

MnSCU Office of Internal Auditing
MnSCU Customized Training Network Leadership Structure Design
Fiscal Year 2000

PURPOSE: The following document is the Customized Training Network's "Leadership Structure Design". It was developed by members of the Customized Training Network in Fiscal year 2000. It was obtained from the CTN and is presented here in its entirety.

MnSCU Customized Training Network Leadership Structure Design

Executive Summary

On December 13 and 14, 1999, an action team composed of college and university customized training administrators and system office staff met at Hennepin Technical College in Eden Prairie to develop an organizational structure for MnSCU's Customized Training Network (CTN). This work was chartered as an extension of the CTN strategic planning process which began in September.

The results of this work are contained in this design which describes a CTN Leadership Team comprised of seven CT administrators to support the Network in achieving its mission. The primary outcomes of this leadership effort would be:

- Increased performance, efficiency, and accountability throughout the Network.
- Higher levels of consistency from one school to another.
- Better and faster decisions due to improved communication and increased levels of cooperation and collaboration.
- Clearer definitions of roles and responsibilities.

The major activities of the CTN Leadership Team are:

- Leading annual Network planning, including goal setting and statewide consensus building.
- Guiding the development of Network-level initiatives.
- Promoting the Network to key stakeholders.
- Monitoring, reporting, and improving Network performance results.
- Facilitating cooperation and collaboration between and among MnSCU CT providers, and between the Network and external entities.
- Communicating with MnSCU leaders regarding the direction of customized training and its relationship to overall academic direction in the system.

This structure design was approved by the Chancellor, January 15, 2000. The Chancellor appointed the seven Leadership Team members, January 18, 2000.

Background

Strategic Planning

Strategic planning for the CTN began in September 1999. Initial results from this process included a Network mission and statement of values. Also identified were the following six “Arenas of Action” that would be pursued during Phase II:

- Organizational structure
- Funding
- Communication/marketing
- Information systems
- Professional development
- Process improvement

This design is the result of an action team convened to address the first arena of action.

Organizational Structure Action Team Charter

The team’s purpose was to develop an organizational structure that could be implemented for MnSCU’s CTN. After reflecting on its charge, the team determined it should address the following broad questions:

- Who should lead the CTN?
- What would the leaders be expected to do?
- What level of authority should they have?
- What would ensure that the new structure adds value and not unnecessary bureaucracy to the CTN?

The team focused its work on producing the following deliverables:

- Responsibility definitions
- Decision flowchart
- Leadership selection process
- Organizational chart
- Follow-up/continuous improvement plan
- Implementation plan

The action team that developed this design included: Pauline Christensen, Ron Erpelding, Carolyn Fransen, Kevin Kopischke, Rosie Mortenson, Brenda Norman Dale Sheveland, and Richard Tvedten. The process was facilitated by Tom LaForce of Team Creations.

Design Details

Overview

The team was successful in addressing the questions it set out to answer. To make the design easy to understand, details are presented in terms of responses to the key questions as well as other questions readers may have.

Why make this change now?

Currently the Network operates as a loosely affiliated group of 36 individual CT operations which serve employer needs at the local and regional level. MnSCU's customized training has recently received both favorable stakeholder reaction to its efforts to serve Minnesota's incumbent workforce and challenges to do more and to be more accountable for its results. Specific challenges include the following:

- Is the Network operating efficiently with the public money it receives? How does the Network hold itself accountable for results?
- What will the Network do to respond to a reported widespread lack of consistency in business practices?
- To what degree are the Network members demonstrating cooperation and collaboration?
- Is serving business and industry at the individual company level an appropriate use of public funds?
- What can be done to serve more employers and incumbent workers?

Addressing real and perceived deficiencies in Network operations and results may be accomplished more effectively with an ongoing leadership structure that reflects the statewide nature of the Network.

Who should lead the CTN?

One guiding principle of the CTN which has been reinforced during strategic planning is the central role of the college and university in making the Network work. With this in mind, leadership that emerges from college and university customized training operations would best serve the Network in addressing its multiple challenges. A leadership team of seven CT administrators from colleges and universities is the model.

What are the leaders be expected to do?

The Leadership Team will meet at a minimum on a monthly basis to do the Network's business. System office staff will serve as liaisons for Network leaders, facilitating communication and implementation of initiatives. The activity of the Leadership Team will fall into five main areas:

Planning

If the Network is to thrive it must continually change as its operating environment changes. Knowing what to change and how to change, and what to continue, is the planning function. The Leadership Team is expected to enhance the Network's competitiveness by proactively identifying and responding to major opportunities and challenges. This work includes maintaining the strategic planning process, operating within an environmental scanning framework, leading annual operational planning, setting priorities, seeking and achieving statewide consensus, identifying areas for improvement and launching initiatives.

