THINKIFIC

Introduction

The Flourishing Center of New York City (TFC) offers adult continuing education programs in positive psychology topics to students from all over the world. Students mainly come from the US and Canada and typically work as consultants, educators, human resources managers, coaches, therapists, counsellors, or psychologists. Currently, courses are offered through The Flourishing Center's New Your City offices through face-to-face weekend events across North America with additional instruction offered through Zoom for live instruction as well as video recorded PowerPoint presentations accessed through Vimeo. Online course delivery tools are used to post videos and to offer a way for students to upload final projects. Other communications with students and prospective students are delivered through email or cohort specific Facebook pages.

Change Management to Set Up for Success

The Thinkific platform has been selected as the new technology tool to manage and deliver The Flourishing Center's learning academy. Introducing the Thinkific platform as a new technology tool requires a significant shift for the organization's team from their current processes. To set them up for success the Prosci ADKAR model will be used to support organizational change. This model is an effective framework for supporting organizations through change by highlighting goals and outcomes for successful change projects.

The ADKAR model will be used at the Flourishing Center in the following ways:

Awareness of the need for change – The Flourishing Center team has developed an awareness that the current teaching tools and processes aren't meeting the needs of students or the organization. New and better tools for delivering online learning exist in the market place and students are expecting higher quality of online course delivery.

Desire to be part of and support change – Team members at TFC must have a desire to be part of the change and to support it in the coming months and years. Currently they have a cumbersome delivery processes that is detrimental to students and instructors. The team believes there are negative consequences for continuing with existing processes and tools, and embraces

the vision for positive results by the proposed transition to new a technology. Basically, they embrace the need for the new tool chosen, Thinkific.

<u>K</u>nowledge of how to change – An understanding of the benefits of Thinkific as well as the implementation steps will help the team to develop the knowledge of how to make this monumental change in their organization.

<u>A</u>bility to implement change – Training on the Thinkific platform as well as instructional design skills will help the team to know how to transfer the current course content to the new platform. The team will also need the technological tools (Thinkific licence, computer, software, video development tools), IT support, financial resources and training on skills.

<u>R</u>einforcement to continue change– To continue to make this positive change for the organization The Flourishing Center will want to reinforce the need for continued change by celebrating the wins so far, reviewing the reasons why this change was needed in the first place, and remind the team of the vision for the future.

Implementation Plan

Goals and Outcomes - The overall goal of this implementation plan is to begin transitioning The Flourishing Center's online course components to the Thinkific platform. This initial phase includes setting up the online academy and being ready to deliver the initial online CAPP program within 6 months.

Outcomes expected include:
> To enable the online course components to be delivered via Thinkific.
> To ensure students can easily access course content.
> To ensure course instructors can deliver their course content relatively easily.
> To ensure staff can more easily administer courses.
> To have positive return on investment over three years. (I'm guessing as I've not done all the math.)
> To enroll more international students.

Stakeholders – There are several groups of stakeholders who are located around the world. Most are in the US and Canada with The Flourishing Center's head offices in New York City. They include:
> **Instructors** – those that lead the Flourishing Center's online courses
> **Funders** - Emiliya Zhivotovskaya, Founder of The Flourishing Center
> **Students** – international students from all over the world
> **Administrative Team** – the team who help run the courses and the center

Implementation Steps – The major steps of implementing Thinkific for the Flourishing Center's online courses include:

1. Create a communication plan for the team to make ensure communication happens throughout the implementation
2. Determine initial training needs for the Thinkific platform
   a. Academy setup – administrators trained
   b. Course development setup - Instructional designers trained
3. Go through Thinkific training for setting up the learning academy
   a. Setup learning academy page on TFC site including branding and marketing pages
4. Complete training for setting up first course
   a. Setup initial course shell – landing page, cover page, eCommerce links
5. Create an outline of the international CAPP course including chapters and main lessons
   a. Inventory current content and begin transferring
   b. Develop additional content that needs to be filled in
   c. Develop instructor notes for delivery
   d. As course content is being transferred, have staff do testing of the course segments to ensure everything is working.
6. Test CAPP course draft and complete quality check
   a. Have staff members and student volunteers review the course content to ensure buttons, downloads, video, audio etc. work.
   b. Have an instructor quality test the instructor notes
7. Pilot International CAPP Course
   a. Course delivery – train instructors
   b. Deliver course
   c. Evaluate online CAPP course, formative
   d. Make changes based on evaluation

