

THE USE OF VIDEOCONFERENCING TECHNOLOGY IN THE MARKETING CLASSROOM: ISSUES TO CONSIDER WHEN VIDEOCONFERENCING WITH DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS

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ABSTRACT

This workshop is designed to discuss issues related to the effective use of videoconferencing with business executives and government officials in marketing classes. The major purpose of the session is to show case this technology and encourage faculty members who have not used it in their classrooms to consider using it. The session will provide a forum for faculty members who have used it to discuss their experiences. Brief video clips from student videoconferences with foreign executives and US Government officials in the Commercial Service abroad will demonstrate classroom applications.

SESSION RATIONALE

Many schools of business make a practice of bringing seasoned executives into the classroom, particularly in upper division courses. These executives provide insightful, first-hand experience in addressing complex marketing problems from their perspectives as top decision-makers. The geographic locations of many schools, unfortunately, make it very difficult for faculty to have ready access to a pool of executives to bring into the classroom. Even in areas where executive talent is available, the travel time between their offices to the campus often is an impediment to obtaining participation from these very busy individuals. Getting access to multinational executive talent from outside the country is even more challenging. Encouraging the use of this technology to enhance classroom experiences is the primary rationale for the session.

In the near future it is expected that the bandwidth issue on the Internet will permit much less expensive technologies to bring videoconferencing to the classroom. Many of the issues that are pertinent now with the more expensive technology will also obtain when the cheaper technology can provide the same frames per second video imaging and similar audio quality. The coming improvement in video Internet conferencing will provide many more institutions that cannot afford formal videoconferencing facilities the opportunity to bring distant experts and classroom. Therefore, this workshop should be of interest even to faculty from schools that currently do not have videoconferencing rooms.

SESSION FORMAT

Oral Presentation /Video clips/ Discussion: In this workshop, a review of the equipment and support requirements on both ends, issues involving preparing the executives and students for the event, cost for connect time, and the problems of communicating across quite different time zones will be presented and discussed. Brief video excerpts of the authors' classes teleconferencing with marketing executives in Norway, Japan, and with the U.S. Commerce Department officials in Brazil will be shown. The session will also discuss students' reaction to the experience. Additionally, overall pros and cons of this type of learning experience will be examined from a faculty perspective. The audience will be encouraged to comment on our experiences as well as discuss their own. Additionally, thoughts on the implications of improved bandwidth for Internet-videoconferencing will be presented to encourage discussion.