
Media Impact International



INDEPENDENT AUDIT of MMU Courses:

Foundations of Media Strategy
Story in Ministry
Expand your Mission through Media

Table of Contents:

1. Overview	2
Visual Story Network	
Mission Media University	
Course Descriptions	
MII Vision and Strategic Focus	
MII External Commitments	
2. Objective	4
Measuring Impact	
VSN Goals	
3. Review of Approach	5
Anonymous Questionnaire	
Student Interviews	
VSN Supplied Data	
4. Findings	6
Class Participation	
Anonymous Questionnaire	
Student Interviews	
Impact of MMU on Participating Students	
• Evangelism Effectiveness	
• Mission Effectiveness	
• Action Plan Development	
• Beginning Implementation	
5. Conclusions	14
MMU Effectiveness	
Recommended Steps for Improvement	

Overview:

VISUAL STORY NETWORK

Visual Story Network is part of a movement of visual storytellers taking the life and kingdom of Jesus to the ends of the earth. As part of this storytelling movement, VSN seeks to provide leadership to various sectors and geographies in the movement. Media Mission University is an outworking of VSN's desire to lead other story tellers into greater effectiveness and impact for the Kingdom of God.

MEDIA MISSION UNIVERSITY

The purpose of the Mission Media University is to develop an online learning platform to distribute short- format curricula to missionaries and church leaders worldwide. These leaders will be better evangelists, disciple-makers and church planters as they develop their skills in using media, story and mobile in their mission. Courses will be developed for each area of ministry focus (visual communication, story, mobile ministry). This platform will enable scaling to multiple courses and levels of training over time. Students will learn to be more effective in the creation and use of media for the sake of evangelism and discipleship. This project will develop the hardware, software and networking platforms for the next seven years of growth within the global network.

Media Impact International is honored to once again partner with Visual Story Network for the independent audit of the achieved outcomes following the Winter/Spring sessions of Visual Story Network's Mission Media University (MMU). The invitation to audit the MMU *Foundations of Media Strategy, Expand Your Mission Through Media, and Story in Mission* course outcomes aligns perfectly with the vision, strategic focus and stakeholder commitments held by MII.

FOUNDATIONS OF MEDIA STRATEGY

The *Foundations of Media Strategy* course is intended to provide students with a foundational overview of field-driven media strategy and encourage and equip missional people and teams to develop an intentional outreach strategy using new media.

This course was facilitated by Tom Khazoyan, a missionary video producer serving with 10X Productions, a ministry of Pioneers.

STORY IN MINISTRY

The *Story in Mission* course will provide students with the ability to develop a theory of story and its power to draw people to Christ and to create compelling stories from idea to pitch.

Participating in five one-hour live sessions together during the course. The live sessions were held in a webinar-style online room where use of video, audio and whiteboards were used to facilitate interaction and connection.

This course was hosted by Jeremy Casper, a writer/director/producer from Los Angeles.

EXPAND YOUR MISSION THROUGH MEDIA

Expand Your Mission Through Media is a course “taught by women for women.” Each participant will develop a media project that will increase her kingdom influence. Whether the media is visual, written, audio or social, the participant will learn what it takes to go from idea to reality.

Expand Your Mission Through Media was led by three co-instructors. Nancy Sawyer Schraeder, Nikki Hevesy and Shirin Taber. All three women have achieved significant and impressive accomplishments in film, television and written media.

MII VISION

MII exists to see more people brought into God’s Kingdom and growing in their faith, through the effective utilization of media. MII identifies, assesses and comes alongside partner ministries to strategically increase their media projects.

MII STRATEGIC FOCUS

Media Impact International is focused on equipping media ministries with the tools and expertise to maximize their effectiveness. MII utilizes key Christian consultants and contractors, who are recognized as media industry experts. These consultants also represent a larger network of media, communications, IT and security experts from around the globe that can be called on to address any issue. All have global business and ministry experience, and are committed to using their gifts and expertise to see more people brought into the Kingdom.

