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Journal for Advancing Business Education

FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Reader,

With advancements in artificial-intelligence applications, automation, and machine learning, artificial intelligence (AI) is revolutionizing the traditional business landscape and entire industries in an unparalleled fashion. AI possess vast capabilities that can make automation more efficient, optimize predictions, and reduce risk. Therefore, a recent Business Wire survey (2022) reports that 91 percent of responding organizations are investing in AI activities.

A challenge that surfaced lately and that more and more instructors try to tackle is the following: How to teach AI? More specifically, how to teach AI to a class of college students? In this context, artificial intelligence is a machine that, kind of, thinks like a person. More general, AI covers expert systems, machine learning, deep learning, generative AI, and artificial general intelligence. All these elements combined create the AI that we encounter every day.

When perusing through different kinds of class-content that integrate AI in teaching, various subject matters emerge. In the case of business and engineering, one can find courses such as data science, programming, robotics, machine operations, signals and systems, optimization and control, and language processing. AI strategy, ethics, and technology are other natural outflows of these courses. Many of these courses have experiential projects and simulations involving live organizations woven into their fabric and touch on topics, including neural networks, AI and human work, algorithmic bias, and large language models.

Ultimately, to explain basic artificial intelligence to junior students, one should start with emphasizing a thematic and social (big picture) approach rather than a skills approach. An accessible framework that focuses on artificial intelligence has to be created which could incorporate the following elements: defining and explaining the nature of AI; describing the history of AI; showing how AI impacts work and business; demonstrating how AI impacts the education system; showing how AI influences health and wellbeing; creating awareness for how human-technology interaction works; highlighting how AI changes creativity and innovation; and emphasizing how AI influences policies, governance, and ethics.

Artificial intelligence is here to stay. Eventually, it will become an integral part of society. Each of us has to decide whether artificial intelligence should be piloting major parts of our lives or copiloting small tasks in our daily operations. This especially applies to teaching: if an instructor wants to utilize the power of AI, additional assignments that go beyond the AI's capabilities (e.g., students enacting a play live, students building a product prototype) have to be added to the existing course exercises in order to make the student learning-experience as valuable as possible.

Thank you!

Christian Gilde
Managing Editor

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DESIGNING A PERSUASIVE UNIVERSITY WEBSITE

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ABSTRACT

University websites are one of the significant tools for recruiting students. This study tests the influence of website design dimensions on attitudes toward the university. It focused on the dimensions of information quality, usability, inspiration, and reciprocity. Data from an online survey of 308 students tested the research model using factor analysis and structural equation modeling. The results showed that two dimensions of usability and reciprocity affect the overall attitude toward the website. The attitude toward the website influenced the attitude toward the university. This study's results will be helpful for higher education marketers in designing the university website.

According to Kusumawati, "Without enrollment growth, colleges and universities will not sustain" (2018, p. 3). In turn, "digital marketing (DM) helps educational institutions to attract and engage potential students and build credibility, satisfaction and loyalty among the students and parents. “In addition, DM builds students' satisfaction as well as improves ranking, increases profit, easy access to millennials and parents and gain instant feedback" (Harbi et al., 2022, p. 463). DM plays a vital role in recruiting students by triggering the need for education. Existing research indicates that DM is reshaping the educational sector; the social media component increases student enrollment; it targets students and strengthens branding, and it is cost-effective with the ability to target specific audiences and is an integral part of overall HEI strategy (Basha, 2019; Harbi et al., 2022; Kusumawati, 2018).

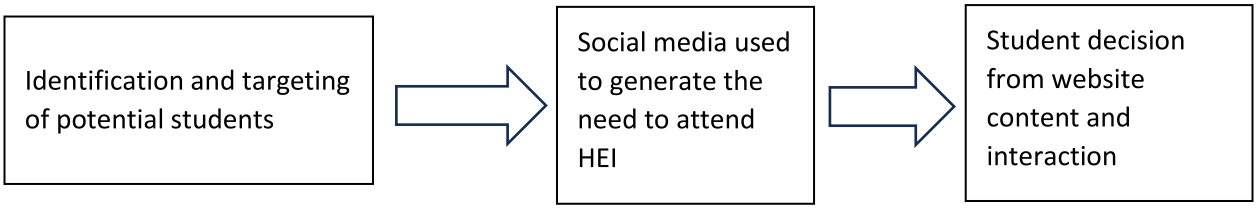
Digital Marketing (DM), of which the website is a crucial component, plays a key role in HEI's success. The website should serve as a front gate to the students (Subbarayalu, 2022). The university website serves a wide range of stakeholders, performs numerous functions, is a crucial tool, and plays a critical role in higher education (Bae et al., 2021). Additionally, the quality of a higher education institution (HEI) is related to the quality of its website (Giannakoulopoulos et al., 2019). HEI website users include the institution, students, the larger community, employers, alumni, donors, and numerous outside partners and alliances (Subbarayalu, 2022). HEI website functions include but are not limited to branding, strategy, digital marketing, discourse, and day-to-day operations. According to the June 2023 Web Server Survey by Netcraft, there are over one billion active websites (Netcraft, 2023.). Conversely, there are approximately 21,000 accredited HEIs worldwide World Higher Education Database (WHED Portal, n.d.). As a result of the lesser number of HEIs compared to other organizations, research on HEI websites is limited. This study, by investigating the relationships between website design, attitude toward website, and attitude toward university, provides a roadmap for the importance of and the use of websites in HEIs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Student HEI Choice Process

Within the context of DM, websites play a vital role in the student's decision on whether to apply to or attend a particular HEI. The process of marketing to students begins with identifying and targeting students (see Figure 1). Social media is the primary tool for generating the need to pursue a higher education. The student accesses the website to learn more about the HEI and its specific programs. The student attendance decision largely depends on the information and the interaction with the website (Basha, 2019; Harbi et al., 2022; Hoang & Rojas-Lizana, 2015; Kusumawati, 2018).

Figure 1: Student Decision Process

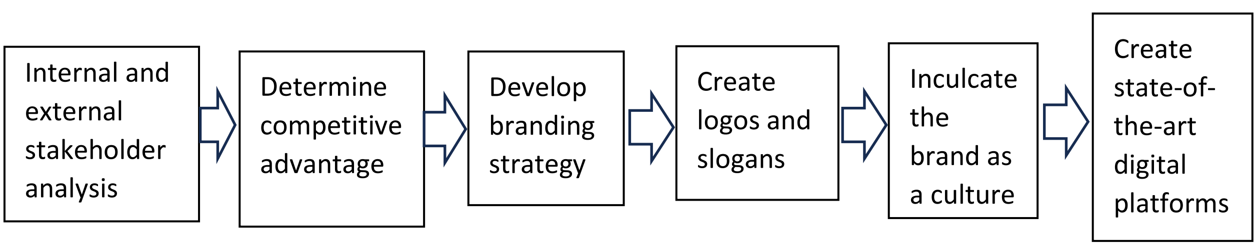


The website is critical in the process for two reasons. Over 90% of students access the internet multiple times daily, and the website is the preferred medium for admission-related information and activities. The HEI should clearly understand the student choice process and "have an awareness of how to engage directly with students and what outcomes they could expect as a return for their investment" (Kusumawati, 2018, p.7). Very few students utilize traditional in-person or paper materials for admission-related activity. The essential elements of the admission-related website include easy access to personal and relevant information, student programs of study with related course offerings, and engaging directly with students about program outcomes, including return on investment and job opportunities (Chadha & Toner, 2017; Kusumawati, 2018). In addition to the importance of the university website in students' decision process, HEI branding and strategy are key components.

HEI Branding and Strategy

Branding and strategy also play a vital role in the student decision process. The website is a critical element in HEI's branding and strategy. Figure 2 illustrates how HEI's digital platforms should result from displaying, promoting, and interacting with a well-developed brand and organizational strategy (Subbarayalu, 2022). According to Basha, students make admission-related decisions based on digital platforms 43% of the time from website content and 25% from social media (2019). However, for this decision to be consistent, it should be based on proper analysis, determination of the HEI's competitive advantage, clearly identified branding, tied to the organizational strategy, and representative of organizational culture.

Figure 2: The Branding Process in the HEI



Numerous factors are essential when developing an HEI brand. Geographical, historical, and socioeconomic factors are essential when developing an emotive relationship with the student

(Hoang & Rojas-Lizana, 2015). Language should include adjectives like excellent, outstanding, or fantastic and be tied directly to incoming student desires like "generous financial aid packages". Quantifiable information like university rankings, new capital projects, student outcomes, and research success are essential. Branding and promotion efforts should be integrated across platforms to include website and mobile applications, search engine optimization (SEO), social media, and customer relationship management (CRM) (Harbi et al., 2022). High-quality photos and videos aligned with athletic branding, school spirit, admissions, and promotional content will help increase engagement (Peruta & Shields, 2018). Branding on platforms should be evaluated outside the organization by entities with the proper knowledge in the particular arena (Subbarayalu, 2022). Finally, tying branding to cultural and governmental policy aspirations adds value for HEIs (Bae et al., 2021). Having explored the significance of university websites, we'll now delve into website design practices.

Best Practices in HEI Websites

It is also important for HEI websites to follow best practices in support of the student choice process. Accessibility, discourse, and content best practices are important elements in the use and functionality of HEI websites.

Accessibility

An essential legal, functional, and quality requirement for websites is accessibility to the content and functions by all (Giannakoulopoulos et al., 2019). Most HEI websites do not meet accessibility standards as measured by Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) international standards, with the latest version being 2.1 with a proposed version of 2.2 in the process (WCAG 2 Overview, Web Accessibility Initiative WAI, W3C, n.d.). One evaluation by Ismail and Kuppusamy found 24 areas of violation among 44 college websites (2022). Common problem areas include "color contrast, alternative texts, link visibility, list elements, lang attributes, form labels, captions, and marquee elements" (Ismail & Kuppusamy, 2022, p. 907).

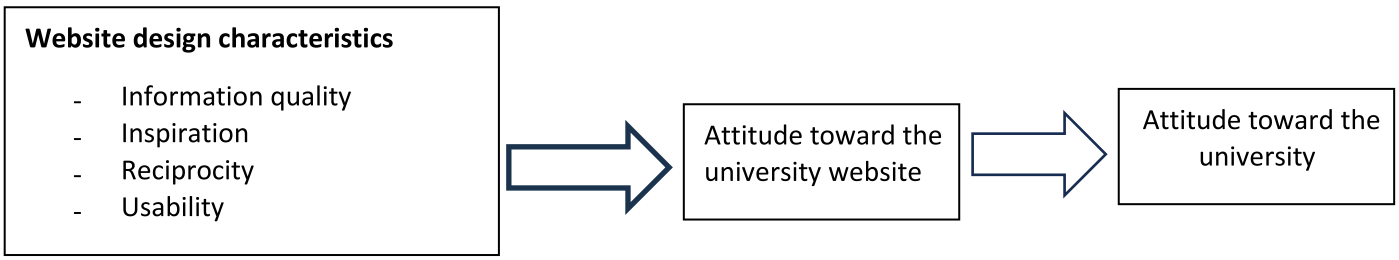
Discourse and Content

High-quality HEI websites will include discourse and content directly aimed at attracting students and resources (Hoang & Rojas-Lizana, 2015). The best practice includes clearly presenting their identity on the home page(s) with links to social media and personalization. Use personal pronouns like "we" for the HEI and "your" for the student to achieve personalization. High-quality images or videos develop stakeholder relationships tied to purposeful messaging and branding. The About Us page should describe what the university does, and the future student link should specifically access programs or degrees to include course information, admissions, financial aid, and scholarships. Another best practice includes directing and personalizing for the HEI to pursue outside funding. To enhance user experience and use, use tools to continuously measure content engagement time by media type and subject (Peruta & Shields, 2018). Website content should include user-submitted content to increase engagement. Finally, use the website for practical communications. For example, the site could indicate the number of sites available for parking or the library (Felix Răduică et al., 2019).

Theoretical framework

This study seeks to establish a connection between the characteristics of websites and students' attitudes in order to improve the knowledge in the choice process. It aims to illustrate the comprehensive process of persuasion and communication that operates on university websites. Figure 3 summarizes our conceptual model. The literature and definitions of the elements of the conceptual model follow.

Figure 3: Conceptual Model



Information quality

According to Lee (2002), consistently fulfilling customer expectations regarding information is known as information quality (Lee, 2002). Significant research exists on information quality in the online customer behavior context. People mainly visit websites to find information (Hwang et al., 2006). Information quality is one of the main contributors to information system success (Schaupp et al., 2006; Tao, 2011). Moreover, users' perceived information quality of websites influences their subsequent behavior, such as purchase intention (Jeong & Lambert, 2001). By evaluating the information quality of Indian universities' websites, Singla and Aggarwal (2018) revealed the influential role of information quality in attracting more students.

The literature has identified various criteria to assess information quality (Davis et al., 2019; Jeong & Lambert, 2001; Kim & Fesenmaier, 2008; Rieh, 2002). These criteria focus on evaluating the information content of a website based on factors such as accuracy, relevance, usefulness, currency, security, validity, and completeness (Rieh, 2002). For instance, in their study, Davis et al. (2019) highlighted that among the information sought by students on university websites, details regarding tuition fees and overall costs of attendance ranked as significant. Previous studies confirmed the influence of information quality on attitudes toward websites (Elliot et al., 2005; Priyadarshini et al., 2017). Thus, we hypothesize that:

H_1: Information quality of the university website positively affects attitude toward the website.

Inspiration

Inspiration is breathing in or infusing some idea, purpose, and so on into the mind; the suggestion, awakening, or creation of some feeling or impulse, especially of an exalted kind' y (Simpson & Weiner, 1989, p. 1036). Inspiration and visual aesthetics are commonly used interchangeably within the website design context. Lavie and Tractinsky (2004) divided the visual aesthetic of a website into two categories: classical aesthetic (e.g., pleasant design) and expressive aesthetic (e.g., creative design). By adding visual and auditory features such as graphics, web designers create an appealing experience for website users, enhancing the aesthetics of web pages (Yang et al., 2013). Graphics can evoke strong emotions and feelings in website users when used effectively. Ashraf et al. (2019) state that website design artifacts influence attitudes and behavioral intentions. Tractinsky et al. (2006) evaluated the users' perceived aesthetic of web pages and suggested that visual aesthetic affects users' attitudes toward interactive systems. Based on a review of the literature, the following hypothesis summarizes the inspiration construct:

H_2: Inspiration of the university website positively affects attitude toward the website.