Resources and Support – This is the initial phase of a longer project. Many resources will be needed in the following areas:

> **Time** is one of the biggest factors needed for training, planning and transferring and testing course content.
> **Money** is required to pay for instructional designers, developers, admin staff, IT resources, additional content development and the Thinkific platform. A budget is not finalized however the Thinkific membership level required will cost $99usd/month.
> **IT support** is required for course development and implementation.
> **Leadership support** is required for planning and guidance.

Existing TFC Assets Supporting Implementation - This initial course has been delivered before to an international audience bit through a different set of tools.

> **Existing content** - In most cases existing PowerPoints, video, readings have already been developed and can be used again.

> **Existing student base** - Students have taken this course with TFC before and can act as testers for the new format and any new materials.

Existing instructors – Instructors have experience facilitating the current online CAPP program as well as the face-to-face programs.

Evaluation surveys – Previous evaluations results can help guide the new course development so it is not a straight copy and past of the old content but a new, improved version of the program, resulting in higher quality and value for the student.

Knowledgeable leadership – The founder and leader of TFC is very technically savvy. This helps in the planning and implementation of the roll out of Thinkific, and in supporting the implementation team.

Potential barriers and challenges to implementation – There are numerous known barriers and challenges to a smooth implementation which include:

1. **Lead time** to implement course transition before next courses offered.
    a. To mitigate challenges with lead time, plan to continue existing courses until the new one is ready to launch.
    b. Add 15% 'buffer' time to the projected timeline for unforeseen issues.
    c. Use project management tools to manage the project and team members.

2. **Money** needed to pay course transition team – instructional designer, graphic designer, videographer, etc.
    a. A bank load can help in mitigating this challenge.
    b. Running the existing course parallel while the new version is being developed to keep revenues flowing.

3. **Finding qualified members** for course transition team.
    a. TFC has a large following so they can recruit qualified contract workers from their base. The advantage is they'd know the material, having taken the course before. They'd also work remotely so costs would be lower, depending on where they are located. New York City typically has a higher wage level so hiring outside the current area would help. With students and contacts all over the world, they have some options here.
    b. They'd be able to attract qualified contract workers as they have several courses to transfer to the new system so there is ongoing work which would encourage a better rate.

4. **Students resistant** to using **new technology**, preferring more face-to-face or blended learning.
    a. This initial course is already delivered online with international students grateful to have access through an online version. They are likely used to different technologies for training. Transitioning this one first can enable them to work out the kinks before the blended learning courses are transitioned.
    b. Offer initial training sessions for students to get them used to the Thinkific software as many of them have not likely used it before.

5. **Emiliya's time** – The founder of TFC and main instructor.
   a. Hiring a project manager or promoting one from the current pool of instructors.
   b. Freeing up her time by having other instructors take over in her usual face-to-face courses or other projects.
   c. Hire an instructional designer to do most of the course transferring.

6. There may be the draw to using **other technology tools** to develop new course content such as video, online presentation tools, graphic design, etc.
   a. Select a set of tools that the team is already familiar with wherever possible.
   b. Keep it simple where you can such as using text instead of a video.
   c. Use content that is already developed. This may require searching for new ones.

7. **Thinkific's limitations**. There are ongoing posts on their customer Facebook page that suggest some problems that are ongoing for users of the platform. Like any technology company, some bugs are fixed sooner than others.
   a. Keep integration with other software tools to a minimum at first. Try to avoid using Zapier for example. This also helps keep costs down.
   b. Keep content drip to a minimum to keep the roll out as simple as possible initially. Content dripping refers to when course content is released to the student at a set schedule linked to calendar dates or pre-requisites.
   c. Review the Facebook page to see what challenges are current and avoid using the tool in this way if possible.
   d. Use existing software marketing tools where possible for this initial phase as this is where some potential bottle necks exist with the Thinkific platform.
   e. Have a backup manual process for enrolling new students as this is again, a potential problem area for Thinkific.