MII EXTERNAL COMMITMENTS

Media Impact International makes the following commitments to those we serve:

- **Christ-centeredness:** We are committed to demonstrating our faith in God and living out Christian values
- **Integrity:** We are committed to Christ-like behavior in all aspects of our operation.
- **Objectivity:** We are committed to demonstrate objectivity in decision making and other business activities
- **Stewardship:** We are committed to the wise and honorable use of human and financial resources.

It is our prayer that the data and analysis contained in the following pages will be a blessing to Visual Story Network and the students benefiting from Mission Media University now, and in the future.

Objective:

MEASURING IMPACT

MII measured the general impact of MMU on the participating student's improvement of skills, motivation, knowledge, and ability to develop action plans following the course. Our research has determined whether the ministries and/or individuals participating have begun the design and/or implementation of strategies, processes and initiatives that will enhance the Kingdom and desired outcomes of VSN.

The timeframe for students to reach credible outcomes varies. This audit will explore the desired outcomes of MMU and the participating students relative to the initial benchmarks established by the MII discovery period.

It was our goal to determine if the MMU's overall curricula, presentation and approach are significantly contributing to student's ongoing Kingdom impact. In the following pages MII will provide recommended proactive steps, which MMU can take to ensure the success of students who have completed the offered courses.

Of the original VSN goals for MMU, MII is able to provide initial feedback and estimates on:

- Will students describe themselves as more effective in evangelism?
- Do students intend and understand how to use their training to more effectively reach people for Christ?
- Have they, or are they planning to train others in story?
- Have they or are they planning to train their team in story?

Review of Approach:

Anonymous Questionnaire

An anonymous survey was created for each course to be evaluated. All students were encouraged to participate in the survey. The surveys were available to students for at least 30 days following the completion of the course. Unresponsive students received a minimum of up to 3 survey reminders encouraging participation in the survey.

Survey questions focused on five key areas; Skills, Motivation, Strategy, Knowledge and Action Plan Development. The questions have been designed to determine the effectiveness of MMU's curriculum, processes and approach as measured by Kingdom impact achieved by participating students.

Student Interviews

MII conducted phone interviews of randomly selected students. No more than one student from any one ministry was interviewed. A ministry was not required to complete the anonymous questionnaire to participate in the phone interview and no effort was made to cross reference phone interviews with online survey results.

The phone interview conversation covered the same five areas listed above, with the addition of asking follow-up questions seeking detail about specific outcomes, accomplishments and implemented strategies in the few weeks following the completion of the courses.

VSN Supplied Data

MII has been supplied with course evaluations that had been previously submitted by students to MMU upon completion of the course. Clyde Taber, Director of VSN, supplied this data and it has been included in the results below to inform the findings in this report.

Findings:

This section explores the results of MII's data gathering and analysis. We have chosen to highlight some of the findings, both positive and negative, that have a material impact on the stated objectives of this MII audit.

Class Participation

Foundations of Media Strategy

24 students registered for the winter course and 17 students completed resulting in a 70% completion rate. Only 5 of the 17 who completed the course had perfect attendance. 10 students were awarded a Certificate of Completion (42% of those registered)

Story in Ministry

27 students registered for the Winter course of which 23 students completed the course, an 85% completion rate. The Spring course began in late February, 2017 with 24 students registered. 19 students completed this session giving MMU a slightly lower completion rate of 79% for this cohort. 16 certificates of completion were awarded to each cohort for a total of 32 certificates awarded.

Notably, the spring cohort had nearly perfect attendance of those completing the course. Of the 19 students completing the course, only one student missed one class! 14 of the 23 completing the winter session achieved perfect attendance.

Expand your Ministry Through Media

87% of students registered completed the course. (20 of 23 registered) Half of the class had perfect attendance and at least 75% of the class was in attendance each week. 12 of the 20 students completing the course were awarded certificates of completion.

We understand that there is a strong correlation between class participation, completion of assignments and student's future success implementing what has been taught by the instructors. In evaluating course participation, it became clear that MMU instructors are doing a very good job keeping track of class participation. The class records provided were very helpful and provided good insights into the activity happening within each cohort throughout the course.

