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Determining Effective, Cost-Efficient Marketing Efforts for Old Dominion University's Teletechnet Program

Douglas Brown
Old Dominion University

DETERMINING EFFECTIVE, COST-EFFICIENT
MARKETING EFFORTS FOR
OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY'S
TELETECHNET PROGRAM

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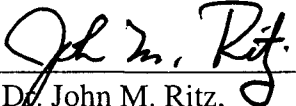
By

Douglas Brown

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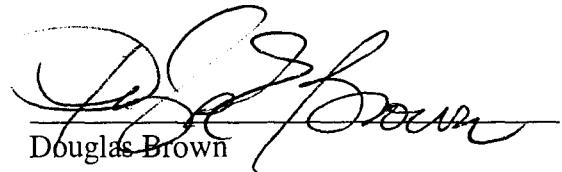
APPROVAL PAGE

This research paper was prepared by Douglas Brown under the direction of Dr. John M. Ritz in OTED 636, Problems in Occupational and Technical Studies. It was submitted to the Graduate Program Director as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Science in Occupational and Technical Studies.

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Dr. John M. Ritz,
Advisor and Graduate
Program Director

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Douglas Brown

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Distance education is the educational wave of the new millennium. Every day more colleges and universities are starting or designing a distance education program. The programs include web-based degree formats and satellite sites.

Old Dominion University (ODU) is a state funded educational institution with a successful distance learning program. The distance learning program, TELETECHNET, affords students the opportunity to pursue both undergraduate and post-undergraduate degrees, along with educational endorsements. In light of national economic issues and an economic crisis of sorts in the Commonwealth of Virginia, cost-efficiency becomes a major goal of all state funded institutions.

To continue growing and competing in the arena of distance education, TELETECHNET must become a cost-efficient program while maintaining the excellence of its educational offerings. Marketing efficiently and effectively must be the first priority to insure the continued success of the program.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study was to determine effective, cost-efficient marketing efforts for Old Dominion University's TELETECHNET program.

RESEARCH GOALS

The goals of this research study were:

1. To document marketing efforts currently in use at Old Dominion University distance sites.

2. To determine which marketing methods have brought students to Old Dominion University's TELETECHNET programs.

3.   To recommend system-wide methods to be employed in marketing Old Dominion University's TELETECHNET program.

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

In 1992, Old Dominion University began its distance-learning program called TELETECHNET. The program was developed to offer an affordable higher education alternative to students who might otherwise be unable to pursue a degree program beyond the associate's degree level. In 1994, TELETECHNET was available on the campuses of 13 Virginia community colleges and several corporate sites.

TELETECHNET was designed to cater to the non-traditional student. As a part-time program, it allows students to pursue a degree at their pace while continuing to work at a job and meet other responsibilities. The number of degrees offered via TELETECHNET has grown to more than 18 undergraduate and 9 graduate degree programs. To date, more than 2,000 students have graduated through the TELETECHNET program (TELETECHNET Brochure, 2002).

Old Dominion University has a proven success with TELETECHNET. The program has experienced growth beyond projected estimates. However, more colleges and universities are seeing the importance of a distance learning option for students. Competition has increased in the non-traditional educational arena. Competition calls for more effective marketing to insure the continued success of any program.

Effectiveness, however, is not the only requirement for marketing TELETECHNET. Old Dominion University is a state-funded institution and is, like all other state agencies, currently under budget constraints. The Commonwealth of Virginia is facing a total revenue shortfall of $5 billion (http://www.governor.state.va.us/Press_Policy/Major_Events

/Commonwealth_2002/Commonwealth-2002.html). This shortfall means that all state agencies will have to reduce their budgets by 8% in an effort to meet the needs created by the economic crisis. Unfortunately, educational institutions are not exempt from budget cuts. Therefore effectiveness and cost-efficiency become the driving factors in marketing TELETECHNET.

In response to questions about the significance and benefit of this study, the marketing coordinator for TELETECHNET responded that there was in fact a need. Maria Ferguson replied:

"There is definitely a need to study cost-efficient marketing efforts for TELETECHNET. As competition in the distance learning industry increases, marketing becomes more complicated and costly. The results of such a study would aid Old Dominion University in making informed decisions based on facts" (Ferguson, 2002).

This study was an effort to meet the needs of the TELETECHNET program. It was designed to determine what is currently working at distance sites, as well as to recommend what more can be done.

LIMITATIONS

TELETECHNET is made up of sites on the campuses of Virginia community colleges, corporate and military sites along with those sites outside of Virginia referred to as TTN USA. This study was limited to TELETECHNET sites on community college campuses within the Commonwealth of Virginia.

ASSUMPTIONS

This study was based on the following assumptions:

1. It was assumed that all sites asked to participate in the study would do so willingly and in a timely manner.

2. The researcher expected that many, if not all, of the sites were using many of the same marketing ideas. Given that some overlapping ideas or tools were in use, the researcher assumed that individual sites would have taken on additional marketing initiatives that might be put to use at other sites.

PROCEDURES

For this study, the researcher conducted a review of literature specifically related to distance learning and marketing educational programs and consulted with the ODU's Marketing Coordinator for Distance Learning. The researcher then developed and administered a survey to each of the twenty-six site directors in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The survey asked for a rating on commonly used marketing methods employed throughout the TELETECHNET program. It also asked for information on marketing tools and methods currently in use that might be unique to the site. The survey closed with an opportunity to suggest marketing ideas to be put to use system-wide.

After the surveys were returned, the researcher compiled information from the survey to provide a comprehensive list of marketing methods currently in use along with their effectiveness. The information gathered, in the survey, was then used to recommend marketing tools/ideas for use within TELETECHNET.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

The terms used in this study are defined as follows:

Marketing Strategies/Methods – For the purpose of this study, this means any project, event or method of delivery whose purpose is delivering

information about ODU's distance learning program.