Reciprocity

Reciprocity is a powerful motivator for influencing behavior (Cialdini et al., 1992). Reciprocity implies that an individual offers something of value, such as knowledge, in return for receiving something valuable (Gamberini et al.,2007). In the context of a website, reciprocity refers to the level of exchange of information between the websites and their visitors (Srinivasan, 2004). Melek (2004) investigated whether web users provide personal information to customize their online experience. Of the users, 81% would provide their addresses, 96% would provide their names, 76% would supply information about their hobbies and interests, and 95% would provide their email addresses. Based on the results, providing additional user benefits enables websites to create a reciprocal loop. In the case of university websites, benefits such as contests, discounts, brochures, and guidebooks are used to create a reciprocal loop. Hsu and Lin 2008 examined the influence of knowledge sharing on attitude. The results showed that reciprocity as a knowledge-sharing factor affects the attitude of blog users. In another study (Shiau & Luo, 2012), an online survey showed that reciprocity considerably affects attitudes toward websites. Thus, we hypothesized that:

H_3: Reciprocity of the university website positively affects attitude toward the website.

Usability

Usability refers to how easily and effectively users interact with a website (BenbunanFich, 2001). Usability plays an essential role in a website's success because if visitors cannot find the information they seek, they will leave the website (Chen et al., 2004; Rudolf & Pirker, 2000;). Several factors, such as functionality, convenience, ease of understanding, and ease of navigation, have been proposed to measure the usability of websites (Loiacono et al., 2002). Usable websites facilitate information-seeking (Seyhmus et al., 2006) by providing navigation features such as web maps and search functions (Nielson, 2000). Sengel (2013) assessed the efficiency, effectiveness, and satisfaction aspects of a university website's usability using Brook's System Usability Scale (1996). Similarly, Sukmasetya et al. (2020) confirmed the impact of learnability, memorability, efficiency, and errors on usability within university websites. Manzoor et al. (2012) compared the usability of two university websites from students' perspectives, identifying factors like online result facility, updated faculty profiles, and timely news and event updates as contributors to higher usability levels.

Karani (2021) employed the usability evaluation instrument WEBUSE, developed by Chiew and Salim (2003), to investigate the effect of university website usability on students' satisfaction. They found that satisfaction was associated with four factors - user interface design, navigation and links, performance and effectiveness, and content and reliability. The authors suggested that university websites should focus on enhancing content, organization, and readability to satisfy students, needs. The study by Wang and Senecal (2007) showed that website usability influences users' attitudes toward the website. Thus, we hypothesized that:

H_4: The usability of the university website positively affects attitudes toward the website.

Attitude

Attitude is a lasting tendency to consistently respond to various aspects, characteristics, and situations related to an object, person, or environment. It significantly drives behavioral change (Diesbach & Midgley, 2007; Kimelfeld & Watt, 2001). In a marketing context, the attitude toward advertising is vital because it affects how people respond to specific advertisements and various marketing messages (Lutz, 1985; Mehta, 2000). Previous research revealed the influence of consumers' attitudes toward advertisements on attitudes toward brands and their purchase intentions (Sallam et al., 2016; Suh & Yi, 2006). As an essential marketing communication channel, the company's website acts as an online advertisement. Researchers highlighted the influence of website design characteristics on consumers' attitudes, which, in turn, affects their likelihood to recommend the website to others, engage in further information searches, and influence their purchase behavior. For instance, online advertisements' content, such as pictures and textual content, has been recognized as crucial in internet advertising, which can enhance the advertisement's effectiveness (Cho, 1999; Braun-Latour & Zaltman, 2006; Dreze & Zufryden, 1997).

Researchers widely accept the relationship between users' perception of the website and overall attitude toward the brand (Maria et al., 2006). This attitude towards the brand is crucial in shaping future consumer behavior, including their purchase intentions (Mpinganjira, 2016). Understanding how university websites as promotional materials influence students' attitudes becomes essential in education marketing, as these websites typically highlight the university's offerings. Thus, we hypothesized that:

H5: Attitude toward the website positively affects attitude toward the university.

METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

These five hypotheses are evaluated through the following procedure. This study used an experiment to collect data. Table 1 shows the university websites selected for this study as experimental websites.

Table 1: Experimental Websites of This Study

No	University	Website address
1	Shepherd University	www.shepherd.edu
2	Brown University	www.brown.edu

This study's target sample consisted of 308 undergraduate students at Shepherd University. The instrument used an online questionnaire, and questions were adapted from previously established questionnaires (see Table 2). All items were measured using the 7-point Likert scale. Participants read about the study's objective at the beginning of each experiment session. The instructions were to navigate the websites for 5 minutes. Then, participants answered the survey questions. Structural Equation Modeling analysis (SEM) via Smart PLS 4 was used to analyze data. Table 2 includes the standardized factor loading for each item, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct. Based on Table 2, the factor loading for all factors was higher than 0.50, and composite reliability was higher than 0.7. In addition, AVE values were greater than 0.5.

Table 2: Standard Factor Loadings, Composite Reliability and Average Variance Extracted

Measure/Scale item	Factor Loading	Composite Reliability (CR)	AVE
Information quality (Kim et al., 2009; Kim & Fesenmaier, 2008)		0.89	0.53
This website offers clear information.	0.80		
This website offers up-to-date information.	0.83		
This website offers sufficient information that satisfies my	0.81		
studying needs.	0.71		
This website provides cost information.	0.84		
This website provides useful information about the university.	0.77		
This website represents information about events and festivals, news, and unique activities of university.	0.69		
This website provides job prospects information.			

Usability (Kim & Fesenmaier, 2008; Luna et al., 2012)		0.87	0.64
This website is easy to understand.	0.91		
This website is easy to use.	0.92		
I have the ability to control what I am doing, and where I am at any given moment.	0.840		
This website is easy to navigate in terms of time required in order to obtain desired results.	0.88		
Inspiration (Kim and Fesenmaier, 2008; Nevarez, 2012)		0.88	0.63
This website represents the university in an appealing way through images.	0.85 0.84		
This website represents university in an appealing way through video clips.	0.84		
This website represents university in an appealing way through attractive video clips.	0.87		
This website represents university in an appealing way through virtual tours.			
Reciprocity (Kim & Fesenmaier, 2008)		0.84 0.57	
This website offers program brochures I'd like to request.	0.80		
This website enables me directly contact offices.	0.79		
This website provides helpful customer service.	0.87		
This website enables me register for special offers, events, newsletters, personalization, etc.	0.83		
Attitude toward website (Lubbe, 2007)		0.93	0.74
In my opinion, surfing this website is very desirable.	0.89		
I like to use this website.	0.90		
I have a positive evaluation of this website.	0.90		
I found it easy to obtain information from this website. I am satisfied with using this website as a study planning assisted tool.	0.92 0.84		
Attitude toward university (Hausman & Siekpe, 2009)		0.89	0.72
I have a positive evaluation of this university.	0.90		
I like to study at this university.	0.90		
This is a good university.	0.90		

The results of SEM analysis are illustrated in Figure 4 and Table 3. Among the five relationships tested, three were significant. Information quality and inspiration did not have a relationship with attitude toward the website. Usability influences attitude toward the website (β=0.57, t=10.812, p<0.01). In addition, reciprocity influences attitude toward the website (-

β=0.27, t=4.46, p<0.01). Finally, attitude toward website influences attitude toward university (-β=0.64, t=15.78, p<0.01).

Figure 4: Final Model Showing Structural Path Coefficients of Hypothesized Relationships

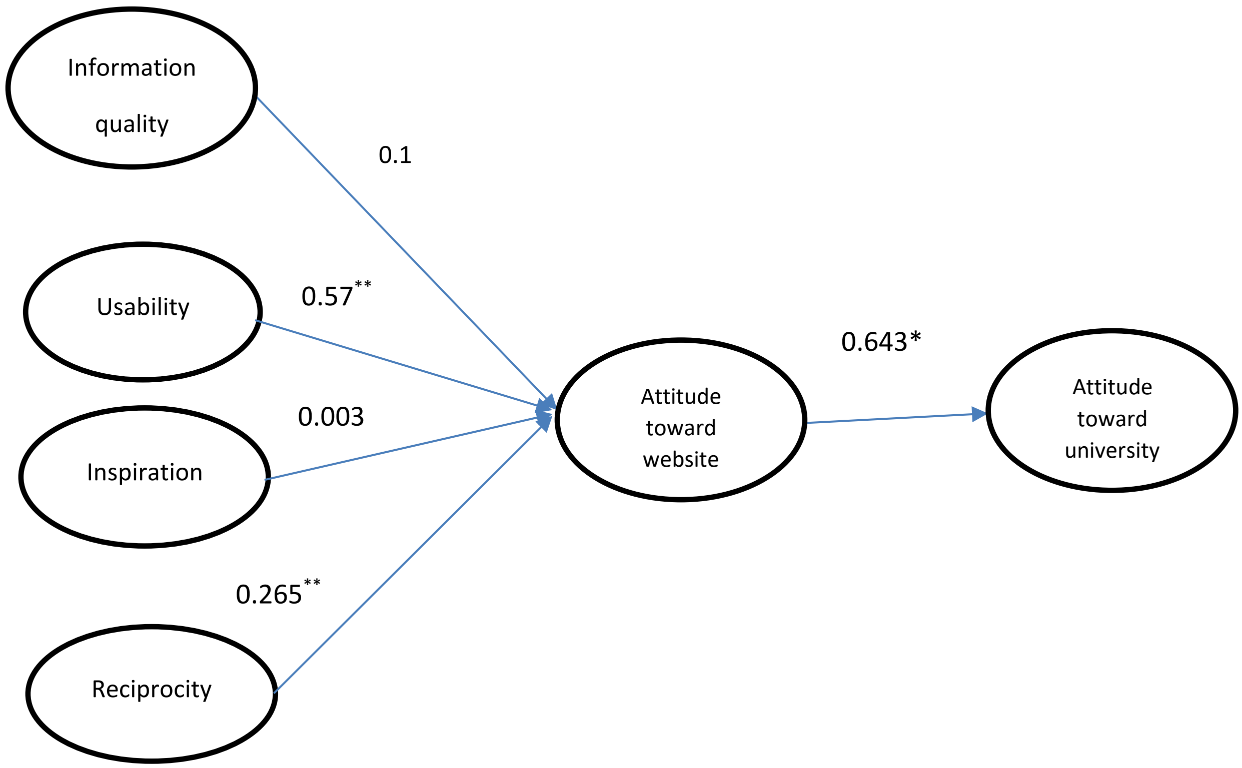


Table 3: Results of the Structural Model

Paths	-ß	t-values	p-value	Supported
Information quality → Attitude toward website	0.100	1.95	0.081	No
Usability → Attitude toward website	0.570	10.81	0.000	Yes
Inspiration → Attitude toward website	0.003	0.12	0.949	No
Reciprocity → Attitude toward website	0.265	4.46	0.000	Yes
Attitude toward website → Attitude toward university	0.643	15.78	0.000	Yes

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results from this study showed that in the higher education sector, university website design significantly influences students' perceptions of the university and, consequently, influences their decision-making process when selecting a university. The findings of this study revealed that among four website design dimensions, usability and reciprocity positively related to attitude toward the website. Based on the results, students are likely to form a positive attitude toward the university when the website is usable and creates a reciprocal relationship with students.

According to the results of this study, usability was the most important predictor of attitude toward the website. Previous research verifies the effect of usability on attitudes toward websites. Thus, universities should continuously seek ways to improve the usability of their websites. University websites should be designed with simplicity, ensuring a smooth user experience. The university website should have a clear and logical structure, making it easy for students to navigate and find the necessary information. For instance, navigation menus and links should be well-organized. Websites with a high search functionality help users quickly locate specific information. Simple website design and fast loading time lead to an enhanced user experience.

Reciprocity had a positive relationship with attitude toward websites in the present study. This result shows the importance of establishing a mutually beneficial relationship between the university and students. University websites should have interactive features such as live chat support, forums, or social media integration to increase engagement with the website. University websites can help students decide where to attend by providing comprehensive and relevant information, such as e-brochures. In addition, support features of the websites, such as FAQs, contribute to a reciprocal relationship between students and the university. It should also contain different landing pages and be capable of displaying different content by user group (Felix Răduică et al., 2019). The content on the main pages can be automatically updated using scraping tools such as Octoparse combined with Python to read and summarize basic information. Finally, university websites should encourage users' feedback to understand their needs, enhancing their experience.

Information quality and inspiration did not influence the attitude toward the website because students might be more concerned with finding accurate information quickly rather than evaluating the overall quality of the content. Additionally, the primary determinant of student attitude toward a university website is its functionality rather than its inspirational or aesthetic elements. University website designers should prioritize usability and simplicity to create positive attitudes among users, regardless of whether they are explicitly "inspired" by the design. A positive attitude towards the website is normally influenced by information quality. It was not found in this case. This may be explained by needing more data, by the students' familiarity with their own website, or by current students already having the required information.

The result of this study has strategic implications for higher education institutes using e-marketing channels. Although universities must consider the quality of all website dimensions, our research suggested that a website's usability and reciprocity elements are the most critical components of website design. Our results showed the importance of website usability attributes such as ease of navigation and straightforward content organization. The information should be quickly accessible with hassle-free navigation and information search options. Contact information, including the phone number, should be on the front page. A mixture of links, buttons, and single-level menus provides balanced navigation on the front and main pages. Students, as task-oriented users, appreciate a responsive website design that is user-friendly and efficient in delivering information. Finally, the website should be optimized for mobile friendliness (Giannakoulopoulos et al., 2019).

In addition, university websites should encourage user engagement. Universities can generate a sense of being heard and belonging by promptly addressing students' inquiries. As users of university websites look for specific information, it is important to tailor content to individual needs, such as offering e-brochures and increasing user connection. This can create a more positive attitude and engagement with the university.

In summary, students value practicality and an engaging online environment over design inspiration when forming an attitude toward a university website. Since attitude toward websites has a positive relationship with attitude toward universities, universities should incorporate website design effectiveness into their marketing strategy. By prioritizing web users' experience, universities can achieve their marketing goals. University websites should optimize usability and reciprocity features to communicate effectively with students and persuade them to attend the university.

One of the limitations of our study is the potential for sample bias, as it includes students from only one university. Our sample may not fully represent the broader population. Future research could address this limitation by incorporating participants from different universities to include participants from different geographic regions and different cultural backgrounds. This broader sampling approach would enhance the generalizability of our findings and provide a more comprehensive understanding of how web design impacts user behavior. Another limitation of our study is the relatively small number of experimental websites used to manipulate web design elements. This study only utilized two experimental websites. While this study investigated key variables of interest, information quality, usability, inspiration, and reciprocity, a more extensive range of experimental websites could offer a more comprehensive analysis of the impact of these design elements. Future studies could expand upon this by including a wider variety of website designs, incorporating different aesthetic styles, functional layouts, and interactive features. This approach would allow researchers to provide valuable insights into how website design features influence website effectiveness. By incorporating diverse samples and a broader range of experimental stimuli, researchers can uncover new insights that contribute to the development of more effective and user-friendly website designs.

