



Why Universities Should Consider Crowdsourcing:

To continue to evolve and enhance their institutions, universities must find new ways to engage their key stakeholder communities, build stronger bonds with these groups, and gain real value from the interaction. Crowdsourcing is a powerful way to provide this needed, dynamic connection between universities and their many “crowds”, which include current students, faculty and staff, alumni, corporate sponsors and partners.

Crowdsourcing nourishes the often passive relationship between the institution and these groups, by inviting active, constructive participation on issues important to all.

Crowdsourcing goes beyond online forums or surveys by providing an interactive process, focused on specific objectives, that guides online collaboration and innovation, leading to desired outcomes. Participants in well-designed crowdsourcing engagements report great satisfaction and stronger connection to organizations as a result of having the opportunity to contribute in a meaningful way.

Universities use crowdsourcing to address challenges such as finding solutions for on-campus issues, innovating ways to ensure a successful and growing future, and providing a conduit for fresh ideas into the academic community. Using crowdsourcing can become a major differentiator for a university and be a visible demonstration of an institution’s “leading edge” vision.

How Crowdsourcing works:

Crowdsourcing is a disciplined online process where people who have a common interest or affiliation (such as students in a university) collaborate in an organized and positive way towards accomplishing specific objectives.

Crowdsourcing uses specific online technology to pose questions to the “crowd” and enable people to submit ideas, which other participants can read, comment on, or make further suggestions. In this way, the ideas submitted are improved and enhanced based on the “wisdom of the crowd” (or in other words, the various experiences, knowledge, backgrounds and opinions of the participants). The crowd may be asked to rate submissions, to help identify submissions the crowd thinks are most viable. These evolved ideas are now available for consideration and implementation by the institution at their discretion. Numerous studies show that “crowdsourced” ideas and solutions are often superior even to those from panels of experts.

Crowdsourcing engagements may last days, weeks, and months or may evolve into an ongoing dialog to address many different issues and topics over time.

Applications for Crowdsourcing

There are a variety of ways that universities can and should take advantage of the power of crowdsourcing. Specific examples include:

University-Wide:

- **Student Body:** Involve students in developing innovative solutions for on-campus issues, such as alcohol abuse. By inviting participation the likelihood of acceptance, adherence and support of the new policy will be increased.
- **Alumni Network:** Provide a way for alumni and other interested parties to be actively involved in the University after they graduate on topics chosen by the University. For example, topics could include ways for University to become more 'green', or how increase enrollment or the endowment.
- **Departmental Use:** Crowdsourcing could be applied by different departments to tap the collective wisdom of their smaller crowds. For example, the Athletics department could engage to former athletes and high school coaches for input and ideas to improve recruiting results.

In-curriculum:

Utilize crowdsourcing as part of the curriculum of one or more classes in a university or business school. Examples of in-curriculum applications include:

- Use crowdsourcing to allow full class participation in identifying solutions to complex case studies
- As a platform in an entrepreneurial course to enable students to evolve business ideas with the collaboration of others in the school community.
- New business or campus idea "contest" - sponsor a semester-long school-wide contest, either within a business school, or the university as a whole, for best new business idea with a small prize for the winner.
- As a post-graduate tool to enable graduates to tap the collective wisdom of the greater business school community (students, faculty, administration and alumni) for open innovation on new business ideas they may be interested in pursuing, or for current companies that they have joined.

How GoodCrowds can help:

The benefits of crowdsourcing can be significant for universities, but it takes planning and strategy to do it right. Where is the best place to start? What are the right topics? How long should you engage? What can you expect?

GoodCrowds will work with you to determine the right approach for your organization. We have worked with organizations around the world to conceptualize, design and implement crowdsourcing programs. We will help ensure that your engagements are successful from the get-go and make best use of your valuable budget.

For more information, please email info@goodcrowds.com, or visit www.goodcrowds.com