ODU – Old Dominion University

TELETECHNET – Old Dominion University's Distance Learning program

TTN USA – TELETECHNET sites outside of the Commonwealth of Virginia

OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

Chapter I presented a rationale for the study of marketing efforts in TELETECHNET. The marketing coordinator for the program stressed the importance of such a study, briefly commenting on the benefits of the study. The procedures for the execution of the study were also explained.

The study continues in Chapter II with a review of literature on the importance and ways to market an educational program. Chapter III, Methods and Procedures, explains how the study was conducted focusing on the population of the study, instrument design, and methods of data collection/analysis. Findings from the study are compiled and presented in Chapter IV. Chapter V presents a summary and conclusion to the study, along with recommendations for marketing ideas and further study.

CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter provides information on distance education including the growing importance of the field. Old Dominion University's distance education program is highlighted. The review of literature also focuses on how to market education, providing proven steps and innovative ideas.

Distance Learning: A Brief History

Distance education is not a new concept. As shown in Figure 2.1, it can be dated back as far as 1840. Distance education began as a strictly correspondence-based delivery method and has grown into much more. Since the onset of the Information Age, "the digital revolution has profoundly altered traditional limitations of time and space" (http://www. acenet.edu/calec/dist_learning/index.cfm).

2000— eLearning emerges as the dot com term for distance education

1999—Learning portals, like Blackboard, emerge on landscape

1995—Standford University starts Asynchronous Distance Education Project

1989—University of Phoenix starts its online program

1984—NTU opens, offering videotape and satellite graduate engineering courses

1965—University of Wisconsin offers statewide telephone-based distance education program for physicians

1925—State University of Iowa offers 5 radio courses for credit

1922—Pennsylvania State College broadcasts courses over the radio

1883—Chautauqua Institute authorized by New York to award degrees by correspondence

1873—The Society to Encourage Studies at Home was founded by Ticknor

1856—Toussaint and Langenscheidt teach language by correspondence (Europe)

1840—Isaac Pitman teaches shorthand by correspondence (Great Britain)

Timeline created from http://www.gospelcom.net/bakersguide/timeline.html
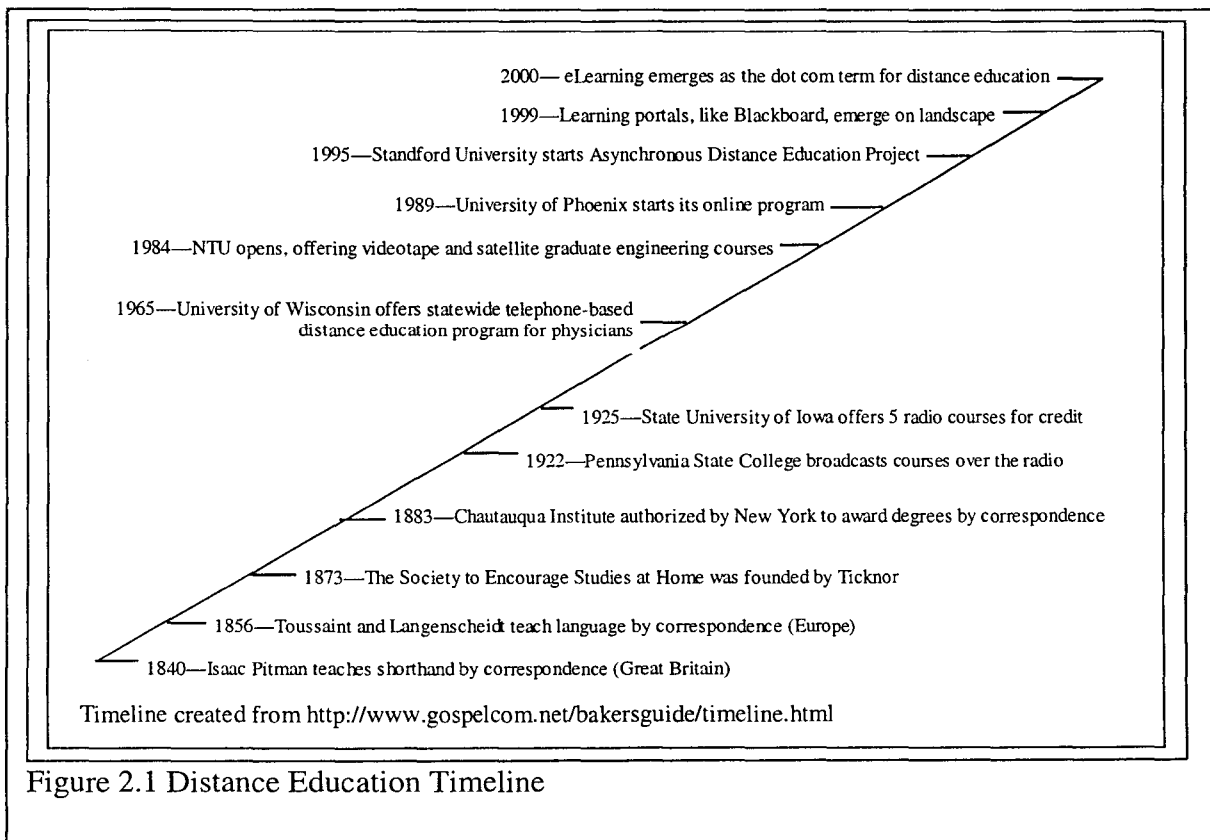
Figure 2.1 Distance Education Timeline

Advances in technology have greatly increased the potential of distance learning and offers an effective method for meeting the needs of continuous learners. "Distance learning, with a long history of serving isolated and remote learners, has now emerged as an effective, mainstream method of education and training that provides learning opportunities that are flexible and responsive to learner's needs" (http://www.acenet.edu/calec/dist_learning /index.cfm). These learning opportunities are delivered by various modes including live instruction on branch campuses, internet-based instruction, and satellite-delivered instruction.