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WHAT IS MISSING FROM MANAGEMENT EDUCATION?
LEARNING FROM THE STAKEHOLDERS

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores whether business schools are lagging in their preparation of future leaders. In 2023 JABE published the first stage of a multi-phase agenda focused on higher education's responsibility to workforce preparation. Insights of senior leaders, as employers for our graduates, were revealed. In *this* paper insights of faculty, in their role as the gatekeepers of business curriculum, are explored. Without the faculty, the integration of coaching knowledge into business education will not be successful. The purpose of this research is to ensure that management education remains relevant to the needs of leaders *and* to our students' professional goals.

INTRODUCTION

The profession of *executive coaching* lives outside of the traditional curriculum; yet the skills and knowledge of coaching actively serve senior leaders as they face their daily challenges. Coaching elevates participative leadership and empowerment (DiGirolamo & Tkach, 2020; DiGirolamo & Tkach, 2019). A coaching approach serves leaders and managers as they gain insights on their own thinking (Jamison 2018), and it serves leaders as they learn how to motivate and empower their followers (Filipkowski, Heverin, & Ruth, 2019). Coaching can be a powerful tool, as well as can lay the foundation as a meaningful leadership philosophy, that can serve emerging and future leaders.

This expanding profession actively influences the development of new, rising, transitioning, and senior leaders (Mackenzie-Ruppel, 2021; Wasylyshan, 2022). Employees desire a workplace culture that values well-being and a sense of purpose. Chief Executives and Human Resource Officers contract with for-profit consultants to coach their leaders in these skills. One leader suggested, “No one is ever fully ready for these C-level jobs. It takes time to settle in, and as talented as these people are, they need support, especially in terms of their behavior and how to lead in these big jobs” (Wasylyshan, 2022, p. 8). Should these skills be intentionally introduced and honed within the business curriculum leading to the Master of Business Administration (MBA)? (McComb, 2012; McGill, Clarke, & Sheffield, 2019). The history, understanding, and value of executive coaching as a leadership *behavior* and a desired organizational *culture*, has **not** explicitly found its way into the canon of management and business education. A forward-thinking leader, who seeks to create a coaching culture in his or her organization, may find resistance or reluctance from many of the organization’s emerging or subordinate leaders and managers. One reason may be that these individuals were *not* introduced to coaching as a legitimate management practice within their traditional business curriculum and management education (Jamison, 2018; McComb, 2012).

Business scholars must consider whether graduate business education is still a meaningful ingredient of leadership preparation? In a time passed, senior leaders were expected to hold the coveted MBA before rising in position.

As scholars and educators, we must explore whether coaching knowledge and skills should be actively integrated into the program-level learning outcomes for graduate business education. Currently, training for coach practitioners and internal executive coaches emerges from external organizations, rather than from the universities and colleges. Why?

Is Higher Education Slipping in its Influence over the Rise of Future Leaders?

Higher Education was once perceived as the non-negotiable entrance ticket into positions of authority and leadership. Business Education, especially the MBA, provided rising leaders with a credential that stood for advanced cutting-edge knowledge and skills. Business schools create value for their stakeholders, which include both students and employers (Cavico & Mujtaba, 2009, p.3). Yet, public doubt has creeped into the thinking around the absolute need and economic value for a college degree prior to journeying onto the professional pathway (Fischer, 2019: The 2019 Trends Report, 2019) though evidence reflects otherwise (Graduate School Degrees, 2016; Rothwell, 2016; United States, 2021). Business schools have been criticized for focusing too heavily on bottom-line achievements at all costs (Cavico & Mujtaba, 2009, p. 2) and for failing to prepare future leaders with useful and relevant skills (Bennis & O'Toole, 2005). Stakeholders "worry that college costs too much, wonder what students are learning, and question the value of a degree" (Fischer, 2019). This perception exists though there is evidence of the economic value of the college degree (Rothwell, 2016; United States, 2021; Graduate School Degrees, 2016).

This research is critical as it explores whether graduate business education is serving its students professional goals as well as the needs of industry leaders who hire MBA graduates. Vlachopoulos (2021) provides evidence that change is needed in higher education and executive coaches can partner with college and university leaders as well as professors, in this quest.

Higher Education is still limping away from the Global Pandemic, yet the challenges that higher education leaders are facing were already emerging *before* the global shut-down of higher education. In the March 6, 2020, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, it was reported that 30% of colleges face some market risk with 10% of colleges facing *severe* market risk (Mackenzie-Ruppel, 2020).

The influencing factors of Higher Education' underperformance *prior to the 2020 Pandemic,* include Public Doubt. The student debt crisis had fed the doubt that a college education was relevant and worth the cost. Although there is evidence that earning a college-degree *does* improve the economic future of an individual (Source: Georgetown University), public doubt persisted (The 2019 Trends Report, 2019). Students and parents demand evidence of the value of this significant financial investment. Are the knowledge, skills, and experiences gained necessary for the professional journey of the student?

The market and organizational life are changing. The threat of professional organizations becoming the '*go-to*' educational providers, as is the case with *executive coaching*, is chilling. Business Schools must take the lead as the premier source of business education. The Mega-university offers a degree at a low cost with high convenience. Some students believe that the credential of a college education is all that is needed, regardless of the educational content. Low cost + speed + convenience = Degree (Mackenzie-Ruppel, 2020). The student's strategy may be to earn *any* degree and then let industry certifications educate! We, as scholars, academics, and business educators, need to re-ignite our roles; we must become the influencers of cutting-edge business practices.

The role of who defines premier business education is unclear. Business educators look to accreditors for validation that their practices and curriculum allow high profile accreditations to be retained. Regional accreditors that serve as the eyes of the Federal government (e.g., MSCHE) focus on financial strength, faculty credentials, and strong processes, but do not dip down into the depths of curriculum to define content (Harcleroad, 1980; Harcleroad & Eaton, 2005; Hegji, 2018). It is perceived that discipline-specific business accreditors fill that role (e.g., IACBE and AACSB), but these prestigious accreditors have moved away from a model curriculum (AACSB, 2013; AACSB, 2018; AACSB, 2020; AACSB, 2021), leaving faculty to keep its thumb on the pulse of the market's needs.

THE EXPANDING PROFESSION OF LEADERSHIP AND EXECUTIVE COACHING

The concept of coaching is often tied to sport, yet the theoretical foundation for coaching has a rich history that serves the individual's ability to stretch his or her thinking, gain clarity for problem solving, and remove limiting thoughts that shut down creativity and breakthrough thinking. The early influencers of coaching emphasized self-reliance and aligns with the emergence of Humanistic Psychology (1950s), which shifted the focus away from '*what is wrong with you?*' and pathological labels, to elevating human potential and the holistic focus on the human experience. The theoretical foundation for coaching emerged from the same theorists that fill our Organizational Behavior textbooks such as Abraham Maslow and Kurt Lewin. (Maslow, 1968; Schultz, 1994; Wildflower, 2013).

In 1995 Thomas Leonard started a non-profit organization called the International Coach Federation (ICF) to offer support to fellow coaches. It is now considered the gold standard for coach certification (International Coaching Federation 2021; International Coaching Federation, 2020; International Coaching Federation Website). Coaching organizations have emerged throughout the world and influence control of coaching education and the certification arm of this growing profession. Organizations include: The International Authority for Professional Coaching and Mentoring (IAPC&M), Center for Credentialing and Education (CCE), European Mentoring & Coaching Council (EMCC), International Association of Coaching (IAC), and the Association of Coaching (AoC).

The use of coaching skills has expanded beyond professionally trained coach practitioners to include managers, leaders, human resource professionals, and talent-development professionals. (International Coaching Federation, 2020). Related to why this research is important is that only 10% of coach training is university-based (International Coaching Federation, 2020).

Evidence exists that coaching has elevated and supported leaders at the highest level of the organization, even as they transition into C-suite roles. Senior leaders gain meaningful support from professional coaches. Rising leaders are facing increased complexity within organizational life; professional coaches support leaders beyond what is defined as industry specific problem solving, and broaden their thinking around workplace relationships, calming emotional turmoil, and facing the multi-faceted challenges of the changing workplace (McGill, Clarke, & Sheffield, 2019).

Research co-sponsored by the ICF and the Human Capital Institute (HCI) has revealed the emergence of a coaching culture in organizations (Filipkowski, Heverin, & Ruth, 2019). The results revealed that organizations are elevating their use of both internal coach practitioners, external coach practitioners, and have managers and leaders using coaching skills. Respondents reported that coaching activities were used to develop leaders, enhance performance management discussions, and to develop talent (Filipkowski, Heverin, & Ruth, 2019).

MULTI-PHASE RESEARCH AGENDA

Triangulation of research invites multiple viewpoints to reduce bias. With this intention in mind, a multi-phase IRB approved research plan was designed. Business education is intended to create value for the students, the employers, and all stakeholders, especially responding to the marketplace (Cavico & Mujtaba, 2009). The intention for this research path is to ensure that management education remains cutting edge and relevant to the needs of organizational leaders *and* to business students' academic and professional goals.

To explore this agenda, the primary stakeholders of business education must be invited into the research process. Revising management education requires the voices of (1) senior leaders as the employers of our future graduates, (2) management faculty as the gatekeepers and stewards of management education, and (3) graduates, who have earned their MBA and are now firmly established in their professional lives (Mackenzie-Ruppel, 2021).

The first stage of this research was published (Mackenzie-Ruppel, 2023) and included the literature review and discussion as to who defines premier business education, details of the growing profession of executive coaching, and higher education's responsibility to relevant workforce preparation. Most compelling were the research results drawing insights from eleven in-depth interviews with *senior leaders* as the future employers of our business graduates. The research questions explored the interest, the process, and the potential benefit of integrating coaching skills, theories, and knowledge into management education. A primary outcome revealed was employers' expectations of business educators as we prepare our students to become their future leaders. (Mackenzie-Ruppel, 2021)

In this paper the insights drawn from another major stakeholder of business education are reported: *Management Faculty*. Without the faculty, the integration of coaching skills, knowledge, and disposition into business education will not be successful. A research question emerging from stage 1 results that *bridges* to this stage 2 research is *whether student learning outcomes, skills, and knowledge can align with the needs of employers and the marketplace?*

Recap of Stage 1 Research: Insights from Senior Executives (Mackenzie-Ruppel, 2023)

Table 1 reflects a summary of the results drawn from that research. A total of 138 data points were drawn from the transcripts of eleven in-depth interviews with senior executives from a range of industries. These data points were systematically reduced by the researcher in an iterative process to allow the themes to emerge. A total of fifteen (15) themes emerged that were presented under three umbrella concepts. They are: (1) executive leadership within organizations, (2) expectations of business graduates after being hired, and (3) expectations of business educators in preparing graduates to be workplace successful (Mackenzie-Ruppel, 2023).

Table 1
Summary of Research Results-Senior Leaders

Executive Leadership within Organizations	**Expectations of Business Graduates after being Hired**	**Expectations of Educators in Preparing Graduates to be Workplace Successful**
Theme 1 - Leaders are exposed to executive coaching in different ways	*Theme 1 - Who will get the job?*	*Theme 1 - Weakening student entitlement*
Theme 2 - Shift in coaching from being perceived as remediation	*Theme 2 - Expectations of young leaders as they develop and rise in the organization*	*Theme 2 - Managing student expectations*
Theme 3 - Senior leaders align coaching with mentoring	*Theme 3 - Expectations of rising leaders as they begin to lead others*	*Theme 3 - Gaining real-world experience*
Theme 4 - External vs. internal organizational coaches		*Theme 4 - Acquiring and using skills*
Theme 5 - A coaching culture is desired, but it is unclear how it is defined		*Theme 5 – Integrating coaching skills, knowledge, & practice into business education*
Theme 6 - Measuring the benefits of coaching		
Theme 7 - Coaching resources dedicated to support diversity, equity, and inclusion		

EXPLORATORY RESEARCH CONTINUES

University faculty understand that revising the content of management education requires effort and energy as the faculty champions navigate committees and university processes. Most essential is whether the recommended revisions will *serve* and *align* with the academic goals of the discipline, industry, and students. This multiphase study is laser focused on the stakeholders of business education. The viewpoints, insights, and desires of senior leaders, as they are the employers of our future graduates, have been captured (Mackenzie-Ruppel, 2023).

This paper reports the data and insights of the *Management Faculty* who will be expected to champion, build, and deliver the revised curriculum. The range of research questions will explore the interest, the process, and the potential benefit of integrating coaching skills, theories, and knowledge into the canon of management education. Business faculty must face the reality that more organizations are hiring coaches to help onboard leaders and to support rising talent as they move up the corporate ladder, yet, management education has left the coaching discipline on the fringe, mostly living within the single Organizational Behavior (OB) course embedded in the business curriculum.

A multi-phased research agenda was designed to deeply explore this topic. In this second paper the insights gained from a valued stakeholder of business education is reported. The subjects for this study are *Management Faculty* willing to share their experience and expectations of business education as it pertains to executive and leadership coaching. This research will inform business educators on how its influence over future leaders can remain relevant.

Subjects

The primary stakeholder in delivering premier business education is the faculty. Gaining insights from those who transition individuals from novice to experts is valuable in exploring how business education can be most effective in preparing future business professionals and leaders.

Eleven Business Faculty were interviewed from eleven different institutions of higher education. Of the eleven faculty: 45% were male, 55% were female; 45% held the academic rank as Full Professor and 55% held the rank of Associate Professor. The subject group reported a total of 223 years of college level teaching experience. The average teaching years of the eleven faculty members is over 20 years each with a range of 7 to 40 years. Even after removing the outliers, the average teaching experience is *20 years*.

All the faculty subjects worked within the management discipline, with many having an additional discipline, such as Accounting, Information Technology, Economics, Business Law, and Business Analytics. None of the faculty subjects are from the same college/university, so 11 institutions are represented. Of the 11 institutions, 9 of the 11 are in the state of New York, with 1 within a borough of the City of New York; 3 are located on Long Island, NY, and the remaining 5 being spread through the state of New York. The other 2 institutions are located in NJ and KS.

