

## **WORKING WITH CLIENTS IN EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING EXERCISES: ADVICE FROM THE TRENCHES**

*Chair: Deborah Cours, California State University Northridge, Department of Marketing, 18111 Nordhoff Street, Northridge, CA 91330-8377; (818) 677-4635*

This session highlights several types of experiential projects and the strengths and problems associated with each.

### **Procuring, Managing, and Supervising Large Projects: Internal and Interdisciplinary Coordination**

Judith Hennessey and Deborah Cours, California State University Northridge, 18111 Nordhoff Street, Northridge CA, 91330-8377; (818) 677-2458

These presenters discuss two government-based projects that involved students across the curriculum (and integrated with other departments). The authors share their knowledge regarding the procurement process and management of these projects, including a discussion on the management of interdisciplinary projects and internal coordination across academic departments. They will also discuss their attempt to integrate the project across classes, uniting undergraduate and graduate students, and using the project iteratively across semesters to enhance the speed and quality of learning and the quality of the final product.

### **Experiential Student Projects: Managing Client Expectations and Maximizing Student Learning and Performance**

Brian Jorgensen, Southern Utah University, 351 W. Center Street, Cedar City, UT 84720; (435) 586-5497

Dr. Jorgensen has worked with undergraduate marketing research students on projects for both on-campus organizations and off-campus businesses and non-profit organizations. His presentation focuses on students working with off-campus organizations. Specifically, he discusses the identification and selection of appropriate projects, the assurance of appropriate expectations on the part of client organizations, and ways of meeting specific challenges faced by students. A particular challenge for the professor is maximizing the quality of student projects, while making certain that clients recognize the limitations inherent in the fact that these are

student, rather than professional projects. Dr. Jorgensen also addresses the issue of how to effectively start projects when business students are still being trained on the course concepts.

### **On-Campus Clients for Student Projects**

Bruce Lammers, California State University, Northridge, 18111 Nordhoff Street, Northridge CA 91330-8377; (818) 677-2169

This presentation addresses opportunities for student projects for on-campus organizations. Dr. Lammers has been very successful in conducting projects for various on-campus University groups (e.g. Parking, Copy Center, etc.) in his marketing research and consumer behavior courses. He has implemented the use of team competition on preliminary exercises to screen for a "power team," which is then selected for presentation of the final project to the client. Dr. Lammers will discuss the effectiveness of this tactic as an outcome control mechanism and as a motivator of students. He has also found that the use of University clients often decreases the conflict of expectations that is sometimes experienced with off-campus clients (e.g. business owners). On-campus projects also provide a community service – particularly when done at a public institution such as Cal State Northridge – allowing students to improve the quality of their own University.

### **Use of Students in Marketing Consultations**

James Beckman, University of Redlands, PO Box 1753, Lake Arrowhead, CA 92352; (909) 274-7117, J.D. Bell, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand, and Norton Marks, CSU San Bernardino; (909) 336-6933

This presentation discusses the use of marketing students to support the efforts of academic and private-sector consultants. The ethical and legal requirements for disclosure of their status is discussed. Likewise is the need for their services given the ending of the Federal funding of the Small Business Institute program, the proliferation of small business startups, and frequent

challenges to the continued existence of established, smaller firms. All three authors have participated in such small business consultations, and share their experiences with regard to pricing, services rendered, and contact with clients and their employees, as well as the educational benefits to students.

**Experiential MBA-Marketing Management**

**Class: Linking Students to S.B.D.C. Clients**

Steven B. Corbin, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, IA 50614-0126; (319) 273-6204 and Lyle Bowlin, University of Northern Iowa, Small Business Development Center, 200 East 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Waterloo, IA 50701; (319) 236-8123

A questionnaire was sent in August 1998 to the 24 pre-registered University of Northern Iowa MBA-Marketing Management students to determine their classroom environment preference. Survey results indicated that the students wanted a class that was application-oriented, discussion in nature, project-based, and working with real business problems (vs. cases and computer simulations).

The SBDC personnel sought business people to be matched with the Marketing Management students' industrial/business background and/or interest. The capstone project for the students was to develop an actionable marketing plan for the business person's existing or to-be-developed company. The MBA students met with the SBDC clients on four of the ten class sessions. The final session with the marketing plan presented to the entire group of SBDC clients was held on February 10, 1999.

A pre- and post-assessment instrument, as well as a SWOT analysis of the experiential learning environment project was administered to the students. The strengths, weaknesses, and suggestions for improvement of the experiential MBA Marketing Management class will be shared with WMEA attendees.

**Managing the Small Business Institute**

Ronald Hagler, California Lutheran University, 60 W. Olsen Rd, Thousand Oaks, CA 91360; (805) 493-3371

In the SBI program, students participate in hands-on learning experiences by providing consulting services to local small business owners, using a field case method. The SBI provides faculty and students with opportunities to engage in active learning while providing a community outreach service. The SBI projects are not limited to marketing problems, and universities differ in which department houses the SBI. However, many small business owners have great need for marketing plans, marketing communication programs, and customer analyses. Dr. Hagler will describe how the SBI program works and will provide some suggestions regarding management of the student-client relationship and monitoring quality of the work.

**Sponsored Projects: The General Motors Marketing Internship Program**

Katrin R. Harich, California State University Fullerton, School of Business Administration and Economics, Fullerton, CA 92834-6848; (714) 278-4674

The General Motors Marketing Internship Program was originated by Sgro Promo Associates (Sgro recently changed its name to EdVenture Partners), a company consultant to General Motors. The projects that are executed in the GMMI Program provide students with the opportunity to practice in a real-world situation what they learned in class, which fosters motivation, learning, and, as a consequence, makes students much more attractive and valuable future employees. For this project, students design and implement a real-life communication campaign on or off campus. The students present their work in class to their professor, to EdVenture Partners, and General Motors. Moreover, they hand in a comprehensive report (Plans Book) which summarizes their research, their communication plan, as well as implications for future strategies. Dr. Harich describes her experience with this challenging and exciting program and offers advice to others interested in pursuing similar projects.