Learners are seizing these opportunities to satisfy their needs. In 1998, a reported 710,000 students enrolled in distance learning courses and that number is expected to increase to 2.2 million in 2002 (IDC, 1999). Many colleges and universities are developing, if not already delivering, some form of distance education program. In 2001, college and university administrators were surveyed on the use of technology and were asked if they provide any form of distance learning (http://www.schooldata.com/datapoint74.html). Eighty-four percent of the 1,621 respondents said that they did operate a distance-learning program, up from 70 percent the year before (http://www.schooldata.com/datapoint74.html). The International Data Corporation (IDC) predicts "by 2002, 85 percent of two-year colleges and 84 percent of four-year colleges will offer distance learning courses, up 58 percent and 62 percent respectively over 1998 figures" (IDC, 1999).

Distance Learning: Old Dominion University

Since 1993, Old Dominion University has been offering distance education opportunities to residents of the Commonwealth of Virginia. By 2002, with sites in Virginia, Arizona, Washington, Georgia, and North Carolina, ODU's program is "the nation's largest distance learning provider of its kind" (http://web.odu.edu/webroot/orgs/AO/DL/teletechnet.

<u>nsf/pages/about</u>). TELETECHNET was established to work in partnership with community colleges, allowing students to complete the first two years of coursework at the community college. The students then complete the third and fourth years with ODU, receiving a bachelor's degree while traveling no further than the local community college campus. TELETECHNET grew to allow students to pursue various master's degrees as well. The foundation of partnerships also grew to include several corporate and military sites.

Combining cutting-edge technology with fully accredited programs and nationally recognized faculty, TELETECHNET has established itself as a success in distance education. However, with the number of distance education programs on the rise, competition becomes an issue. This competition increases the need for a good marketing strategy. "Marketing strategy for distance learning becomes more complex as we continue to grow in and outside of Virginia. Demographics, economic status, number of competitors, demand for programs and the cost of advertising varies from market to market. We cannot develop one model and apply it to all. An in depth study of cost efficient marketing would be extremely beneficial to the TELETECHNET program at this time and would certainly contribute to future success" (Ferguson, 2002).

Currently, there is no real model in use for marketing ODU's distance program (Ferguson, 2002). Marketing is done primarily by distance site directors with some support, assistance, and guidance from Maria Ferguson, the Marketing Coordinator for Distance Learning. In an interview conducted for this research paper on the current state of marketing for TTN, Mrs. Ferguson stated that there are six key areas that need to be addressed. These are financial resources, collaboration, human resources, research, strategic planning, and tracking (Ferguson, 2002)

The first of these areas is limited financial resources. "The marketing budget was not pre-determined in the past" (Ferguson, 2002). Quite simply, there was no money for marketing until the 2001-2002 academic year when some money was budgeted for marketing. "This relatively small amount was reduced further during budget cuts" (Ferguson, 2002). One reason that marketing on limited funds is a major issue is due to the fact that the Distance Learning department is not only marketing the distance learning program. The department is also faced with branding Old Dominion University statewide and nationally.

Mrs. Ferguson sees an answer to this problem in collaboration. By collaborating with other departments within ODU, a more successful marketing effort can be undertaken. "Although some attempts have been made to collaborate with other ODU departments, other ODU sites, and with the community colleges, not nearly enough has been done" (Ferguson, 2002).

Along with a lack of funds for a budget, the current marketing department has very limited human resources with one marketing coordinator and one graphic designer. There are not enough people to do the work involved in an in-depth, successful marketing program.

> In addition to other responsibilities, the marketing department is responsible for assisting site directors by scheduling and buying media for each site, creating and supplying content for ads, and supplying promotional items. Although these tasks are important, time spent researching and planning strategically is equally, if not more, important (Ferguson, 2002).

"Research is the foundation for all marketing decisions" (Ferguson, 2002). Limited funds and human resources prohibit the in-depth research needed to formulate a strategic plan. Without proper research of enrollment trends, local markets, economic issues, and competition, well informed decisions cannot be made. "Research data should be used to

create an overall strategic plan for all distance learning and a plan for each individual site"
(Ferguson, 2002).

"In recognizing that change is inevitable, constant tracking and evaluation is
imperative" (Ferguson, 2002). Sites have the capability to track the success of marketing
efforts via a specially designed Access database. In fact, "site directors are encouraged to
utilize the Access database for tracking" but many are not doing this (Ferguson, 2002).
Using the database would allow for the creation of consolidated reports that would show the
effectiveness or ineffectiveness of marketing efforts.

Marketing Distance Education

Education, including distance education, is in essence a business. In 2000, Peter
Drucker reported that the U.S. was spending approximately $1 trillion on education and
training (Drucker, 2000). He predicted that the amount would increase in the area of adult
continuing education, a major benefactor to distance education. This increase in spending
and growing competition makes marketing a key factor in having a successful program.

"Marketing is aggressively learning what our clientele need and want, responding
within our mission and reporting our impacts to key audiences/publics" (http://www.ect.uga.
edu/marketing/planhome.htm). Marketing is a complex process and an integral part of
implementing any new program and continuing the success of established programs.

The University of Missouri's Outreach and Extension Program established a nine-step
model for successful implementation of extension programs (http://outreach.missouri.edu
/staff/marketing/ninesteps.html). This model (Figure 2.2) is applicable to other educational
programs as well. The model should be viewed as a cyclical process, as the need for
marketing an educational program does not end with the program evaluation.

Nine Proven Steps in Marketing Education Programs
    Taken from the website http://outreach.missouri.edu/staff/marketing/ninesteps.html

1. Analyze the needs of citizens in your county, keeping in mind your county's plan of work, statewide issues and extension national initiatives.

