

Profile of VET organisation

Name of organization: Laatukeskus Excellence Finland

Country: Finland

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Type of VET institute: Further education and training

Good practice title

Products cards

Baseline / problem

Our courses and curriculum were not being developed systematically. Although we did have new courses at times it was sporadic and there was not much product development going on. In addition, information about the new courses was unclear and sometimes key people got the information too late.

Good practice: (Measures, instruments, criteria, indicators)

We implemented a two-step product development process centred around a new tool: product cards. A product card is a basic fact sheet that lists what should be considered before developing a new course.

The product card includes:

- Name of the course/li>
- Process responsible for making the course happen/li>
- A short description of the course/li>

- Justification why we should run this course in the first place/li>
- Unique selling points for the 1) end user and 2) purchaser of the course/li>
- Key target group of the course/li>
- Preliminary schedule of the course/li>
- Price/li>
- Financial indicators (such as expected revenue and bottom line)/li>
- Targets and measurements for the course

Anyone can at any time start filling in a product card for a new course. However, the course can only be realized after the product card has been approved in our monthly office and finance meeting. Sometimes cards get passed on the first try, but usually they get some feedback and homework to come back next month again with an improved card.

So, basically the approach boils down to: 1) draft a product card 2) present it at the monthly meeting and 3) if approved realize products or 4) if declined either work on it more or leave it be.

Problems and constraints encountered and solutions found:

This approach works well as a low-entry service development process. It has encouraged our staff to come up with more ideas and at the same time kept everyone up to date with what is happening. We have mostly solved the problem of new products appearing out of nowhere.

It is vital to keep the card as simple as possible. Ours is roughly one A4 sheet of paper. This will keep people from being disheartened by a needlessly long bureaucratic exercise.

If the cards are approved in a meeting as we do, it is a good idea to make sure that people attending have a chance to familiarize themselves with the cards that will be presented beforehand. This will save plenty of time as you can go straight to making the decision instead of having everybody first read the card.