
AMEX Advocacy - Government Contracting

EDUCATIONAL STRATEGY (skeletal draft)

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Background

A large piece of what this group does is sponsor events for Small Business Owners to come and learn about how to get Government Contracts. Their event season starts in April so they would like to have a solution up by that time. Since time is their priority we are not going to have this built out on OPENForum.com in the short term, but instead look at other ways we can begin to solve their problems quickly and cheaply now.

- Can we pull all of the content on these sites into one place? (not on OPEN Forum, recommend OPEN.com/governmentcontracting)
- Can we at the very least rework the OPEN.com/governmentcontracting site to link out to the other sites and all be skinned/look the same to create cohesiveness?
- A big portion of this is education. What are standards for online learning? How can we make this content digestible so that our users can learn?

Current Situation

- They have 4 disparate sites that include, content, educational tools, and information about the program.
- None of these sites work off of each other and all have unique logins/profiles for members

Goals

- Inform, Educate, and Connect Small Business Owners about Government Contracting.
- Have all Government Contracting resources online and in one place.

Their specific request was for

- this content live on Forum in a more robust way
- cohesiveness across all sites
- make the sites more dynamic and educational (speaking to crash courses)
- create a strategy that ...

Where are we now

TBD



Compared Site Profiles

Kaplan University online learning

- Full accredited degrees. Online classes, advanced interaction tools

Rosetta Stone

- Immersive language learning. DVD and audio. TO VERIFY

Fluenz

- Traditional language learning using interactive Flash/Director type interface Supported by podcasts practice sessions, tips and on the ground commentary.

iTunes U

- Video and audio lectures by top tier educational institutions, professors and lecturers.

Ted Talks

- Short video lectures and demonstrations on engaging current events, world problems and research topics.
- Unusual approaches to problems in the world by preminent people in arts, education and technology.

Skill Path

- Online classes focused on business and technical topics – seminar length?

Lynda

- Video training for technical, software and
- Organized by package and 1-3 hours long in 5-15 modules.
- [Rich's] I use and LOVE this site. I really like being able to see the outline of the class. Gives me a mental model to move forward with. Would be great to give users of AX GC that same leg up on GC as early as possible both linearly and conceptually.

Visa Small Business Network

- Financial support for small business. Resources.

To review

Intuit

TurboTax

Mint.com

SBA.gov

Business.gov

Colorado.gov

<http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/DPA-DFP/DFP/1199264708367?opendocument>

The for profit coordination sites

<http://www.govcb.com>

others>?



Key Insights

Tailored curriculums

- Important to have clear hierarchy /IA for Modules and Sessions
- Clear agenda and take aways
- Well thought out, step by step, and user centric teaching strategies that take into account the users experience levels with the topics, content and needs.
- Plan, Execute, Motivate, Adjust
- Skills path, fundamentals, down to work, monitoring, troubleshooting and problem solving, managing multiple projects, putting it all together.

Content Taxonomies

- Better ones had finer granularity: Date, Languages, Recommended status, Comments, Genres, Themes, etc.

Timely Information

- The better sites conveyed that their offerings were up to date and current

Trusted & Commitment

- Many sites took care to express that they were or had authority through accreditations, industry affiliations.
- “Commitment to you” (Kaplan)

Explanations & Voice

Important to use clear, simple, plain language tactics

Shared Knowledge

- Tips, insights, tutoring
- Insider knowledge of process and success strategies
- Forums & Discussion areas

User Context | Mode

Clearly important to identify early on why the user is present.

- Goals: Learn/Search/Find/Explore
- Motivation levels

Immersion

- Varying levels of immersion were used to get users (students) up to speed.
- “Dynamic immersion” – start thinking in the language from the beginning (Rosetta Stone)

Engagement

- Seminars & Webinars
- Web field trips - curated web experiences touring specific related sites and resources. Could be a really nice avenue for GC.
- Encouragement of skills needed for task at hand.

Visuals & Metaphors

- Online classrooms are employed only in select instances.
- Noted that some sites expressed the importance of connecting words with images and by extension other rich media: video, sound, motion.

Validation

Confirming knowledge was key for some institutions

- Quizzes
- Self tests
- Certification testing
- Advanced degree orals

Reference Desk

Utilize any or all of the following:

- FAQ engines
- Knowledge bases
- Articles, journals and case study archives
- Document library
- Success stories
- White papers
- Need for excellent search tools

Support

- Live chat
- Advisors
- Tech support
- Social connections

Visa

- Nice search portal type interface with 15 or so needs area with results grouped across these sections: Articles, Blog, Videos, Podcasts, Links



Motivating Strategies

Initial thoughts

- Crash course in GC for small business
- Show value and relevance
- Help them visualize and create structural mental models for the content at hand
- Anticipate the questions
- Empower users to find information themselves (teach a person to fish)

To revisit goals

- Inform
- Educate
- Connect
- Online
- One Place

Brainstorming

- Event tie ins
- Making content digestible?
- Cleanup all content on the 4 sites/ rewrite portions? review for tone and clarity?



User Flow

- Stub