2. Set measurable objectives.

3. Identify your target audiences.

4. Analyze the competition.

5. Position your program; find its unique niche.

6. Determine your marketing strategy – what messages you will deliver to whom, when and how.

7. Deliver the program.

8. Evaluate the impact and results.

9. Publicize your success to groups involved, local decision makers, media and others.

Figure 2.2

Step one of the model requires a needs analysis. Basically, it is important to know the customer/learner so their needs can be met. "The essence of business strategy is to start with a deep understanding of the customer" (http://www.hbs.edu/units/marketing/). There are two major ways to conduct a needs assessment for education. "Enrollment trend analysis is considered the most widespread needs assessment procedure in Adult Education" (Dickerson, 1992, p. 10). The second needs assessment tool is the interest inventory. "Information from these assessments can form the basis for effective marketing techniques and subsequently assist program growth" (Dickerson, 1992, p. 10).

The fourth step says to analyze the competition. By doing this, a need that is not being met by competition can become a selling point of the program. This allows a niche to be found, as mentioned in step five. "Search out special niches of customers not being

served" (http://ohioline.osu.edu/cd-fact/1251.html). Once the niche is found, that portion of the population can be targeted.

In the model, steps one through five establish the basis for the marketing strategy. It is important that an aggressive, targeted marketing strategy be implemented. Step six is the implementation of that strategy. The focus then falls on how to get the message out.

Marketing: Delivering the Message

Delivering the message, or getting the word out about a program, can be done in many ways. There are many tried and true tools that can be used. These include flyers, calendars, letter writing, fact sheets, press releases and public service announcements. All of these ideas are easily developed and can be sent directly to the target audience.

Another way to reach the target audience is relatively new, but growing in popularity and effectiveness. This new tool is referred to as E-mail Marketing. "The pervasive hand of technology not only altered the nature and speed product development, but has also revolutionized the channels of distribution, and changed the nature of relationships between producers and consumers" (http://www.hbs.edu/units/marketing/). Technology is a presence that cannot be ignored, but should be used to its fullest potential.

In 1999, three percent of all web-advertising dollars came from e-mail advertising and that percentage is expected to increase to 15 percent in 2003 (http://www.sendbizman .com/stats.htm). Statistics show that over 100 million adults use the Internet and 77 percent of those send emails weekly (http://www.sendbizman.com/stats.htm). It is obvious that the potential benefits of e-mail marketing are tremendous. "From 1999 to 2000, e-mail marketing grew by more than 270% and has emerged as the killer application for marketing"

(http://www.info-edge.com/product_detail.asp?sku1=17036&). Educational institutions should take full advantage of this tool when marketing a new or existing program.

Delivering the message, by whatever means, is the pivotal point of a marketing strategy, no matter the product. Regardless of how good or bad the product is, if the message is not delivered no one will know. It is important that, when planning to market educational programs, all possible tools for delivery need to be examined. Any idea should be explored for its benefits, and all tools should be used to their fullest potential.

Summary

Chapter II provides information on distance learning, including Old Dominion University's program TELETECHNET. It also presented a model for marketing educational programs. It is important to see the nine-step model as a continuous cycle, allowing the marketing process to change as the audience/needs change.

Chapter III will discuss the survey instrument that will determine what marketing methods are currently in use at TELETECHNET sites throughout Virginia. The instrument design, population, methods of data collection, and statistical analysis will be discussed in this chapter.

CHAPTER III
METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The focus of this study was marketing strategies for TELETECHNET. The information presented in this chapter documents the methods and procedures used to collect the data needed to address the problem and research goals of the study. The following research goals were established: to document marketing efforts currently in use at Old Dominion University distance sites; to determine which marketing methods have brought students to Old Dominion University's TELETECHNET programs; and to recommend system-wide methods to be employed in marketing Old Dominion University's TELETECHNET program. Chapter III provides information on the population of the study, instrument design, methods of data collection, methods of data analysis, and a summary.

POPULATION

To gather the information needed to address the research goals, the population used were the site directors at all community college TELETECHNET sites in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The population consisted of twenty-six (26) site directors. The survey was distributed to each site director.

INSTRUMENT DESIGN

The researcher created a survey instrument consisting of questions in reference to marketing methods in use at the distance sites. The survey instrument was given to the Coordinator of Marketing for Distance Learning to determine the appropriateness and usefulness of the questions asked. The survey instrument focused on current methods of delivering information. It was also designed to solicit information on marketing efforts in use at each site, as well as suggestions for improving the marketing process. The survey

instrument consisted of eleven (11) evaluation questions that utilized a Likert Scale and three

(3) open ended questions. For a copy of the survey instrument, see Appendix A.

METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

Data collection consisted of a survey instrument distributed to twenty-three (23)

TELETECHNET site directors. The purpose of the survey was to evaluate current methods

of delivering information on TELETECHNET, determine if any unique, site-specific

marketing efforts might be in use, and to gather information on suggested changes to the

marketing process.

The survey instruments were distributed through internal departmental mail along

with a cover letter and a self-addressed, stamped envelope. To keep track of responses to the

survey, a title page was used that required the person completing the survey to identify their

site by name. Two weeks after the initial distribution date, a follow-up letter and another

survey instrument were sent to any site director who had not responded. After all surveys

had been returned, the title pages with site identification were destroyed to insure anonymity

of those surveyed. See Appendices B and C for the cover letter and the follow-up letter that

accompanies the instrument.

METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected from the survey of site directors were tabulated and analyzed to

determine:

1. The effectiveness of current delivery methods.

2. What site-specific marketing endeavors were in use.

3. What suggestions were made for changing the current marketing process.

The data specifically concerning the effectiveness of current delivery methods were

studied and ranked to show the delivery methods from most to least effective. The responses were totaled to determine most effective marketing strategies. The remaining data were collated to offer a list of unique marketing measures and a list of suggestions for changes to the marketing process.

