will understand the sector, will be connected to people in FE on social media and support various FE events etc. This may give the sector confidence in the suppliers’ ability to cater to FE’s needs more effectively than a supplier who works across a variety of different sectors. **Please see Appendix 2** – Proctor & Gamble for more details of the kind of results that “Community Managers” can achieve.

NB MIT’s Bill Aulet & Ken Morse highlights issues of quality & community in their fantastic workshop on “Inbound Marketing.” They emphasise that sales & marketing today is about understanding your clients needs and turning your current customers into your fans.

Cost Savings

Growth in many sectors today comes from companies who are focusing on reducing costs in order to deliver savings to their customers. We are seeing some organisations doing things differently from the status quo within their sector to provide these reductions;

- Groupon has revitalised & revolutionised the humble age-old coupon
- The Gym Company has changed the model that the fitness industry uses – with their unstaffed 24 hour gyms, cheap membership & no cancellation notice

We now turn our attention to some specific examples to see these principles in action.

Business Development Ideas for Colleges

Google & You Tube – Websites that focus on and excel at one thing!!

If you were to look at the top 6 websites with the most traffic one of the common themes might be that these sites only focus on one thing. An example of this is that Google owns You Tube but we do not see video's all over Google's home page.

Obviously FE Colleges need to keep a lot of stakeholders updated with news and events – students, parents, prospective students, services open to the public, corporate training provision & conferences etc. However this can make college websites look quite busy and may even prove challenging to navigate.

To give an example of this we wanted to pull all College services that are open to the public together for this report, to demonstrate the potential retail networks that colleges could have by plotting the distribution on Google Maps. This process ended up taking over 800 hours to collate as the data was not always easy to find on some sites. Information that took time to find included;

College Website

- Services on some sites were not very easy to navigate to, we found that there are 52 colleges where there appeared to be no services that are open to the public.
- It was not always obvious if services were only available to students or if they were also available to other groups
- For multiple campus sites the location(s) of the service was not always provided and/or obvious
- Price Lists and opening hours were either not included on the website or were PDFs which could take a while to load
- There were also details of past events still on the site & invalid e-mail addresses

Google Maps

- The college/campus name & address on the college's website was different to the details on Google Maps, or
- The college/campus was not listed at all on Google Maps.
- Of the 1,298 college campuses that we plotted; 476 Campuses were listed and had the instantly recognisable "Mortar Board" Icon which makes FE/HE sites easily identifiable. However 385 had no land marks (64 of these are Main College Campuses) and 330 campus sites had no listings at all on Google Maps (11 of these were main college campuses) and 106 with "other" icons

Colleges "Open to the Public"

The dataset we eventually got was that there are 1,298 College Buildings/campuses and 1,274 Commercial Outlets that are open to the public including*;

- 345 hair & beauty salons at 227 Colleges
- 280 venues and services for hire at 168 colleges
- 244 Restaurants at 196 Colleges
- 136 Sports Centres at 108 Colleges
- 129 Nurseries at 99 Colleges
- 52 Theatres at 50 Colleges
- 48 florists, animal care & farm facilities at 34 Colleges
- 31 Travel Agents

A Word from the Sector

"This report includes welcome and timely advice on, among other things, maximising the impact of College websites and ensuring Colleges are visible across the suite of Google products, in particular Google maps. The overview of College commercial outlets is a revealing study of the entrepreneurship within Colleges, their commitment to professional practice in vocational education and their social and economic impact." Ben Verinder, AoC Communications Director

*We are keen to verify this data with everyone to ensure the information is correct and up to date. Please also contact us if you would like to be sent copies of any of the maps that we have plotted these services on.

...The most visited sites are those that connect... such as ebay [connects buyers to sellers], Facebook [people to people], or people to content as in the case of Wikipedia [researcher to reference repository]. Google is no different. As the old saying goes: "When everyone is panning for Gold, sell pans." Peter Sheahan, Flip

Promoting College Services Open to the Public

Once we collated all of the open to public data we wanted to assess the similarities and differences in how colleges promote these services. We looked at a number of areas including – If the service had its own website, name, logo or images etc on the webpage.

When looking at this data we found that a number of college services have very distinct brands. These services not only have their own name and logo but also have their own webpages and domain names as opposed to sharing the colleges “.ac.uk” address.

(Please See Appendix 1 – “Open to Public” Services with own domain name).

There were also differences when looking at the number of images colleges used to promote services open to public. While there are 47 college services that have 10+ images to promote a single service, there were also 352 services at 189 colleges with no images at all. Please find below a summary of some of the areas where we assessed the brand identity of college services that are open to the public;

Service	Number of Services	Own Name	Images on Webpage	Logo	Separate .co.uk/.com Address
Hair & Beauty	345	219 (63%)	212 (61%)	104 (30%)	15 (4%)
Restaurant	244	196 (80%)	177 (73%)	91 (37%)	27 (11%)
Nursery	129	84 (65%)	97 (75%)	35 (27%)	17 (13%)
Sport	136	46 (34%)	102 (75%)	26 (19%)	16 (12%)
Theatres	52	39 (75%)	36 (69%)	23 (44%)	13 (25%)
Travel Agents	31	24 (77%)	23 (74%)	6 (19%)	2 (6%)
Animal Services	49	15 (31%)	36 (73%)	11 (22%)	6 (12%)
Weddings	21	3 (14%)	19 (90%)	9 (43%)	13 (62%)
Venue Hire	269	15 (6%)	146 (54%)	37 (14%)	55 (20%)

The above data is based on information from the service website but does not include any logos or photos from PDF files.

“Best Kept Secret”

When collating all services open to the public it was not unusual to read that “XYZ service” is the area’s “best kept secret.” Obviously these are not the kind of economic conditions for FE to be having income generating services that are “best kept as secrets”, especially when this need not be the case. At the moment if someone is looking for a service that the college is able to provide, it may be unlikely that any search results returns an individual college’s provision – as is perhaps demonstrated by the current “best kept secret” label.

Google’s Methods for Colleges – Websites & Mobile App that focuses on one thing

After looking at this data we wondered how we might be able to help colleges’ commercial enterprises to further promote their services open to the public. What we came up with was to take a leaf out of Google’s book and pull all the data for the various services together. This would allow people to see all the services FE has to offer without having to go onto a variety of individual college websites.

