



Corporate Universities: Role and Success



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Najafi Global Mindset Institute

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Definition of University: American Heritage Dictionary



- An institution for higher learning with teaching and research facilities constituting a graduate school and professional schools that award master's degrees and doctorates and an undergraduate division that awards bachelor's degrees.
- The buildings and grounds of such an institution.
- The body of students and faculty of such an institution.

Definition of Corporate University



- Does NOT exist!!

Corporate Universities



- Corporate universities were first created in the late 1980s as an enhancement to traditional training departments.
- Over 3000 corporate universities (CUs) are estimated to exist in the United States, either centrally located or operating as virtual universities.

In a 2009 EIU survey of Senior executives:



- 60% believe traditional educational institutions will be important or very important ten years from now.
- 58% believe corporate universities will be important or very important ten years from now.

Corporate Universities vs. Training Departments

Training Departments	Corporate Universities
Run classes based on popularity and demand.	Align learning opportunities with the company's initiatives.
Use e-learning as a cost-cutting device.	Utilize technology strategically in order to support and reinforce learning.
Outsource training to minimize full-time head count in the department.	Create outside partnerships to support organizational goals.
Executives view training as an expense that should be kept as low as possible.	Senior management is actively involved in the learning process and sees a commitment to learning as a competitive advantage.

Corporate Universities



- Corporate universities can be established as an effective way to develop, attract and retain specialized workers.
- Companies use CUs as a vehicle to create, distribute and manage knowledge.
- Offer a unique branding opportunity

Corporate Universities



- Are a strategic tool for:
 - the integration of the development of people
 - facilitating organizational learning as a means to achieve and sustain competitive advantage.

Corporate Universities are Designed to:



- 1) manage the delivery of content
- 2) conduct relevant and focused research
- 3) spearhead leadership development
- 4) encourage business innovation
- 5) reinforce organizational culture
- 6) support change management initiatives.

Designing a Corporate University



- Determine with the senior executive team how learning supports the organization's strategy and vision.
- Identify how to align the training function with each of the company's initiatives.
- Create a corporate university name, logo and brand.
- Develop a vision, mission and values statement for the corporate university.
- Determine key initiatives and measures of success.
- Assess current team members' strengths and commitment to the change process.
- Work with your marketing group to create a marketing plan for the university.
- Create a rollout plan for the corporate university and ensure that it touches every part of the organization.

Running a Corporate University



- **Make marketing a core competence.**

Work closely with your marketing group to brand your corporate university. Be passionate about the brand of your university and how you are perceived by your customers and stakeholders.

Running a Corporate University



- **Operate like a business.**

Organize like a business organization: finance and accounting, sales and marketing, operations, administration, information technology, research and design.

Create plans and have individuals who are responsible for each area of a traditional business.

Running a Corporate University



- **Evaluate your learning initiatives.**
 - How did learners react to the training solutions?
 - How much did participants learn from the training solutions?
 - How did behaviors change as a result of the training solutions?
 - What types of results did the training solutions achieve?

Key Success Factors



1. Clarify Role and Strategy

- ❑ Disney University, one of the oldest corporate universities, was created to sustain a culture created by Walt Disney.
- ❑ Develop a well-defined mission and learning goals, as well as a clear business plan, in line with the company strategy.
- ❑ CU's goals and strategic plan must clearly connect and link to the corporation's strategy.
- ❑ What is your value proposition?

Key Success Factors



2. A Senior Champion

- The corporate university needs a visible, high-level champion.
- The champion is an executive who is willing to support the corporate university in achieving its mission.
- This support includes providing input into the strategy, communicating the strategy and, when necessary, political support.

Key Success Factors



3. Establish Proper Governance

- Who does the CU report to?
- A strong senior board of advisors, trustees or directors.

Key Success Factors



4. Align With Business Needs

- The programs, solutions and services of the corporate university must be aligned with the business.
- This alignment is developed during the initial analysis leading to the implementation of the learning solution.
- If this alignment is not made, it is difficult to connect the corporate university to business value and ultimately show the success of the university.

Key Success Factors



5. Address Performance Improvement

- Closely related to the alignment issue is the process of addressing non-training/non-learning solutions.
- When a request for a learning solution is made, how the corporate university addresses the issue is extremely important.
- the need may be better addressed with a non-learning solution.
- Some corporate universities attempt to utilize a results-based approach, exploring the non-training issues, and then hand off potential solutions to other providers.

Key Success Factors



6. Pursue a Variety of Learning-Transfer Strategies

- One of the disappointments for learning organizations is the limited transfer of learning to the job.
- Create a variety of practices to enhance the transfer of learning. The process usually begins with analysis of the work environment as new learning initiatives are undertaken.

Key Success Factors



7. Develop Partnerships With Key Executives

- A critical group of managers are those in the middle who allocate resources, provide funding, allow individuals to participate in programs and generally support the corporate university concept.
- Develop positive relationships so that they can work effectively to help resolve issues and business problems confronting this key group.

Key Success Factors



8. **Manage the Corporate University as a Business**

- Fiscal management is just as important as delivering a variety of world-class programs.
- Operate within the budget, deliver programs efficiently, manage vendor relationships productively and ensure excellent customer service to all parties.
- Allocate the appropriate resources to analysis, design, development, implementation and evaluation.

Key Success Factors



9. Demonstrate the Value of the Corporate University

- Top executives are asking corporate universities to thoroughly demonstrate their value to the organization.
- A typical approach is to develop a corporate university scorecard, showing the value of all programs using qualitative and quantitative data.
- The challenge is to move beyond the traditional approach of counting inputs such as the number of people served, the number of hours, costs, etc. to show the contribution in terms of application and impact.

Key Success Factors



10. **Stay Relevant to the Customer**

Corporate university leaders must avoid becoming out of touch with the customer. Corporate university clients need content delivered locally, with products and services that are relevant to the participants and the organization's needs.

Key Success Factors



11. **Involve Managers and Specialists in the Learning Cycle**

- The higher the level of executive involvement, the more the corporate university appears to be a part of the organization.
- Managers should be involved in all phases of the learning process, with some serving in active roles, such as facilitating programs or in review and advisory roles.

Key Success Factors



12. Market the Corporate University in a Strategic Way

- Marketing communicates the purpose, role, scope and success.
- Branding is important so that the internal stakeholders understand what the corporate university represents

Corporate Universities



- Can add value, drive change and contribute to the growth and development of the overall enterprise
- Only if the corporate university is connected to the business, relevant, managed in a productive, efficient manner and valuable to the organization.



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Thank you!