Research Methods and Results

The design of this research study is exploratory in nature (Morse & Richards, 2002). The qualitative approach seeks rich data rather than simply consensus. It seeks to draw meaning from the data using content analysis, leading to grounded theory. The IRB-approved protocol was followed. In-depth interviews were used to capture the experience, insights, viewpoints, and opinions of the eleven subjects. The interviews followed the protocol for a semi-structured interview, which allowed the researcher to participate in the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985); to probe the subject's answers, while still maintaining the basic interview structure. Qualitative researchers are "interested in meaning - how people make sense of their lives, experiences, and their structures of the world" (Creswell, 1994, p. 145). Therefore, this study uses qualitative methods to capture and analyze the data.

The interview schedule of questions was open-ended and invited unqualified responses from the subjects that provided increased depth into the questions surrounding workplace preparation for the students. The questions inquired as to each subject's teaching focus, whether his or her institution currently integrates coaching into its curriculum, familiarity with the coaching process as compared to mentoring, consulting, and therapy; perceived risk/benefit related to the integration of coaching, the faculty member's role in preparing the student for the workplace, and what the faculty member would need to know or learn to be prepared to teach and/or support coaching skills and knowledge at the college-level. The researcher also captured demographic data, including level of leadership and gender (See appendix for schedule of interview questions).

The interviews were recorded and transcribed without any subject identifiers being captured. The original recording was destroyed as soon as the transcript was created. A total of 110 data points were systematically drawn from the eleven transcripts. Content analysis was used to mine the data points from the transcribed interviews. These data points are verbatim sentences, words, or sets of sentences that express concepts. The data points were reduced in a multi-staged iterative process to allow the themes to emerge.

A total of eleven meaningful themes (11) emerged that are being presented under two umbrella concepts, which are: (1) understanding coaching, and (2) the work of the faculty to deliver coaching skills and knowledge to students. To help illustrate the themes, I selected a number of datapoints and included them in the report.

RESULTS

Results Concept 1: Understanding Coaching

These themes reflect the faculty seeking to understand coaching and finding its place as a discipline that needs faculty stewardship in response to market shifts. Many of the faculty had *heard* of coaching yet had a mixed level of awareness and acceptance. Some had no familiarity with coaching beyond what would align with coaches in the world of sport. As descriptors of what is *not* coaching were placed in front of the faculty, deeper insights and understanding emerged. The faculty started to align coaching with areas that made sense for them.

A total of 25 datapoints drawn from the eleven leaders' interview transcripts were reduced, allowing five (5) themes to emerge that reflect the faculty seeking to understand coaching.

Theme 1: Faculty Not Aware of Coaching as a Professional Business Discipline

Though not a major theme within the results, it is still relevant to report that not everyone recognized that coaching exists in the world of business as a formal area of knowledge.

Select data points that illustrate this theme include:

> *"I'm not aware of actual coaching."*

> *"Not formally familiar with a coaching model, but I think that this is what you do as a good management teacher or instructor. I think that's some of that comes from trying to work your hardest for the students to achieve great things."*

Theme 2 – Coaching Brings to Mind – Sport

Similar to theme 1, this is not a major theme, but it is relevant to the faculty finding alignment with coaching as a business discipline. Initially some faculty had difficulty separating coaching from sports. Some suggested that the word coaching has no meaning in business curriculum beyond "*the athletic arena*". One faculty shared his own mentor's reliance of influential athletic coaches' behaviors as examples to illustrate the difference between leading and managing. It was suggested that *"one way to think of coaching more directly resonates with the sporting context."* One faculty member used the example of athletic coaching to express that the coach does ***not*** need to have been the greatest athlete to be successful in coaching another athlete.

Select data points that illustrate this theme include:

> *"Coaching is not a word that has any meaning in our business curriculum. People are familiar with coaching in the athletic arena."*

> *"My previous mentor was very passionate and would explain the difference between coaching and managing; he would always give us the examples of baseball managers and baseball coaches."*

> *"One way to think of coaching more directly resonates with the sporting context."*

> *"I would use a sports analogy in that a coach does not necessarily to have been the best baseball player but can still coach another to be great."*

Theme 3 – Coaching as Compared to Mentoring, Consulting and Therapy

The formal coaching profession makes clear that coaching is *not* mentoring, *not* therapy, and *not* consulting. The International Coaching Federation (ICF) defines coaching as a partnership between the coach and coachee "*in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential. The process of coaching often unlocks previously untapped sources of imagination, productivity, and leadership*." (International Coaching federation Website, 2021). When exploring how the business faculty perceived the process and concept of coaching, there were *some* faculty that expressed "*surprise*" that mentorship was separate from coaching, suggesting that these concepts "*get muddled together*" and that "*they are all connected*." More often the faculty accepted the separation of these four concepts. This acceptance is in contrast to the senior leaders' perceptions; the leaders had less acceptance in separating coaching from mentoring (Mackenzie-Ruppel, 2023). Mentoring suggests that the coach has previously walked the same or similar steps that the coachee is now needing to navigate, and therefore can provide the meaningful guidance or mentorship. The faculty more easily grasped coaching as a discipline and set of skills that can help a coachee inspire and shift thinking.

Select data points that illustrate this theme include:

"I would connect coaching and ***mentoring****. Those are the closest among the four and the one that is the least related to would-be therapy."*

"We will need help to understand the difference among coaching, mentoring, and consulting. Those all get ***muddled*** *together; what's the difference?"*

"Coaching is probably really ***therapy****. And we don't want anything to do with that."*

"Mentoring is something they've heard about. Mentoring means somebody else is going to throw them a rope and pull them through the situation. Coaching requires much more individual knowledge, effort, and responsibility. With coaching you are taking responsibility for jointly noticing where questions need to be asked and figuring out ways to ask them that won't totally put people off."

"When coaching is discussed, they are really thinking about ***mentoring****."*

"We as faculty are trying to mentor these students into their professions, whatever they may be. Just because I'm teaching management does not mean that everyone's going to be a manager. So, ***mentoring*** *and coaching comes out a lot in advisement, like when we're mapping out their academic plan."*

Theme 4 – Communications as a proxy discipline and skill

A theme that emerged is that faculty naturally align **communications** skills with the *coaching* skills. As the path to success is envisioned, an individual with well-developed active listening and speaking skills is also envisioned. A belief emerges that improving **communication** skills is a prerequisite for coaching skills. It is suggested that a coach requires "*reflective or active listening skills*." Insight is expressed that the student must minimize any predetermined idea and focus on "*asking the questions that get folks to thinking*." There was a concern that communication skills have diminished in students and coaching will require a recommitment to teaching and learning communications skills. Written skills did not emerge, rather a prime focus was on listening blended with critical thinking skills that would inform powerful questioning.

Select data points that illustrate this theme include:

"Within the School of Management, we talk a lot about the importance of ***communications*** *as a path for being successful in any organization."*

"Students need coaching with regard to improving their ***communications****. Before they can move forward with coaching others or being coached, active listening must be developed.* ***Communications*** *have really diminished. I think communication goes hand-in-hand with coaching."*

"Develop listening skills in a business **communication** *class, they need reflective or active listening skills. Learn to not have a predetermined idea in mind, mentoring but coaching, It sounds like you need to start asking the questions that get folks to thinking. Help them practice those skills."*

"They need to **communicate** *well, and not just a public speaking class where you get up and say your name the first day, and then the next day you talk about your dog, really, truly talking to a consuming public. They need to do a lot of that and get calm and become comfortable with it."*

Theme 5 – Curriculum Needs to be Reflective of what Employers Need

Faculty have a role in society as gatekeepers for their disciplines, fields, and professions, depending on the role of their faculty (e.g., humanities, sciences, nursing, business). Business faculty transition their students from being unconsciously incompetent through the stages toward conscious competence. Unlike other disciplines, the world of business as a profession requires keeping a collective thumb on the pulse of what business leaders and employers need of their future employees and leaders. This theme emerged as the faculty gained this insight that coaching *does* exist and is being used in the business world as a tool to develop talent and to lead change. This theme reflects the bridge from the faculty seeking and gaining understanding of coaching to the next umbrella concept where the faculty recognize their work to deliver this knowledge and these skills to their students.

Select data points that illustrate this theme include:

"Making sure that those skills are what employers want so they don't have to train them when our graduates get there. We don't want employers to be disappointed."

"We need to be aware of the changing landscape of business industries."

"The type of curriculum that we're providing must be appropriate and driven in large part by what employers' needs are; that relationship is key."

"Our students need to learn techniques to bring right to the workplace, so that it's not left to the employer to first teach them the skills."

Results Concept 2: Work of the Faculty to Deliver Coaching Skills and Knowledge to Students.

The faculty moved from *understanding* to *action* as they recognized their role in delivering the knowledge and skills that the profession needs from its graduates. A total of 85 datapoints drawn from the eleven faculty interview transcripts, were reduced, allowing six (6) themes to emerge. These themes collectively tell a story. At first faculty seek to find where coaching skills and knowledge may already exist in the curriculum, next the faculty become more focused on where it could be inserted in the current curriculum, then move to a clearer affirmation that coaching needs to be established as a course, certificate, badge, or program. The story continues as the faculty reflect on required faculty expertise needed to effectively deliver this new curriculum. The final theme is where a level of realism descends as to the challenges that higher education faces in creating new curriculum.

Theme 1: Faculty Find Where Coaching May Overlap the Current Curriculum

Faculty shared their reaction that coaching may already live in parts of the curriculum. Their alignment of coaching with consulting, managing HR, and leading change, had faculty *seeing* the coaching knowledge and skills within those modules. Another facet of the academic reach to the student where coaching was perceived as overlapping, was the area of career development. Faculty named both programs and courses where they suggested that coaching already lives. This included such programs as the Master of Organizational Development and such courses as Entrepreneurship and Organizational Behavior.

Select data points that illustrate this theme include:

> *"We do not have a coaching class, but we have consulting, we have change management, we have HR, we have stuff that might straddle the border of this notion of coaching.*

> *"We already integrate career coaching, but not general coaching. That is why I was interested in this because I know that career coaching is a subset of the broader umbrella of coaching."*

> *"In my master's organizational development class, we talked about executive coaching or team executive coaching. But the students don't get the practical approach on how to develop themselves, or to develop others."*

> *"I feel that a fair amount of coaching happens both directly and indirectly, in our entrepreneurship courses as well, because the students create business plans for different, venture ideas, and you have to make sure that they are viable. And so, there's coaching, "*

Theme 2: Faculty Recommend Places in the Current Curriculum Where Coaching May Fit

As the faculty members' thinking expanded around the knowledge and skills of coaching, recommendations emerged as to where the natural fit may allow for insertion in the current curriculum. It was suggested that undergraduate students may be less ready to learn and demonstrate coaching skills. Rather, it was suggested that undergraduate students become exposed to "*being coached,*" and that undergraduates learn "*what it feels like to be coached*" and experience "*the benefits of coaching*." Graduate students are better prepared to learn how to coach. A system was recommended where graduate students would mentor undergraduate students. The explicit courses that faculty recommended for the integration of coaching skills and knowledge included: Leadership, Organizational Behavior, and Human Resource Management. Career and professional development were also explicitly recommended as a natural fit where "*coaching at a more basic level would work …in terms of interview skills, resume writing, or communications."* It was also suggested that "*every one of our fields could include coaching. There could be coaching related to analytics, coaching related to project management, and working with teams."* This theme found faculty actively looking for the spots in the current curriculum that would welcome coaching skills and knowledge.

Select data points that illustrate this theme include:

> *"I think you could integrate coaching within the curriculum at an undergraduate level, but more so students should have the experience of being coached. So that they learn what it feels like to be coached and the benefits of coaching. And then talk about the idea that one day you will be doing this for others. It integrates with organizational behavior, leadership or HR; you can integrate in those three courses."*

> *"There are all sorts of ways you could get creative about it, too. How STEM undergraduate students do internships, you might want your MBA students to actually take on a mentee, while they're in the MBA program. The person would need to agree, but you would train them to provide a set of tools that they would be working with, so they would get the experience of it."*

> *"In leadership and organizational behavior, they talk about all the different leadership theories. That translates to how you help that individual person, mold them, guide them, coach them to the next level."*

> *"In the organizational behavior class, you're talking about employee satisfaction. It's not framed in coaching language; but there would be overlap. We could easily change some of the language to talk about coaching in those classes."*

> *"I think that every one of our fields could include coaching. There could be coaching related to analytics, coaching related to project management, and working with teams."*

> *"Coaching at a more basic level would work; professional development in terms of interview skills, resume writing, or communications."*

Theme 3: Affirmations Made as to Establishing a Form of Coaching as a Course or Program

As faculty consider where the coaching knowledge and skills currently show up in the curriculum, and then recommended where it could be inserted, the *affirmations* for establishing new courses, certificates, and programs *emerged*. Consistent with the prior insights, faculty recommended establishing new learning opportunities at the graduate level. One faculty member remarked that "*I don't really think our undergraduate students are ready. They have a hard enough time figuring themselves out*." Faculty recommended that coaching knowledge be delivered as a micro-credential, a stack-able certificate, or a separate course. It wa suggested that coaching is "*too big a piece just to be sprinkled lightly into a class here or there. It's something that would need its own course*." It was also suggested that the coaching course be more fully integrated into the curriculum to ensure overlap to avoid having the coaching course be "*stranded by itself in a little corner and not allowing the students to get the added benefit*." Another professor recommended a "*dedicated track"* be developed within the MBA program. As the faculty members' thinking expanded, a theme of revenue opportunities emerged. Faculty suggested the low cost and low risk that a coaching program presents with one professor stating that ***"****you could start this program with low risk, high reward."* Select data points that illustrate this theme include:

> *"I am thinking that coaching would be better integrated in an MBA program than undergrad; I don't really think our undergraduate students are ready. They have a hard enough time figuring themselves*

out. The first step is having them do an interest inventory like the Strong Interest Inventory. They also can do the DISC assessment, which relates to working with others in groups and things. I feel that undergraduates need to understand themselves before they can work on helping others. I think it would be a very interesting addition to an MBA program."

"If coaching could lead to a certificate, that might be something of interest. Allow different certificates to be added to our students resumes; it can be attractive to employers."

"Maybe something like what they call a micro-credential might be a starting point. And if it shows promise and success, then of course, it could expand."

"The new trend is stackable certificates. "

"I think even a dedicated track whether it's an MBA with a concentration in whatever the knowledge and skills that would prepare one to go in that direction for the proper credentialing.

"We are introducing consulting courses, so coaching is close. So maybe consulting-coaching! Adding a course could be the right path. They could take this course and get a certificate. Needs curricular overlap to keep the coaching course from being stranded by itself in a little corner and not allowing the students to get the added benefit."

"Certificates and badges and stuff like that haven't really reached our school yet, but are about to and can add value, I would try that."