Managing Network Performance

In order for the Network to adequately address stakeholders' concerns, it must be able to quantitatively demonstrate its performance. The Leadership Team will be responsible for gaining consensus on performance standards, monitoring performance against those standards, communicating results and taking action to improve the Network's aggregate performance level.

Managing Network Priorities

Priorities will be identified through the planning process. Several have already been identified during Phase I of strategic planning. They include:

- Communication/marketing
- Funding
- Professional development
- Information systems

Many priorities will require significant amounts of work to accomplish results. The Leadership Team's role will be to ensure a quality approach to completing the work of the Network. This means it will charter particular initiatives, secure resources, monitor progress, provide support as requested, approve recommendations, and communicate results.

Network Promotion

The mandate for the Network to "tell its story" in the aggregate has never been clearer or more critical. The Leadership Team will provide ongoing direction to the Network's communication and marketing strategy. The Team will act as champions and ambassadors for the Network and will assist the Chancellor in communicating the Network's goals and results to key stakeholders such as the Legislature.

Facilitating Collaboration

The main basis for creating a Network is the idea that the whole is stronger than the sum of its parts. The Leadership Team is responsible for creating and harnessing synergy throughout the Network. This could be accomplished by acting as a communication clearinghouse. It might mean identifying and facilitating opportunities for collaboration. Although the specific responsibilities are not yet defined, the expectation is clear: Realizing the Network's true potential.

What isn't the Leadership Team expected to do?

Delivering training, managing customer relationships and serving communities are and will continue to be the responsibility of local colleges/universities. The Leadership Team isn't about telling an individual CT operation how to run its business. It's not about deciding how to spend a college/university's allocation. It is about providing overall direction, support, and vision.

What level of authority does the team have?

In terms of formal levels of authority, little has changed with this model. The Leadership Team's ability to make changes and get results will depend on the overall Network's willingness to accept the team's leadership. If individual CT operations believe in the benefits that will be gained from working collaboratively and see the Leadership Team as a vehicle for increasing cooperation and leveraging individual capacities, the team will earn the right to lead the Network.

How will decisions be made?

Broad decision categories might be handled in the following way:

Operational: For decisions relating to how the leadership team operates internally, routine expenditures, assignments and how it represents the Network to stakeholders, the team is empowered to decide without consultation or to delegate decision-making authority when appropriate.

Planning: For decisions such as action team designation, short and long-term planning, data collection, major initiatives, continuous improvement, operating principles, and budgeting, the team would be expected to use a consultative approach. It should collect feedback, taking full advantage of technology.

Policy: For decisions related to funding and associated performance indicators, personnel, system-wide definitions, and other policy-related decision, the team would provide recommendations to the Chancellor or Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs for an eventual decision.

How is the team selected?

The Leadership Team members are selected based on their ability to meet the qualifications and stated willingness to live up to the expectations. Consideration will also be given to creating a team that reflects the CTN's institutional (type, program size, geography) and individual diversity.

Qualifications

- Is able to take a “big picture” and long-term perspective.
- Demonstrated team skills (e.g., problem-solving, analytical, interpersonal, consensus-building).
- Communication skills necessary to represent the Network in public forums.
- Must be a customized training administrator.

Expectations

- Be prepared for and attend all meetings.
- Commit 12 days per year for at least two years.
- Represent a Network perspective.
- Serve as an ambassador for the Network.
- Fulfill team's roles and responsibilities.
- Support team's decisions.
- Travel and incidental expenses paid with system set aside funds.

Selection Process

Willing volunteers must get another CT administrator to complete a short (less than one page) nomination that outlines why the person would be an effective member of the Leadership Team. The nomination should address the qualifications listed above. It will be assumed that the nominee has agreed to the submission of her/his name. The nomination is forwarded to the System Office. The System Office aggregates the nominations and submits to the Chancellor's Office. The Chancellor selects the team members. All members of the Leadership Team serve at the will of the Chancellor.