Making the search for services easier for the user in this way could increase revenue potential, especially when you consider that FE would then have some of the largest retail outlets. Some services could even rival the largest commercial retail chains in certain industries, for example;

- There are 345 FE Hair & Beauty Salons compared with SAKs Salons (120 outlets), which is the largest chain, or
- 136 sports venues almost as many as the largest chain, Fitness First (160 outlets) and twice as many as Bannatynes

Promoted in this way, how much more business could this generate for individual colleges and the sector?

We have already discussed this with some colleges and there does appear to be an interest in exploring the idea and are currently consulting the sector on this and expect to report on some exciting developments and partnerships about this soon.

FE Already Does...

Five of the top UK land-based colleges have come together to form Cultiva Ltd.

This allows companies to “exploit the expansive skills and experience of five leading UK colleges through just one point of contact.”

Nike – Brand Identity

What do you think of when the following brands are mentioned:

- Nike
- Apple
- FE

Nike and Apple perhaps evoke some quite clear connotations. Nike’s “Just Do It” campaign was an inspired branding concept;

A Time magazine story about the baby boom generation would quote a social historian saying that the ethos of the largest American generation could be summed up in 3 words: “Just Do It.”

... somehow “Just Do It” managed to evoke countless previously impeded visions of personal possibility... ‘Just Do It’ had become much more than an ad slogan. It’s an idea. It’s like a frame of mind.”

When people think of FE, the connotations may be less clear with various groups having different perceptions and, in some cases, they may not be too complementary. Any negative views that people may have about FE is hard on those who teach in colleges and devalues the achievements of their students. This can have far reaching implications, as the social entrepreneur Andrew Mawson can testify to from his experiences at Bromley in Bow;

“The environments we live, work and play in profoundly affect how we are as human beings and how we relate to each other. I learned this from Bromley-in-Bow. It was such a dump down there when I first arrived. We were determined to create a really nice space. As I began to deliver this, I realised that people took it as a sign of respect for themselves and their children – they felt they were being taken seriously. When we are careful about the way we create a physical environment, when we pay attention to every detail of it, people start to think about themselves and each other differently. What was becoming clear was how value judgements about Bromley-in-Bow had been keeping it down all these years: when we later wrote to a government body, outlining our plans to build a top quality restaurant with granite work surfaces and limestone flooring on our site, we received a response telling us that this was far too high quality for such a rundown area. It demonstrated an extraordinarily skewed logic and a total lack of even a fundamental understanding of the human spirit. I was treating people as people; they were treating people like statistics. If you give people quality, if you treat them with respect, they will respond in kind. A café that offers people instant coffee in a foam cup gives a very different message from a café that offers them a range of coffee in elegant cups which are nice to drink from, literally and metaphorically. It was all they were worthy of.” **Andrew Mawson – author of The Social Entrepreneur**

Nike methods for Colleges – Brand Identity

Differing views regarding FE’s brand identity may be understandable given that Colleges can vary a great deal for a number of reasons, whether due to different Ofsted ratings, the courses they run, size, location, age of buildings etc.

One area where FE does have commonality is that the facilities that are “open to the public,” really do look fantastic – please see the images on the following page to see the quality, and variety, of services available.

Promoting the “Open to Public” services collectively could support organisations like The FE Reputation Management group in their work to give FE a collective brand identity and the size of the collective retail networks could aid the Gazelle Groups’ work in highlighting FE as centres of enterprise and entrepreneurship.

In addition to this, the impact this could have on people’s perceptions could benefit existing students, staff and admissions, as well as increase revenue.

FE Already Does...

Nationally – Organisations like AoC, FE Reputation Group & The Gazelle Group all promote FE as a quality brand.

Locally – Every college marketing & student service department work very hard to get the college brand identity right & maintain this image with all stakeholders in their communications.

Examples of the quality & variety of FE services open to the public



Hair Salons



Beauty Salons



Saunas & Spas



Complementary Therapy



Outdoor Pitches



Gyms & Sports Halls



Golf Courses



Equestrian Centres



Restaurants



Theatres



Travel Agents



Accommodation



Catering



Weddings



Florists



Conferences



Room Hire



Corporate Events



Office Space



Children's Activities



TV Studios



Recording Studios



Design & Reprographics



Vehicle Maintenance

Apple – Collaboration that leads to mass appeal

Interviewer: *“What is Apple going to do in response to the market turmoil and the most frightening economic times in recent memory we are facing?”*

Regional Apple CEO: *“We are going to innovate through it!...the company will come out of this crisis in better shape than We have entered it in. This [2008 economic crisis] is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to sort out the wheat from the chaff in the market.”*

It would not be too difficult to write a full report on what we could learn from Apple on all 3 areas of quality, community and cost... and much more besides, but will focus on collaboration here.

While the most visited sites on the web only focus on one thing they do not produce the content themselves, they have thousands and in some cases, millions of collaborators.

As the Apple App store approaches 25 billion downloads across the 550,000 apps that have been developed since 2007. This has given Apple a new revenue stream worth £3.6 billion. Just like Linux, the open source operating system, and Wikipedia that preceded the app store, no one company could have developed these resources without what has been termed “Crowdsourcing.”

The difference between Apple and a lot of crowd sourced initiatives is Apples funding model. Any revenue generated from an app is split 70% to the developer and 30% goes to Apple. Apple has the technology (iphone/ipad) and central repository (app store); the thousands of developers they collaborate with have the sector expertise, have identified a need and have the contacts to promote their apps amongst their individual communities.

Together this creates mass appeal, regardless of who the owner of the one of 146 million iphones sold is – whether teenager, stock broker or teacher there will be a number of apps that will appeal to each group because the dominant central platform is being populated by developers with specialist expertise in their area and community.

Apple’s Methods for Colleges – Collaboration with collective services

If we consider that buyers are looking for a quality service from someone who knows what the sector and community's issues are, this may pose issues of time constraints for colleges. The team responsible for conferences may also be responsible for attracting prospective students, dealing with the press and college print material, social media as well as the other open to public facilities.

Add to this that it would not be cost effective for a single college to be promoting their facilities in a national business or conference magazine, then there may be some lost opportunities. What would Apple do? Collaborate?

