

# Strategic Planning results from the Anoka Area Chamber.

*Jamie Barthel, Laura Cleveland & Jon Olson*

Our process was a 2 step data collection process.

1. 10 question electronic survey sent out to all Anoka Area Chamber members
2. Meeting with Anoka Area Chamber Board of Directors to prioritize the survey results and add additional ideas as needed.

Below is the data we collected from the Anoka Area Chamber board on our 10 questions

1. What 5 words do you hear in the business community that describes us?
  - Community Hears Nothing
  - Missed Opportunities
  - Poor Communication
  - Only Communication is about fundraisers
  - Lack of skilled workers coming out of college (Math and Reading)
2. How does your actual experiences with us compare with what you expected?
  - School has to do more to approach the business community
  - Met Expectations
  - Little to no experience
3. How can the colleges better integrate with the business community?
  - More Internships
  - Continue the outreach of both credit and non-credit
  - More emails / Newsletters / Press releases
  - Invite business leaders into the classroom
4. What is one thing we can change to achieve excellence?
  - Internships
  - Have a clear mission and vision that is conveyed with a compelling brand message -- that way we can champion around you
  - Awareness
5. What would you like to see changed at the colleges to better meet your needs?
  - Focus on what degree people need and forget the well round BS requirements that raise the cost of the degree and is not used in the marketplace.
  - More college's need to set up their programs to meet the local business needs in regards to jobs.
  - More technical skills and less on classes not needed
  - Customized program training on the credit side
  - A better way to forecast work place trends
6. What about our histories helps/hinders us?
  - No stability (almost lost Tech college, changing name of AR)
  - Flexibility
  - Boomers knowledge/opinion/perception not compatible with what Colleges really do

7. What could the colleges do to position us better to meet the needs of the future?
  - Online Classes
  - To grow the step program to the point that every high school student leaves school with some type of skill if not continuing on to a 4 year degree.
  
8. What value to you place on liberal arts/technical education?
  - Any education today needs to lead to improved employment and ability to earn a living. Both liberal arts and technical do that
  - Value of liberal arts could be promoted better to community
  - Place equal value on technical and liberal arts education
  
9. What more could the colleges do to better prepare our students for the next steps?
  - Hard for me to identify this.... Soft skills are hard to teach, but seem to be in increasing demand and there is a gap in this skill
  - Get real-world input on what we need for successful future workforce members
  - Teach students how to start their own business
  - Don't teach "soft skills" but essential skills
  
10. What priorities should we consider as we go through our strategic planning process?
  - Further awareness in our community and to the businesses
  - More community involvement
  - Communicate results/final message to each group who helped