

Institutional response to student feedback

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The principal objective of this paper is to demonstrate the capability of La Trobe Melbourne to successfully provide a response to students, accurately and inexpensively, regarding actions taken, resulting from student feedback, on several surveys throughout the year. La Trobe Melbourne conducts surveys regularly to gain student feedback on academic matters, curriculum, and quality of teaching as well as on student activities and customer service. For the purposes of this paper, student feedback on customer service, especially at college reception, will be used as the main example.

After the student feedback on each of the surveys is collated, management, in each area of the college, study the student responses to decide upon actions to be taken to improve the situation for the students or measure the quality of a product, if some items on the surveys have received low scores. Also, some comments in response to open-ended questions, sometimes, receive negative comments. If the low scores and/or comments appear in a high percentage of responses, the matter is looked at by management in terms of improvements required. If the recommendations of the students are reasonable, and the improvements are viable, they are budgeted to be actioned the following financial year. Action is taken as soon as possible, and this is reported back to the students, in a presentation by the Principal and Director of La Trobe Operations.

During the presentation the audience will be provided with examples of some of the types of surveys conducted, the student feedback and the actual actions taken. After this the discussion will focus on why the effort to communicate the institution's response to the students' feedback is perceived to be a tedious and compromising task by the students. Efforts have been made by La Trobe Melbourne to improve the exercise of communicating with the students. These strategies for improvement will be discussed, and the audience will be able to judge the success or otherwise of these efforts put into practice by management.

The audience will be invited to contribute examples of strategies which in their experience, at their institutions, have worked better than those applied by La Trobe Melbourne.

Biography:

Usha Rao (MA, Monash; MEd, Uni of Melbourne; IDLTM, Uni of Qld) is the Director, Quality and Services at La Trobe Melbourne, Navitas Bundoora Ltd. She is the 2012 holder of English Australia's John Gallagher award for her contribution to international education in Australia. Usha is a Fellow of Australian Institute of Management. She has been an ISANA member since 1993.