Green Gown Awards 2014

AWARDING SUSTAINABILITY EXCELLENCE FOR 10 YEARS

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10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY
AWARDING SUSTAINABILITY EXCELLENCE SINCE 2004

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finalist's case study

South Devon College
Food & Drink

FUNDamental Food
- Smart use of bursary funds

Section 1 About the project

Summary - We have developed/written our own in house system that allows us to link our learner database (EBS) to the system and scan learners' ID cards at a point in our catering outlets. From this electronic recognition we were then able to provide a substantial meal to our learners. Through regular/ongoing feedback we have ensured that our offering appeals to our learners. From this, we have also seen a reduction in food wastage. We are now able to, at the click of a button, identify and provide evidence to our funding bodies of which learners have taken lunches and at what time. The system can actually set dates/time parameters for which learners are able to take their meals between. We have since expanded this system to incorporate free college meals available from September and we aim to further enhance this with the introduction of the Raspberry Pi low voltage PC.

Section 2 The results

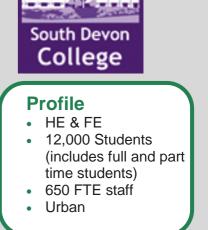**The problem -** At South Devon College the overall learner experience is a key. Support services (catering in particular) are an important factor in what makes them choose to learn here, their retention, and future choices. We have a bursary fund for learners and since the removal of EMA funding we understand that we need to spend this wisely. We needed a way to record this information to report back to our funding bodies.

The approach - We developed our own system written by our team of IT experts that allows us to link our learner database (EBS) to the system and scan learners cards (simply a bar code) at a scanning point in our catering outlets. From this electronic recognition we were then able to provide a substantial meal to our learners.

Our goals – We needed to ensure that we had an offering that would appeal to our learners and through course representative feedback sessions and open direct communication we have been able to develop a menu that is attractive and appealing to all learners. We also keep up to date by keeping in touch with industry developments, sampling new products and striving to mirror the high street trends within our facilities.

Obstacles and solutions – We encountered various obstacles along the journey which has led us to where we are now. These were generally based around the communication/link up between the departments that were instrumental in the success of the project. A working group was formed which consisted of

representatives from Catering Services/Computer Services/Help zone Team/Enrolment Team/Finance Team.
The group still exists and meets regularly to review the progress of the project.

Performance and results
This year we have served in excess of 15,000 meals to learners that we believe may have not eaten without
this provision being made available.

Section 3 The future
Lessons learned

1 We have seen the benefit of providing this service to our disengaged learners and have seen an
improvement in concentration, application and attendance. Learners have remained on site at lunchtimes
which has contributed to both their safety and the overall ambience within the college social environment.

2 Communication between departments has been a key factor in the success of the project. The linkup
between Catering, Finance, Help zone, Learner Information services and Computer Services has grown
stronger and the communication/understanding has developed accordingly.

3 It has enhanced the importance of the catering service that we provide, and the positive effect that this
has on our learners. We were able to provide a meal, but what was most important was understanding
what it is they actually want to eat and is appealing; this was obtained through regular/on-going feedback
mechanisms.

Sharing our project – The project has been shared across all departments of the College. This has been
achieved via digital communication. We have also used social media, signage & our promotional video to raise
awareness to not only our learners but our colleagues also.

What has it meant to your institution to be a Green Gown Award finalist?
"Winning will be a fantastic accolade for South Devon College, reflecting the hard work of students and staff
promoting and championing sustainability. We want to be leading the way for sustainability in our community
and this award will confirm we are continuing to achieve our aspirations." - Stephen Criddle, Principal.

Further information
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You Tube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WfR-Wz5OmWw&feature=youtu.be