

Crafting the Future of Collegiate Sales Education

Jimmy Peltier and Andrea Dixon (Special Issue Editors)

Business schools periodically evolve to better serve student and employer needs, and collegiate sales education helps to satisfy these critical relationships to a noteworthy level. According to the Sales Education Foundation (2015), the top 71 North American collegiate sales programs report a remarkable 96% student placement rate. The placement statistic is a breath of fresh air that encourages sales educators to share their pedagogy and curriculum scholarship for sales and non-sales educators to further advance sales education. We are therefore delighted to share with you a summary of the authors and articles whose works appear in this special issue on Innovations in Sales Education.

Introducing Professional Selling to College Students

Misconceptions abound when students think about sales, so introducing sales careers appropriately during the collegiate experience is important. In Cummins, Loe and Peltier's article, *Using Sales Competition Videos in a Principles of Marketing Class to Improve Interest in a Sales Career*, the authors reveal how including an educational intervention (video of a sales competition) within a 45-minute lecture of a Principles of Marketing class impacts student intent to pursue a sales career. Similarly, Paden, Stell, Trainor and Mushro's article, *Changing Students' Perceptions of Professional Selling Using an Online Learning Workshop*, presents the use of an online learning workshop as an intervention for changing negative perceptions of the selling profession. The proposed workshop intervention with panel presentations and role plays aligns with key outcomes in terms of ease of implementation as well as effectiveness in driving

interest in sales careers. Since many universities are moving courses toward hybrid or fully online formats, teacher-scholars are keen to understand the opportunities associated with moving sales courses to online platforms. Rippé, Weisfeld-Spolter, Cummins and Dastoor's article, *A Guide to Teaching On-line Sales Courses*, provides a step-by-step roadmap for organizing and implementing an online introductory sales course as well as weekly assignments and teaching materials.

Sales Relationships

Beyond sparking student interest in the sales career, academicians focus on preparing their students for the complex world that marks business relationships and the sales or exchange process. In such complex relationship settings, the art of negotiation is one of several bodies of knowledge that students must master. In Fleming and Hawes' *Teaching Sales Students How to Become Adaptive Negotiators*, the authors introduce and discuss the use of an adaptive negotiations scorecard for embedding this body of knowledge into students' minds and skill sets. Based on situational factors, students use this tool to ascertain whether distributive or integrative techniques should be used in the pending sales encounter. Further, in Nielson and Border's *Teaching and Training Future Sales Professionals How to Negotiate with Real World Experience*, the authors demonstrate how involving students in negotiating an actual deal (rather than just role playing) increases the dollar amount negotiated. Also focused on a real-world experience, Lastner, Rast and Andzulis demonstrate how engaging their university entrepreneurship program's partners, they create a context for more immersive learning. In *Creating Win-Win Collaborations for Students*, the authors share how their project-based approach impacts the students registered for the Advanced Sales class as well as entrepreneurs

who are building their businesses and need real assistance in driving revenue. Another partnership model taps into behavioral learning allowing students to understand how to approach problems in a variety of different ways. In *Leveraging Partnerships with Local Companies as a Method of Teaching Sales*, Lilly and Stanley discuss a curriculum re-design leveraging constructivist learning whereby students are exposed to business professionals as they discuss similar problems addressed by different solutions. In the process, students learn how to approach a problem rather than just finding the right answer.

The Marketplace

Learning how to problem-solve is an underlying objective of most simulated learning experiences. In *Learning beyond Negotiation Tactics: The Sales Marketplace*, Seung Hwan Lee introduces a simulated sales marketplace involving a number of buyer/sellers facing fluctuating price points. Providing a more realistic experience, this simulation pairs students into buyer-seller teams for practicing their negotiating skills and creating sales contracts. The new simulation format allows buyers and sellers to “move about” and choose to do business with other market players. In the quest for realistic learning experiences, Mullen and Larson created a sales shadowing program for students involving 55 distinct industries. The program outlined in *Analyzing the Impact of a Sales Shadowing Program: Process and Outcomes*, gives students the opportunity to locate, contact, interview, and shadow a sales manager thereby providing students with that more realistic experiential learning.

Professionalism and Leadership

Universities today are called upon to prepare students to be ready for the “real world” and part of that preparation involves student readiness for the job search process. In Jones, Vijayalakshmi and Lin’s article, *Instructing Students on the Use of Behavioral Assessment in Sales Hiring*, the authors explore the development and application of behavioral assessment in the hiring process. Through the lens of a sales management course curriculum, students conduct a competitive analysis of a firm and then translate that analysis into the critical behavioral success factors for the firm’s sales positions, thereby learning how to connect business strategy with sales operations. In the process, students think critically about the firm’s ideal candidate profile and who they might fit the various roles.

Students must develop a working understanding organizational roles and how people create value for the organization through those roles. It is one thing to learn *about* a leadership or management role; it is quite another to embody the role fully and deliver on the value promise. In *Introducing Student Sales Managers into Experiential Sales Projects*, Rocco and Whalen present a classroom innovation that allows students to embody the role of a sales manager, supervising students in the basic undergraduate selling class. In addition to key learning outcomes for the student, this classroom innovation promises to reduce a professor’s administrative burden as another key benefit.

Diversity and Ethics

Our students must also be learn how to operate effectively in a diverse, multi-cultural workplace and to do so with a high degree of integrity and ethics. Teaching students how to behave when faced with culturally diverse values and behaviors will go a long way in developing culturally

sensitive salespeople and sales managers. Baker and Delpchitre's article, *An Innovative Approach to Teaching Cultural Intelligence in Personal Selling*, unpacks a methodology focused on teaching cultural intelligence (CIQ) through awareness, knowledge, and behavioral exercises. Their innovation provides a systematic framework to help students identify cultural norms and develop the ability to reserve judgment as well as adapt behaviors to different cultures. Finally, Fischbach and Connor introduce the concept of graphic novels as a tool for encouraging the development of a student's ethical worldview or mindset. In *Empathy and Interpersonal Mentalizing in Ethics Education: An Exercise with Graphic Novels*, the authors outline an exercise which gives students the opportunity to discuss dilemmas when experiential learning cannot be implemented. Student feedback suggests that the graphic novel methodology was instrumental in the development of their ethical decision-making skills and also improved their satisfaction with the teaching methodology for ethics education.

Overall, we are inspired by the work presented by these authors and hope that this special issues inspires our colleagues around the globe to advance their practice in the classroom.

Jimmy Peltier and Andrea Dixon

References

Sales Education Foundation (2015), 2015 Top Universities for Professional Sales Education, *University of Wisconsin Whitewater*, pp 6-7 retrieved from <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwiRopScmKPMAhWJIIMKHTdvDAgQFggcMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.uww.edu%2Fdocuments%2Fuww%2Fsales15.pdf&usg=AFQjCNGkFC6JR6LbaH3VBLupSoxHkoRxQ&sig2=tK2uP3Tt-0mFV6z9V9R-PQ&bvm=bv.119745492,d.amc>.