Evaluation

The evaluation portion of the Thinkific platform rollout is formative in nature and acts to support positive design and development as we finalize the online CAPP course. This type of evaluation will help us catch and correct any issues with the new program before it is released with the first cohort.

Success measures of implementation of Thinkific for TFC Learning Academy and initial CAPP online program:

1. On time and within 6 months of start date.
2. They would recommend this course to their contacts. – 80% agree
3. Ease of use measurements by students. – 80% agree
4. Ease of using Thinkific by instructors. – 80% agree
5. Students have learned material and can see where they'd apply it. 90% agree

6. Easy to sign up new students for international programs. – Admin and students 90% agree.
7. Easy to develop new courses and transfer courses onto this platform by developing a process template for the next course transformation.

Formative Evaluation of TFC online CAPP program - Formative evaluation will provide The Flourishing Center with feedback on their first course in the new learning platform. It will offer information for fine tuning the CAPP online course, the first program being delivered via Thinkific. It will also provide feedback on the process for converting a course as this will be the first one of several. Students and instructors will have an opportunity to weigh in on the value of the program and ease of use of the new technology among other factors.

Stakeholders will want to know how students liked the new program design and what they'd change.
1. Information – engagement of student with course material, would they recommend to someone else?
2. Balance between all online course and those that are face-to-face with segments supported by Thinkific support

Evaluation questions and data collection
Thinkific Surveys - Development questions will be asked as students move through each chapter in online CAPP course. A survey option is available in Thinkific and can be inserted anywhere in the course as students move through it.

Following is a list of questions to be included for evaluation within the Thinkific program:

Technical issues for students when taking the course
1. How easy was it to navigate around the CAPP online course after your introductory training video? (Scale)
2. Did you run into any difficulties while moving through this part of the course content? If yes, what were they? Please be specific.
3. Is there anything that you'd suggest changing in this part of the course? Please be specific.

Course content
1. The course content is delivered in a variety of ways.
   a. What forms of delivery do you prefer for learning this content? (video, text, reflection questions)
2. Is there anything you would change about the delivery of this part of the program?

Community place
1. The CAPP program has a Community Café for online gathering and networking.
   a. How often did you use this section of the course? (daily, weekly, monthly, not at all)
   b. How valuable is this part of the program for you? (scale)

      c.   What were some of the most valuable aspects of the Community Café while going through this program?

Discussion forums
1. Some program chapters ask students to post and participate in the discussion forum at the end of each chapter. How valuable did you find this part of the program? (scale)
   a. Why did you rate the discussion forums that way? Please be specific.

Overall course survey
At the end of the course students will be asked to complete a short series of questions that gather feedback on the overall online course experience.
1. Would you recommend to others?
2. What changes would you recommend?
3. How did you find the balance of live instructor access and online instruction?

Focus Groups – qualitative data
At the end of the testing and the first pilot course students will be asked to participate in focus groups to gather additional feedback. This deeper dive will be based on the results of the Thinkific course survey questions.

Data analysis in service of decision making
Thinkific survey question sample sizes are small (up to 40) so data will be summarized to adjust for this. Margin of error is much too high to be reliable but here we want to capture obvious challenges that need to be addressed before the first live release of the course. Data will be grouped together looking for themes, technical errors, useful ideas for user experience improvements.

Once courses are reviewed by testers and course corrections are made, the initial set of pilot students will receive similar questions to make sure everything is captured from a live class of participants.

Quantitative analysis will come from Thinkific back-end reports on areas such as student access, usage, and survey questions.

Focus group analysis will consist of looking for themes and 'most agree', 'some said' analysis. Because of the nature of qualitative data numerical analysis cannot be used.

Presentation of Evaluation Results
Results of our evaluation will be presented online via Zoom as team members are potentially located in various cities around the world with the bulk of the team in New York City. Highlights will be delivered to teams in a in a written report (PDF) initially, followed by a team meeting and presentation online. This allows introverted and analytical team members to prepare questions in advance for a more in depth discussion. Data will be presented through Zoom screen share with a Prezi presentation showing info graphs, screen captures, and bullet points. Prezi allows our discussions to move around easily without having to flip through a slide deck.

References:

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