Some years ago, I participated in a management training in which the facilitator spoke to the importance of utilizing performance measurement tools. Without these, he told us, it would be like bowling without knowing how many pins you knocked down. That image has always stuck with me.

Knowing that performance measurement is essential is pretty straightforward. However, knowing what and how to measure can be more difficult to determine. I’m really pleased to share with you that the NACS Foundation Standards Project will provide campus stores with a set of topic-specific measurement tools including detailed scorecards that will do just that. These will be accompanied by related educational and reference resources.

The purpose of the scorecards is to permit a campus store to complete self-evaluations that compare the store’s performance, operations, and campus protocols to established industry standards. These tools include the project’s collegiate retail industry standards and guidelines that have been developed to guide campus stores and enhance their success.

For each standard or guideline, a campus administrator, store director, or other store employee will evaluate compliance. The reviewer then assigns a rating using the rating scale (Meets, Partly Meets, Does Not Meet, etc.) provided. The intention of this self-evaluation process is to help campus store administrators make the industry standards actionable—taking them from theory to practice—with the goal of enhancing store success and informing the planning process going forward.

For each standard or guideline, additional comments or explanation can also be entered to reinforce compliance and recognize achievement. When noncompliance represents an opportunity for improvement, the intended action plans can be described. It is important to note that noncompliance with a standard or guideline does not always indicate that the store performance is deficient. A store may not be fully compliant due to campus culture or due to an institutional policy directive that is beyond the control of the store.

There will be times when the user may not be able to complete the data entry on the web form in one sitting. Therefore, there is an option to save the form which will generate an email containing a personalized link to the form. Clicking on that link will reopen the form and allow the user to continue whenever it’s convenient to do so.

When the standards and guidelines in all sections of the scorecard have been evaluated, summary pages will present the ratings, calculate a percentage score, and provide space to create action plans for improvement.

The qualitative summary will allow the reviewer to briefly summarize overall comments, explanations, compliance exceptions, and improvement opportunities. Based on the identified improvement opportunities, there is a space to enter detailed action plans with target dates. When all the data entry including the
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Once the scorecard has been completed, the reviewer will be able to export the results to communicate to others in the organization for use in internal planning purposes. Once the scorecard is completed, the next step will be for the store to determine how best to improve aspects of the operation that are identified as needing improvement. While the store itself may already have the needed materials and trainings, NACS also plans to provide applicable industry resources. These will include hyperlinks to targeted NACS educational resources related to individual standards and guidelines including learning modules, white papers, and articles.

It is important to note that the Standards Project’s performance measurement tools will also identify areas in which the store operation is excelling. This information can be leveraged to help the store develop and communicate its story to the administration, faculty, and students.

The value of the NACS Foundation Standards Project is directly dependent upon how it can actually benefit campus stores. The scorecard tool will prove to be an essential resource that translates the project’s standards into customized, actionable plans designed to drive store success.

Stephen Hochheiser is a past president of the NACS Foundation and is retired after a 40-year career in publishing and bookstore management.

Learn More at Virtual CAMEX22

If you want to learn more about how the Standards Project and its tools can help your campus store to communicate its successes and needs to the administration, look for the session Equip Your Store to Tell a Better Story at the Virtual CAMEX22. Jeff Nelson, NACS vice president of industry collaboration and development, explains how the scorecard can help evaluate your operations, identify what resources you need for improvement, and share what’s working well.

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