Could the colleges with conference facilities establish a specialist “Conference team” who would represent all 280 colleges to provide customers with a central booking point. Any revenue generated from the "FE College Conference Consortium" could include a fee (15% for marketing & 15% admin fee), the host college would get 70% for running the event. Colleges collaborating with colleagues that have similar commercial services could yield dividends. E.g. If one member of staff at 10 colleges spent 2 hrs/wk on the “college conferences consortium” who represented 200+ colleges and led to 20 additional bookings at £2k would be £300 p/h.

A college involved with this scheme would only be paying the consortium admin fee if it brought in any new business for the college. In addition to this, as this could be classed as a VAT exempt shared service the 30% central marketing fee & admin cost would in reality only be 13%. It could also lead to job creation...not job losses, as is the case with some shared services at the moment.

NB Competition - There may be concerns that this service poses challenges as colleges compete with one another for this corporate spend. We would argue that this is not necessarily the case. If a company is looking for a venue they will have certain geographic area in mind. There will not be too many colleges within a 5-10 mile radius of one another that provide conference services. However, collaboration would allow colleges to compete with other providers, like hotels to facilitate orders from new clients.

Starbucks Loyalty Card Scheme

While colleges may be happy to see a general increase in the uptake of their services open to the public, there is one group that would have more value to colleges than others – Company Directors & decision makers. Perhaps something along the lines of Starbucks loyalty card scheme could help to engage with this group to facilitate a higher level of uptake & the frequency of visits.

Starbucks loyalty card scheme allows people to pre-pay for drinks and earn points to get rewards and freebies. At any one time there is £5 million on Starbucks cards that is unused, a good way of ensuring that Starbucks will be the coffee shop of choice for cardholders.

Starbucks Methods for Colleges – Corporate Loyalty Cards

To encourage captains of industry to visit the college regularly FE could create “The College Club Card” which is only available to Company Directors and gives members a 20% discount on any FE “Business & Open to public services” for an annual fee. The discount offered by this membership would encourage a higher level of use of the facilities from local employers and decision makers.

In the event that a company subscribed to the loyalty card but was unused or under-utilised, then the credit could be transferred for training or other college services at the end of the year.

Given the current economic situation Directors & SME’s will be looking to make savings as much as colleges are. Therefore they will be more willing than ever to consider new ideas and alternative venues. By highlighting that colleges offer the same quality services, at a fraction of the cost AND with a further membership discount available, these ideas could be well received.

There are some precedents regarding how new practices can be adopted by businesses during an economic downturn, consider the following example from the 1930’s:

We [Pepsodent] didn’t know the depression was going on. Except that our clients’ products were plummeting and they were willing to talk to us about new ideas. They wouldn’t have let us in the door if the times were good... The depression passed right over me. I’m not a good man to talk about the Depression...

...These were the new techniques of the Depression. As their sales went off, the big advertisers looked around and said: who are these new young men that have these new ideas that appeal to these new young people? The type of men that largely dominated advertising, before the Depression, faded, the ones who played golf with their accounts. The Depression speeded up greatly the use of research in marketing. I developed new techniques, George Gallup brought in new standards.

In addition to this it would be surprising if FE suppliers who currently work with colleges wouldn’t want to be seen to support the community with such an initiative, especially as this would be cheaper and of more value to the sector than the cost of a single mail shot to the 500 UK Colleges.

FE Already Does...

A number of colleges have loyalty schemes;

Deeside College has a Corporate Gym Membership Scheme.

Manchester College have a loyalty card scheme for all their services that are open to the public.

Microsoft – Better Results for Less

When you think of Microsoft you may not think of them as a major advertising agency. Obviously this is not their core business but they do generate more than most media owners with \$2 billion in annual ad revenue, or consider the fact that they are looking for 25% of future revenue to come from advertising.

Advertising may not be Microsoft's core business but they certainly have an infrastructure that is well placed to serve advertisers needs and, in a way that is cheaper and more effective than their competitors. Microsoft is able to provide a larger reach, more diverse service & better results than many other media agencies. All of which means that;

They have happier and more satisfied customers in every possible way!!

Colleges have a number of training & business services available to employers but compete with other commercial and/or non-FE providers. Applying Microsoft's logic to FE services we find that colleges might be able to differentiate themselves in some very effective ways.

Microsoft's methods for Colleges – Better Quality Service for Less

While corporate training and conferences are important for colleges it is not their core business, but they do have the necessary infrastructure in place. Therefore colleges may be well placed to replicate Microsoft's model to be the cheapest and best quality providers in the area. In addition to this they can include a diverse range of services that few of their competitors can offer.

Many conference venues tend to offer much the same service, so that the selection of venue tends to come down to geography & cost. Therefore how much would people talk about and re-book the conference venue that offered;

- Nursery & crèche provision on the day
- Hair, Beauty or Spa Treatments before/after the event
- Car valeting and vehicle servicing while delegates attend the conference
- Fresh pastries and/or floral bouquets for each delegate to take home after the event
- Vouchers for discounted meals/gym sessions

We can anticipate the effect this would have on bookings from other companies who have defined their services in this way. Peter Sheahan* describes Four Seasons' "unstinting commitment to the customer experience" and their results;

Four Seasons set out to "redefine luxury as service... Their "No Luggage required" policy is a feature of the hotel to help guests who lost their luggage in transit. Lose or forget a tie? No worries – tell them what your suit looks like, they'll fix you up. Wait, what was that? You lost your whole suit? No worries – we'll fit you for a new one you can borrow. The results speak for themselves.

- *A tiny 2% of guests reported problems or complaints about service (down from 4% the previous year)*
- *Revenue per available room was up 11.8% and 70 basis point rise in occupancy.*
- *Gross profits were up 10.5% and operating profits up 18.2%.*
- *Four Seasons is committing to 20% earnings growth for each of the next 5 years.*

If this was successful and other conference providers decided to try to compete with the exceptional level of the "college conference service" it would increase the cost of hiring their venue as they would be unable to provide these additional services in-house.

*Also the author of the fantastic report "[Talent Magnets – Attracting & Retaining Young Teachers Through Courageous Leadership](#)"

FE Already Does...

When looking at descriptions of Hair & Beauty Salons or Restaurants it was not unusual to read comments like "High Street Quality Services... at a fraction of the cost"

Groupon – Network Effects

While many are struggling to come to terms with the current economic climate companies like Groupon are demonstrating what is possible. Groupon is the fastest growing company in history, making \$1billion in sales within 12-18 months.