As one might expect, attendance is strongest during the first week the course is offered. Typically, more than 95% of those registered attend the first session. Attendance fell after the first week for every course, and the number of students participating in week 5 is significantly lower. The worst performing class by attendance was the Foundations in Media class offered on December 15th where just under 2/3rds of the class attended (14 of 24 registered). However, the

upcoming Christmas holiday and seasonal travel may have been a contributing factor.

Completion of assignments was variable across all classes observed and we noted declines in assignment completion rates in nearly every class. One exception was the Story in Ministry course.

The February Story in Ministry class was interesting to us. Students in this class completed their assignments regularly. But, only 42% of the students completed assignments at any point of the course. Other classes saw assignments completed by 75% of students in week one and falling to as low as 20% or 30% in week 5. By comparison, the February cohort for the Story in Ministry course could be considered more successful. Even though they had 42% of the class participating in assignments, this cohort was able to maintain this level of participation throughout the program.

It should also be noted that the Story in Ministry course had higher assignment completion rates in both course offerings observed than other courses. Even though there was a decline between weeks 1 and 5 of 74.1% assignments completed to 52.2% respectively, 52.2% of students completing assignments in week 5 of this course is significantly higher than the assignment completion rate of any other class. In this way, the Story in Ministry course appears to be an outlier when it comes to class participation. This course offering enjoys high attendance and higher than average completion of assignments through the end of 5 weeks.

Anonymous Questionnaire

A note about Sample Size

MII and contributing consultants recognize that the small sample size of both the participating students, and the number of those responding to the survey and interviews presents challenges to making statistically valid conclusions from the data received. However, Dr. James Engel of Wheaton College has suggested that such surveys can serve as a “windsock” - showing some indicators of the terrain. These surveys accomplish that, and show us the direction of impact following the MMU course participation.

We chose to use a 1 to 10 scale for questions that asked students to rank their experience. To account for negative sentiment, or the possible degradation of skills or impact following the course, 1 is considered maximum negative impact possible, while 5 represents “No Change” and 10 equals maximum positive impact possible.

Student Interviews

MII conducted phone interviews with a random sampling of students. Interview questions focused on the student's view of their own personal effectiveness, and the effectiveness of their organization as a result of participating in MMU. 100% of students surveyed were positive on the overall experience regardless of their ability to point to measurable increase in impact. Those who participated were thankful for the experience.

Combined results of MII research is provided below and separated into categories relating to MII's four objectives for this audit listed above in the Objective section.

- While giving consideration to curricula, presentation and approach, MII will measure the general impact of MMU on the participating student's improvement of skills, motivation, knowledge, and ability to develop action plans following the course.
- Determine whether the ministries and/or individuals participating have begun the design and/or implementation of strategies, processes and initiatives that will enhance the Kingdom and desired outcomes of VSN. (Certainly, MII will look for outcomes already fulfilled in the research sample.)
- Recommend proactive steps which MMU can take to ensure the success of students who have completed the offered courses.

GENERAL IMPACT OF MMU ON PARTICIPATING STUDENTS

Evaluating the general impact of MMU on the participating student's improvement of skills, motivation, knowledge, and ability to develop action plans following the course was a positive and encouraging experience for our team. Overall, students continue to be very optimistic about MMU.

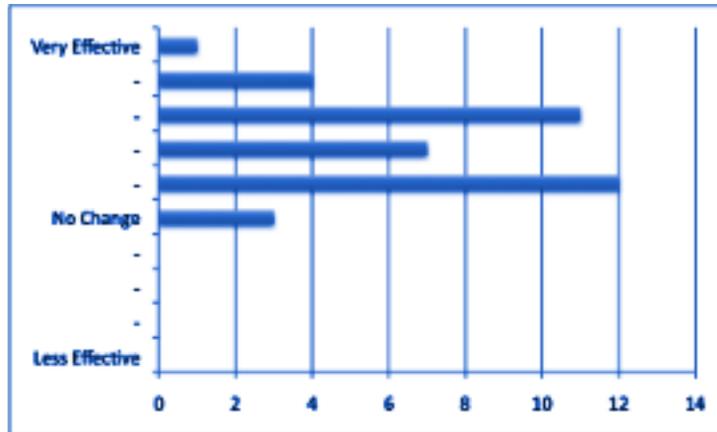
Evangelism Effectiveness

Of the students responding to the online survey, 79% reported positive change in evangelism effectiveness following the MMU courses. The remainder reported "no change". No students reported that they are less effective in some way.