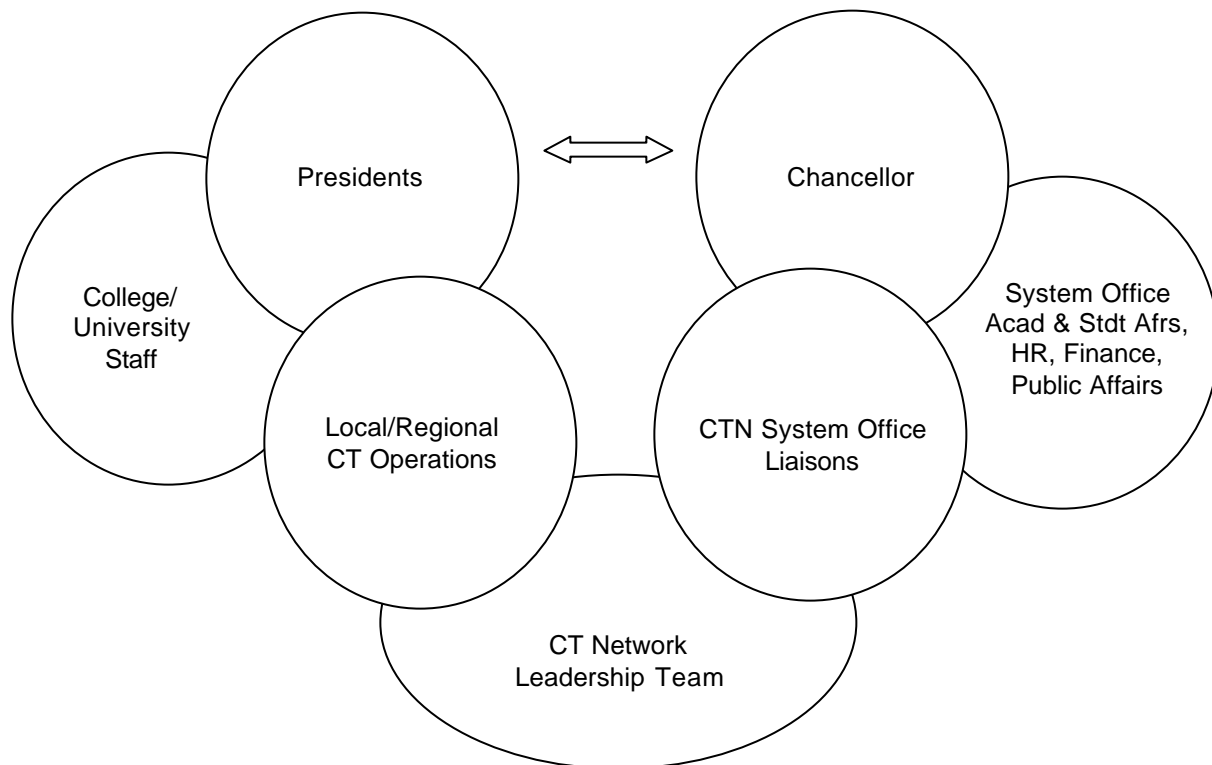
What are the benefits of this new structure?

This new structure will benefit the Network in many ways. Some are fairly obvious, while others are not. Here are just some of the expected benefits:

- Improved communication.
- Increased Network accountability.
- Sharing of best practices, resulting in improved efficiency.
- More visibility to key stakeholder groups.
- Greater consistency.
- Increased support for CT operations with identified operational gaps.
- Greater innovation, resulting from more collaboration.
- Potential access to more resources.
- Clearer definition of roles and responsibilities.

How does the Network fit into the MnSCU picture?

Several other players are involved. The following diagram illustrates the relationship between all the major Network components and MnSCU's existing structure. Following the diagram are suggested responsibilities for specific roles.



Local CT Operations

- Manage customer relationships.
- Develop programs.
- Deliver instruction/related services.
- Monitor customer satisfaction.
- Provide suggestions, ideas, feedback during the planning process.
- Support the implementation of all Network plans.
- Take an active role in action teams.
- Provide information in support of performance measurement.
- Serve as liaisons to local college/university administration.

CTN System Office Liaisons

- Participate in the planning process.
- Facilitate the dissemination of CTN plans.
- Facilitate relationship with the Chancellor and other System Office staff.
- Provide staff work and logistical support.
- Serve as a resource clearinghouse.
- Serve as a liaison to other statewide organizations.
- Provide stability, focus and resources to the Leadership Team.

Local College/University Administration

- Provide college/university-wide perspective to local/regional CT operations.
- Review and comment on CTN plans.
- Provide recommendations to the Leadership Team.

How will this not result in added bureaucracy?

The Leadership Team is a service-based entity. Its role is to provide direction and support. It also ensures the provision of specific services which are best fulfilled at the Network level. It does not have authority over day-to-day operations of local CT operations.

The team will ask for feedback and suggestions. It will involve local CT staff in projects and major initiatives. It will request data. It will monitor and report performance in the aggregate to ensure critical stakeholder feedback. It's also important to note that these activities are not new, but will become much more extensive with increased visibility and stakeholder expectations.

What if it doesn't work?

One key expectation of the Leadership Team is to incorporate continuous improvement into the planning process. If the Network were falling short of expectations, evaluating the effectiveness of the leadership structure would likely be one area examined as a possible cause for the unmet expectations. If that were the case, the process would involve determining the exact source of the problem, making appropriate adjustments and moving ahead. Specific details on continuous improvement will be determined by the Leadership Team itself, in consultation with local/regional CT operations.

Implementation Plan

The chancellor approved the structure design, 1/15/00, and named the seven leadership team members, 1/18/00.