

## Constant Client Contact

### Economics La Ceiba Development in Practice Professor Shawn Humphrey

**Objectives:** The long-term sustainability of La Ceiba is contingent upon our clients successfully repaying their loans. One method of realizing a high repayment rate is to practice “high-touch high-feel” microfinance. Our *Constant Client Contact* initiative will:

1. Allow our clients to receive individual attention.
2. Develop a relationship between La Ceiba team members and clients.
3. Provide timely information regarding a client’s repayment performance. In the case of a client running into difficulty with her repayments, possible solutions can be explored in a prompt manner.
4. Provide an avenue by which to receive continual and immediate feedback from clients – which is a possible catalyst for rapid organizational innovation.

**Due Dates:** Throughout the Semester

**Points:** 10

#### Instructions:

1. Each team will be composed of at least two members - one Spanish speaker per team is required.
  - A. Each team will be responsible for four clients
  - B. Each team will be responsible for creating and maintaining a file for each of their clients
    - i. Client profile Data Sources
      - a. Loan Application Form (see Loan Team)
      - b. Poverty Scorecard (see Ben)
      - c. Customer Satisfaction Survey (see dr H)
      - d. Original Poverty Surveys (see dr H)
      - e. Ana
      - f. Picture of Client
  - C. Non-spanish speaking Team Member Responsibilities:
    - i. Gather Data to create Client File
    - ii. Before each Communication session fill out “Client Loan Performance” document
  - D. Spanish-speaking Team member Responsibilities:
    - i. Translating any client data into English for Client File
    - ii. Conducting Communication Session with Clients
    - iii. Translating Communication Session into English
2. Each team will be assigned four clients each
  - A. Frequency of Contact: Once per month
    - i. This translates into communicating with clients at least once per week; however, I have a list of Spanish speaking volunteers who are willing to participate. If this works then you talk twice a month and the volunteer can talk the other two times.
3. With the assistance of the Honduran Loan Officer, each team will schedule a regular day and time to communicate with their assigned client(s) (which is recorded on their *Loan Application Form*).

- A. Each team must communicate with their assigned client(s) at least every two weeks.
  - B. We will explore alternative lines of communication with clients – including, phone and skype.
4. At least three days prior to a scheduled communication with a client, the team must download and complete the *Client Loan Performance* document. The required information for this document can be found by accessing the Google Document titled “New Loan Repayment Record”.
- A. If the client is currently delinquent or in default on a loan, the team should ask that the US Loan Officer contact the Honduran Loan Officer for the most up to date information regarding the client’s repayment performance.
5. Immediately prior to communication with the client download the *Communication Record Sheet*.
6. Use the *Communication Record Sheet* to record the major topics discussed and conclusion of the conversation.
- A. Ask the enumerated Questions and record the client’s answers in the space provided. The questions are few on purpose. We do not want to manufacture your conversation. You should feel free to have small talk, talk about their future plans and the plans they have for their family, and ask how La Ceiba can assist them in realizing their goals.
  - B. During your conversation with clients you may hear stories of personal and familial hardship. It is important to be sensitive and to be a good listener. However, you must maintain a professional distance. Clients may ask for various forms of assistance. In the past, La Ceiba team members have been asked to become the godparent of a client’s child and others have been asked to provide housing for a client who was contemplating an illegal migration to the United States. Beyond the financial and educational services we provide, La Ceiba team members are not in a position to provide additional assistance. Other clients may ask for advice about how best to handle their personal as opposed to their financial hardships. In these cases, you should be very cautious of offering advice. Not only are we geographically distant from our clients, we also come from different cultures and have had very disparate life experiences.
    - i. Bring pressing issues to be the team as whole. If necessary, we will pass them along to the Honduran Loan Officer who is in a better position to evaluate the situation.
    - ii. Class time on Thursday will be available for you to bring topics to the entire team.
  - D. If your client is unable to make a scheduled session, leave a polite message (if possible) and take steps to schedule another day and time to talk.
7. Staple the *Client Loan Performance* and *Communication Record Sheet* together and give them to the US Loan Officer to be filed away with the client’s folder.
8. If communicating with a client becomes a source of personal stress at any time, please let me know as soon as possible.