

THE APPLICATION OF CLIENT-BASED PROJECTS IN ADVERTISING COURSES: MEETING CLIENT EXPECTATIONS

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Abstract

A "client based learning" experience (Swan & Hansen, 1996; Parsons & Lepkowska-White, 2009) is one in which a client presents a real life business situation to a group of students and where the students are to use the tools at their disposal to address the situation. Client based projects (Lopez & Lee, 2005), client-sponsored projects (De los Santos & Jensen, 1985; Goodell & Kraft, 1991) and live case studies (Kennedy, Lawton, & Walker, 2001; Elam & Spotts, 2004) are terms that have been previously associated with this form of activity. One of the primary benefits of this teaching approach is that it brings together the business and academic communities in a cause in which both parties can benefit (Goodell & Kraft, 1991; Cooke & Williams, 2004). The business community can benefit because this exercise offers a chance for these businesses to work with and interact with enrolled college students. By doing so, the business community has a chance to obtain ideas from student research regarding their individual business. These interactions can also provide a pool of students for internship and well as employment opportunities. The academic community has the opportunity to establish business contacts with the community as well as to provide a platform where students can apply the concepts learned in class to real business situations. To some, these students serve in a consultancy capacity since they have the opportunity to make outside recommendations based on the material learned in the classroom as well as ideas from their personal experiences. This group of students may be suited for the task because "the Millennial Generation" (Ng, Schweitzer & Lyons, 2010) has a background unlike many college students before them; this group of students has a solid foundation grounded in technology. Because the advertising field is evolving and a subject area where "Millennials" are often the target audience, this generation may have the insight and knowhow to help those businesses that may not have a comparable level of expertise.

With client based projects, students are asked by clients to propose ideas needed to fulfill their objectives. Two examples that may serve as objectives are increasing sales or store traffic in the store. Beyond explaining the process in which the client based projects take place, a second focal point of this paper will be based on former clients' responses to a series of interview questions. The content of the questions will come from highlights extracted from past projects that clients have already been exposed to since these businesses have already participated in these projects in the past. By conducting these interviews, the overall impact of the student recommendations on each business client will be able to be determined. In the end, the value of client based projects will be assessed based on the feedback from the client.

References Available upon Request