



Education
Advisory
Board

Community College Executive
Forum

Expanding Corporate Training Programs

Considerations for Program Design and Marketing



Research Brief

eab.com

Community College Executive Forum

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1) Executive Overview

Key Observations

Community colleges face new opportunities to expand their corporate training activities as employers reverse the training expenditure cuts implemented during the Great Recession. National surveys suggest that the average employer's training expenditures have increased by 10 to 15 percent annually since 2010. Compared to other corporate training providers, community colleges offer affordable prices, flexible delivery, and expertise in adult learner pedagogy.

Marketing staff should target corporate training outreach toward new businesses and employers who have previously sponsored employee training. Many marketing departments lack the resources to call or mail all businesses in their service area. To maximize time spent on phone outreach, resourceful administrators may limit calls to businesses with a demonstrated record of sponsoring employee education through tuition reimbursement. Administrators may also target businesses that have recently relocated to the area, which commonly have unmet staffing and training needs.

Both print and online marketing materials should profile successful corporate training partnerships, with an emphasis on the business partner's return on investment (ROI). Compelling measures of ROI include heightened productivity, increases in employee retention, and reductions in employee recruitment costs. Case profiles better reflect the customized nature of corporate training programs than traditional course catalogs. Some colleges include profiles in annual workforce development reports that administrators distribute to local business leaders.

Advisory boards, corporate alumni clubs, and corporate memberships allow colleges to convert one-time training clients into long-term business partners. At many colleges, over half of all incoming training inquiries come from previous business partners. To keep key partners engaged after their first training, college administrators can invite business leaders to program advisory boards and participating employees to alumni clubs. Select corporate training divisions even offer annual memberships (instead of one-time training contracts) to business partners likely to seek repeated trainings.

Program administrators supplement local labor market data with needs assessment surveys to understand the specialized needs of local employers. Common sources of labor market data include the Bureau of Labor Statistics, state departments of labor, and proprietary analytics platforms. Needs assessment surveys typically ask local employers to indicate interest in available corporate training offerings and to request specially customized programs.

Optimal price points balance the cost of program delivery with the need to remain competitive among local training providers. The price of a corporate training program typically exceeds the sum of instructional expenses and administrative overhead by at least 25 percent. However, administrators may lower standard prices to compete with other local training providers, to promote new programs, or to partner with nonprofit organizations unable to pay corporate rates.

2) Introducing the Corporate Training Market

Throughout this report, the term *corporate training* refers to customized programs that colleges deliver to a business partner's employees. Programs may be credit or noncredit, depending on the employer partner's needs and the training division's accreditation status. Many colleges offer corporate training within their continuing education or workforce development divisions, but select colleges instead maintain free-standing "corporate colleges" that specialize in noncredit training for business partners.

Despite their name, many corporate training divisions also partner with the public and non-profit sectors. Many of the strategies profiled in this report apply equally toward partnerships with governmental and non-profit organizations.

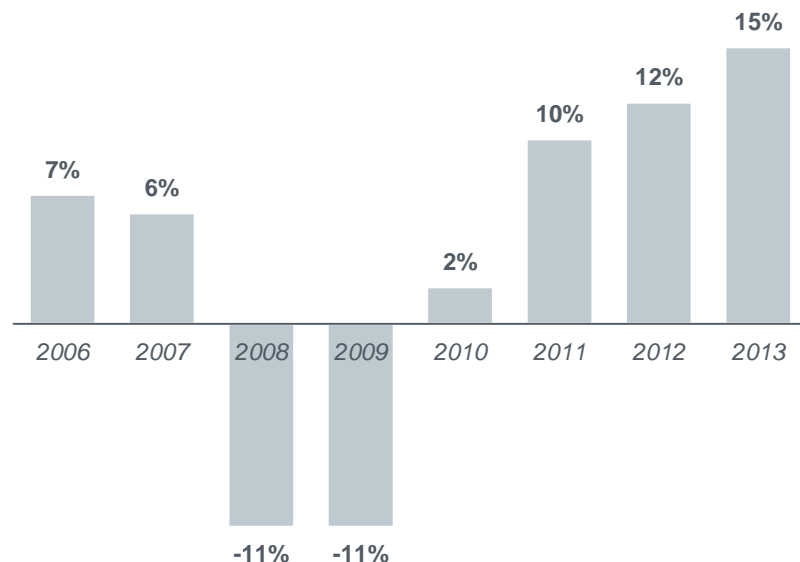
Overview of Employer Demand

Economic Recovery Elevates Employer Investment in Training

The market for corporate training closely mirrors the economic cycle. At the height of the Great Recession of 2007-2009, businesses faced with shrinking budgets reduced spending on employee training and development. This trend has reversed markedly since 2010, and the market for corporate training is expanding as the economy recovers. According to a national survey from the research firm Bersin by Deloitte, the average employer's training expenditures have increased by 10 to 15 percent annually over the last three years.

