

PUTTING MARKETING STUDENTS IN THE SHOES OF AN EXECUTIVE: AN APPLIED APPROACH IN DEVELOPING DECISION MAKING SKILLS

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ABSTRACT

Instructors who teach marketing courses need to strike a balance between ensuring that students understand the key concepts and theories as well as have opportunities to apply those concepts to address meaningful organizational challenges and issues. Students will retain what they have learned when they are given hands on learning opportunities to solve relevant problems and make decisions that have a direct impact on the organization's results. While marketing principles provide a useful fundamental framework, student learning is enhanced when instructors integrate challenging organizational problems into assignments which give students opportunities to see the market by "being in the shoes of the executive" who is accountable for the success of the business. Learning is maximized

when students step outside of the classroom through engaging in opportunities to work directly with business leaders who face challenges and issues related to marketing on a regular basis. Through working directly with organizational leaders, students are able to develop necessary skills to make informed decisions and to integrate textbook knowledge to address the complex issues which leaders face. In this article, methods of experiential learning in the classroom are first discussed. Then specific tools for implementing experiential learning projects are offered. Finally, the authors describe their experiences working with students as they interact with business leaders who have real marketing challenges that need to be addressed and managed for the viability of the executive's business.