

Challenges and Takeaways of Organizing Local Job Fair During Covid Era

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Abstract

Project Information

The State of Texas is home to 2.8 million small businesses of all sizes in urban, sub-urban and rural communities (Texas Economic Development, 2021). During the pandemic, the number of small businesses open fell by 57.7 percent during 2020 period, versus a 31.5 percent decline for all small businesses (Garza, Costello, Donald, Fikac, Green, Grubbs, Halbrook and Minton, 2021). When some of these small businesses started to open, they were faced with no workers. Workers did not return to work. This is true to the counties of Nacogdoches and Angelina. The purpose of this project was to organize a local job fair for the local businesses in these two counties to match them with the students from the university. The goal of the project was to have 8 local small businesses vendors and students. Students who attended were able to make connections with the prospective employers.

Methodology

Qualitative case study research is an investigative approach used to thoroughly describe complex phenomena, such as recent events, important issues, or programs, in ways to unearth new and deeper understandings of these phenomena, the particular example or instance from a class or group of events, issues, or programs, and how people interact with components of these phenomena (Mertens, 2015; p. 245). We had the following questions: (1) Did we achieve our goals? (2) What are the challenges that we need to overcome? (3) What are our next steps? (4) Student takeaways. The data was gathered and analyzed during post event evaluation session.

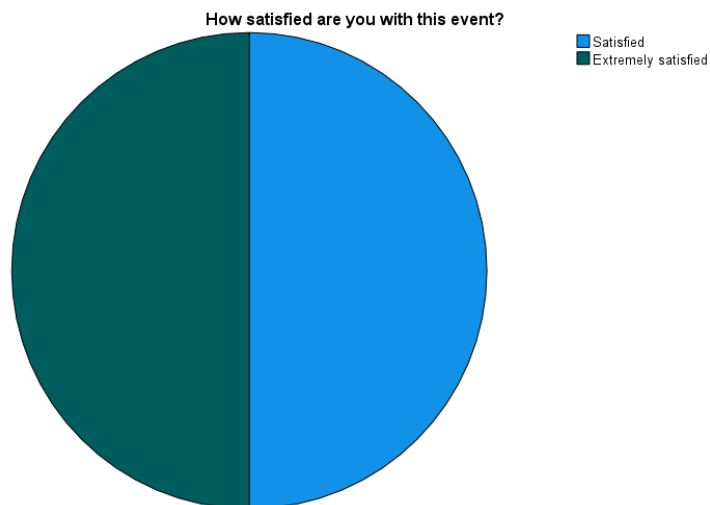
Results

Descriptive Statistics

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---------|---------|------|----------------|
| How satisfied are you with this event? | 6 | 4 | 5 | 4.50 | .548 |
| How likely are you to recommend this event to a friend? | 6 | 5 | 5 | 5.00 | .000 |
| How was out staff? | 6 | 5 | 5 | 5.00 | .000 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 6 | | | | |

How satisfied are you with this event?

| | N | % |
|---------------------|---|-------|
| Satisfied | 3 | 50.0% |
| Extremely satisfied | 3 | 50.0% |



Challenges

Fifty percent of the vendors showed up and more than 30 students attended the event.

There were various challenges that the team had to tackle. The University Marketing office did not help us with the flyer. The class was on an 8-week duration which did not give us enough time to connect with the vendors. Thanksgiving week made us helpless

because we were not able to meet and there was an Unemployment Workforce Solution Event hosted by the City of Nacogdoches that competed with our own event.

Takeaways

For our next steps, have more sponsors for the event; make sure that the date is set in advance; connect with CCPD in order for them to help promote; change the class to 16 weeks that meets; connect with University Marketing in advance. Some of the students' takeaways were: (a) Making contracts and documents; (b) Skill development i.e. Communication skills; (c) Creativity; (d) Built self confidence in asking questions and making mistakes. Overall, the event was a huge success because we were to establish a local job fair that the CCPD will build upon for the next fall semester.

References

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