The network effects and feedback loops that we discussed in our “[Twitter in Further Education](#)” report seems to be at play here, allowing the company to enjoy rapid growth. Consider the following 2 scenarios:

Scenario 1 – Sales Call

A busy executive gets a call at work or home from a local restaurant;

Restaurant: *“Would you like 50% off the cost of a meal at our restaurant tonight?”*

You: *“Oh No...NOT ANOTHER SALES CALL” you may think...or even say. The executive may hang up without engaging in conversation or making a booking.”*

Scenario 2 – Inbound Marketing

A friend calls or sends an e-mail saying

“This restaurant is offering 50% off if they get XXX number of people by 5pm this evening...feel like going tonight”

If the busy executive agrees to go along they may send an e-mail round to others to get the best possible discount... they have just become the restaurant’s sales & marketing machine. Both scenarios involve the same process and discount but are very different experiences – one is outbound marketing; the other is inbound – and are likely to achieve very different results.

Hubspot explain these 2 approaches in a great and fun way, which business development teams are sure to enjoy:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/HubSpot#p/c/CA27B97FEB65136A/6/4-lGe5MnBIY>

Groupon’s methods for Colleges

Colleges could encourage local business leaders, trade associations etc to assist in a similar way with the promotion of their events. Colleges could highlight that their overheads for training remains the same, but the event will be more cost effective for them if more people were to attend the event;

# of Attendees	Cost pp	Event Cost		# of Attendees	Cost pp	Event Cost
10	£500	£5,000		60	£84	£5,000
20	£250	£5,000		70	£71.5	£5,000
30	£167	£5,000		80	£62.5	£5,000
40	£125	£5,000		90	£56	£5,000
50	£100	£5,000		100	£50	£5,000

Anyone interested in the session will encourage people in their networks to attend so they can benefit from the maximum discount. An added advantage with this method may be that by attending the session with people they know the event will be more enjoyable and could assist with re-bookings.

FE Already Does...
 The National Employment Service worked very closely with large employers and may have made concessions for large groups/employers

Threadless T-shirts – 100% Tailored for Customer Needs

Threadless T-shirts has succeeded wildly in one of the riskiest possible markets – youth fashion, which is dominated by the tastes of the notoriously fickle youth demographic. Threadless’s products should be marked by hits and misses, where a handful of hits pays for thousands of misses. Yet Threadless has never had a flop – it has sold out of every t-shirt it has ever produced.

How? Threadless understands the value of community, and allowing the community to have its say, by giving customers the opportunity to determine the company’s inventory, it is serving their community in a personal and tailored way.

Threadless is doing something much savvier than simply offering their community a voice in the production process. “In fact, it follows a strategy that turns market research into quick sales. All products sold by Threadless are inspected and approved by user consensus before any larger investment is made into a new product.” Threadless allows their users to rank t-shirts from 0-5, but they’re also able to check an “I’d buy it” box next to the scale. The elegance of the Threadless model, in which users both submit t-shirt designs and vote on a winner, is that the company not only gets virtual volunteers to create their shirts, it simultaneously knows how much demand exists for every shirt it produces. Small wonder every shirt sells out. In many ways, it’s a natural evolutionary step. If the customer is always right, why not give him better tools to express his preference. The advantage is rather clear: The better you understand consumer demand, the better you can supply it.

Threadless T-Shirts methods for Colleges

Obviously the sector already works very closely with businesses to ensure that their training provision is as tailored as possible. Unfortunately, budgets for training can be one of the first casualties in an economic downturn.

When consulting with employers much of the focus may be on medium-large companies needs as colleges may not have the time they would like to consult with all of the SME’s in the area. This could mean that some valuable untapped opportunities are missed in what Chris Anderson describes as “The Long Tail.”

Therefore it might be worthwhile to employ similar techniques to Threadless and getting input from businesses before putting training programs together to assess the level of interest. We could develop a web page with the training colleges are considering, provide a summary of the benefits to local businesses/specific sectors and include options like “Would Buy”; “Would be Very Interested”; “Interesting but need more info” or “No interest” in the various training sessions.

This could help assess demand before putting the training together. Gauging initial demand in this way would let colleges know the level of uptake and would also provide a database of companies that were interested in each training event. This method could be more cost effective & time efficient than producing marketing material & then following up with sales calls.

Amazon Webservices and S3 Server Capacity – Turning back room “cost” centres into profitable enterprises.

In 2002 Amazon had the brilliant idea of turning its back room costs into a profit making enterprise. If SME’s and bloggers didn’t want to set up, configure, and maintain extra servers as their web traffic increases they can rent space on Amazon’s servers. Why not offer to undertake some of the back office tasks for SME’s?

Amazon’s methods for Colleges

Again SME’s may employ people to undertake various admin tasks, would the college have capacity to undertake some of these functions for local businesses at a competitive rate?

This will save key members of SME staff time and may be cheaper than other outsourcing companies. This could allow you to demonstrate the great work that the college does and earn income from your “back room” functions. This could include anything the college had the extra capacity to do e.g. event organisations, design, marketing, HR, accounts, legal, policy docs.

FE Already Does...

Nationally – HRC Cube “brings together the best of breed cloud computing companies to offer a service that is configured for education. HRC Cube understands the problems needs & constraints of the education sector.”

Bringing Services to their Customers

Given our busy lives we are seeing more services available where the organisations core audience can be found regularly and in large numbers; whether NHS supported general health/sexual health clinics at college, or additional services in supermarkets e.g. opticians in Tesco's, extra tuition for children at Sainsbury's or MP surgeries in Asda... As for our groceries? We can order them online and get them delivered so we don't need to leave the house.

Most colleges have services that are available to businesses on their websites, but business leaders may log onto LinkedIn or Slideshare more frequently than visit their local college website.

Furthermore when a business is actively going onto a college website looking for training they may be "shopping around," so its possible that the college will be competing with other providers by this point. Having a profile on LinkedIn could generate interest from people's "latent" need for training and could raise the colleges' profile with local businesses.

FE Already Does...

Nationally – Many colleges offer courses at various community centres

Locally – Some colleges have Hair & Beauty salons and restaurants based on the High Street, as well as at the college

LinkedIn & College Profiles

LinkedIn appears to be slightly under-utilised by FE evidenced by the fact that as of last September only 287 colleges had a profile. If a college does not have a listing they may inadvertently raise the profile of the competition by default. For example, if you type in certain colleges in Leeds or Taunton then not only do other colleges come up in their place but the local competition appears.

