Innovating on Shoestring

PATTY PATRIA
VICE PRESIDENT FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
BECKER COLLEGE
- Small private college
- Enrollment of 2,100
- Traditional students and adult learners
- 98% tuition driven
- Small budgets and lean IT staff (11 people supporting 2 campuses)
What is innovation?

- Innovation can be a change, alteration, revolution, upheaval, transformation, metamorphosis, breakthrough;
- It can also be a new method, idea or product.
Google’s 70-20-10 Model

Google employs the 70–20–10 percent rule:
- 70 percent of employee’s time should be spent on core business
- 20 percent on projects related to core
- 10 percent on projects not related to core business

Source: https://www.fastcodesign.com/
Other ways to Innovate

- **Follow Customers Home**: try to find unexpected insights about customer needs, problems, and desired experiences.

- **Tap Outside Collaborators**: recruit a small group of “thought leaders” from other companies, universities, startups, or think-tanks to join a collaborative innovation session.

- **Stay Small**: Big innovations don’t necessarily have to begin by taking big risks or making bet-the-farm investments. It’s not about waiting around for senior leadership to sponsor and fund the next big idea but rather rapidly testing ideas to identify the things teams can do to have the biggest impact.

- **Use the Best, Invest the Rest**: The most innovative companies don’t always wait to build a new technology themselves—they look outside, find what exists, and then go from there.

Source: [https://www.fastcodesign.com/1670960/4-innovation-strategies-from-big-companies-that-act-like-startups](https://www.fastcodesign.com/1670960/4-innovation-strategies-from-big-companies-that-act-like-startups)
Many ways to innovate

Proof of Concepts
• Drive price down on new purchases

Jump Start Programs
• Free Services

Beta Testing
• New or existing vendors
Innovation can succeed or fail....

I’ve failed over and over and that is why I succeed.

Michael Jordan
Innovations that Failed - Predictive Modeling

Challenge
President requested predictive module results on Enrollment data - need actionable plan in 9 months

POC
Formed an internal skunk team, collaborated with outside experts, hired expert to train staff in R and built models

Result
Initial model did not help; variables for modeling are complex. Decided better to outsource model generation in future.
Innovations that Succeeded-
Wireless POC

Challenge
Needed complete new wireless solution for 2 campuses; tight budget and timeframe

POC
Performed 1 month POC in 2 residence halls during Spring Semester with Ruckus and Aruba

Result
Substantial savings off leading wireless vendor
Consolidated NAC & Wireless in one solution
Innovations using Technology you own...

- Innovation can often come from using new features, or exploring different options, for technology you might already own.
- Leverage your campus agreements to get the most out of your software.
- Schedule yearly updates with vendors to learn about new features that might be available.
Innovation with O365: Collaboration for NEASC Accreditation

Challenge
Going through 10 year NEASC accreditation process; needed an inexpensive, easy tool for collaboration and document management

POC
Setup a SharePoint online site at no additional cost to College

Result
Entire repository of NEASC documents in one place; collaborating editing online at once; easy to use format inside and outside of organization
Innovation with O365: Collaboration for NEASC
Innovations that Succeeded - Azure Backups

Two locations that require backups; existing solution at end of life

Jump Start Performed no charge Azure jump start for Backups at secondary campus.

Result Setup complete backup solution using current Azure allotment at no additional charge; entire process took 3-4 weeks.
Innovations in Progress-Digital Displays

Challenge

Building new technology center that needs digital display system; don't currently own one.

Routine Product Review

Performed routine review with existing card access vendor; they have display system built into card access.

Result

Deploying Magic Monitor through existing S2 Card Access system. Great display functionality at zero added cost.
Innovations using beta testing for new products.

- Beta testing generally gets you all services around new products for free.
- Provides early access to new products.
- Allows you to provide feedback around areas for improvement for the product.
Innovations In Process: Cloud based Warehouse

Challenge
Currently have an Excel based data warehouse; need a real solution.

Ellucian Beta
Signed a beta agreement in September with Ellucian for analytics tied to both Colleague and Recruit.

Result
In 3 months, warehouse in production for student data; still working on recruitment and IR dashboards.
Innovations In Process: Cloud based Warehouse

- Betas allow us to drive feature set and get features we want sooner.
- Heavy lifting done by the vendor.
- Participation gets early access to product and free use of product during the beta period.
- For Becker, one of the initial keys is helping to see instructor assignment; working with Ellucian to help calculate faculty load.
Innovations In Process- Web Based Workflow & Forms

**Challenge**

Lots of manual processes involving forms and signoff throughout the college; also need imaging solution.

**Ellucian Beta**

In February, asked to participate in a beta of a new product called Workflow. Has web based forms with workflow, approvals and ties data to Colleague.

**Result**

In 4 weeks, had a HR new hire form and workflow built, tested and in production. This will be huge process improvement.
Innovations In Process- Web Based Workflow & Forms

Benefits:

- **Improved service for new hires.**
- **Automated workflow for existing staff.**
- **Automated communication to supervisor at every stage so people stay informed.**
Innovations In Process- Analytics for Student Success

Challenge
Leverage Starfish for success tracking with traditional students, but needed a solution to help with adult population.

Discourse Analytics Beta
In February, Microsoft referred us to Discourse Analytics. Leverages student feedback via quick polls and combines with predictive models to suggest interventions, which can be automated or manual.
Innovations In Process Analytics for Student Success

- New tool will ask students 5 questions per week for 5 weeks.
- Questions are behavioral based.
- Leads to an understanding of students' skills, so proper intervention can be made.
Innovations In Process-Analytics for Student Success

Piloting with adult population starting 3/27; goal will be to increase retention with this population by reaching out sooner based on behavior signals, attitudinal dimensions, known profiles and targeted interventions.
Innovations In Process- Blue Light Emergency App

Don't have physical "emergency blue light" terminals on campus; cost is too high based on city campus structure.

Kryptos Mobile Pilot
Kryptos offers a free "blue light" app to any school. Started beta process in February 2017.

Piloting with RAs in March 2017 and plan to launch at freshman orientation in June.
Innovation through 6 Degrees of Separation

Visit to MTC to review new technology

Introduction to VP for Microsoft Education Worldwide

Agile University Idea

Invite to Microsoft Campus Connections Summit

Connection to Workforce Central of MA

POC for new academic program
Future Areas for Innovation

- Web Resign
- Office 365
- Employee Intranet
- Web Friendly Portal
Innovation Recap

- Innovation is a mindset that can be infectious. If you start to function in the 70-20-10 model of innovation, you will attract others who want to innovate with you.
- You can’t innovate on your own. You need to leverage partners (on your campus and outside your campus) to be truly innovative.
- You don’t need to spend a lot of money to innovate; sometimes it is just the investment in time and relationships.
- Innovation can you help solve both technology and business problems; the more business problems you solve, the more respected you will become among your Cabinet of VPs.
- Start small and have fun!
Questions?