

If I were to start a university today, it would be focused on the human element. By combining internet-based lectures (as a substitute for traditional lectures) with small working groups (to maintain the human interaction), the transferring of knowledge and research would be more efficient and require less resources than traditional universities. The core of this university would be on the human interaction between teaching staff and students. This is extremely hard to copy outside the institution and would therefore create a competitive advantage over other forms of learning. The teaching content itself would not be part of the core and neither the physical space the meeting are held in. Teaching content is very accessible today through MOOCs, Wiki's and other digital (and analog means) which makes it easy to imitate. Although the physical spaces are a requirement for working groups to meet, they are not special and also easy to imitate. This approach would likely in a focus on quality requiring a focus over customer service and price. This is not a problem but would require a specific type of customer that is willing and able to pay for this type of education. Therefore, the typical student at this institution will be likely working and preferring an education which requires less time on site than traditional education. Given the flexibility of online education, combined with working groups on-site is able to deliver this flexibility. An operational consequence of targeting this customer might be that working groups take place in the evening rather than during the day. This would allow professors to do research during the day and teach in the evenings.