Project Management Systems Thinking Departamental Upgrade

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**ABSTRACT**

Student Affairs Marketing Communications provides support services for several Western Michigan University departments. In addition to a strong online Web presence, printed materials continue to be a popular medium for Dining Services, Residence Life, Student Affairs and Children's Place Learning Center, a primary list of Student Affairs departments marketing does work for. Promotional materials are developed for both new students and recruitment and retention of students. Throughout the year, the marketing department develops and designs a variety of projects in print, digital media and for the Web — in fact over 400 per year.

The marketing team consists of a marketing manager, webmaster, marketing specialist, senior and a part time graphic designer. To keep the department deliverables project objectives within time and resource commitments it is important to be organized and systematic in the approach. Project managing is an important function of that organization. After ten year’s the system approach required review and updating.

**GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

Each year as part of the performance management program and departmental strategic planning there are goals for process improvements. Administratively providing a systemic process approach that is organized and accurate for daily tasks is helpful with the available technology. As a project manager it is important to provide quality and consistency to all projects.

**DEPARTMENT NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

Researching and planning for a project management systems technology upgrade to improve the process in general for both administrative and customers is a time consuming process, while concurrently managing the daily job responsibilities. There is a commitment to make continuous improvements — accuracy and time saving for routine tasks. Improve quality and customer satisfaction.

At the March 2015 marketing staff meeting a needs assessment review took place. The chart to the right shows the current workflow list.

**CURRENT PROCESS**

The current project management process is identified in the graphic workflow as a multiple step, systematic approach. The Student Affairs departments meets with the marketing manager to review the yearly creative brief. Once these meetings occur, the project manager receives notes and an updated monthly project calendar. From this calendar many of the yearly, recurring projects can be scheduled and assigned. Based on system thinking, the improvement will come in with a more robust online, collaborative, trackable project management system.

**SEARCH RESULTS**

After a detail search of project management online systems. The results have been narrowed to four online systems. The comparison chart to the right was compiled based on the department needs assessment. The review was broken down into categories: traffic/workflow, creative, accounting, cost system details for a more comprehensive view.

**PRODUCT EVALUATION**

**DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

Departments at some point will need to be included as part of the process in terms of by-in for a new system chosen.

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

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