Annual Change in Average Corporate Training Expenditures¹

United States, 2006-2013



1) Bersin by Deloitte, The Corporate Learning Factbook 2014: Benchmarks, Trends, and Analysis of the U.S. Training Market (Jan. 2014).

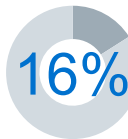
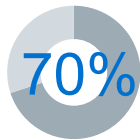
Opportunities Remain for Colleges to Capture Greater Share of Corporate Training Market

The acceleration of technological change further drives growth in demand. As industry implements new technologies at a faster rate, workers face growing pressure to update their skills. In fact, according to a survey conducted by Aslanian Market Research, 70 percent of employers now agree that today's employees need continuous education to keep their skills relevant.

However, most employers currently turn to in-house training and development teams or external consultants for continuing education. National surveys indicate that many employers turn to these training providers because they lack awareness of college-based training programs adequately tailored to their needs. This suggests that community colleges, which currently capture a small share of the corporate training market, could expand their corporate training portfolio through targeted marketing and customized program design.

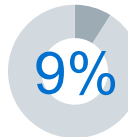
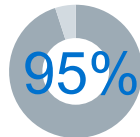
Employer Views on Corporate Training and Higher Education²

Share of employers who believe today's employees need continuous education and training



Share of employers who believe available college programs are adequately tailored to their needs

Share of employers who financially support the continuing education of their employees



Share of employers who partner with a higher education institution for professional development

Value Proposition to Employers

Community Colleges Offer Affordability, Flexible Delivery, and Instructional Expertise

Businesses partner with community colleges to supplement in-house training resources without incurring the expenses associated with private sector training providers (e.g., consultants). The graphic below highlights three advantages of community college training programs that college administrators should emphasize to prospective partners.

The Value of College-Based Corporate Training



Affordable Cost

Community colleges generally charge less for corporate training than private sector providers. Additionally, many small companies that cannot afford to hire in-house training and development staff can still afford a short-term training contract.



Flexible Delivery

College-based instructors commonly travel to employer sites to ensure that programs are as convenient to attend as in-house training. Colleges may also develop online training platforms that allow employees to complete programs at their own pace.



Instructional Expertise

Few companies hire in-house staff with the pedagogical expertise of community college faculty. Faculty have substantial experience teaching adult learners, and instructional designers may also help develop customized training programs.

2) Destiny Solutions and Aslanian Market Research, The Voice of the Employer on the Effects and Opportunities of Professional Development (May 2012).

3) Identifying and Recruiting Employer Partners

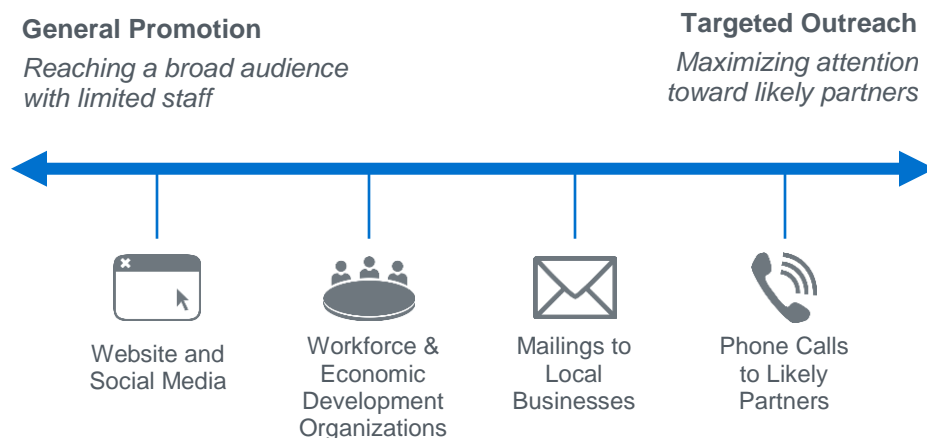
Marketing and Outreach

Combine General Promotion with Targeted Outreach to Maximize Marketing Resources

Many corporate training divisions lack the staff to conduct extensive proactive outreach (e.g., phone calls to local businesses), so marketing activities primarily consist of general promotions (e.g., press releases). Select employers who encounter marketing materials may initiate training partnerships with the college. However, many local business leaders will continue to lack awareness of the college's offerings until program administrators proactively initiate conversations with them.

The following sections explore how administrators with limited marketing resources can balance general promotions with targeted outreach to maximize the local business community's awareness of their training programs.

Spectrum of Recommended Marketing Activities



Reserve Phone Outreach for Employers with Demonstrated Record of Education Sponsorship

Resourceful marketing administrators prefer to dedicate time spent on phone outreach to employers likely to consider partnership. This includes employers who have already demonstrated a financial commitment to their staff's continuing education through tuition reimbursement policies.

Marketing administrators can analyze college-wide enrollment data to identify employers who have previously provided tuition reimbursement to numerous students. Staff can then proactively call the 20 (or more) employers who have sponsored the most students over the last ten years. Employers who have sponsored fewer students may be weaker candidates for phone outreach but should still receive program brochures in the mail.

Build Relations with Local Business Leaders Through Workforce and Economic Development Organizations

Local workforce investment boards, economic development organizations, and chambers of commerce commonly refer business leaders to community college training programs. Regular attendance at these organizations' meetings and events allows college representatives to build relationships with potential employer partners. It also enhances the college's visibility as a training provider and allows college administrators to better understand local businesses' hiring needs.



Offer Training Discounts as a Relocation Incentive

Many economic development organizations or chambers of commerce offer incentive packages to new businesses that relocate to the county. To ensure that businesses can meet their staffing needs, these packages commonly include free or discounted corporate training from local community colleges. This acquaints new businesses with college offerings, and businesses that receive free or discounted trainings may become regular partners.

Highlight Employer ROI from Previous Partnerships in Mailings

Marketing administrators often struggle to design brochures and course catalogs for corporate training because of its customized nature. Businesses that seek specially designed training programs see limited value in pre-set catalogs. Effective marketing materials go beyond course listings to emphasize the training division's areas of expertise and previous successes.

Administrators at **Central Piedmont Community College** produce an annual workforce development report to mail to local business leaders. This report profiles success stories from previous partnerships and highlights new additions to the college's training portfolio. Business leaders who receive the report commonly contact the college for more information, and some also share the report with colleagues across their industry.

Promote Programs Online Through SEO and Instructors' Networks

Although many business leaders discover corporate training opportunities through word-of-mouth, others discover them online. Like effective mailings, effective websites profile previous partnerships that generated value for participating employers.

Strategies to Promote Corporate Training Programs Online

Invest in Search Engine Optimization

Some colleges invest in search engine optimization (SEO) or paid searches to ensure their websites appear among the top results when individuals in their region search for terms associated with corporate training (e.g., "professional development," "staff training")

Market Through Instructors' Professional Networks

College administrators can encourage corporate training instructors to mention their courses on their websites and LinkedIn pages. Instructors' professional networks commonly include business leaders in their field who may seek training opportunities for their staff.

Retain Current Partners to Reduce Recruitment Expenses

At many community colleges, previous business partners account for half or more of each year's corporate trainings. Colleges that successfully encourage employers to return for additional trainings can generate future revenue without additional recruitment costs.

Corporate training partnerships can also produce an enrollment pipeline for continuing education courses. If a worker benefits professionally from corporate training offered by his employer through a local community college, he may return to the college for future coursework later in his career.



Engage Local Business Leaders through Presidential Advisory Councils

To encourage sustained involvement from business leaders, **Central Piedmont Community College** maintains a presidential advisory council. This council includes approximately 50 local executives, who meet twice per year for a lunch and reception. The president uses these meetings to highlight the college's training programs and the on-the-job successes of graduates. This encourages council members to consult the college when future training needs arise.

Propose Annual Training Memberships with Add-On Benefits

Colleges can supplement training programs with various related business services, ranging from onsite education fairs that introduce employees to training options to customized exit surveys that evaluate employees' training experiences. At eCornell, a subsidiary of **Cornell University** that offers online professional development courses, employers select from one of seven annual membership tiers. Each tier includes a set amount of training seats and "customization credits," which employers can spend on add-on services. The membership model ensures that employers partner with the college for at least one year, while the add-on services promote high levels of satisfaction that encourage members to return for additional years.

Tiered Memberships with Customized Add-Ons

The eCornell Model (Illustrative)

Membership Level*	Annual Fee	Training Credits	Customization Credits
Enterprise	\$350,000	1,000 seats	0
Gold	\$85,000	300 seats	40
Silver a la Carte	\$30,000	\$185 per seat	20

*Simplified for illustrative purposes. Only 3 of 7 tiers are shown.

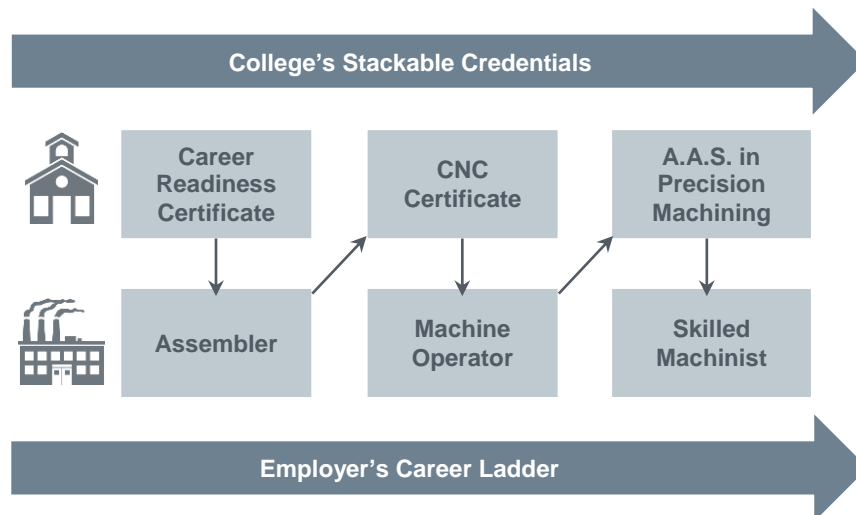
- Co-branded Catalog (2 credits)
- Orientation Webinar (2 credits)
- Onsite Education Fair (8 credits)
- Custom Exit Surveys (8 credits)
- Dedicated Sections (10 credits)
- Competency Mapping (12 credits)
- Training Needs Analysis (40 credits)

Map College's Stackable Credentials to Employer's Career Ladder

Entry-level workers who participate in corporate training may return to the college later in their careers. To maximize the likelihood that a worker will return for additional training, college administrators can coordinate with employer partners to map educational offerings to available career ladders. This encourages workers to pursue more advanced credentials at the college when they seek their next promotions.

For example, if a college partners with a local manufacturer to offer career readiness certificates to entry-level assemblers, program administrators could then map advanced certificates and associate degrees to skilled machinist roles at the manufacturer.

Manufacturing Credentials Mapped to Career Ladder (Illustrative)



Establish Corporate Alumni Clubs to Incentivize Employees to Return for Further Education

Select colleges have established corporate alumni clubs that bring together employees within a business who have previously attended the college. These clubs keep alumni engaged so they become more likely to return to the college for future trainings. They also allow colleges to leverage alumni for word-of-mouth marketing; a club's presence may draw the attention of other employees at the business who seek training.

Steps to Launch a Corporate Alumni Club



- 1) Choose a Business Host:** The best candidates include businesses that participate in corporate training, commonly hire the college's graduates, and/or serve on program advisory boards.
- 2) Identify Alumni-Employee Liaisons:** Liaisons plan events for the alumni club. Offer small incentives to encourage alumni to serve as liaisons (e.g., course discounts, college merchandise, athletic event tickets).
- 3) Plan a Club Event:** Alumni clubs commonly host a few events each year, such as brief presentations on training offerings, guest lectures from faculty, and opportunities for members to network over refreshments.
- 4) Incentivize Attendees to Enroll:** Some colleges offer application fee waivers, tuition discounts, or other incentives to encourage alumni club members to return to the college for additional training.

4) Designing Programs to Meet Employer Needs

New Program Development

Assess Local Demand Through Labor Market Data and Employer Perspectives

College administrators consult various resources to generate ideas for corporate training offerings and assess their viability. Some resources, including labor market data, allow for broad environmental scans of local demand. Other resources, including employer feedback, provide targeted guidance on specific workforce needs.

Resources that Inform New Program Development



Conduct Needs Assessments with Prospective Partners to Gauge Demand for Customization

Corporate training administrators at **Crowder College** mail needs assessment surveys to previous employer partners and new businesses in their service area. Surveys include the following components:

- Available course titles and prices, listed by field
- Space to indicate the number of employees the responding business expects to send through each available course that year
- Space to request customized trainings not listed on the survey

When a business submits a completed survey, college staff request a one-on-one meeting with the CEO, hiring managers, or human resources personnel to discuss the business's needs in greater detail.

Develop Mix-and-Match Modules to Expedite Customization

Many businesses value customized training over “off the shelf” content. However, instructors require several months to develop customized programs, and employer partners often find the associated costs prohibitive.

To allow for efficient customization, instructors may instead design modular programs that allow employer partners to piece together their own curriculum from pre-designed modules. For example, **Anne Arundel Community College**’s CyberCenter offers modular trainings in cybersecurity awareness that teach non-technical workers to support enterprise-level security initiatives. Employer partners can combine core modules in broadly applicable topics with specialized modules that target the needs of their particular industry (e.g., law, accounting).

Sample Modular Training with Customization Options

Cybersecurity Awareness Trainings at Anne Arundel Community College

Core		Specialized	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Specialized modules adapt curriculum to needs of diverse industry sectors ✓ Flexible schedules and on-site delivery options provide the convenience of self-paced trainings in a face-to-face group setting
Introduction to Security	Workplace Security	Cyber for C-Suite Executives	
Passwords	Data Integrity	Cyber for Law Practitioners	
Computer Security	WiFi Security	Cyber for CPAs	
Online Security	Social Engineering	Cyber for Health Care Professionals	
Mobile Security	Network & Cloud Security		

Assessment and Evaluation

Modify Program Content and Structure Based on Exit Surveys

Most colleges administer exit surveys to training participants to improve existing course offerings and better address employer needs. Exit surveys strengthen long-term business partnerships because they allow program administrators and instructors to align future trainings with a partner’s preferences.

Sample Exit Survey for Corporate Training and Education Programs

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Disagree
This course will help me be more successful in my profession/career.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would recommend this course topic to my colleagues.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The course instructor meets stated objectives of the course.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand Lean Six Sigma organization structure after completing this course.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5) Securing Resources for Program Expansion

Pricing Models

Base Price Points on Cost of Program Delivery, Plus Markup

To ensure that corporate training programs remain financially self-sustaining, administrators must set price points equal to or greater than the expenses the college incurs. These expenses include the direct cost of instruction for individual contracts, as well as the indirect costs of program administration.

Direct and Indirect Costs of Program Delivery

Direct Costs

For Individual Contracts

- Instructor compensation
- Instructor travel expenses
- Dedicated space or equipment
- Textbooks and worksheets

Indirect Costs

For Administrative Overhead

- Administrators' salaries
- Space and equipment shared across multiple courses
- Marketing expenses

Program administrators typically multiply a program's direct and indirect costs by a markup rate so that the contract generates surplus revenue. This markup rate ranges from 25 to 70 percent across surveyed institutions.

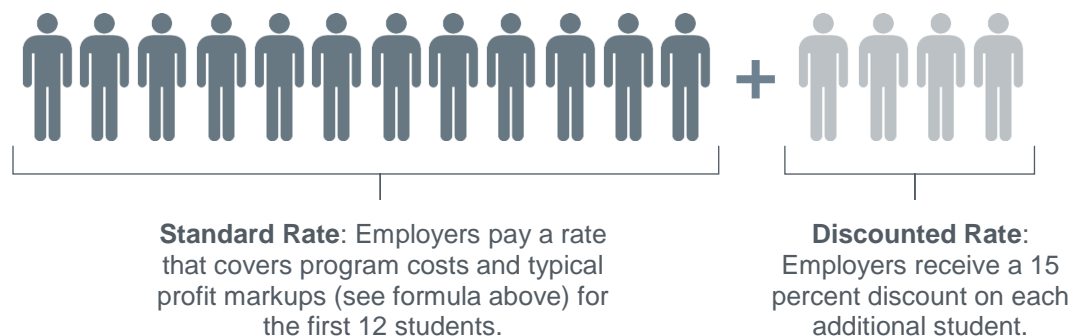
General Program Pricing Formula

$$\left(\begin{array}{c} \text{Direct} \\ \text{Costs} \end{array} + \begin{array}{c} \text{Indirect} \\ \text{Costs} \end{array} \right) \times \begin{array}{c} \text{Markup} \\ \text{Rate} \end{array} = \begin{array}{c} \text{Price per} \\ \text{Student} \end{array} \times \begin{array}{c} \text{Minimum} \\ \text{Expected} \\ \text{Enrollment} \end{array}$$

Offer Discounts for Large Cohorts to Boost Enrollment Revenue

Typically, the largest direct costs associated with a corporate training program's delivery (i.e., instructor compensation and dedicated space) remain fixed regardless of the number of students enrolled. Because larger cohorts generate greater enrollment revenue, program administrators may offer employers a discount on each additional student that the employer sends beyond the minimum.

Sample Pricing Model with Large Cohort Discounts



Adjust Prices to Reflect Local Competition and Program Reputation

Pre-determined pricing formulas allow corporate training administrators to ensure that all business partners receive comparable rates. This prevents conflicts that may arise when one business discovers that the college offers a preferred rate to another business. However, administrators may allow for pricing flexibility in limited cases to ensure that price points remain competitive.

Common Reasons to Lower Price Points

- **Competitors' rates:** If other local training providers (colleges, universities, or private sector organizations) offer comparable programs at a lower cost, administrators should consider matching the lowest cost to avoid losing business partners.
- **New program launches:** Administrators occasionally subsidize new programs to garner interest and establish a reputation of quality. Once the program establishes a positive reputation, its pricing will revert to standard rates.
- **Availability of external funding:** Occasionally, government or foundation grants may subsidize corporate training in high-demand fields, which allows colleges to reduce the price they charge employers for these programs.
- **Business partner's ability to pay:** Program administrators may sparingly offer discounts to business partners unable to pay standard rates. This allows colleges to expand the market for corporate training to include employers that could not otherwise afford it, including many nonprofit organizations.

Staffing, Space, and Equipment

Large-Scale Corporate Training Requires Dedicated Marketing, Program Design, and Delivery Staff

At many colleges, staff from continuing education and workforce development divisions allocate part of their time to corporate training. This allows colleges to support small training portfolios without hiring additional staff.

However, colleges with large corporate training portfolios (including those that maintain free-standing corporate colleges) often hire dedicated staff to market, design, and deliver programs for business partners. Although this model requires significant investment, it allows staff to develop expertise in functions specific to corporate training, such as employer outreach and customized program design.

Common Functions of Dedicated Corporate Training Staff



Marketing staff receive inquiries and manage relations with prospective business partners. They also oversee division-wide advertising and network with local businesses to initiate partnerships.



Operations staff coordinate program delivery, including facilities and travel. Corporate training programs often require instructors to teach at the business partners' facilities.



Instructional designers develop programs according to business partners' customized requests regarding course content, target audience, and program length.



Instructors include industry practitioners hired to teach on a per-course basis, as well as college faculty who teach corporate training in addition to their standard workload.

On-Site Delivery Reduces Space Constraints and Facilities Costs

Many corporate business partners prefer that instructors deliver training at the employer's facilities. This reduces the loss of staff productivity that business partners would incur if their employees needed to travel to campus for each class session. The convenience of on-site delivery may also encourage otherwise hesitant employees to participate in training.

Although on-site delivery generates travel expenses for the college, it reduces the need for the college to provide dedicated space—often the greatest constraint on program expansion. Colleges that deliver training at employers' facilities save on space rental fees and off-peak utilities usage (e.g., lighting, heating and cooling). They also face less pressure to establish satellite locations in business districts, which typically provide convenience for business partners at a high cost to the college.

Leverage Demonstrated Training ROI to Solicit In-Kind Donations

Business leaders who rely on corporate training to address key skills gaps, reduce hiring costs, and/or increase staff productivity may consider in-kind donations that support their specialized training needs. For example, a manufacturer struggling to recruit workers trained in computer numerical control (CNC) operations might donate a CNC machine to the college to ensure that students receive training on it. Such donations allow colleges to update and expand their training portfolios.