SUMMARY

Chapter III showed the methods and procedures used to collect the data needed to address each of the research goals. The survey instrument was checked by the Coordinator of Marketing for Distance Learning to insure that the appropriate information was gathered. The instrument was then distributed to a population consisting of TELETECHNET site directors. The results from the survey instrument will be presented in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV
FINDINGS

Chapter IV will present the data collected for this research study. The problem addressed by this study was to determine marketing efforts currently in use within the TELETECHNET system, the effectiveness of those marketing efforts, and to gather suggestions for improving the marketing process. Data were gathered through a survey instrument distributed to TELETECHNET site directors on the campuses of Virginia community colleges. The survey consisted of eleven (11) evaluation questions that utilized a Likert Scale and three (3) open ended questions. Approximately two (2) weeks after the initial mailing, follow-up letters and additional copies of the survey instrument were mailed to those individuals who had not responded. A total of 22 responses were received, representing 84.62% of the population.

SURVEY RESPONSES

Questions 1 through 11 asked for the respondent to evaluate existing methods of information delivery. The respondents utilized a Likert Scale to rank the effectiveness of the delivery methods. The scale ranged from 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good) and included an option for ranking a delivery method as not applicable, which was assigned a point value of 0. A summary of responses is shown in Table 1. The individual responses are provided in Appendix D.

The lowest-ranked delivery method was Paid Advertisements on Television with a mean score of 1.14 and 54.55% of respondents ranking it as not applicable. The second lowest-ranked delivery method was a tie between Paid Advertisements on Radio and E-mail Marketing with a mean score of 1.41. Paid Advertisements on Radio and E-mail Marketing were ranked, respectively, by 40.91% and 54.55% of respondents as not applicable.

The highest-ranked method of delivery was Word of Mouth with a mean score of

4.77 and 86.36% of respondents ranking it as very good. The second highest-ranked delivery

method was Direct Mail with a mean score of 3.82 and 100% of respondents ranking it as

acceptable or better. Press Releases, Posters/Flyers, and Business Visits were also highly

ranked with a mean score of 3.50 or better.

TABLE 1

Evaluation of Current Methods of Information Delivery: Please evaluate the following items based on their effectiveness as delivery methods for information about TELETECHNET in terms of this scale:

Very Poor	Poor	Acceptable	Good	Very Good	Not Applicable
1	2	3	4	5	N/A

Delivery Method	Score	Mean	Median	Mode
1. Press Release/Public Service Announcement	77	3.50	4	4
2. Paid Advertisement – Print	46	2.09	2	0
3. Paid Advertisement – Radio	31	1.41	1.5	0
4. Paid Advertisement – Television (cable crawler)	24	1.14	.5	0
5. Posters/Flyers	79	3.59	4	4
6. On-site Informational Sessions/Open Houses	65	2.95	3	2
7. Off-site Informational Sessions (Business visits)	79	3.59	4	4
8. E-mail Marketing	31	1.41	1	0
9. Internet/Webpage	74	3.36	4	4
10. Direct Mail	84	3.82	4	4
11. Word of Mouth	105	4.77	5	5

Question 12 of the survey instrument asked for the respondent to list any delivery

methods currently in use at their site that were not listed in the evaluation section of the

survey. Of the total respondents, 63.64% replied to this item. There was some repetition of

additional delivery methods at sites. Of the respondents who replied to Item 12 on the

survey:

- 71.43% of respondents listed community college networking (including a local web page, newsletters, information tables set up in prominent areas on the campus, and luncheons for staff) along with participation in transfer days, Spring Fling (and other community college events).
- 28.57% of respondents listed ads in community college schedule books.

- 21.43% of respondents listed membership in local Chambers of Commerce along with participation in Chamber of Commerce committees and events.
- 14.29% of respondents listed presentations to community college orientation classes and presentations to specific college majors (i.e., Nursing, Engineering Technology).

Additional delivery methods listed for Question 12 included:

- Participation in local job fairs
- Community involvement
- Tech Prep involvement
- Advertising signs on the rear of local buses
- Advertising on local pharmacy bags

Question 13 of the survey instrument asked for respondents to list any marketing efforts in use at their site. The respondents were asked to include as much information as possible, including costs associated with the marketing efforts. Of the total respondents, 86.36% replied to this question. Responses are shown in detail in Table 2.

TABLE 2	
Question 13 – In the space provided, please list any marketing efforts in use at your site (IE. Lunch for community college divisions): PLEASE PRINT and be as detailed as possible including any costs associated with the marketing efforts.	
Response	**Cost (if any)**
Adopt-a-Street	
Co-sponsoring events with community college student organizations (i.e., SGA)	
Fax materials to local school districts	
Frequent visits to Virginia Employment Commission offices	
Site specific web page	
On-line newsletter	
Articulation agreements	
Annual report luncheon	
Newsletters to partners	
Visits to community college branch campuses	
Frequent visits to Virginia Employment Commission offices	
Speaker for all local groups (VFW, Ruritan, Rotary, etc)	
Visits to community college branch campuses	
Web page inclusion & link from county and economic development websites in service region	
Business visits (hospitals, schools, etc)	
Informational Binders for community college staff, businesses	