The average score given when asked, "How much more effective are you in evangelism after taking this course?" was 7.06 on a scale of 1 - 10. Students participating in the *Story as Mission* course offered in February reported the

highest scores with an average score of 7.2 on a 1 - 10 scale. Only 1 student in this class reported “No Change” indicating that the large majority of students participating in this course find themselves to be more effective as a result of participating in this course.

We found this to be true across all survey respondents from all classes. In fact, only 3 students in total reported “No Change” when asked “How much more effective are you in evangelism after taking this course?”



“How much more effective are you in evangelism after taking this course?”

The phone surveys helped to expand our understanding of how participation in MMU is translating into greater effectiveness in student’s lives and ministry. We also identified a possible area for improvement when interviewing students by phone.

When pressed with the question of the level of increase in their evangelism effectiveness, many students interviewed by phone reported no change. One student reported,

“[I] really liked the course. However it was very much geared towards people in missions, which is not so relevant to what I do at work.”

This student reported that she passed on some of the information to her manager and is hopeful that I will be received to improve her organization’s ability to have greater impact on people in the future.

Most had difficulty associating the training with their personal and professional roles. A common trait with each of these students is that they served in media support roles within their organizations and saw their day to day activity as not having a direct impact on the evangelistic efforts of the organization in which they served. VSN has an opportunity to draw a stronger connection between the day

to day activity of the student and the overall Kingdom impact that they are having because they work within an evangelistic organization.

Mission Effectiveness

MII sought to directly address VSN's goal of building leaders to be better evangelists, disciple-makers and church planters as they develop their skills in using media, story and mobile in their mission. With this goal in mind, we asked the question, "How much more effective are you, personally, in the fulfillment of your mission as a result of taking this course?"

An important part of MII's objective is to determine if students are coming away from the experience with the proper motivation, and equipping to fulfill the mission to which they've been called.

97.3% of students responding reported that they are personally more effective in the fulfillment of their mission as a result of taking the MMU course.

When asked if you "feel better equipped to accomplish your mission after taking this course?", 100% reported positive change. The question "how do you feel" helps us understand a student's current motivation.

Between these two questions about Mission effectiveness, the results skewed higher when asking students about their feelings toward being equipped. While the average score given when asked "do you feel better equipped" was 8.68, the Mode (most frequent answer given) was a 9 with 13 students reporting this score. Another 10 students reported a score of 10, "Very Effective." No students reported less than 6 when asked if they felt better equipped to accomplish their mission.

This question of feeling equipped is an important one. Through our work with several of the largest missions organizations operating throughout the world, we often find that staff feel under-resourced and overworked. MII hasn't measured this in any meaningful way, and comparing MMU students to the staff of other MII partners wasn't a part of this engagement. But from this experience, we find it worthwhile to note that how a student feels about their participation in MMU is important to note. When compared to employees in similar industry roles, it is our observation that ministry workers have fewer opportunities to upskill themselves through education like that which is offered by MMU. When participants report that they feel better equipped, it is a strong indicator that they will find greater satisfaction in their job, have a higher opinion of their manager and employer, and likely provide meaningful contributions to their organizations in the future.

This response was observed in our phone interviews as well when students were asked “Which part of the training do you feel helped you most to be more effective in evangelism?” Students reported that the class participation provided perspectives from other students that was valuable in helping increase their own effectiveness.

When asked about their specific contribution to their organization, students reported that they believe the training will have a great impact on future Kingdom efforts in which they are directly involved.