Strategies for the Solicitation of Corporate Gifts

Publicize Major Gifts to Encourage Related Small Donations

Companies across a given industry often work together to support training for high-demand skills. If one company offers a major gift (valued at \$100,000 or more), college representatives should solicit related smaller gifts from other local companies in the same industry to develop a training program that meets the industry's needs.

Recognize Donors with Named Facilities and Press Coverage

The primary major gift recognition strategy involves naming facilities or professorships after the corporate donor. Some colleges also host banquets to honor major donors. Administrators may invite local press to banquets to generate positive media coverage for donors.

Demonstrate ROI on First Donation Before Soliciting Subsequent Gifts

Most first-time corporate donors expect colleges to demonstrate success in training program graduates on donated equipment before they make subsequent gifts. Repeat donors typically prefer to wait at least three years between their first and second gifts. If possible, different departments should oversee gift solicitation and corporate training to ensure companies do not feel undue pressure to donate each time they request training from the college.

6) Project Methodology

Institutions Examined in Our Research

Alamo Colleges
San Antonio, TX

Anne Arundel
Community College
Arnold, MD

Bellevue University
Bellevue, NE

Brown University
Providence, RI

Bunker Hill Community
College
Charlestown, MA

California Institute of
Technology
Pasadena, CA

Central Carolina
Community College
Sanford, NC

Central Piedmont
Community College
Charlotte, NC

Cornell University
Ithaca, NY

Crowder College
Neosho, MO

Cuyahoga Community
College
Cleveland, OH

Davidson County
Community College
Thomasville, NC

Erie Community
College
Williamsville, NY

Everett Community
College
Everett, WA

Florida State College at
Jacksonville
Jacksonville, FL

Forsyth Technical
Community College
Winston-Salem, NC

George Washington
University
Washington, DC

Georgetown University
Washington, DC

Georgia Institute of
Technology
Atlanta, GA

Harvard University
Cambridge, MA

Henry Ford College
Dearborn, MI

Holyoke Community
College
Holyoke, MA

Idaho State University
Pocatello, ID

Illinois Valley
Community College
Oglesby, IL

Lone Star College
System
The Woodlands, TX

Lorain County
Community College
Elyria, OH

Macomb Community
College
Warren, MI

Maricopa Community
College District
Tempe, AZ

Maryland Association of
Community Colleges
Annapolis, MD

Massasoit Community
College
Canton, MA

Motlow State
Community College
Tullahoma, TN

North Carolina
Community College
System
Raleigh, NC

North Shore
Community College
Danvers, MA

Northern Virginia
Community College
Springfield, VA

Oregon State University
Corvallis, OR

San Diego State
University
San Diego, CA

Technical College
System of Georgia
Atlanta, GA

University of Virginia
Charlottesville, VA

Sheridan College
Oakville, ON

University of Akron-
Wayne College
Orrville, OH

University of
Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Milwaukee, WI

South Carolina
Technical College
System
Columbia, SC

University of Alaska
System
Fairbanks, AK

Virginia Polytechnic
Institute
Blacksburg, VA

Southern Methodist
University
Dallas, TX

University of California-
Irvine
Irvine, CA

Wake Technical
Community College
Raleigh, NC

Stanford University
Stanford, CA

University of Chicago
Chicago, IL

Wentworth Institute of
Technology
Boston, MA

Tallahassee
Community College
Tallahassee, FL

University of Nevada,
Las Vegas
Las Vegas, NV

Project Sources

This report draws on the following studies, presentations, and research briefs produced by the Education Advisory Board:

- Education Advisory Board, “Capturing Non-Traditional Revenues: Survey of the Frontier,” 2010
- Education Advisory Board, “Considerations for Community Colleges’ Business Services and Training Offerings,” 2011
- Education Advisory Board, “Corporate Training and Education,” 2013
- Education Advisory Board, “Corporate Training Program Opportunities and Administration,” 2014
- Education Advisory Board, “Creating High-Impact Workforce Development Programs,” 2010
- Education Advisory Board, *Cybersecurity: Expanding Enrollments Through New On-Ramps*, 2014
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