As we recommend in our Twitter report, even if you are not going to use a profile it is definitely an idea to create one as a "placeholder" to prevent others from creating an account and to let people know where they can connect with the college online. An great example of this is Seth Godin's old twitter account message;

@sethgodin Seth is not active on Twitter. This is a placeholder. BUT! You can follow my blog by following @thisissethblog. Anyone who says they're me on Twitter is lying.

You may also want to make sure that your profile is correct and up to date. As with Twitter and Google Maps, we have found anomalies with Linked In profiles. For example Boston College USA has members of staff based in the East Midlands and the USA. There are a couple of colleges like this, so may want to check that the college name is right, that any old pre-merger college names are no longer active and that you are happy with the college profile description.

Analytics & Targeted Marketing

The college is ready, willing and able to run conferences but is not getting many generic or incoming enquiries and needs to make every penny spent on advertising count. Where can colleges turn for the best information?

There are some amazing analytics out there from companies like Hubspot and Hitwise which details the web patterns of various demographics. Their services can help to make sure that all advertising spend is as targeted as possible, they can help identify;

- The specific demographic category that your target audience comes under.
- Where your audience lives & shops, hobbies, level of education, newspapers they read, TV shows they watch
- Where these groups can be found online when making decisions regarding further education
- Which websites companies use when looking for work based training & conferences?
- The time of year that people search for these things?

With this information in hand you can then ensure that your messages appear on the right sites at the right time. If you would like to get a flavour of the level of detail that these companies can provide please get in touch and we'll send some more information.

Inbound Marketing for FE – Putting it all together

I don't know how practical some of these ideas are, or the extent that some of these things are already being done in FE but if we were to put it all together, our wish list of outcomes and “inbound business development marketing for FE” might look something like this;

A busy regional MD reads about a new network of national training & conference venues “The College Conference Consortium” in a business trade magazine that he subscribes to. This includes 280 locations nationwide that can be booked at a central point and at a fraction of the cost he usually pays, so has the potential to save him both time and money.

When he sees the network is FE Colleges at first he is surprised at the variety and quality of the services available - he had no idea all these services were available in colleges.

He loves the fact that his new supplier could be FE colleges as this fits his company’s “Corporate Social Responsibility” ethos and their commitment to young people & the community.

When he requests more information he is delighted to learn that he can get a further 20% off through the “FE Corporate Loyalty Card”, which is valid at any college - great news for his sales team who travel a lot.

He subscribes to the Colleges' business e-mail updates and gets sent a brief outline of the training sessions that the college is considering running this term and is asked what his level of interest is for each session.

When he books the training, he indicated he was "Very interested" in, he is surprised to find that his costs can be reduced even further if he can encourage more people to attend. He e-mails some of his contacts with details of the training session and the discounted offer.

When he arrives for the training there is the offer to have his car valeted/serviced during the event and when the session finishes he is handed a voucher for a discounted meal/salon/spa. He is also given a list of the outsourcing service that FE can provide.

This MD's perception of FE, his experience as a customer and the range and quality of service means that he is set to become a keen supporter and regular user of the college & its facilities.

How achievable this might be is unknown, but in essence it is not dissimilar to Professor Fredrick Terman’s recommendation to his staff in 1930's Stanford

"Get out and get acquainted with local industry and with the people in it who were doing interesting and creative things. Likewise he encouraged industry to know about the university by getting acquainted with what was going on at Stanford as it related to their own interests and to make the acquaintances of those university people who had similar interests."

A region that was as badly affected as everywhere else in the 1930’s depression is one of the least affected areas in today’s economic downturn because of one educators’ frustrations at student opportunities and his vision to change the situation.

We hope that this report has provided some interesting and creative things that companies are using to generate growth and we hope that they will help FE providers to further develop the fantastic relationships they already have with employers locally & nationally.

Tech Stories would be delighted to assist the sector to develop or implement any of the ideas detailed in this report.

Example Projections

If we were to project that the level of additional spend at all colleges then the value to the sector might be as follows;

Members of the Public

Service	# of new members	Average Spend per Visit	Total Increase in revenue
Hair & Beauty	20	£10 per month for 8 months	£1,600
Restaurants	30	£10 per month for 8months	£2,400
Sports Facilities	20	£15 per month for 12 months	£3,600
Theatres	10	£7 per ticket for 4 performance	£280
Weddings	2	£3,000	£6,000
Total	42		£13,880

We would have thought that 10 additional members would be realistic and, if these figures are replicated across all FE facilities that have each of the services above, these projections would generate almost £700,000 annually.

Hair & Beauty	£181,600	Theatres	£14,000
Restaurants	£156,800	Weddings	£132,000
Sports Facilities	£194,400	Total	£678,800

Business Services

Service	# of Bookings	Ave Spend	Total Revenue
Apple: Collaboration	2	£2,000	£2,400 (-30% admin fee)
Starbucks: Corporate Loyalty Card	2,000*	£500 per annum	£1,000,000 (£2k per coll)
Microsoft: Better Quality for Less	10	£1,000	£10,000
Groupon: Network Effects	N/A	Down from £500 to £50**	N/A
Threadless: Pre-assessing needs	10	£500	£5,000
Amazon: Back Room Services	20	£40 per month @£20ph	£9,600
Other: Analytics/LinkedIn	1	£500	£500
Total			£29,500 per college

*If we look at BETT & AoC conference exhibitors, there may be as many as 2,000 companies who support FE and who would be more than happy to support the sector in this way. This is without even considering any companies who are looking for cheaper options for conferences, room hire & business lunches etc.

**Companies who would normally pay £500 for the training but was discounted to £50 would mean that they would have a surplus for other events. If training went from £500 to £50 this would allow new groups, like SME's, who would not normally be able to afford the training to attend the session.

A Word from the Sector – Case Study

Hadlow College's Journey... from near Bankruptcy to lowest dependency on Education Funding

When compiling this report we were keen to find out which college(s) had the most revenue and/or profit from their commercial enterprises.