"I definitely see the benefit of integrating coaching because it can be a revenue producer, in terms of return on investment. It is education in a field that is not yet totally flooded."

"I don't really see a risk of starting because it's not the kind of program where you have to order millions of dollars of lab equipment to start."

Theme 4: Why and How Might Coaching be Offered to Students

This theme emerged with the greatest strength as faculty shared both *why* and *how* coaching should and could be offered to students. Leading with the *why* creates the strongest motivation for integrating coaching skills and knowledge in the curriculum. It was suggested that "*being part of a learning organization … or part of a coaching culture is accepting that there's going to be failure*" therefore leading to the desired outcome of helping "*each other understand what we need to do to move forward*" with the question of "*how do we incorporate that into the curriculum*." Understanding that "*failing is an opportunity to learn*" is an insight also gained from the senior leader interviews. Helping students to "*change criticism into coaching*" elevated the learning objective and aligned with other faculty insights that "*education is not just about business management,"* rather the students "*need to go out and be lifelong learners*."

The value of coaching in helping individuals respect each other was articulated by one professor suggesting that "*DEI is part of coaching; it is to get people to listen to others and to respect others and to really get to know them better."* The whys continued with faculty suggesting that coaching "*would help people with the changing society"* and is "*leadership training at its* *finest."* One comment suggested that coaching is *"like a personal Kaizen process … to continually improve."*

As faculty recognized the value for students bleeds beyond the professional credential, the recommendation emerged that it be embedded in the general education program because it supports "*critical thinking"* and "*problem solving …where you're asking questions."* The long-term benefit to the student is the development of a *"growth mindset. We need to teach them how to instill and appreciate that."*

Select data points that illustrate this theme include:

> *"Failing is an opportunity to learn; that's a big part of learning. Helping students be aware that they're learning from their successes and the failures; then teaching students to be able to help each other."*

> *"If they have some positive experiences within the curriculum, they may be more open. Most schools stress that learning is a lifelong process; somehow coaching has to be linked with that lifelong process."*

> *"Instructors should be more coach-like with their students."*

> *"I think coaching is almost synonymous with leadership. It's leadership training at its finest."*

> *"DEI is part of coaching; it is to get people to listen to others and to respect others and to really get to know them better. That would be something you would coach people towards; to be successful in business."*

> *"It is really critical to have experiential activities built into your classes so the students can experience what a real-life setting would be like and have lots of situations that are not canned. They should get hit with a lot of different types of people and a lot of different types of organizations that make them uncomfortable sometimes."*

> *"We are trying to generate the leaders of the future, so I hope that I'm inspiring them. I tell them, you are a leader, so don't just sit there and stare at the book, tell me what you would do. So, I think that's coaching. We do a lot of hands-on exercises that would be in leadership training or a coaching session."*

> *"So, our coach brings a problem to the course. The students work with each other to coach and lead and come to some type of resolution. But what can faculty do more? I think one of the things that we could do better is incorporate this process throughout the program. I sometimes feel as if the students have this one class, and they do really well. And they learn a great number of skills, but we don't pull that through to the end of the program."*

> *"We're seeing a different type of student that considers the word coaching as some sort of a negative connotation, as if they've done something wrong. I think we need to be better about educating students as to what it means to be coached. How can we help students understand coaching and provide opportunities throughout the program that do not result in defensiveness."*

"We should provide opportunities for students to be coached. Take our students that are struggling and find someone who can coach them. We must continue to reinforce the benefits of coaching and then provide opportunities; these are the best two things that we can be doing at the college level."

"Like a personal Kaizen process, we try to take care of ourselves; to continually improve."

"Keep focused on the growth mindset. We have to teach students not to perceive feedback as an attack; it can be supportive, it can be helpful, it can be something to build upon."

"It goes back to critical thinking, problem solving, and philosophy classes, where you're asking questions."

Theme 5: What do Faculty Need to Offer a Coaching Course or Program

As faculty become more committed to integrating a coaching curriculum the question was raised as to what the faculty would need to feel confident and competent in teaching this curriculum. The theme reflected the desire of the faculty to gain the needed knowledge, skills, and credentials. It was suggested that "*you need people who are cutting edge to teach*." The faculty desire "*expertise*" in coaching before being expected to teach. Gaining this expertise from outside was a recognized option. Also, it was suggested that "*current faculty develop that expertise … and to have expertise come from the outside, or a combination of both, which is typically what happens*." More than one faculty suggested that faculty be supported to gain licensure or the coaching credentials that are recognized by the profession. The faculty *"want to fully understand what coaching is."*

Select data points that illustrate this theme include:

"You need people who are cutting edge to teach."

"For us to teach it, we need expertise, whether that's within our existing faculty, or the expertise comes from outside. So, one option is to have current faculty develop that expertise. And second is to have expertise come from the outside, or a combination of both; which is typically what happens."

"They should get me some licensure from an organization like what you're getting your licensure from before I can teach coaching."

"So as a coach-teacher, I need certifications; I need all of the curriculum that is involved in the coaching body of knowledge, I would want to fully learn and fully master that."

"it would be hard to coach someone on coaching unless I felt I had been coached on coaching"

"I would want to really make sure that as faculty we fully do our homework; we are really at that level. I don't know if it's realistic to expect all faculty who want to be teaching in that area to be certified and have that level of coaching experience; but whatever we would need, whatever we could realistically get, I would want to go through that program to learn."

Theme 6: Barriers to Establishing a Coaching Curriculum

The final theme that emerged expresses the barriers to integration and curriculum creation. This is a valuable theme as it may help us understand why this growing profession is gaining its education outside of colleges and universities. Though the faculty may be willing, the process to develop and offer new credentials appears to be a roadblock. Barriers included the lack of qualified faculty with one professor stating, "*I don't know how many people have PhDs in this field.*" Another barrier is motivating faculty to change, with one professor suggesting that "*it is a fairly heavy lift and hard to get faculty to agree to change curriculum*" and another professor sharing that "*it's hard to reach consensus*." Another barrier is convincing administration that the market demands the change, with one faculty member remarking that his "*school wouldn't start coaching unless they heard executives talking about coaching*." And another professor stating that *"someone must be able to demonstrate that there is demand in the market for this sort of thing for it to be supported."* Another professor shared that the barriers are less economic and more political, stating that "*I think the politics of the college is too much; why are you knocking your head against the wall with colleges?"* And the final barrier that was shared was the lack of motivation by senior faculty in learning a new field. Comments shared that "*I'm past that at this point in my career"* and "*It's kind of late for me."* One professor stated that *"There's a lot of teachers out there that have apathy. And it's a lot easier to just show the PowerPoints that come with the textbook.*

Select data points that illustrate this theme include:

> *"My school wouldn't start coaching unless they heard executives talking about coaching. It is a fairly heavy lift and hard to get faculty to agree to change curriculum."*

> *"It's just so hard to make new curriculum happen; you know the realities of developing curriculum and getting it approved."*

> *"This topic historically hasn't been taught in college; I don't know how many people have PhDs in this field. People with practical experience can be brought in to teach in this Program.*

> *"Someone must be able to demonstrate that there is demand in the market for this sort of thing for it to be supported.*

> *It's just so hard to develop a new graduate curriculum; it's just so hard to reach consensus."*

> *"It's kind of late for me. I would have liked to have been coached so that I would have known how to coach. I would like for it to be modeled for me as to how to be a good coach."*

> *"I don't want to be learning this to teach it to the students, I'm past that at this point in my career. Getting the right staffing resources, I think, is the first thing to ensure, which is a real challenge in today's environment."*

> *"I think the politics of the college is too much; why are you knocking your head against the wall with colleges? Just build your own business."*

> *"We don't have the skills necessary to provide coaching for our students. It's a very simple answer, but it's the truth."*

"I'm relying on adjuncts to help me understand what's the hottest thing in the market. I'm relying on folks outside of the college to help me with that. And that's a difficult position because I know in theory what I want to interject into my courses, but I don't have that expertise in order to really make that happen with competence."

"There's a lot of teachers out there that have apathy. And it's a lot easier to just show the PowerPoints that come with the textbook.

"Building this new coaching program will take a lot of energy and a lot of work."

Summary of Results

The two umbrella concepts and the eleven related themes are summarized below in Table 2.

Table 2
Summary of Research Results-
Management Faculty

Understanding Coaching	Work of the Faculty to Deliver Coaching Skills and Knowledge to Students
Theme 1 - Faculty Not Aware of Coaching as a Professional Business Discipline *Theme 2 – Coaching Brings to Mind - Sport* *Theme 3 - Coaching as Compared to Mentoring, Consulting and Therapy* *Theme 4 - Communications as a proxy discipline and skill* *Theme 5 - Curriculum Needs to be Reflective of what Employers Need*	*Theme 1 - Faculty Find Where Coaching May Overlap the Current Curriculum* *Theme 2 – Faculty Recommend Places in the Current Curriculum Where Coaching May Fit* *Theme 3 - Affirmations Made as to Establishing a Form of Coaching as a Course or Program* *Theme 4 - Why and How Might Coaching be Offered to Students* *Theme 5 – What do Faculty Need to Offer a Coaching Course or Program* *Theme 6 - Barriers to Establishing a Coaching Curriculum*

CONCLUSION

Is it not the role of the academic scholar to keep his or her thumb on the pulse of the discipline to create new knowledge that will serve the discipline? The university scholar *translates* this gained knowledge into a robust educational environment that should be cutting edge. Academic faculty are often laser focused on what the accreditor desires, often hearing such an acclamation that we '*can't change'* or '*must change'* because our accreditor demands it!

What may have gone unnoticed is that a review of the AACSB standards provides *invitation* to the coaching skills, theories, and knowledge. The AACSB had shifted from its 2013 defined list of skills and knowledge areas *to* a broader definition of what is expected of curriculum content. The 2013 standard 9 included required skill development of *reflective thinking*, which was further defined as the student's ability to "*understand oneself in the context of society*" (AACSB, 2013, p. 35). Also included in the skills requirement was *Interpersonal relations and teamwork; the ability to "work effectively with others and in team environments*" (AACSB, 2013, p. 35). The knowledge area where the coaching knowledge would fit is in the "*approaches to management*" and "*group and individual behaviors in organizations and society*" (AACSB, 2013, p. 35). The first time that leadership emerged in the 2013 standards is at the graduate level with a fit for coaching theories: *"Leading in organizational situations, thinking creatively, and framing problems and developing creative solutions in the specialized discipline*" (AACSB, 2013, p. 35-36).

The AACSB standards articulate that a valued business curriculum "*promotes a lifelong learning mindset in learners, including creativity, intellectual curiosity, and critical and analytical thinking*." Program standards expect the program to "*foster a lifelong learning mindset*," expecting that "*curriculum should reflect current and innovative business theories and practices*" (AACSB, 2020, p. 38, standard 4.3). At the graduate level, it is expected that students are prepared to *lead an organization, manage in a diverse global context, think creatively, make sound decisions and exercise good judgment under uncertainty*. (AACSB, 2020, p. 39, standard 4.1). Essential to the AACSB standards is that the "*Faculty demonstrate a lifelong learning mindset with respect to their domain expertise. This means faculty take responsibility for continuing their professional development to maintain currency and relevancy in their field of expertise and embrace the idea that we never stop learning.*" (AACSB, 2020, p. 47, standard 7.3). In both the 2013 and the current standards, '*Executive Education*' is discussed, but positioned **outside** of the degree, defined as "*educational activities that do not lead to a degree but have educational objectives at a level consistent with higher education in management. Examples include corporate training or professional development seminars*" (AACSB, 2020, p. 41, 'Definitions'; and 2013 & p. 42 under 'Standard 5', 'Assurance of Learning').

Most compelling is the research by the AACSB on lifelong learning and talent management. The coaching skills and knowledge are *not* explicitly cited, but to a coaching professional it is implied. For example, *"…learners themselves must take on more responsibility, including the assessment of their own needs and the identification and selection of learning alternatives to address those needs. New tools and platforms are being built to help learners address this challenge*." (AACSB 2018, p. 6). Relevant to the focus on management education within business schools is the AACSB's recognition that much education is taking place within the corporate world. Its exploration focused on the "*overlapping space between lifelong learning and company-based talent management."* (AACSB, 2018, p. 7). Chilling is the emerging insight that some "*companies are beginning to question whether their degree requirements are hindering rather than helping their efforts to attract talent with the skills they need*" (AACSB, 2018, p. 14). Two challenges in the talent management arena included: (1) a pedagogical approach for closing skill gaps, and (2) skills that the talent-managers require (AACSB, 2018, p. 19).

Layering the insights drawn from the senior leaders as relates to the integration of coaching knowledge, skills, and disposition (Mackenzie-Ruppel, 2023) ***with*** the insights drawn from the management faculty, we see the emergence of a compelling case for the integration of the foundation of executive coaching into graduate management education. As the profession of executive coaching gently leads us toward the leadership development path, business educators can partner with coaching organizations to integrate professional credentials into business education. This model has existed for years with the accounting profession and the pathway toward sitting for the Certified Public Accounting (CPA) exam. Colleges are now integrating one or more of the Certified Financial Analyst (CFA) exams into the business curriculum as well.

A transformational mindset is needed to ensure that business educators are aware of what is needed and desired in the marketplace so that there is no gap in the preparation for these rising professionals. As the executive and leadership coaching professional has grown, there appears to be only minimal evidence that business education has been updating its curriculum and student learning outcomes to incorporate what is expected.

This multi-phase research provides both evidence and direction to those who are responsible for establishing cutting edge curriculum that serves the market and our students' academic and professional goals.

This leads to our research goal of understanding what business educators can do to prepare graduates for success in the workplace. The integration of coaching skills, knowledge, and disposition emerged as a needed component in business education.

Future Research

The next step in this research plan is to conduct in-depth interviews with twelve (12) graduates who have earned an MBA between 5-15 years ago. They hold the power and gift of experience. These post-MBA graduates have risen to levels of leadership authority yet can reflect back on the educational journey from their past. In this next stage of the research, their experiences will be mined as they reflect and share as to how (and if) their MBA programs prepared them for the business world. We can draw from their experiences and insights to further improve management education for future students.

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APPENDIX

Schedule of Interview Questions

- ✓ What is your teaching focus?
- ✓ Does your college integrate coaching skills, knowledge, or practice into the curriculum?
- ✓ What is your familiarity with the coaching process as compared to mentoring, consulting, and therapy?
- ✓ The professional coaching industry is growing. What is your opinion as a management professor on the potential benefit and/or risk of integrating coaching skills, theories, and knowledge, into college-level management education?
- ✓ What can Business Educators DO to better prepare business graduates to:
    - contribute to a coaching culture
    - use coaching skills and knowledge in their development of others
    - be prepared to be coached as they rise through the organization?
- ✓ What would you need to know or learn to be prepared to teach and/or support coaching skills and knowledge at the college-level?

