

SO YOU WANT TO TEACH MARKETING ONLINE: THE CHALLENGES AND THE ISSUES

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ABSTRACT

The use of the Internet and computer-mediated communication has been definitely increasing over the past decade. Sixty-five percent of graduate programs in the United States are now providing online courses as an option for students and 56 percent of universities and colleges signify online education as a critical long term strategy (Norton & Hathaway, 2008).

As instructors embrace the use of the internet in the teaching process, they are taking on a task that will enhance their teaching activities yet potentially create endless challenges and frustrations. Smith, Ferguson, and Caris (2001) indicate teaching classes online can be considered a labor-intensive, highly text-based, and intellectually challenging teaching forum. Most online instructors understand and anticipate these broad conceptual online teaching issues. Pankowski (2004) indicates faculty training for online teaching should include technical training, pedagogical training, mentoring and online coursework. Again, most online instructors accept, embrace, and often seek various forms of training and learning.

From experience, what the authors found missing and rarely discussed are those tricks of the trade learned only by doing advice, training sessions, alternative platforms, and ideas to simplify the online teaching experience. Grant and Thornton (2007) indicated several best practices for online learning, while Cuthrell and Lyon (2007) cover instructional strategies students prefer. However, there seems to be little discussion on the implementation or implementation alternatives, daily strategies that address those challenges and frustrations that occur when technology, students, instructors and institutions of higher education are combined. Via the authors' experiences, simple daily issues such as the computer ate it, here's a hard copy as I could not submit it online, the system was down, the system cut me off, we changed online software delivery editions, student online class access ended based on university policies versus instructor policies,

course availability must be requested, etc. can blind-side an instructor and quickly add unanticipated challenges and frustrations if not nightmares to the online teaching process.

The purpose of the session was to address those "unanticipated challenges and frustrations" faced by non-online to early adopters to seasoned online users, by tech savvy as well as non-tech savvy instructors, and by those instructors totally or partially teaching online. Unanticipated issues and challenges, possible solutions as well as the type of creative thinking that may be required to feel comfortable teaching marketing courses online were covered. The session was an interactive session to share instructor, student, and technical issues and challenges for those just starting out to those well versed in online teaching. The session specifically addressed online teaching issues gained only by living those frustrating experiences that the authors wished someone had encouraged them to think about before it happened. The authors shared not only various challenges and ideas but presented solutions that worked and did not work in marketing classes at both the graduate and undergraduate levels for classes such as Principles of Marketing, Consumer Behavior, Internet Marketing, and Marketing Management. New and relatively new instructors who wish to integrate online technology into their marketing classes, as well as seasoned online marketing teachers seeking new ideas, learned vicariously about challenges faced in both internet only (Web based) and seat-time/internet (Web enhanced) classes.

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