Students who are able to apply their training directly in their day-to-day activity reported confidence that their participation in MMU will lead to greater mission effectiveness. Students who are not directly involved in creating media, or leading evangelistic media efforts in their organization had difficulty making the connection between the training and greater evangelistic impact. Perhaps this is an opportunity for MMU to introduce change management ideas or mission, vision, values content into their course material.

Action Plan Development

Students were asked directly about their confidence in their ability to develop a strategic plan for new media in their respective ministries. Like motivation, we feel that confidence is a good leading indicator to future success in this area. In order to gauge a change in confidence as a result of participating in the course, students were asked two questions:

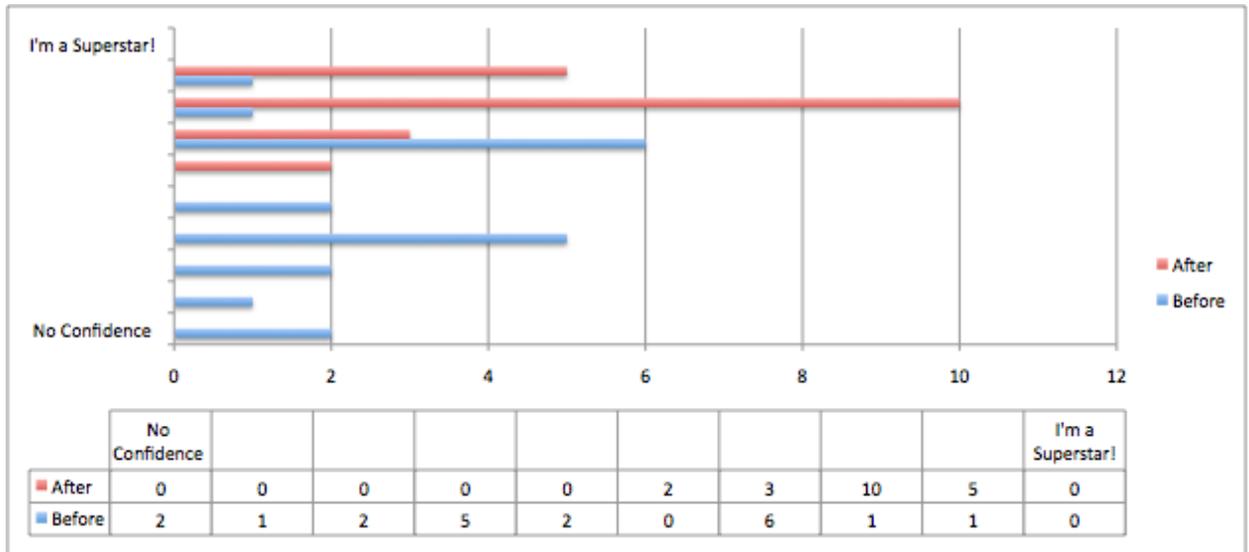
First, “Before taking this course, how confident were you in your ability to develop a strategic plan for your ministry?” And second, “After taking this course, how confident are you in your ability to develop a strategic plan for your ministry?”

Connecting student’s confidence to the skills gained in the course proved to yield some interesting and encouraging results. 100% of students responding to the online survey reported greater confidence in their ability to develop strategic media plans.

60% of students reported Little to No Confidence in their ability to develop a strategic plan prior to taking the course with an average score of 4.4 among those who answered. Little to No Confidence is defined as a score <5 on a 1 - 10 scale. Only 2 students reported “Great Confidence” with a score of 8 or higher on this same scale.

These same students reported an average score of 7.74 when asked “After taking this course, how confident are you in your ability to develop a strategic plan for your ministry?” 100% of students reporting “Little to No Confidence” on

the prior question moved into the positive range with 0 students reporting a score below 6 on this follow up question.



Note: The X-axis represents the number of students reporting

Confidence in the ability to create a plan hadn't necessarily translated into action by the time we conducted our follow up phone interviews. Most students reported still being in the phase of action plan development at the time of our conversation. One student reported "It has been a process," and this has "taken a backseat for the time being." However, this student also reported the desire to implement the lessons learned in their next season of projects.

MII found that most students participating aren't in a position within their company to implement these changes. This sentiment is shared in one student's response:

"I'm not sure that the organization as a whole is any more effective because of my sole participation, being that I work for an extremely large organization with several thousand people. However, if there were more people from my ministry enrolled in this course and from different areas of the ministry I can see how it would be more effective overall."

Another student reported that her manager required a report following her participation in the class. This conversation led to the collective realization her ministry needs to allocate time and budget to resourcing action plans in the future.

BEGINNING IMPLEMENTATION

Students completing both courses were asked about current implementation, or future plans for implementation of strategies. Given that these surveys were conducted less than 30 days after completing the course, MII believes that inquiring about future plans is a good indicator of future follow-through. We have found that the ability to implement lasting change is often dependent on the culture and leadership of the student's organization. VSN may want to consider strategies for gaining buy-in from a student's leadership, or equipping students to engage their leaders in the training process throughout the 5-week course.

52% of students responding to the online survey reported that they have not yet implemented lessons learned from their course with 29% of the students completing the courses completing this question.

47% of students responding report that they have already implemented strategies learned from MMU, and another 17.4% report that they plan to do so in the near future. Overall 65% of students reporting have the intention of putting their training into practice, or have already done so.

Phone interviews conducted with MMU students continued to be a great source of information when attempting to understand how valuable these courses were from the student's perspective. The behavior of students after participating in this course can give us some good insight into how they view the material and if they intend to use it in the future.

The students we interviewed had all engaged in sharing what they had learned with others. Some had also recommended the course to a colleague or friend.

One student from Ethiopia reported sharing all of the content from the course with a colleague including "documents, worksheets and videos." "I plan on doing a course on how to use media for mission work in May for my team and other members of our organization."

This example is wonderful, but appears to be an outlier. 73.4% of students responding to the online survey reported being unsure or unwilling to train their team in story. There appears to be a disconnect between students willingness to learn, and their understanding of how their experience can translate into impacting others in their organization or networks.

Another student reported:

"I thought the course instructor and material were great, especially at defining and demystifying the components and process that make for a good story. It was exactly what I hoped for and expected: a beginner,

introductory level course to learn the elements of story and begin to practice them.”

Conclusions:

It was our goal to determine if the MMU’s overall curricula, presentation and approach are significantly contributing to student’s ongoing Kingdom impact. MII also endeavored to provide recommend steps which MMU can take to ensure the success of students who have completed the offered courses.

In this section we will provide a summary of the information MII has collected and shared above in order to give a response to the following questions that we are seeking to answer:

- Will students describe themselves as more effective in evangelism?
- Do students intend and understand how to use their training to more effectively reach people for Christ?
- Have they, or are they planning to train others in story?
- Have they or are they planning to train their team in story?

It should be noted that students are receiving a lot of requests for input from both MII and MMU. MMU is following up with students to gain feedback. This is a best practice and should continue. MII was challenged to gain a large number of responses when surveying students before and after the course by both phone and online survey. The lower response to online surveys and interviews (29% of students completing the courses) may be a result of “survey fatigue”.

However, even with a small number reporting, we believe that the information gathered is meaningful that the conclusions listed here are valid. We also gathered many suggestions based on student feedback that we believe will improve the experience and long-term return on investment for MMU.

MMU EFFECTIVENESS

II was able to determine that there are many reasons to believe that MMU is providing training and support for ministry workers that is delivering significant movement towards Kingdom impact, with strong potential for long-term fruit and sustainability.

The MMU courses continue to provide benefit for students completing the courses. Those who participate throughout the course, and complete assignments are among those receiving the greatest benefit. Participants provided high marks for the presentation, style and substance of the course material. Students also reported overall improvement in their ability to accomplish their mission, and their organization's ability to accomplish its mission.

The strategies and methods being taught through MMU take time to develop and take time to measure for impact. The feedback from students about MMU was overwhelmingly positive. This was also true among students who gave lower marks on questions of their own advancement or personal development, and then later reported that they have already shared the content with a colleague, or would recommend the course to others.