TRANSFORMING FUTURE BUSINESS LEADERS THROUGH EXPERIENTIAL AND SERVICE LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

College students today are primarily composed of Generation Z. While they are ethnically diverse and technologically sophisticated, they are regarded as lacking many skills and work experience needed to be successful in today's job market. The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), contends employers are looking for college graduates with eight main competencies that make them career ready. This paper will show how one university's School of Business and Economics' department is transforming and preparing future business leaders through experiential and service learning opportunities, specifically a robust required internship program and a unique service group called ENACTUS (Entrepreneurial Action Us), so students can practice and demonstrate all eight NACE competencies in a global context.

A recent study found that 40% of business leaders believe recent college graduates are unprepared to enter the workforce (Intelligent, 2023). In addition, as the cost of higher education has risen, scrutiny on graduate outcomes has also increased. As such, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) (2022) contends that the construct of career readiness is the solution. Career readiness is described as helping college students develop the skills considered critical for beginning a career (NACE, 2022). To better prepare future business leaders, Concordia University Irvine's School of Business and Economics is transforming students through experiential and service learning opportunities to help better equip them for their future workplaces and make them career ready. This paper will review college student's current demographics, characteristics, and needs and what employers are looking for. Then, taking a theory to practice approach, two programs will be shown to help students meet these career readiness competencies. We believe that requiring students to complete an internship in their emphasis and providing students with the opportunity to mentor entrepreneurs in impoverished countries uniquely prepares students and business leaders to collaborate to create a better world.

CURRENT STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

The majority of students at universities today belong to Generation Z. People in this generation were born roughly between 1995-2010 (Ganguli et al., 2022). This is considered one of the most ethnically diverse and technologically sophisticated generations to date (Ivanovska et al., 2017). Students of this generation have been heavily influenced by technology. Generation Z utilizes technological advancements to their personal benefit and seek out more significant innovation, knowledge, creativity, and multicultural skills (Peres & Mesquita, 2018). This generation also heavily relies on the internet and technology (Al-Asfour & Lettau, 2014). For example, they use YouTube and Google to learn new skills and to be more independent in the workplace (Lev, 2021). While previous generations often had to seek help from another person, this generation can simply "Google it." Furthermore, social media technologies and platforms are often the center of their social world, making this generation inclined to substitute face-to-face relationships for digital communication (Ivanovska et al., 2017).

The qualities of Generation Z can pose some challenges for colleges and employers. For example, this generation is said to lack many soft skills. These skills include time management and organization of work and cooperating with others (Peres & Mesquita, 2018). Additionally, because they rely so much on technology, they are said to lack critical thinking and problem-solving abilities (Macovei & Martinescu-Bădălan, 2022). On a personal level, they are considered more individualistic than previous generations (Ivanovska et al., 2017), too direct and often harsh in their digital communication (Macovei & Martinescu-Bădălan, 2022), and have short attention spans and expect instant answers and information (Shatto & Erwin, 2016). Most notably, this generation lacks the entry level work experience that many get from a part-time job at a younger age (Lev, 2021). This is also due to the COVID-19 impact and the lockdowns this generation faced (Tidhar, 2022).

While there are challenges with this generation, there are also several opportunities colleges and employers can capitalize on. For instance, this generation is eager to learn practical workplace skills in college (Thier, 2023). As previously mentioned, this generation is also technologically savvy and wants to be useful. According to Miller and Mills (2019), today "students have technology at the center of their everyday lives, are accustomed to and comfortable with a diverse world, and are driven by a desire for a helpful, responsive, practical educational environment that will enable them to succeed in future careers" (p. 80). Therefore, this generation is eager to learn and contribute to their workplaces and the world around them.

Generation Z is eager to learn practical workplace skills. Students do not want to waste time on knowledge that will not be beneficial to their future career plans, they want knowledge that can be used in a real-world setting. Practical workplace skills may include lessons on coding language within a STEM class or the use of ChatGPT in a philosophy discussion (Thier, 2023). According to Capranos and Magda (2023), students are at odds with potential employers because of the skills gap – "a significant disparity between the skills needed to achieve their goals and their workforce's capabilities" (p. 5). These employers are preferring candidates with digital badges and certificates rather than a college degree. These types of achievements are a win-win for students and employers; students have a tangible benefit for doing the work and employers are getting the skills needed for their positions (Capranos & Magda, 2023).

Knowing that skills need to be updated regularly, organizations are offering employees tuition reimbursement to keep up with the changing tech environment. Research shows that hard skills have a shelf life of less than two years (Capranos & Magda, 2023). Those hard skills that are in demand include analytics, digital communication, and project management. By collaborating with universities, organizations can continuously update their training curricula and keep the organization's skills gap from widening (Capranos & Magda, 2023). Generation Z students also say they struggle with retaining the material learned in the classroom. If students know that their university is collaborating with one of their potential employers, they have an added incentive to prioritize their classroom experiences and give everything they must retaining it (Thier, 2023).

Some educational institutions have strategically partnered with employers to find out exactly what skills organizations are looking for from recent college graduates to better equip them in their curriculum and experiential efforts during their time at college. One such organization that has emerged from this partnership is NACE. NACE (2024) contends they are "the leading source of information on the employment of the college educated, and forecasts hiring and trends in the job market; tracks starting salaries, recruiting and hiring practices, and student attitudes and outcomes; and identifies best practices and benchmarks" ("About us" section). Therefore, the next section will review the competencies NACE has identified as desired by employers.

EMPLOYER NEEDS - NACE COMPETENCIES

The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) has identified eight career readiness competencies that college students should acquire to be ready for employment, regardless of area of study (NACE, 2022). These competencies can be demonstrated in a variety of ways through curricular and extracurricular activities. These competencies include: (a) Career & Self-Development; (b) Communication; (c) Critical Thinking; (d) Equity & Inclusion; (e) Leadership; (f) Professionalism; (g) Teamwork; (h) Technology.

Career & Self-Development

According to NACE (2022), career and self-development is described as "proactively develop oneself and one's career through continual personal and professional learning, awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses, navigation of career opportunities, and networking to build relationships within and without one's organization" (p. 10). Students spend a significant amount of time in the classroom developing skills that can be used in their career. Skills that range from highly technical to more general communication and soft skills. Some of this class time is devoted to self-development by assessing their strengths and weaknesses through personality and skill building exercises. Awareness of these strengths and weaknesses will allow students to be proactive in choosing a good fit for a career.

Continuous learning is another attribute that higher education needs to focus on. Employers want employees to arrive in new roles ready to connect with and inspire others, build relationships, and grow their network, and take charge of their own career and professional development (Andreau et al., 2020). Teaching students how to adequately assess their learning and skills development also needs to be emphasized so they will want to continue growth in their field. Therefore, students who demonstrate competency in career and self-development show an awareness of their own strengths and areas for growth, apply feedback, develop career goals, self-advocate, display curiosity, build relationships, embrace opportunities for development, and voluntarily participate in further training or professional events.

Communication

Effective written and oral communication skills are crucial for students entering the workforce. According to NACE (2022), communication is defined as "clearly and effectively exchange information, ideas, facts, and perspectives with persons inside and outside of an organization" (p. 10). Effective communication skills are the driving force of success in business, they are tools that need practice in the right context to ensure competence for the workforce (Al-Musalli, 2019). In addition, students who demonstrate effective communication understand the importance, employ active listening, are respectful to others, ask appropriate questions, and seek guidance when needed (NACE, 2022).

According to Al-Musalli (2019) "The choices of what to teach in communication courses should be based on a rigorous annual needs analysis of what the job market requires" (p. 18). Cooperation with companies that are hiring students from a particular university would provide guidance needed for the best communication demands and preferences. In addition, both written and verbal skills curriculum should be reevaluated to allow for changes in current practice and form. While companies use various methods to communicate with their employees and customers, students must be prepared to communicate effectively, being mindful that companies operate and communicate differently (Al-Musalli, 2019).

Critical Thinking

Critical thinking skills are crucial in order to solve problems and make informed decisions. Critical thinking is a process and a commitment to using reason in the formulation of beliefs (Mulnix, 2012). According to NACE (2022), critical thinking means employees can "identify and respond to needs based upon an understanding of situational context and logical analysis of relevant information" (p. 11). Students who demonstrate critical thinking make decisions based on sound reasoning and judgment, gather information from multiple sources, are proactive, accurately summarize and interpret data, effectively communicate actions and rationale, and multitask effectively (NACE 2022).

Although some students view that critical thinking as more of an abstract concept, it is important to engage in dialogue about critical thinking skills in their discipline and highlight opportunities to make connections between different contexts (Forbes, 2018). Providing opportunities for practice should be spread across coursework and weaved into presentations and discussions. Opportunities such as reflecting on a student's own work and providing detailed feedback about the work of classmates. Adding one's own opinion of the evaluation and criticism of the work of others can be used as practice in developing critical thinking skills (Forbes, 2018).

Equity & Inclusion

The ability to be equitable and inclusive is increasingly essential in today's workplace. Employers want employees who can work well with diverse others and be open to a variety of viewpoints. As such, NACE (2022) defines equity and inclusion as the ability to "demonstrate the awareness, attitude, knowledge, and skills required to equitably engage and include people from different local and global cultures. Engage in anti-racist practices that actively challenge the systems, structures, and policies of racism" (p. 12). Students who demonstrate competence in equity and inclusion solicit feedback from multiple cultural perspectives, advocate for inclusion and equity, seek global cross-cultural interactions, are open minded, and demonstrate flexibility by adapting to diverse environments (NACE, 2022).

Students can be exposed to equity and inclusion in a variety of ways. For example, students are encouraged to study abroad, serve their communities, learn about other cultures, and be open to other viewpoints. Students are often tasked with working in groups and reading various case studies involving these concepts. Overall, these skills are essential for business success because they promote more innovation and creativity, attract more talent and diverse skills, increase productivity, and lead to happier employees (Cole, 2020). Therefore, students must learn to embrace equity and inclusion and build this competence for success in today's workplace.

Leadership

NACE (2022) found that employers have increasingly ranked the value of leadership among new employees as important. Even when students work in entry-level positions, they often work in teams and therefore, need leadership skills to effectively collaborate with others. In addition, Petriglieri and DeRue (n.d.) argue that leaders are not the finished product of any single institution because leadership is an ongoing learning process that lasts a lifetime and business school should help them to recognize this. Therefore, NACE (2022) defines leadership as the ability to "recognize and capitalize on personal and team strengths to achieve organizational goals" (p. 12). Students with strong leadership abilities can inspire, persuade, and motivate others, are innovative and seek feedback, serve as models to others, build trust, and can effectively plan and execute a project (NACE, 2022).

Leadership courses acknowledge that students need experiential learning as part of their higher education coursework but sometimes struggle with meaningful opportunities and ethical leadership examples. According to Andreau et al. (2020), “leadership is about challenging the status quo and pursuing change in response to dynamic environments” (p. 136). Faculty can encourage students to seek out leadership opportunities and assign group work or projects that assist in developing leadership skills in students (Boles et al., 2019). Emphasizing the development of leadership skills improves the job readiness of students and their marketability in the workplace (Andreu et al., 2020). Moreover, employees will be fully engaged in their work if they have an ethical leader to provide the environment and opportunity because ethical leaders inspire employees and provide the freedom for employees to take initiative (Engelbrecht et al, 2014).

Professionalism

According to NACE (2022), professionalism is hard to define and deeply embedded in individual work cultures. Therefore, professionalism is “knowing work environments differ greatly, understand and demonstrate effective work habits, and act in the interest of the larger community and workplace” (p. 13). Professionalism is taught in the classroom in a variety of ways such as student decorum, punctuality, and preparedness. In addition, Boles et al., (2019) argued that students gain understanding of the expectations in their field when faculty members bring industry representatives and recruiters on campus to serve as guest speakers, role-play as buyers, mentor students, and participate in mock interview sessions.

Showing competence in professionalism means acting with integrity and accountability, maintaining alignment between organizational and personal values, being present and prepared, dependable, completing tasks, meeting, and exceeding goals, paying attention to details, and showing dedication to the position (NACE, 2022). Collaborating with recruiters, students, and faculty helps students better understand the requirements of certain jobs and recruiter expectations when interviewing for a position (Boles et al., 2019). Students directly benefit from opportunities to interact with guest speakers, company representatives at campus events, and lectures and professional events. When students meet with recruiters and other professionals, they receive input on what it means to be a competent professional, how to effectively manage time, and ways to continue their education to have a success in their career (Andreau, et al., 2020).

Teamwork

Regardless of whether employees work remotely or in person, much of today’s work is reliant on teamwork and collaboration. Moreover, among the soft skills consistently reported to be desired by employers, teamwork is consistently at the top of the list (NACE, 2022; Schartel Dunn et al., 2021). Therefore, NACE (2022) defines teamwork as the ability to “build and maintain collaborative relationships to work effectively toward common goals, while appreciating diverse viewpoints and shared responsibilities” (p. 13). Some behaviors that demonstrate teamwork include listening carefully to others, managing conflict, being accountable for team and individual responsibilities, using strengths to compliment team members, compromising, collaborating, and building strong relationships (NACE, 2022).

Since teamwork skills are desired by most organizations today, having repeated opportunities to develop team skills strengthens business students’ abilities (Schartel Dunn et al., 2021). Teaching strategies will help students be able to approach teamwork and communicate in a team setting. Practicing these strategies will help students identify strong and weak teamwork characteristics and grow as an effective team player. Most importantly, teamwork skills include providing clear and constructive feedback so the team can learn and improve (Schartel Dunn et al., 2021).

Technology

Today, technology is ubiquitous in both education and the workplace. As such, NACE (2022) describes how students entering the workforce must "understand and leverage technologies ethically to enhance efficiencies, complete tasks, and accomplish goals" (p. 14). The use and type of technology will vary according to a student's career path, so it is important to gain exposure to various technologies in college. Technology when used for teaching has motivated and enhanced students' experience and motivated their passion for learning (Bryant & Hunton, 2000). Competence in technology means navigating change and being open to new technologies, using technology to improve productivity, using appropriate technology for the task at hand, and managing technology for decision making and achieving strategic goals (NACE, 2022).

Different jobs use different types of ever-changing technology. For instance, accounting students would use different types of technology than other business majors. "In the recent past, the typical delivery of the audit was document-checklist driven. Cloud and other technologies, notably AI and data analytics, have allowed for the audit to be delivered more efficiently and effectively" (Dennis & Jenkins, 2024, para. 6). While many of the same fundamentals exist in teaching, how the deliverable is provided using different technologies also needs to be reviewed in the classroom.