We were delighted to hear about Hadlow College's journey from near bankruptcy to a college with thriving income and their entrepreneurial flair;

"Hadlow College Group is a specialist land based organisation that, in 2002, began a unique journey that continues today. Hadlow Group is Part-funded by the Department of Education and the Department of Business Innovation & Skills (BIS) in the delivery of excellent Further & Higher Education (presently 67% of turnover – 2010/2011 Financial Statement). Hadlow Group is a unique cross-county institution. The multiple sites deliver commercial business, educational training and research. At the heart of Kent business and community as a whole, the group has achieved a remarkable transformation from near bankruptcy to national success in less than 8 years. Hadlow Group is unique in its approach and whilst has stabilised in financial outturn in 2010/2011 maintains its sustainable financial performance.

Hadlow College was a traditional Further Education College with dependency on public funds of circa 85% (2007). The vision was to create and develop sustainable commerciality to underpin educational excellence by providing a unique service to business in Kent and the wider business sector. This resulted in a unique fiscal rule 'To develop a balanced portfolio of revenue streams in equal fiscal terms over Further Education, Higher Education and Commercial Operations'. This would ensure effective risk management on income streams and generate cash for reinvestment. Its commercial portfolio ranges from farm shop chains, to four commercial farms, fisheries, comprehensive business and service department through to an ethos of linking education and commerciality together to support students and their outcomes.

Restructuring the Hadlow College Group on a commercial footing has produced multiple and substantial benefits. Reducing dependency on government funding has resulted in a culture of creativity diversely linking education and commerce. Staff members present innovative ideas for development and expansion which are assessed and implemented as appropriate (e.g. new commercial fishing complex supporting local industry and food chain in 2009.) Staff 'want' to be part of the process. The business is focused on ensuring profitability in all areas whilst meeting its obligations as the rural lead for Kent and the South East with a track record of managing rural business, retail and estates thus raising the organisation's profile. (Evidenced by winning Kent Large Business (2008), international finance award (2010) and being graded by OFSTED and Government as Outstanding 2010. The College Group has consistently been able to pay above the national pay award since 2007, rewarding staff and celebrating excellence. The balanced portfolio of business has created new opportunities in the community with regional sustainability programs (for the local community), creation of a dairy cooperative (25 farms supported and partnered by Hadlow College) and enabled over £21m investment to be completed since 2003. All of this is directly linked to teaching and learning to support the core business."

Mark Lumsdon-Taylor, Director of Finance & Resources, Hadlow College

Collaboration & Acknowledgements



William Jenkins has spent the last 10 years working with Further Education Colleges using tired old outbound marketing techniques. William is currently researching ways to apply the practical advice detailed in Hubspots “Inbound Marketing” book in ways that will generate or save revenue for FE. This report was produced while employed at Solus.

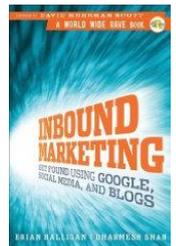
Other reports in our series that looks at different aspects of communication in Further Education can be found on the following links:

- Twitter in Further Education
- Tech Story – What FE can learn from Pixar’s Toy Story
- Culture in Further Education



Hubspot is one of the fastest growing private companies in the US. The inbound marketing software company is the 2nd fastest growing software company in the country, and the 33rd fastest growing company overall. HubSpot has grown revenues more than 6,000% since 2007 with over 5,000 customers using HubSpot’s marketing software system.

Inbound marketing-focused businesses have a 61% lower cost per lead, meaning expensive traditional "outbound" marketing methods like cold-calling, email blasts, advertising, and direct mail are becoming increasingly less effective. Inbound Marketing is a how-to guide of actionable steps to get businesses found by pulling customers in rather than pushing messages out. The book will teach readers how to improve rankings in Google to get more traffic, build and promote a business blog, grow and nurture a community on social networks, measure the metrics that matter and do more of what works online.



Special Thanks

Thanks also the Mike Gaston at Totton College and Ben Verinder at the AoC for all their input as this report took shape and to Mark Lumsdon-Taylor at Hadlow College for detailing the colleges experiences with their business development.

Appendix 1 – Services “Open to the Public” with their own domain names

103 Services open to public who has separate domain names and, in some cases, have their own branding & logos from the main college website (There are 140 links as some of these websites have more than 1 service i.e. Conferences & Weddings etc).

Hair & Beauty

<http://www.seasonssalon.co.uk/index.html>
http://www.thecollege.co.uk/college/hairdressing_salons.php
<http://www.thecollege.co.uk/college/flaunt.php>
<http://www.theparkcambridge.co.uk/>
<http://www.zesthair.co.uk/>
<http://www.balticsalonandspa.co.uk/>
<http://www.thegraduatesalon.co.uk/contact.php>
http://www.radmoorcentre.co.uk/hair_and_beauty
<http://www.theelysiumcentre.co.uk/>
<http://www.theacademysalon.co.uk/>
<http://www.westsuffolk-ac.co.uk/invogue/index.php>
<http://www.aspire-salons.co.uk/>
<http://www.brooksspa.com/>
<http://www.fusionredditch.com/>
<http://treshamstudios.co.uk/>

Venue Hire – Weddings

<http://www.hallplace.co.uk/>
<http://weddings.carnegieconferencecentre.co.uk/>
<http://www.thestables-doncaster.co.uk/weddings.html>
<http://www.weddingvenueswansabay.co.uk/>
<http://www.kirkleyhall.co.uk/weddings.asp>
<http://www.thewessexcentre.co.uk/weddings.php>
<http://www.lackham.co.uk/weddings/>
<http://www.lackham.co.uk/stmaryssalisbury/>
<http://www.skettyhall.com/Weddings>
<http://www.themansionhouse.org/weddings.aspx>
<http://roundhouse-weddings.co.uk/>
<http://www.edc-events.co.uk/banquets.php>

Restaurants

<http://www.openkitchen.biz/>
<http://www.eatery1853.co.uk/>
<http://www.skylinerestaurant.co.uk/>
http://www.thecollege.co.uk/college/escoffier_restaurant.php
<http://www.canningtonwalledgardens.co.uk/>
<http://www.brooksbyhall.co.uk/>
<http://www.capelmanorgardens.co.uk/restaurant.html>
<http://www.thestables-doncaster.co.uk/restaurant.html>
<http://www.elmwoodgc.co.uk/restaurant.php>
<http://www.thegallery-restaurant.co.uk/bookings.php>
<http://www.farthingsrestaurant.co.uk/>
http://www.radmoorcentre.co.uk/hospitality_and_catering
<http://www.archersrestaurant.co.uk/>
<http://www.albero-restaurant.co.uk/>
<http://www.kirkleyhall.co.uk/>
<http://www.meritsrestaurant.co.uk/index.htm>
<http://www.thewharnclyffe.co.uk/Pages/default.aspx>
<http://www.horizonsrestaurantsouthdevon.co.uk/>
<http://www.dineatreflections.co.uk/>
<http://www.westsuffolk-ac.co.uk/zest/index.php>
<http://www.skettyhall.com/Restaurant>
<http://www.stratford-circus.com/cafe/index.htm>