Will students describe themselves as more effective in evangelism?

- Of the students responding to the **online survey**, 79% reported positive change in evangelism effectiveness following the MMU courses.
- Only 3 students in total reported "No Change" when asked "How much more effective are you in evangelism after taking this course?"

Do students intend to and understand how to use their training to more effectively reach people for Christ?

- 97.3% of students responding reported that they are personally more effective in the fulfillment of their mission as a result of taking the MMU course.
- When asked if they "feel better equipped to accomplish your mission after taking this course?", 100% reported positive change.
- 100% of students responding to the online survey reported greater confidence in their ability to develop strategic media plans.

Have students, or are students planning to train others in story?

- All students we interviewed by phone had all engaged in sharing what they had learned with others. Some had also recommended the course to a colleague or friend.
- One student offered, "I plan on doing a course on how to use media for mission work in May for my team and other members of our organization."
- 73.4% of students responding to the online survey reported being unsure or unwilling to train their team in story.

Have students or are students planning to train their team in story?

- MII found that most students participating believe they aren't in a position within their company to implement these changes.

- Student Quote: “I'm not sure that the organization as a whole is any more effective because of my sole participation, being that I work for an extremely large organization with several thousand people. However, if there were more people from my ministry enrolled in this course and from different areas of the ministry I can see how it would be more effective overall.”
- 47% of students responding report that they have already implemented strategies learned from MMU, and another 17.4% report that they plan to do so in the near future. Overall 65% of students reporting have the intention of putting their training into practice, or have already done so.

From this data our audit has determined that the long term return on investment is good. With any new concept, ideas and best practices evolve over time. VSN has been blessed to develop a quality program that is providing a good service and a benefit to students who participate fully.

MII has seen the value of continuous improvement, and we have listed some recommendations to take MMU from good to great with future cohorts.

RECOMMENDED STEPS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Word of mouth and promotion by MMU alumni will continue to validate the MMU model. MII recommends regular and expanded follow up with participating students for the purpose of creating community around those who have participated in, and completed the course. Checking in with students 6 months and 1 year following course participation would give a much better view of overall impact on the ministries being served by the MMU. If possible, VSN should consider ways to cultivate ongoing relationship with MMU students. This kind of engagement will also help improve course materials for future students, lead to exposure of new students through an alumni network and ideas for future courses, resulting in greater and greater impact over time.

Making the connection between course material, and how the training can be delivered in a student's day to day work continues to be an issue highlighted by student surveys. Higher levels of absorption and implementation happen in the areas that students find most valuable and relevant to them in their specific situation. MII would recommend considering adding more discussion time or Q/A to the courses to allow students to explore implementation options collectively.

Impact for the Kingdom will not be achieved without implementation of the strategies and processes being taught through MMU. MII suggests the following modifications for your consideration to improve implementation among future

students:

- Create a private facebook group for MMU alumni. Inviting students to join this group at the beginning of the course will serve as an introduction to one another, serve to keep students connected beyond the course, and allow students and instructors to engage in ongoing dialogue and sharing outside of the “classroom” environment. Ideally, the instructor is heavily involved in this experience.
- Direct communication upfront on course expectations relative to VSN goals for MMU
- VSN may want to consider strategies for gaining buy-in from a student’s leadership, or equipping students to engage their leaders in the training process throughout the 5-week course.
- Provide students with training or course curriculum that presents concepts and strategies for change management to help students implement MMU training into their organizations.
- Present the “Why”. Help students make the connection between their role in the organization and the overall impact of the organization.
- Encourage course instructors to draw lessons back to the purpose of delivering greater impact through media evangelism throughout the program.
- Implement a follow up program to check in with students individually after the second week. A personal note from the instructor to every student, for example. This is an attempt to raise class participation and assignment completion.
- Provide students with an outline or other conversation guide designed to help facilitate a conversation with leaders and influencers within their organization about what they are learning and how it can be applied within their team’s context.
- Finally, Keep up the good work!