APPLICATION

All eight of these competencies have proven valuable to college students as they prepare for their future careers. In the School of Business and Economics at Concordia University Irvine, students are prepared for their workplaces in a variety of ways both inside and outside of the classroom. Two programs that focus on experiential and service learning will be highlighted to illustrate how students are being transformed into future business leaders and gaining valuable career readiness skills in all eight competencies. Using the NACE competencies to enhance their hard skills, students can learn how to apply classroom experience to real world projects. Strategic thinking and analytics, digital communication and project management are applied in different ways through student internships, service learning projects and entrepreneurial projects done with microloans. Students also get to practice their soft skills such as professionalism, teamwork, communication, and leadership through job interviews, internship projects, and their review of loans and travel abroad. More of this will be addressed in the following sections.

Experiential Learning

Experiential learning is one way to prepare students for their future careers. According to Ludlow (2010), "experiential learning is an umbrella concept that includes many varieties of hands-on learning activities, including laboratory experiments, kinetic learning activities, professional internships, and course-related fieldwork" (p. 45). Some of the benefits of experiential learning for students includes nurturing collaboration, discovering new skills, enhancing communication, promoting deeper understanding, growth, self-esteem, personal responsibility, and sense of purpose (McDonald, 2020). One type of experiential learning opportunity that Concordia University Irvine's School of Business and Economics requires is internships.

According to a recent Gallup poll, only four in 10 college students seeking a bachelor's degree have had internship experience and that number drops even lower if it is a first-generation college student or a student attending a public university (Marken & Curtis, 2023). Internships are beneficial to both students and employers. Students who complete internships receive twice as many job offers as students who do not complete internships (Marken & Curtis, 2023; VanDerziel, 2023). In addition, employers often extend interns full-time job offers and see a much higher retention rate on employees who started as an intern and then moved into full-time employment post-graduation (VanDerziel, 2023). Additionally, Di Meglio et al. (2020) found internships were able to open doors to the labor market, make the process from graduation to working full-time much smoother, and reduced the time it took for students to find their first job. Students also develop contacts and networking skills during the internship which can help them establish references and connections and improve productivity and beginning salaries at the start of a student's career (Lei et al, 2019). Employers also value seeing an internship on a resume because they know the prospective employee has had some real experience and can answer questions relating to that experience (Di Meglio et at., 2020). Because of the importance of internships, Concordia has made internships a requirement for all students in the School of Business and Economics.

Internships. Students majoring in business at Concordia have had the opportunity to learn workplace skills, professionalism, and organizational culture while doing an internship. Practical knowledge that is gained with hands-on experience gives students additional knowledge beyond coursework. Concordia's robust internship program can be divided into three phases: pre-internship assignments and coaching, fieldwork, and post-internship evaluation and reflection. In the first phase, students focus on personal reflection and opportunities for development. Students must take the Strengths Finder 2.0 Assessment and reflect on their top five themes in a reflection paper to better understand themselves and what they have to offer to an organization. Next, they prepare professional documents such as a resume, LinkedIn profile, and create a Handshake account. These help them reflect on their past experience, and what steps they need to take to achieve their career objectives. The resume is reviewed, and feedback is provided before they share it with employers. They also receive coaching and the opportunity to practice their interviewing and networking skills. This phase aligns with the NACE competencies of career and self-development, communication, professionalism, and technology. In the second phase, students must actually apply, interview, obtain a job, and work in the industry related to their field of study. For instance, students who major in marketing should complete a sales or marketing internship, while accounting students must find a position in an accounting firm or payroll department. Regardless, students must gain approval from the internship director before starting any fieldwork to make sure it aligns with their major and their personal career objectives. In addition, they are required to work a minimum of 80 hours in the field. During this time, students are asked to complete a monthly progress report detailing the projects and assignments they have completed and tracking their hours. They are encouraged to seek opportunities that will expose them to a variety of skills to maximize their time and learning. During this phase, students gain experience in all eight of NACE's Career Competencies.

The third and final phase of internship is about evaluation and self-reflection. Students obtain an evaluation from their supervisor on their skills and areas for growth, students complete an evaluation on the site/supervisor, students write a reflection paper reviewing how they experienced the eight NACE competencies in the field and what they learned. For example, for career and self-development many students talk about the projects they were able to work on and their overall growth. For communication students usually address which channels they used to communicate with their team and supervisor and how frequently. For critical thinking students usually reflect on something that challenged them and how they overcame it. For equity and inclusion students write about working with people who are different than themselves and how they managed that. For leadership students usually address their relationship with their direct supervisor and what they learned (or did not learn) from them. Professionalism topics range from clothing to how to write an email to how to interact with clients and varies across industries, but most student state that they learn more about how to act in "the real world." Most students get the opportunity to work in a team, whether in person or remotely, so they reflect on the pros and cons of that. Lastly, students address which technology platforms they were able to use during their internship. Finally, the students complete an exit interview with the internship director to reflect on the experience, transferable skills, and next steps. Clearly, this final phase addresses all eight of NACE's Career Competencies and provides them with references and feedback for future career development and opportunities.

Through this experiential learning process students are able to prepare themselves for their future career by learning essential skills, making mistakes, building connections, developing their self-confidence, and bridging the gap between the classroom and the field. Many students learn valuable skills that help them determine their next steps in career development, some receive job offers, and others decide that they might want to pursue a different career field altogether. Regardless, they all describe the internship experience as valuable.

Service Learning

Service learning is a distinct form of experiential learning that emphasizes "mutually beneficial partnerships" (Finley & Bowen, 2021, p. xvi). In addition, Turk and Pearl (2021) contend that service learning is a mutually beneficial community-based experience that combines academic rigor and high-impact student learning outcomes as well as critical reflection to tie the two together. This also ties into the concept of student philanthropy. According to Jacoby (1996), student philanthropy is a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together and provides opportunities for student learning and development. Overall, this type of learning is meant to advance the civic mission of higher education, expand student learning, and enrich partnerships with communities (Ti et al., 2021).

Service learning allows students to experience and reflect on different behavioral strategies where they can try out concepts they have learned in the classroom in a low-stakes environment. "These activities provide students with life-changing experiences, leading to a better understanding of self and confidence in their ability to make an impact on others and the world" (Andreau et al., 2020, p. 137). Direct interaction with others outside the student's normal scope gives them the ability to see things differently and analyze situations they have never experienced.

"Service-learning pedagogy can not only help customize and contextualize instruction for students, it can help integrate greater student support within instruction, and through student reflection exercises, help instructors to proactively monitor and provide feedback to students" (Turk & Pearl, 2021, p. 93). It is important to continue to practice what students have learned in the classroom to improve skills and become more confident in their approach.

As the concept of service learning is becoming more prevalent around the globe, "the challenge is not only offering more and better service-learning courses by also institutionalizing service-learning, which goes beyond changing the curriculum on a course-by-course basis and includes institutional and organizational change" (Ti et al., 2021, p. 7). Service learning needs to be an integral part of the overall institution's mission. At Concordia, each semester all students are invited to participate in Concordia Serves, a day where classes are canceled, and students participate in giving back to the community. In addition, several mission trips are planned each year, services are donated to the community and donations are made to community partners for a common cause. In the School of Business and Economics, a philanthropic club called ENACTUS is funded to assist in both local and underserved communities around the world.

***ENACTUS*.** <u>En</u>trepreneurial <u>Ac</u>tion <u>Us</u> (ENACTUS) is an organization that seeks to ignite business innovation to make a positive social impact that allows students and business leaders to collaborate to create a better world. Students are able to participate in the ongoing micro-loan program in partnership with a missionary organization in the Philippines. In addition, students are able to create their own "give-back" project where they can benefit local organizations, nonprofits and churches.

With the goal of students being able to practice what they have learned in the classroom in mind, ENACTUS developed a micro-loan program. In this program, students go through the process of using classroom and textbook theories and apply them to real world business plans from an entrepreneur seeking start-up funds. Each business plan is analyzed using tools that determine financial viability and assess the market needs. Through the interview phase students ask questions regarding the business plan and interact with the sponsors that work with the entrepreneurs in the Philippines. Students then provide feedback on the business plans, offering assistance and encouragement. Business plan(s) that best align with our goal of loan repayment are then chosen. Since we receive an average of twelve business plans each semester, students use project management skills to plan determine the viability of the business and the likelihood of repayment. They then figure out what they can loan from their annual budget and how they will provide support to the applicants. They figure the best way to communicate with the prospective borrowers and begin a dialogue using social media, internet meetings, etc. This aligns with the NACE competencies of career and self-development, communication, and critical thinking.

Once the micro-loans are funded, students have the opportunity to work with entrepreneurs or their sponsors to give guidance, provide encouragement, and track the results of the business through loan repayment. Students are set up either individually or in groups to mentor entrepreneurs via phone, text, or Zoom. ENACTUS leaders work with the groups to evaluate progress throughout the first few months of funding the loan. Using social media such as blogs and Facebook pages, students can see how the entrepreneur is doing on a day-to-day basis and provide encouragement and support. At the end of the semester, students take a trip to the Philippines to see their work firsthand. This aligns with the NACE competencies of leadership, teamwork, professionalism, and technology.

Once the Philippines trip has been set, students work on creating workshops and presentations for each day of the trip that will assist current and future entrepreneurs in their business endeavors. Students conduct business plan workshops, loan repayment workshops, business plan Q & A sessions and are available to assist future business plan owners who need assistance in getting their ideas on paper. In addition, students will visit with loan recipients at their place of business and meet the owners they have been working with over the previous few months. This aligns with the NACE competencies of career and self-development, leadership, critical thinking, communication, and professionalism. Overall, this program is just one more way that students are able to serve their global community while also gaining valuable and practical career experience.

CONCLUSION

Experiential and service learning clearly have many benefits for students as they prepare for their future careers. Internships and ENACTUS are just a few ways Concordia University Irvine's School of Business and Economics is preparing and transforming future business leaders to help them gain essential skills they need during college, help fill the deficits they experienced because of COVID and their reliance on technology and help fulfill their strong desire to give back to their local and global communities, so they can excel in their future careers across various industries. These opportunities go beyond textbook instruction to help students learn, demonstrate, and hopefully excel in the eight career readiness competencies outlined by NACE. Students must learn and gain skills outside of the classroom in safe and supportive environments where they can learn, fail, grow, make connections, and give back so they are more equipped to be successful global business leaders of the future.

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GMS, COACHES AND PLAYERS: MANAGEMENT LESSONS FROM SPORTS

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ABSTRACT

Leaders in sports and business face challenges in their fields. CEOs face the challenge of maximizing the firm's value, whereas coaches are tasked with winning championships. Despite these differences, good management practices can help each to reach their goals. In this paper, we use examples from sports to illustrate different management issues facing businesses. Sports presents interesting cases for students to study because, unlike the rest of the business world, where matters such as hiring, firings, and mentoring occur behind closed doors, many of these issues occur in a very public forum in sports. This allows instructors to engage students with essential concepts in management using real-world examples from sports.

INTRODUCTION

Sports in the U.S. and around the world is a multibillion-dollar industry. Numerous books have been written on the business of sports [see Conrad (2017), Harrow, Burton, and Krzyzewski (2019)]. These books tend to look at the economics and structure of various sports. Sports are an interesting industry to study and provide valuable lessons for understanding business in general. One of the unique characteristics of sports like baseball, basketball, and American football is that sports franchises face many of the same issues that non-sports businesses encounter. The difference is that these issues, which play out behind closed doors in most industries, usually play out in public, often in real-time, in many sports. Another advantage of sports is that seasons have clear endpoints that allow us to evaluate how the team performed for that season, and each season stands alone in gauging the success or failure of the team. For example, a team that wins a championship once every five years and finishes last the other four is likely a success. In contrast, a company that posts extraordinary earnings once every five years and losses in the other four is not.

In this paper, several sports are used, most notably American football, to illustrate various challenges faced in the business world. Football is employed for many issues because unique characteristics like the coaching hierarchy, salary cap, and importance of one player, the quarterback, make it uniquely suited for discussing hiring practices, mentorship, and succession planning.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE (NFL)

Professional football teams provide a structure like that of other businesses. Consider the hierarchy of the coaching staff. Here, the head coach serves as the CEO of the team, with assistant coaches assigned clear titles and responsibilities. The offensive and defensive coordinators prepare the game plans for their respective sides of the ball and usually call the plays on game day. These coordinators supervise a staff of assistant coaches, much like a CFO supervises the company’s treasurer and controller. For example, an offensive coordinator will likely have several position coaches he supervises, such as running back, wide receiver, and offensive line coaches. In other sports, like basketball and soccer, the assistant coaches do not have clearly defined titles, and responsibilities will differ depending on the head coaches’ preference.

Every year, roughly 20 percent of the NFL’s 32 teams seek new head coaches. Potential head coaches are generally drawn from previous head coaches and offensive and defensive coordinators. In addition, prospective candidates tend to be widely reported in the media, including when they will be interviewed and often the interview's success. Therefore, football provides numerous examples of hiring practices by teams akin to hiring practices used by businesses.

Unlike basketball and soccer (excluding the goalie), professional football includes several specialized jobs handled by one person whose sole responsibility is that task. For example, the kicker is responsible for kickoffs, extra points, and field goals, the punter for punting the ball on fourth down, a long snapper for snapping the ball on kicks and punts, and a quarterback who directs the offense.

The success of any organization requires the coordinated effort of an entire workforce. However, the quarterback is critically important in football because he touches the ball on every offensive play. Many teams with excellent players on offense and defense flounder because they cannot find a competent quarterback.

Case 1 - Peyton Manning
Consider the Indianapolis Colts during Hall of Famer Peyton Manning's career with the team. For his entire career, the team averaged 10.8 wins per year (from 1998 to 2010). In his final nine seasons with the Colts from 2002 to 2010, the team never had a losing season and averaged 12.1 wins per season. Yet, in 2011, when Manning missed the entire season due to injury, the team won a mere 2 games.

Quarterbacks also make for an interesting performance study because numerous statistics are commonly reported, such as completion percentage, yards per passing attempt, touchdown passes, interceptions, and passing yards per game.

MANAGEMENT LESSONS FROM SPORTS

In the U.S., the vernacular of sports has become commonplace in business because sports have become such a large part of American culture. References to sports like "knocking it out of the park" or "fumbling the ball" are commonly heard from business executives. However, sports provide more than colorful phrases that can be used to liven up a business meeting; it furnishes valuable lessons that students can apply to any business.