Venue Hire

<http://www.thestables-doncaster.co.uk/accommodation.html>
<http://www.thewessexcentre.co.uk/groupaccommodation.php>
<http://www.themansionhouse.org/accommodation.aspx>
<http://www.pennyschoolgallery.net/>
<http://www.immagestudios.co.uk/>
<http://www.yourkctv.co.uk/facilities>
<http://www.project106.co.uk>
<http://www.mgalba.com/index-en.html>
<http://www.coppicetheatre.co.uk/>
<http://www.hubtheatre.co.uk/facilities/index.aspx>
<http://www.stratford-circus.com/hires/index.htm>
<http://www.accrossbusinesssolutions.co.uk/facilities.html>
<http://www.accrossinnovationcentre.co.uk/>
<http://www.citybusinesssouth.com/default.asp?id=375>
<http://www.bsolutions.org.uk/index/about-us>
<http://redlionquarter.co.uk/329/office-space>
<http://www.barnsleydmc.co.uk/>
http://www.carnegieconferencecentre.co.uk/conferences_and_events/
<http://www.thestables-doncaster.co.uk/conferencing.html>
<http://www.kirkleyhall.co.uk/conferencing.asp>
<http://www.salfordcitycollege-trinity.co.uk/ConferenceFacilities/conferencefacilities.aspx>
<http://www.somersetenterprise.co.uk/conferencing>
<http://www.thewessexcentre.co.uk/meetings.php>
<http://www.lackham.co.uk/conferencing/>
<http://www.skettyhall.com/Conferences>
<http://www.trainingwales.com/conferencing/index.php>
<http://www.citybusinesssouth.com/default.asp?id=258>
<http://www.themansionhouse.org/default.aspx>
<http://roundhouse-events.co.uk/venue.php>
<http://www.k-venue.co.uk/ashford.html>
<http://www.cbcpreston.com/>
<http://www.corporatecollege.co.uk/>
<http://www.concorde-group.co.uk/>
<http://www.k-recruit.co.uk/>
<http://www.londonleisurecollege.co.uk/content/room/>
<http://www.tyrotraining.co.uk/>
<http://www.chelmsfordtraining.com/>
<http://www.thecollege.co.uk/prototype/index.php>
<http://astore.amazon.co.uk/newcol-21>
http://www.carnegieconferencecentre.co.uk/social_events/
<http://www.edc-events.co.uk/>
http://www.trainingsolutionswales.org.uk/venue_hire.php

Sport

<http://www.bilboroughsportscentre.co.uk/>
<http://www.canningtonactivitycentre.co.uk/>
<http://www.canningtongolfcentre.co.uk/>
<http://www.pulsecarshalton.co.uk/>
<http://www.thestables-doncaster.co.uk/golf.html>
<http://www.elmwoodgc.co.uk/>
<http://www.activzone.co.uk/>
http://www.radmoorcentre.co.uk/sport_and_leisure
<http://www.hackneysportscentre.com/index-2.html>
<http://www.optimisefit.com/>
<http://www.lifeleisure.net/enterprise/Cheadle>

Nurseries

http://www.thecollege.co.uk/students/sunshine_nursery.php
<http://www.dovedale-nursery.co.uk/index.asp>
<http://www.first-stepschildcare.co.uk/>
<http://www.waterfrontnursery.co.uk/>
<http://www.gifhelittlestars.co.uk/>
http://www.theoldstationnursery.co.uk/childcare_nurseries.php
<http://www.radmoornursery.co.uk/>
<http://www.somersetenterprise.co.uk/services-to-public-mama-bears-day-nursery.html>
<http://www.stockportcollegenursery.co.uk/>

Theatres

<http://www.shedtheatre.co.uk/>
http://www.thecollege.co.uk/college/jellicoe_theatre.php
<http://www.hubtheatre.co.uk/default.aspx>
<http://www.spectacletheatre.co.uk/>
<http://www.thehafren.co.uk/>
<http://cms.strodetheatre.co.uk/index.php/site/index/>
<http://www.theminories.co.uk/>
http://www.wessexyo.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=27&Itemid=32
<http://www.stratford-circus.com/events/index.htm>
<http://www.arctheatre.org.uk/default.asp>
<http://miskintheatre.com/>
<http://thecockpit.org.uk/>
<http://www.meltontheatre.co.uk>
<http://www.southbankarts.com/>

Others

http://www.thecollege.co.uk/college/floristry_studio.php
<http://www.capelmanorgardens.co.uk/visiting-the-gardens.html>
http://www.trainingwales.com/garden_centre/index.php
<http://kirkleyhallzoo.co.uk/>
<http://www.somersetenterprise.co.uk/service-s-to-public-venture-travel.html>
<http://www.sneec.co.uk/>
<http://www.lackhamfarm.co.uk/enterprise/default.asp>

Appendix 2: Proctor & Gamble - "Community Managers"

We looked at the practices of Proctor and Gamble for this report and the ways that their community managers engage with their audience. When looking at ideas for FE, we felt that colleges already engage groups in the ways we suggest, and we did not wish to be in any way patronising. However we did feel that P&G's work was worth mentioning for a number of reasons, so have included it as an appendix.

Community Managers look to gain insight that leads to new ideas, product innovation and services that adds value.

Proctor & Gamble sought input and feedback from the online communities of mums networks. The mum's input resulted in Proctor & Gambles R&D department shifted their focus from making the nappies even more absorbent to making them more flexible and comfortable for the baby. The insight from mums highlighted that their babies could not bend down to pick things up as easily as they'd like and that the nappies should be made more comfortable... after all their little ones are wearing them 24/7!!

