

Ask Me Redesign to Better Leverage Existing Resources

Background

As an institution, we continue to recognize the importance of communication and collaboration as two critical skills for students leaving EMCC and entering the workforce. However, with new technologies, the continued challenge is working with students and employees virtually to reflect the same model as that of an in-person model. Dr. Jason Chen from Gonzaga University says, "In today's economy, companies are faced with a seemingly paradoxical challenge: to cut costs while at the same time 'expanding' their resources to compete in a global market," (Chen, Volk, & Lin, 2004). While Dr. Chen may be referring to the corporate atmosphere, our challenges as an institution still apply. During peak enrollment periods, our staff are stretched to the limits to support our students as they embark on a new semester; however, the amount of human capital we have to expend does not increase. The "Ask Me" Coordination Team kept this in mind as they planned for the spring 2018 Welcome Week and how to creatively maximize the effects of team members.

With the simple purchase of two-way radios, the "Ask Me" team could be redesigned to better leverage our existing resources and minimize necessary trainings for volunteers. The "Ask Me" team's initial purpose was to answer students questions about university transfer, career planning, goal setting, scholarships, degree audits, leadership opportunities and more (Estrella Mountain Community College, 2017). After the "Ask Me" program was moved under the purview of the "I Will Graduate" team, it was decided to redesign Welcome Week to better leverage existing resources. In order to be able to answer a question for a student in one of the previous areas, employees needed to be trained extensively in different campus departments, and that was becoming difficult as employees continue to take on more roles and responsibilities. When the "Ask Me" team assembled volunteers for the spring 2018 semester, employees were provided a two-way radio so now they could communicate with other employees in different departments so they no longer needed to know it all. Several organizations and businesses continue to rely more on teamwork and collaboration to increase performance. Through the effective use of teamwork and collaboration, the group has the ability to improve efficiency and the quality of organizational performance and when used widespread can impact other areas of the institution (Levi, 2014).

A simple model and a small purchase was able to transform the way that the "Ask Me" team functions and performs to emphasize student success. The "Ask Me" coordinating team will continue to assess and make necessary changes and methods of improvement to better support our students.

References

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Levi, D. (2014). *Group Dynamics for Teams*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc.