

Vendor Partnership Risk vs. Benefit Matrix

Online enablement vendors have helped many institutions reach aggressive enrollment and revenue goals that they otherwise could not have achieved, but every partnership comes with some risk. See below for a comparison of the most important benefits and risks of entering into a partnership with an online enablement vendor.

Institutional Challenge	Vendor Partnership Benefit	Vendor Partnership Risk
Access to Capital		
Insufficient capital to seed new programs	Vendor makes significant upfront investment and assumes most financial risk	School forfeits substantial portion of future revenues in return for questionable value
Aligning Programs with Market Demand		
Inability to estimate demand for new programs	Vendor has broad experience and sophisticated enrollment models for forecasting online program demand	Vendor focus on the highest growth fields ignores school's interest in launching niche programs that are core to mission
Instructional Design		
Insufficient expertise in online course design and online learning platforms	Vendor employs experienced instructional designers and technology support personnel	Faculty distrust vendor involvement in creating academic content and are dissatisfied with off-site support model
Launch Speed		
Inability to launch new programs rapidly	Vendor has ready-to-go infrastructure, enabling rapid launch of new online programs	School experiences severe "growing pains" as enrollment growth outpaces increases in faculty and internal administrative supports
Inability to coordinate the simultaneous scaling of numerous online program supports	Vendor provides a full "turnkey" solution that incorporates all needed services in a streamlined package	All-inclusive package means duplicating existing campus services
Marketing and Recruiting		
Lack of staff with experience advertising to and recruiting online students	Vendor can utilize proprietary data and customer relationship management tools for national and regional marketing and recruiting	Vendor is unfamiliar with school traditions and culture, or employs questionable recruiting techniques at odds with institutional values
Student Support Services		
Lack of support services required by online students	Vendor employs integrated tools and trained staff to support online student success and service needs	Online students are isolated from mainstream campus experience