

TEAM-BASED EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING: INSIGHTS AND LESSONS LEARNED FROM 100 CORPORATE PROJECTS AT PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

**Andrea Scott, Graziadio School of Business and Management, Pepperdine University,
24255 Pacific Coast Hwy., Malibu, CA 90263; andrea.scott@pepperdine.edu**

**Doreen Shanahan, Graziadio School of Business and Management, Pepperdine University,
18111 Von Karman Ave., Irvine, CA 92614; doreen.shanahan@pepperdine.edu**

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this session is to share best practices and lessons learned from the more than 100 corporate projects conducted by Pepperdine University's Education to Business Program (E2B) within the marketing curriculum (<http://bschool.pepperdine.edu/programs/e2b/>). E2B projects allow students and faculty to work directly with partner companies to identify strategic solutions to actual business problems facing the organization. Over the period of a trimester, student teams research, analyze, provide recommendations and then report their findings – both orally and in written form – to partner company executives.

Topics covered in this session included defining and managing the learning experience, pedagogy, project selection and scoping, faculty engagement, ensuring successful outcomes for all stakeholders (students, faculty, university and company), and more.

PROGRAM RATIONALE

Pepperdine's E2B program is a faculty-developed initiative in response to key trends and observations in the student marketplace including the following:

- An influx of younger graduate students with fewer years of practical business experience
- More students with an increased appetite for "hands-on" versus traditional lecture learning environments
- Increased interest in marketing as a concentration among MBA program entrants, but accompanied by limited resume-building opportunities
- Repeated call for additional communications skills-building for burgeoning business professionals (e.g., written and oral presentation)

- Steady feedback from hiring companies that leadership and team-building skills were among the most valued attributes sought in freshly-minted hires

SESSION FORMAT

The format was interactive presentation, which highlighted the following key points about experiential learning within a marketing context:

1. What it is: To understand the learning goals, model/structure and best practices for experiential learning
2. How it works: To share the evolution, development and outcomes of Pepperdine's approach to team-based experiential learning (positioning within the curriculum, project selection and scoping, functional breadth, student team composition, faculty involvement, program governance, program funding, scale)
3. What we've learned: To highlight the lessons we have learned from the more than 100 corporate projects at Pepperdine.
 - a. Describe the value, benefits and impacts of the programs (mission fit; enhanced student learning; access to senior executives; involvement with high profile firms; resume/portfolio enhancement; public relations perceptions of graduates, program and school; raising the tide of overall student learning).
 - b. Identify the enduring challenges and caveats (scaling up, confidentiality, IP rights, faculty engagement, faculty skills; student team dynamics, client issues – non-engagement and evaporation).