Cups with candy for new community college faculty/staff	$15
Attend Chamber of Commerce business luncheons/meetings	$15-30
Giveaway basket at Christmas Breakfast	$30
Stadium cups filled with goodies for community college staff	$50 per semester
Walk-in evaluations and information table with popcorn and giveaways to students	$50
Popcorn machine for open house (rental and supplies)	$50
Lunch for community college divisions	$50-70
Thank you pizza lunch for community college staff	$60
Chamber of Commerce newsletter inserts	$60
New Educators Breakfast (sponsor a new teacher)	$70
Media appreciation lunch	$100
Refreshments for community college in-service	$100-150
Breakfast for community college faculty/staff	$100 - 200
Open House with hot dogs, peanuts and drinks	$250
Newspaper ads	$250 per term
Sign at the local little league ball field	$150 per year
Sign on local bus transportation	$450 two times/year
Lunch with community college administrators and counselors	$500

Question 14 on the survey instrument asked for respondents to list suggestions that they might have for improving the marketing process for TELETECHNET. This questions was answered by 90.91% of respondents. Of the respondents who replied to question 14:

- 70% suggested increasing the marketing budgets (either by individual site or regionally).
- 25% suggested that more give-away items be made available to the sites.
- 15% suggested standardization of marketing methods and tools (i.e., PowerPoint presentations, flyers).
- 10% indicated a need for a statewide marketing campaign by the TELETECHNET Marketing Department (not the individual sites).
- 10% suggested better contact with the TELETECHNET Marketing Department.

Other suggestions made by respondents were:

- Regional marketing plans
- Transfer Pride programs
- Showcasing partnerships
- Articulation agreements

- Improving customer service – specifically on campus processes that affect distance students
- Improving communications on all levels
- Improving scheduling of classes to better cater to our market (working adults) and strive to meet their needs, not the needs of the university
- Market to high school juniors and seniors
- Establish and maintain a community presence
- Marketing based on prior planning and have materials ready before the launch of the programs (roll out new programs as a complete package)
- Professional looking marketing materials (including camera ready ads that can be personalized) and more marketing tools for sites (digital cameras, table displays, etc.)
- Purchase Billboard space
- Professional development in marketing for site personnel
- Eliminate some of the middle men between marketing departments and sites
- Main campus personnel (faculty, department chairs) need to visit sites to establish partnerships

SUMMARY

The survey instrument was used to obtain information that would meet the research goals set forth by this project. Data were gathered to determine the effectiveness of current marketing methods, additional methods in use, and suggestions for changing the TELETECHNET marketing process. In Chapter V, the data gathered and presented in Chapter IV, along with the literature review, will be used to provide a summary, draw conclusions, and make recommendations for courses of action.

CHAPTER V
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The survey instrument was used to determine the effectiveness of existing delivery methods and to generate lists of additional marketing methods and suggestions for improving marketing for TELETECHNET. A summary of this research project will be presented to provide a description of the problem and goals, along with methods and procedures used. The research problem will be answered based on data collected. Recommendations will then be made based on all data and information gathered.

SUMMARY

The problem addressed by this research study was to determine effective, cost-efficient marketing efforts for Old Dominion University's TELETECHNET program. Based on the problem, three research goals were set. The goals were to document marketing efforts currently in use at Old Dominion University distance sites; to determine which marketing methods have brought students to Old Dominion University's TELETECHNET programs; and to recommend system-wide methods to be employed in marketing Old Dominion University's TELETECHNET program.

As part of the research project, a review of literature was conducted. The review of literature was focused on two major areas. The first of these areas was distance education and its growing importance. As part of the review of distance education, Old Dominion University's distance program was highlighted. The second area of the review of literature was focused on how to market education. An interview was conducted with Mrs. Maria Ferguson, ODU's Coordinator of Marketing for Distance Education.

Once the review of literature was complete, a survey instrument was designed to gather the data needed to help answer the research goals. The survey, distributed to TELETECHNET site directors within the Virginia community college sites, was designed for the evaluation of existing system-wide marketing delivery methods. It was also used to gather information on marketing methods or ideas that may be unique to individual sites. Finally, the survey instrument was used to generate a list of suggestions on how to improve marketing for TELETECHNET.

The data collected from the survey instrument were presented. Based on the review of literature and data collected, conclusions and recommendations were made.

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to determine effective, cost-efficient marketing efforts for Old Dominion University's TELETECHNET program. The first goal of the study was to document marketing efforts currently in use at Old Dominion University distance sites. System-wide marketing efforts were generated as part of the survey instrument. Question 13 of the survey instrument asked TELETECHNET site directors to list marketing efforts, currently in use at their site, that were not part of the system-wide efforts. An indication that the majority of sites utilize their own methods of marketing was evident in that 86.36% of respondents generated the requested list.

The second goal of the research study was to determine which marketing methods have brought students to Old Dominion University's TELETECHNET programs. This goal was answered by evaluating the effectiveness of current methods of information delivery. The lowest ranked methods were Paid Advertisement on Television, Paid Advertisement on Radio, and E-mail Marketing. The survey responses indicated that these methods of delivery

were not applicable at the majority of sites. The highest ranked method of delivery was Word of Mouth, indicating that the success of the program is dependent on the success of the students. Other high ranked methods of delivery included Direct Mail, Posters/Flyers, Off-site Informational Sessions, and Press Releases.

The third research goal was to recommend system-wide methods to be employed in marketing Old Dominion University's TELETECHNET program. This goal was obtained by a combination of the review of literature and data collected by the survey instrument. The survey asked for site directors to generate a list of suggested changes to the marketing of TELETECHNET. An indication that changes are need is that 90.91% of respondents answered this survey item.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research conducted, the researcher recommends the following actions. The recommendations are focused in two areas: models and methods.

Models: A study is recommended to determine existing models for marketing educational programs. The study should focus on how to market distance education in an effort to find a model best suited for marketing TELETECHNET. The recommendation is made because of the current lack of a model in use for marketing Old Dominion University's TELETECHNET program.