To best highlight the role and impact of Community Managers please find an extract about P&G's experiences below;

Proctor & Gamble exemplifies the successful digital age pioneer. The world's largest advertiser has been tinkering with its marketing mix to determine which communication channels work best for its brands. These efforts have been promising enough for CEO to proclaim, "If you step back and look at our marketing mix across most of the major brands, it's clearly shifting, and it's shifting from measured media to in-store, to the internet and to trial activity." Nor is P&G alone; more and more consumer product advertising spending will be going toward digital content, e-newsletters, branded entertainment, and viral/word of mouth programs, along with a greater overall focus on in-store programs.

P&Gs Beinggirl.com is a digital destination for teenage girls that was developed to create a relevant online environment for brands such as Secret, CoverGirl, Always, and Tampax. Here again, the value of listening to consumers has paid dividends for P&G. Initially, Being girl's content was predominantly educational – neither especially exciting nor fun, But by asking the site's users what kind of content they wanted, P&G learned that music was high on their list. The consumer products company then enlisted the Sony BMG, which brought new music offerings to the site. Today beinggirl.com connects P&G directly to 500,000 teenage girls each month.

P&G's belief that small numbers of highly motivated consumers can become big multipliers has pushed the company to the forefront of viral and word of mouth marketing...P&Gs Tremor (250,000 teens) and Vocalpoint (600,000 moms) units are two additional examples of the word of mouth marketing capabilities the company has developed as alternatives to traditional media.

What do all of these different elements add up to? For P&G, the answer is a reduced reliance on traditional media. A further result is a multiteired strategy of establishing and nurturing a direct to consumer relationship. P&Gs long term goal is to create a relationship marketing capacity that can directly address 40-60 million households – a scale that would have been unimaginable in the predigital marketing universe. Furthermore, the flexibility of digital media enables P&G to pursue more rapid executions and adjustments in its advertising, marketing, and promotions, which in turn yield more unfiltered consumer feedback and granular insight.

There are a number of ways that colleges might want to develop their own version of "Community Managers."

NB It is worth mentioning that these comments relating to the transition from traditional to digital communications comes from a company that has one of the largest advertising budgets globally (approx. £200 million pa in UK alone).

Proctor & Gamble's Community Manager methods for Colleges

Most colleges will already be doing a lot of the following, but... just in case;

- 1) There are all kinds of networking events in various communities – Enterprise, Chambers of Commerce, Trade Associations, Rotary Clubs, Volunteer Groups – all of whom will have business leaders and decision makers as members.

Why not invite them to have their next meeting at the college, at a reduced rate (or even FOC) as a way of showcasing the college's facilities?

- 2) If there is no network in existence then why not create one? The one man band operators and sectors with no networking opportunities may be grateful for the suggestion and support. Send an invitation to all the hair and beauticians in the area and invite them to a pampering session "You're on your feet all day doing other people's hair...let your hair down with us" ...this will put your hair & beauty and/or catering students in touch with future employers.

Relevant departmental staff could then be in attendance at these events and use them as an opportunity to find out what the sectors issues and training needs are.

- 3) If there are any formal events in the region where you know that business decision makers are likely to attend you could send out invitations for people to get their hair done prior to the event.
- 4) As well as offering these services for conferences etc as everyone is feeling the strain of the economy, SME's may be particularly affected and may be cutting back on luxuries and entertainment. With the sectors you are trying to attract you could produce some marketing material that says something like;

"We know that times are tough and as part of our ongoing commitment to our local community/business please find enclosed an invitation to;

- have your next business meeting at our XXX restaurant free of charge
- Treat you and your partner by relaxing at the college with meal/hair dressing/beautician/gym/theatre
- Offer you & your employees annual gym membership for £XXX per annum

Example Projections – If 10 new networking events resulted from this with a value of £500

This would = £5,000 per college.

50 corporate gym memberships @£20 per month would = £12,000 per college

Appendix 3 – Crowdfunding & Performing Arts Students

While this report is about business development, there is a lot of focus on our students becoming more entrepreneurial at the moment and we have lots of groups and individuals more qualified than me commenting on how to achieve this. However I thought that Sell-a-Bands micro-investor programme may be worth mentioning as it has some revenue potential, but could also help to raise the profile for the college as well as the performing arts students.

“As the sales of CDs continue to plummet, a number of possible business models have emerged, including Sellaband’s crowdfunding model. Sellaband have investors who can buy a share in a band’s future proceeds for as little as \$10. If the act can raise \$50,000 they get to record an album and all the investors receive a complimentary album when the recording is done. All download and CD sales are split 3 ways between the band, the various investors and sellaband. To date Sellaband has helped 21 bands reach the \$50,000 mark.”

This is also clever marketing as micro investors are sure to recommend the album they part own to friends.

Sell-a-Band for Colleges – Performing Arts

FE has a tremendous performing arts network of 53 theatres and 13 recording studios, what a fantastic platform to offer up-and-coming actors, comedians and bands. Colleges could offer a “summer touring package” with venue hire at a reduced rate but with a revenue share from ticket sales. This would give students and other promising acts the opportunity to get experience of performing and touring and help the acts to add to their fan base.

Sell-a-Band for Colleges – Art & Design

Why not have an online FE “Art portfolio” website to showcase student art and designs where people have an option to buy the artwork and/or sponsor the artist.

Both these ideas could generate income for the college and arts students but also;

- Showcase and increase the exposure of performing arts courses
- Gigs with up-and-coming acts could provide “cool” events to get prospective students into the college over the summer break – a crucial time for student recruitment, as well as some additional cost effective enrichment activities for existing students
- Promoted in the right way this could be very appealing to tour promoters. Marketers know that young people are the early adopters and trend setters who are great at spotting and making talented new acts “go viral” and become popular.

FE Already Does...

Nationally – Student work is showcased at FE conferences & World Skills events
Locally – Performing art students theatre productions are on throughout the year and are available on You Tube.

Student artwork is showcased through regular art exhibitions and on the college website

Cheaper new venues at colleges could be an attractive option to tour promoters. The band “Artic Monkeys” and Paramount films “Paranormal Activity” would be great examples to highlight to tour promoters. Paranormal Activity was only aired at midnight at 12 US college towns, these students created such a buzz for the movie that Paramount rolled the film out nationally. The film became a \$100 million hit: <http://www.paramount.com/movies/paranormal-activity/news?page=2>

Example Projections

Micro-funding Service	# of Bookings	Ave Spend	Total Revenue
Performing Arts	300	£5	£1,500 per performance
Art & Design	10 paintings	£100	£1,000