SERVICE LEARNING IN A PERSONAL SELLING CLASS: SYSTEMS ARE THE SECRET

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this presentation is to expand upon my description of service learning in a personal selling course (Hagenbuch 2006) by detailing specific systems that have enabled the Sales Project to benefit students and nonprofit partners. In addition, these replicable methods have allowed me to manage a course that requires more time than other classes. The systems can be categorized into three interrelated areas: relationships & communication, strategy & tactics, and record-keeping & reporting.

SYSTEMS FOR BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS AND MAINTAINING COMMUNICATION

Key to the success of the Sales Project is building positive relationships with local nonprofit organizations and maintaining open communication.

Community Partners Luncheon

Nonprofit organizations are invited on campus to a luncheon for exploring partnership opportunities.

Pre-Course Survey

Through an online survey, students indicate the nonprofit organization they would most like to serve.

Initial Student-Client Meeting

Student teams meet their clients and learn more about the organization they will be serving.

Correspondence with Clients

Teams provide weekly email updates of their work, while I send specific letters to clients at particular stages of the Sales Project.

Frequent Sales Meetings

Class-time often takes on a sales meeting format in which we discuss selling successes and challenges.

Wiki Site

A unique Wiki site allows students and clients to share important Sales Project information.

SYSTEMS FOR MANAGING SELLING STRATEGY AND TACTICS

Students participate in two distinct planning processes and receive tactical-level sales training.

Marketing Plans and Personal Selling Strategies

Student teams develop marketing plans and personal selling strategies based on their client's needs.

Project Management Timeline

The planning process, workflow, and deadlines are managed through an electronic Project Timeline.

Typical Classroom Tools

Students receive training through common classroom pedagogies such as lecture, discussion, guest speakers, and textbook readings.

Training Presentations

Teams role-play specific selling scenarios, then offer analysis of the techniques they presented.

SYSTEMS FOR RECORD-KEEPING AND REPORTING

Several electronic tools help those involved keep track of sales contacts and results.

Sales-Call Logs

Students record each sales call they make, including prospects' contact information and call outcomes.

Sales Reporting Spreadsheet

A master worksheet is used to keep track of sales made by all five sales teams.

REFERENCE

Hagenbuch, David J. 2006. Service learning inputs and outcomes in a personal selling course. *Journal of Marketing Education* 28(1): 26-34.