Methods: A study is recommended to determine the feasibility of initiating new marketing methods. The study should focus on current trends, such as E-mail marketing. Once the study is completed, it is recommended that Old Dominion University initiate all plausible marketing methods to increase the visibility of TELETECHNET. In addition to the study into marketing methods, it is recommended that the main campus marketing unit work hand-

in-hand with distance sites to assist them with their marketing needs. This assistance should be prompt, professional, and consistent. It is also recommended that budgetary issues be addressed. Although it is unlikely that a large marketing budget can be made available to each site, there must be some money available if marketing is to be successful. The researcher also recommends that a study be completed on possible collaborative efforts between distance learning and other ODU offices. Collaboration would take the burden of branding Old Dominion University off of the site directors and allow more time for marketing TELETECHNET.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Survey Instrument

Appendix B: Cover Letter

Appendix C: Follow-up Letter

Appendix D: Results of the Evaluation of Current Methods of Information Delivery

APPENDIX A

Determining effective, cost-efficient marketing efforts for Old Dominion

University's TELETECHNET program

Survey Instrument

All information gathered from this survey will be used for the completion of a research study conducted as part of the Masters of Science in Occupational and Technical Studies.

Information gathered from this survey will also be used to create a list of the marketing efforts that are currently in use within the Old Dominion University distance program, to determine which marketing efforts are the most successful in bringing students to ODU programs, and will be used as the basis for recommending system-wide marketing methods for use in ODU's TELETECHNET program.

Procedures:

1. Please fill in your TELETECHNET site code in the space provided at the bottom of this page. This information will be used to keep track of who completes the survey and will be destroyed once all surveys are returned. **Any comments/suggestions made on this survey will remain completely anonymous. The report will contain no names or site codes.**

2. Complete the survey entirely. (If you are the site director for more than one campus, please complete the survey for EACH of your sites.)

3. Return the survey in the self-addressed, stamped envelope that has been provided.

Thank you for you time and assistance with this project.

TELETECHNET Site Code: _____ (i.e. WCC 582)

I   Evaluation of Current Methods of Information Delivery

Please evaluate the following items based on their effectiveness as delivery methods for information about TELETECHNET in terms of this scale:

Very Poor 1	Poor 2	Acceptable 3	Good 4	Very Good 5	Not Applicable N/A

Delivery Method	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
1. Press Release/Public Service Announcement	O	O	O	O	O	O
2. Paid Advertisement – Print	O	O	O	O	O	O
3. Paid Advertisement - Radio	O	O	O	O	O	O
4. Paid Advertisement – Television (Cable crawler)	O	O	O	O	O	O
5. Posters/Flyers	O	O	O	O	O	O
6. On-site Informational Sessions/Open Houses	O	O	O	O	O	O
7. Off-site Informational Sessions (Business visits)	O	O	O	O	O	O
8. E-mail Marketing	O	O	O	O	O	O
9. Internet/Webpage	O	O	O	O	O	O
10. Direct Mail	O	O	O	O	O	O
11. Word of Mouth	O	O	O	O	O	O

II   Additional Methods of Delivery

12. In the space provided, please list any delivery methods in use at your site not included in the list above: PLEASE PRINT

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III   Marketing Efforts

13. In the space provided, please list any marketing efforts in use at your site (i.e. Lunch for community college divisions): PLEASE PRINT and be as detailed as possible including any costs associated with the marketing efforts.

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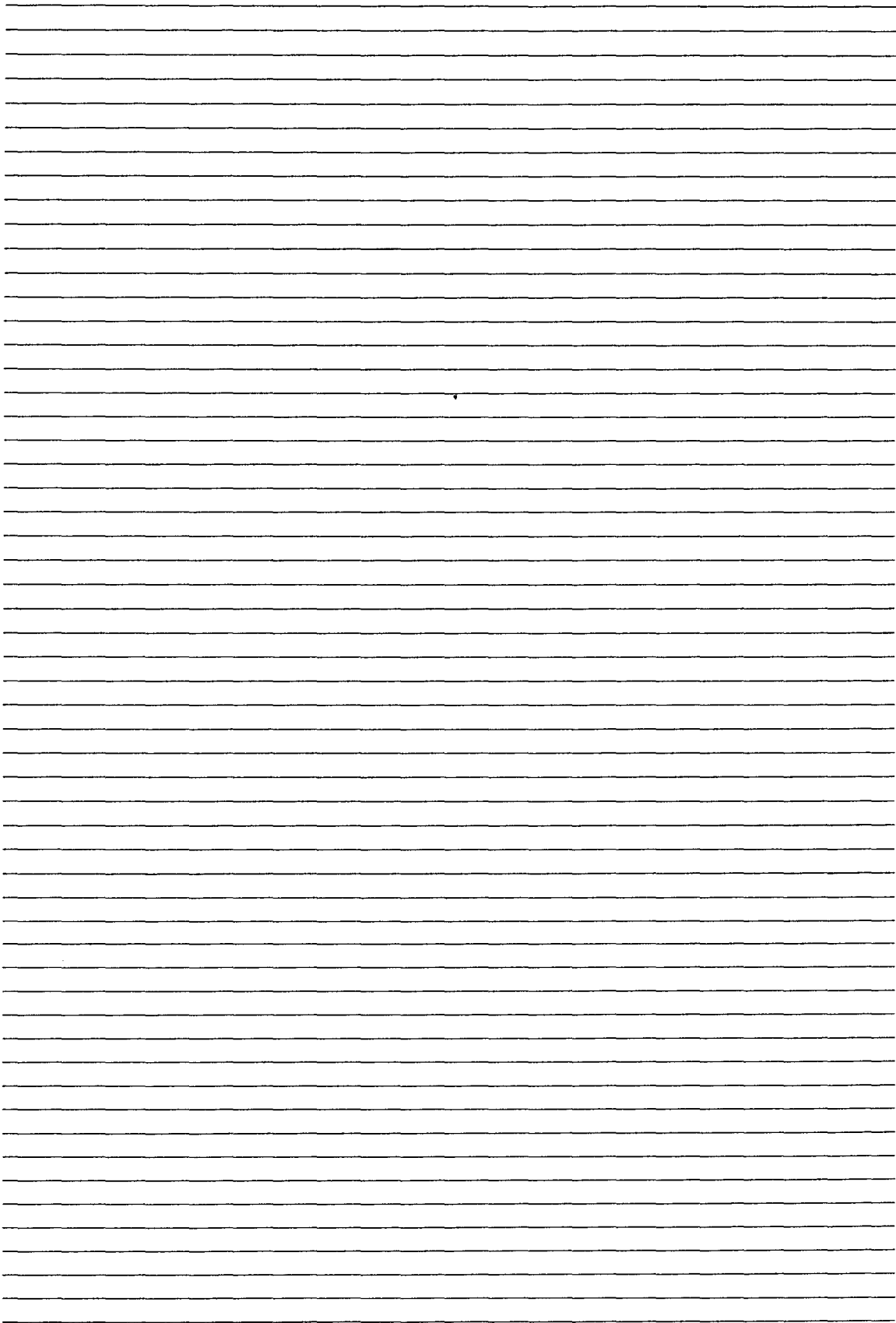
IV   Suggestions

