

## The State of Lifelong Learning 2009

### 1. Institutions in Transition

Lifelong learning units and administrators are now feeling the push-pull of society going through the Crisis & Conflict stage of the transition into the Information Economy. Institutions are now in conflict over generational change, telecommuting, trains vs. cars, online versus face-to-face learning, new teaching methods, and more.

The impact of this larger transition is being felt directly now by lifelong learning programs in institutional settings in terms of organizational structure, staffing, time demands, income objectives, and covering overhead.

### 2. Time & Gas

The higher price of gas and travel, combined with the increasing demands on saving time, combine to put new priority and importance on boosting productivity, increasing efficiency, and increasing measurable outcomes with the same or even fewer resources.

Decisions are being made about wasting staff time, time spent in meetings, the greater productivity gained from working at home, and the burdens of paying for obsolete overhead like office space. With respect to covering overhead, income simply cannot outrun expenses and overhead will have to be cut in order for organizations to remain financially viable.

### 3. Gen Y Coming Out Party

This year marks the “coming out party” for Gen Y in lifelong learning. The biggest generation in history, the 80 million Gen Yers born between 1980 and 1999 will start to emerge as the dominant generation in lifelong learning over the next ten to fifteen years.

Professional continuing education programs aimed at people in the workplace are doing better so far.

### 4. Programs cope with recession

Many community programs offering avocational and leisure courses are reporting big drops in registrations, as has happened during recessionary times every ten years or so over the past thirty years.

Professional continuing education programs aimed at people in the workplace are doing better so far.

### 5. Value of lifelong learning questioned

A number of administrators have begun internal publicity efforts to make sure central administrators understand that lifelong learning is critical and essential not just to society but to the survival and prosperity of their institutions as well.

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## 6. **Green Gains**

Programs are looking at ways in which they can go green, recycle more, and tap into programming responding to the interest in a sustainable environment. LERN Chair Elect, Cheryl Green of Quincy, Mass., says that the interest in greener meetings is growing.

## 7. **Green Brochure standards coming**

Lifelong learning program administrators have requested green standards for brochures. Paula Hogard, Chair of the LERN Board of Directors, authorized with full Board support the formation of a Green Ribbon Committee to establish green brochure standards. Hogard noted the pressure for green standards is coming from both administrators and the public. June Piry of Vancouver, BC is Chair of the committee to come up with green brochure standards.

## 8. **Online interest surges**

As LERN predicted several years ago, the interest in online courses is now surging, and is likely to remain a long-term growth area for programs. Flexibility in scheduling has been the initial reason for the interest, but time constraints, as well as transportation time and costs are driving the interest higher.

## 9. **eMarketing becomes defined job**

eMarketing is emerging as a clearly defined job area, with specialization, training and expertise required for successful email promotions, web sit design, search engine optimization, social networking, pay-for-click online advertising, and more.

## 10. **New data tools help target promotions**

New data tools are being invented to help target promotions, saving money and boosting registrations.

Some of the new data tools:

- Predict what course someone will want next;
- Target brochure distribution better, trimming expenses;
- Identify the email addresses of people interested in a particular course.

The new data tools give you better information to make decisions, promote, and program.

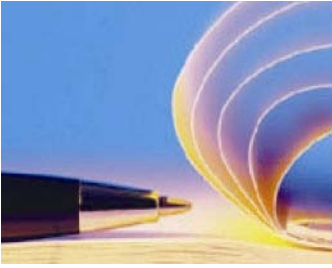
## 11. **Covers try for Gen Y**

After finally getting it right with Gen X, leading lifelong learning cover brochure designers have to shift gears again and go after Gen Y. But it won't be easy to get the right image, says brochure expert Julie Coates.

Gen Y reacts differently to images and marketing messages than does Gen X. And it took almost five years for lifelong learning programs to get good Gen X-oriented brochure covers. So far, brochures continue to be the most important marketing tool for lifelong learning. So even though Gen Y likes online messages, the effort to create Gen Y brochure covers will continue.

## 12. **Divisional analysis key**

An increasing number of programs are using the LERN Financial Format to analyze program success at the Divisional level. Divisional analysis has become the front line in financial



success, showing programmers in what areas new courses and programs should be offered, measuring promotion effectiveness, and what areas need to be cut.

### **13. Gen Y wants training**

Training is the second most important incentive for Gen Y workers in choosing an employer, just behind salary, according to a Deloitte study. This is yet another reason why lifelong learning is so important to society in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **14. ERP software problems increase**

Lifelong learning programs are often required to use ERP (enterprise resource planning) software systems designed for institutional purposes and having a single database. These institutional ERP software systems almost always do not respond well to the lifelong learning program's needs. Some report having no online registration capabilities, no access to reports, and the long time it takes to get marketing and financial data out of the system. There seems to be a growing trend among central administrators to be open to other solutions for their lifelong learning program.

### **15. New staffing structure proven**

A new staffing structure developed by LERN is now taking over. The model calls for separating out routine activities under an Operations head, centralizing incoming customer calls and contact with an Information Specialist, and redefining the Programmer's job to concentrate more on developing new programs.

### **16. Online registration keeps growing**

One of the least-talked-about movements in lifelong learning is the continued growth of online registration. It is also one of the most important developments, and opens the way for many other online activities and interactions with customers.

### **17. Best customer analysis works**

The new LERN software that analyzes your participants list to determine your best customers has proven to work for over 100 programs already. The software identifies the 20 percent of your customers who give you 80 percent of your income. It also enables programs to trim promotion costs by up to 20 percent and still maintain or increase registrations. Jean Johnson of Chicago reported the analysis helped her double her registrations.