

THE COMPUTERWORLD HONORS PROGRAM

CASE STUDY



LOCATION:
Almería, Spain

YEAR:
2006

STATUS:
Laureate

CATEGORY:
Education and Academia

NOMINATING COMPANY:
Information Builders

ORGANIZATION:

Universidad de Almería

PROJECT NAME:

Implementation of an Advanced Strategic Planning
& Control System in a Public University

Summary

Almería is located in the South of Spain (Andalucía) characterized by obtaining the largest improvement in GDP in the last 30 years mainly due to high technology intensive agriculture. This increase in economic wealth was not accompanied at first by a cultural and intellectual growth. The appearance of public funded Universidad de Almería in 1993 was a milestone in its recent history. In 12 years they have doubled the percentage of graduates in the Area. In 2003, they started a process of Strategic Planning for deciding the future of the organization. In 2005, after finishing the whole process they have acquired WebFOCUS Balanced Scorecard software that is being implemented at all the levels of the organization, managing themselves from a social/public oriented University but with the latest innovations in the private sector management.

Introductory Overview

The main project is to show two things: first, how an increase in economic wealth is not enough for developing a social & cultural benefit in a society; and secondly, to show how public high education institutions can be managed in a way to be social-profit oriented with private companies tools of the latest generation.

We must think of a Spain, in southern Europe, leaving a dictatorship in 1975, becoming CEE member in 1986, with large emigration and large differences among the territories, from the rich North to the undeveloped and poor South. The arrival of PSOE to government in 1982 had as a main target to main themes: universal health system and access to higher education for all the Spanish population that wished it. This model that might be discussed nowadays was the only acceptable for boosting the country from the position it hold at that time in Europe.

In 1980 Almería was the 49th out 50th province in Spain. In 1993 is between the 20 first in several wealth indicators, with an increasing population and a very healthy economy. But, the cultural and educational level remained at underdeveloped levels.

With this panorama, the Regional Government decided to create the Universidad de Almería,



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holding around 15.000 students, 800 staff plus 400 service administrators. In 10 years the number of high degree persons doubled. And the role in developing a social network has been awarded by several institutions.

With this overview, at 2002, it was decided the need to manage the future of the University not lead by random acts, but as a consequence of a strategic planning.

With this objective, a Strategic Planning Office was created at the higher level of the hierarchy, leading to a society open process of participation in order to decide what would be the Universidad de Almería of the future (see web page for more information).

After the end of the Strategic Planning came the reality of the business: How to implement the strategy on a day basis? Dealing with this problem, already faced by many private companies, we decided to take several actions, among other implementing Balanced Scorecard software to manage the whole organization. After several modifications we agreed to buy Information Builders WebFOCUS Balanced Scorecard.

Benefits

In the case of a Public University, the stakeholders are several and difficult to analyze. At first the top management of the Universidad has now a tool for analyzing what they are doing on a daily basis, and are able to link actions to their electoral program to be renewed every 4 years. In the case of the whole society we are providing an image of seriousness, efficiency and transparency on the expense of public money. For the administration, we provide them accurate information, that helps us to balanced our budget.

The balanced scorecard allows managers to know the implication of their decisions and monitor them through a set of indicators established ad hoc.

Definitely. You must think that in a Spanish Public University, to become manager you just need to have civil servant, not other education in management. So, our task, has been to convince agricultural engineer, philosopher, language expert, and so on, on how to manage a complex organization. And with Balanced Scorecard technology you are able to do that.

It has helped the University to gain credibility in the Almería's society. As well, our business students will benefit from this experience we will teach them on-line.

The Importance of Technology

Trying to do a project like this one without the information technology would be impossible. We are managing 20 administrative departments, 8 general offices, 5 colleges and 36 departments, implying more than 16000 people.



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Originality

- Spanish public organization
 - University
 - Not professionally managed
 - Objective of increasing education and culture in the surrounds
- Definitely in Spanish Public Universities.

Success

This has been the most difficult in the implementation. It took us several meetings, courses, and discussions for middle managers to understand the benefits of this technology, but finally almost all the staff agreed on it.

Difficulty

Mainly people resistance.

No funding problems. In fact the Chancellor was the first believer on the project.