14. In the space provided, please list suggestions you may have to improve the marketing process for TELETECHNET: PLEASE PRINT

APPENDIX B

203 Buck Avenue, Apartment A
P.O. Box 1015
Rural Retreat, VA 24368

June 18, 2002

Dear TELETECHNET Site Director:

I am currently working on my Master's of Science in Occupational and Technical Studies majoring in Business and Industry Training. As part of the degree program, I am conducting a research study. The focus of this study is determining effective, cost-efficient marketing methods for Old Dominion University TELETECHNET program, specifically the sites located on Virginia Community College campuses.

Your position as a TELETECHNET Site Director means that you have the responsibility of marketing the program in your service region. This allows you to provide first hand information on what marketing methods are working at your site. Enclosed you will find a brief survey designed to collect data on marketing methods currently in use at the twenty-seven (27) community college TELETECHNET sites. Please complete the survey and return it to me in the enclosed envelope by July 5, 2002. If you serve as site director at more than one site, please complete a survey for each of your sites. (A survey has been mailed to every site so you will not need to make a copy.)

Thank you for your time in this matter and I hope to hear from you soon. You can contact me at debrown@odu.edu if you need any further information.

Sincerely,

Douglas Brown

Enclosure

APPENDIX C

203 Buck Avenue, Apartment A
P.O. Box 1015
Rural Retreat, VA 24368

July 9, 2002

Dear TELETECHNET Site Director:

Several weeks ago, you should have received a survey asking for information on marketing methods currently in use at your TELETECHNET site. The information that you provide, as a TELETECHNET Site Director, will help create an overall picture of current marketing methods and their effectiveness. It will also help generate new marketing ideas and methods that may be put to use at every TELETECHNET site.

If you have never received the survey, or have not returned it, please do so in the next few days. Enclosed you will find another copy of the survey and a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Thank you for your time in this matter and I hope to hear from you soon. You can contact me at debrown@odu.edu if you need any further information.

Sincerely,

Douglas Brown

Enclosure

APPENDIX D
Results of the Evaluation of Current Methods of Information Delivery

Survey Item 1 – Press Release/Public Service Announcement

3	4	4	4	4	5	4	2	2	4	2	3	4	4	5	4	4	3	2	4	4	2

Raw Score = 77
Mean = 3.5
Median = 4
Mode = 4

Survey Item 2 –Paid Advertisement – Print

0	0	0	3	5	3	2	3	5	0	0	0	2	2	0	3	2	4	2	2	5	3

Raw Score = 46
Mean = 2.09
Median = 2
Mode = 0

Survey Item 3 – Paid Advertisement – Radio

0	0	0	3	1	2	4	2	0	0	4	0	1	2	0	0	1	3	3	2	0	3

Raw Score = 31
Mean = 1.41
Median = 1.5
Mode = 0

Survey Item 4 – Paid Advertisement – Television (cable crawler)

0	0	0	4	0	2	0	0	4	0	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	3	0	2	0	2

Raw Score = 24
Mean = 1.14
Median = .5
Mode = 0

Survey Item 5 - Posters/Flyers

3	4	3	4	3	4	3	3	5	4	3	4	4	4	3	3	4	3	3	4	4	4

Raw Score = 79
Mean = 3.59
Median = 4
Mode = 4

Survey Item 6 – On-site Informational Sessions/Open Houses

2	4	3	2	4	3	2	5	1	2	3	4	2	2	2	4	2	4	3	4	4	3

Raw Score = 65
Mean = 2.95
Median = 3
Mode = 2

Survey Item 7 – Off-site Informational Sessions (Business Visits)

3	3	5	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	3	4	3	4	4	3	3	3	4	4	3	3

Raw Score = 79
Mean = 3.59
Median = 4
Mode = 4

Survey Item 8 – E-mail Marketing

4	0	0	0	2	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	4	0	2	4	0	3	0	4

Raw Score = 31
Mean = 1.41
Median = 1
Mode = 0

Survey Item 9 – Internet/Webpage

3	4	3	4	3	4	2	3	5	0	3	4	2	3	4	4	2	4	4	5	4	4

Raw Score = 74
Mean = 3.36
Median = 4
Mode = 4

Survey Item 10 – Direct Mail

3	4	4	5	4	4	3	5	4	5	3	4	3	3	3	4	3	4	3	4	5	4

Raw Score = 84
Mean = 3.82
Median = 4
Mode = 4

Survey Item 11 – Word of Mouth

5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5

Raw Score = 105
Mean = 4.77
Median = 5
Mode = 5