Human Resources

Hiring practices, mentorship, and succession planning are critical in every type of business. However, these matters play out privately in most companies with little fanfare. Even hiring a Fortune 500 CEO, arguably the face of the company, tends to be handled quietly away from public scrutiny. Although the names of some potential candidates may emerge, information about the process tends to be limited. In addition, CEO positions at top companies open relatively infrequently. Contrast this with the process of hiring an NFL head coach. Approximately 20 percent of teams are looking to hire a new head coach each year. In the NFL, the names of potential candidates, former head coaches, and high-level assistant coaches, such as offensive and defensive coordinators, are usually reported by sports analysts in the media. As a result, not only are the candidates known, but interviews of candidates tend to be widely reported. Reporting of interviewing candidates is essential because of an NFL requirement known as the Rooney Rule, named after Dan Rooney, the former owner of the Pittsburgh Steelers and chairman of the diversity committee. The Rule, which began in 2003, requires each team to interview minority candidates for certain coaching and front-office positions to promote diversity. Over the years, the Rule has been modified to include additional coaching positions and interviewing women for front office positions. [see NFL Operations, n.d.] The Rooney Rule has come under criticism for not realizing its objective of improving diversity in the coaching ranks and the front offices of NFL teams. However, this rule provides an opportunity to discuss improving diversity in all businesses.

Leadership

Leadership is critical to the success of any organization. In the seventies, Lee Iacocca rescued Chrysler, a firm on the verge of bankruptcy, leading them to profitability. In the nineties, Louis Gerstner, a successful executive at American Express, was able to lead a turnaround for computer giant IBM. In business, there can be many successful companies within a single industry. Even when companies are in the same market, several firms can thrive. For example, Netflix and Hulu can succeed in the streaming industry, as can Walmart and Amazon in retailing. In sports, there is only one definition of success: winning a championship, which leaves only one successful coach and team at the end of the season. Although sports franchises can prosper financially, their fans and the media view teams that fail to win championships as failures. Consider the two most valuable sports franchises in the U.S., the Dallas Cowboys at $9 billion and the New York Yankees at $7.1 billion [see Lu, 2024]. The Yankees have won a record 27 World Series titles, more than double the second-winningest franchise, the St. Louis Cardinals, with eleven. However, the Yankees have not appeared in a World Series since their last championship in 2009. This has led Yankee's ownership, fans, and the media to view the last decade as a failure. Similarly, the Cowboys have had a storied history, winning five Super Bowls, trailing only the "New England Patriots and Pittsburgh Steelers six apiece," yet have not appeared in a Super Bowl in nearly three decades. This championship drought has left fans and the media critical of the Cowboys, with almost no one praising their financial success. Because many owners define success as winning a championship, successful managers and coaches are often fired as team owners search for someone to lead the team to that elusive championship. In other cases, coaches may leave the profession for health reasons or mental burnout, only to return after an absence from the game. This allows us to study leaders who have had success leading several organizations.

Case 2 - Dick Vermeil and Andy Reid

The Philadelphia Eagles hired Vermeil in 1976 to turn around a franchise that had not had a winning season in a decade. During his tenure in Philadelphia, Vermeil led the team to four playoff appearances, including a trip to the Super Bowl in 1980. After the 1982 season, Vermeil left the game due to burnout. After a 15-year absence, Vermeil returned to coaching, leading the St. Louis Rams to a Super Bowl victory in his third season. Vermeil would lead the Kansas City Chiefs from 2001 to 2005, shepherding them to first place in their division in 2003.

The Philadelphia Eagles hired Reid in 1999. During his 14 years as head coach, he led them to nine playoff appearances, including five consecutive conference championship games and a trip to the Super Bowl. Because Reid was unable to bring a championship to Philadelphia, the team released him in 2012. Following his departure from the Eagles, the Kansas City Chiefs hired him as head coach. As coach of the Chiefs, Reid led the team to ten playoff appearances in his first eleven seasons, including four trips to the Super Bowl and three victories.

Vermeil and Reid were able to turn around multiple franchises, indicating their ability to lead and change an organization's culture in multiple circumstances. Unfortunately, this is much harder to observe in business because successful CEOs usually remain with the same company.

Coaches and managers are tasked with motivating and training players and developing game-day strategies. On the other hand, a team's general manager (GM) is responsible for recognizing and recruiting talented players. This can include finding players whom the market undervalues and who fit the city's and the team's culture. Some GMs are better than others at this job. Consider the case of Theo Epstein.

Case 3 - Theo Epstein

The Boston Red Sox had a storied history, winning five World Series from 1901 to 1918. At the end of the 1919 season, the Red Sox owner, Harry Frazee was having financial difficulties and sold the rights to Babe Ruth to the New York Yankees for the unprecedented sum of $100k. This began what baseball enthusiasts sometimes refer to as the "Curse of the Bambino." From Ruth's departure to 2000, the Red Sox went to four World Series, winning none, while the Yankees played in 39 World Series, winning 26.

In 2001, Boston hired Theo Epstein and appointed him general manager at the end of the 2002 season. After rebuilding the roster, the Red Sox won their first World Series in 2004, 86 years after their last victory. Epstein left the team at the end of the 2005 season, but the team and culture he built remained as the Red Sox would win the World Series in 2007, 2013 and 2018.

On October 12, 2011, Epstein returned to baseball as president of the Chicago Cubs, another team with a long history of World Series disappointments. In 2016, after several years of rebuilding, the Cubs won their first World Series since 1908.

The Peter Principle

The Peter Principle is a management concept first proposed by Lawrence J. Peter [Hull and Peter (2020)] that states that people get promoted to their level of incompetence. That is, competent individuals doing a good job get promoted to the next level in the organization, and the promotions continue until that person can no longer do the job, which is their level of incompetence. In many ways, getting promoted to a level of incompetence is unfair because competent people do not become incompetent when they are promoted. Rather, the problem stems from jobs requiring different skill sets that the newly promoted individual may not possess. For example, a great auto mechanic may be highly skilled at repairing cars but may not have the skills required of a service manager, which will likely include managing a garage full of mechanics, dealing with customers, and handling paperwork. Research by Benson, Li and Shue (2019) on sales workers from a large number of firms indicates that firms are aware of the tradeoff of promoting individuals based on past performance but recognize the motivational value of promoting high performers. Some tech firms are also trying to deal with this by rewarding top performers with enhanced titles, and commensurate pay raises while allowing them to remain in positions where they thrive.

In the NFL, candidates for head coach are often drawn from the ranks of successful offensive and defensive coordinators. Successful coordinators' names tend to be bantered about during each new hiring cycle after the regular season ends. Some of these coordinators will go on to great success, while many will be outright failures in their new position. The issue is not a lack of competence but the reality that running an entire team differs from coordinating the offense or the defense. Coordinators focus on their side of the ball by preparing game plans and calling plays on game day. This requires a mastery of the game and its strategies. Contrast this with the duties of the head coach, who is tasked with running the entire team. Many of these tasks have little to do with game day strategy, such as human resources, including managing the roster, dealing with personal problems players may encounter, setting practice schedules, and even determining when to serve lunch. Many successful coordinators have found difficulties transitioning to these new tasks.

Case 4 - Romeo Crennel and Charlie Weis

Crennel and Weis had successful careers as assistant coaches and coordinators, each winning multiple Super Bowls. Crennel served as the defensive coordinator of the Cleveland Browns in 2000 and then the New England Patriots from 2001 to 2004. In 2005, he was named Head Coach of the Cleveland Browns, where he served until 2008. He also spent 2012 as Head Coach of the Kansas City Chiefs. During his years as a head coach, Crennel compiled a 32-63 record.

Weis served as the offensive coordinator for the New York Jets from 1997 to 1999 and the New England Patriots from 2000 to 2004. In 2004, Weis was named the Head Coach of the University of Notre Dame, where he stayed until 2009. He also served as Head Coach of the University of Kansas from 2012 to 2014. During his head coaching career, he compiled a 41-49 record.

Even jobs with the same title and presumably the same skill set can be markedly different at different levels. In the college ranks, one significant responsibility of the head coach is recruiting the best players from across the country and sometimes the world. The best college coaches can lure the finest players to their program year after year, which is at least one reason the same schools consistently dominate their sport. Coaches in less established programs may succeed by finding players not recruited by the top schools and "coaching them up" to their full potential. Also, the ability to manage players differs in the college ranks from the pros. Head coaches can discipline players in ways not available to professional coaches in college. For example, college coaches may be able to pull a student's athletic scholarship and remove them from the team.

On the other hand, professional sports are bound by a collective bargaining agreement, which limits the type of discipline a coach can impose on a player. Age differences also make the handling of players different. What works on an 18-year-old fresh out of high school does not necessarily work on a 30-year-old man. As a result, numerous highly successful college coaches have had little or no success transitioning to the professional ranks.

Case 5 – Lou Holtz, Nick Saban and Urban Meyer

Holtz, Saban and Meyer all had Hall of Fame coaching careers in the college ranks, with Holtz winning one national championship with Notre Dame, Saban winning a total of seven at LSU and Alabama, and Meyer winning three at Florida and Ohio State combined. However, none had much success at the professional level. Both Holtz and Saban returned to college ranks after less than stellar success at the professional level, while Meyer was fired after 13 games in his first NFL season.

The difficulty in transitioning from coaching in college to the professional ranks may seem obvious, with the greater level of competition, but moving from coaching at the NFL level to the college ranks can be just as tricky.

Case 6 – Lovey Smith
Smith had a successful career coaching in the NFL, winning the Associated Press NFL Coach of the Year award in 2005 and leading the Chicago Bears to a Super Bowl appearance in 2006. During his years with the Bears, Smith compiled a respectable 81- 63 record. After an unsuccessful stint as the Tampa Bay Buccaneers head coach, Smith was hired as the head coach at the University of Illinois. There, he compiled a dismal 17-39 record, getting fired after the seventh game of his fifth season.

Mentorship

Working for the proper organization is at least one crucial aspect in determining an employee's success. Good organizations try to hire the right people and then provide adequate training and mentorship to increase the probability of the employee's success. A good mentor can take new employees and put them on the correct path by placing them in positions that utilize their strengths and helping them improve on their weaknesses. He may challenge an individual to take on new assignments the person appears prepared to handle while also keeping that person from situations for which he is not yet ready. This can be critical to putting someone on a successful career path in the business world. Although this can be difficult or impossible for students to observe until they enter the workforce, it is easy to follow in professional football. Consider the quarterback of a team whose success on the field is probably the easiest to observe, even for a casual sports fan.

Case 7 – Tom Brady

Brady, the most successful and arguably the greatest quarterback in pro football history, was a sixth-round draft pick of the New England Patriots out of the University of Michigan. Brady would win a record seven Super Bowls during his storied career. In his second year, Brady was provided the opportunity to play due to an injury to All-Pro quarterback Drew Bledsoe. Brady would lead the team to its first Super Bowl victory. Brady had the good fortune of being drafted by a good team and having a coaching staff that put him in a position to succeed by using a system that fit his skill set and only asking him to do what he, as a young, relatively inexperienced player, was capable of doing.

Case 8 - Lamar Jackson

In 2016, Jackson won the Heisman Trophy, awarded to the best college football player. Jackson, an exceptionally gifted athlete with question marks about his passing ability, was projected by most NFL scouts as a wide receiver in the professional ranks. However, in 2018, the Baltimore

Ravens moved up in the draft to take Jackson with the 32nd and final pick in the first round. Head Coach John Harbaugh recognized Jackson's unique abilities. Rather than try to fit him into the Ravens' traditional offense, the team restructured the offense to take advantage of Jackson's unique skill set. Jackson would start 7 games at quarterback in his rookie season due to an injury to starter Joe Flacco, and the team would win six of those seven games to make the playoffs. In 2019, the Ravens named Jackson their starter, and with a restructured offense, he would be the unanimous choice for MVP of the league, leading them to a 14-2 record. In 2023, Jackson would again be the MVP of the league.

In other cases, players could realize their potential only once their mentoring situations changed through a change in the coaching staff. Consider the following examples.

Case 9 – Alex Smith and Rich Gannon

In 2005, Smith was the overall number-one pick by the San Francisco 49ers and would struggle for the first six years of his career under several different head coaches and offensive coordinators. Then, in 2011, Jim Harbaugh was named the head coach, changing the trajectory of Smith's career. Before the 2011 season, Smith completed an average of 55.56% (a dismal percentage for a starting quarterback) of his passes, threw a touchdown pass on 2.82% of his passes, and was intercepted on 3.7% of his pass attempts. However, from 2011 on, Smith improved significantly in all categories, completing 64.98% of his passes, increasing his touchdown pass rate to 4.22% of his pass attempts, and lowering his interception percentage to 1.46 per attempt.

Gannon was a journeyman quarterback playing for three teams with little success when the Oakland Raiders acquired him in 1999 at the age of 34. Again, like Smith, the move to Oakland completely changed the narrative on Gannon. His completion percentage improved from 54.57% to 61.60%, his touchdown rate increased from 2.82% to 4.48% per attempt, while his interception percentage decreased from 3.84 to 2.00 per attempt. After the move to Oakland, Gannon would be a two-time first-team all-pro selection and the NFL's MVP in 2002.

These are success stories of athletes playing for good organizations and coaches who knew how to maximize their talents. It's easy to attribute a player's success to being in a good organization with quality coaching. However, when a player does not reach what experts believe to be his full potential, it's not clear if the player lacked work ethic and determination or if the situation he was placed in is to blame. Consider the following examples of highly regarded players who had little success in the league.

Case 10 – David Carr and Tim Couch

Both overall number one draft picks, Carr and Couch had less than stellar careers likely caused by the organizations that drafted them. Carr was selected by the expansion Houston Texans in 2002 and Couch by the Cleveland Browns when they returned to the league as an expansion team in 1999. Carr spent the first five years of his career behind a terrible offensive line and was sacked 249 times in 76 games (3.27/game) with Houston. Compare that to Hall of Famer

Dan Marino, who was sacked 270 times in his 242 games (1.12/game) with the Miami Dolphins. Carr would play another five years serving as a backup. Couch was sacked 166 times in his 62 games (2.68/game) and was out of the league after five years.

Mentorship matters not only in the development of players, but also in the development of assistant coaches. A head coach's mentorship legacy can be seen in the success of assistants who became head coaches, referred to as a head coach's "coaching tree." Unfortunately, some of the greatest head coaches in history failed to adequately prepare assistants for head coaching positions.

Case 11 – Vince Lombardi, George Halas and Bill Belichick

Lombardi and Halas were two legendary coaches (the Superbowl Trophy is named for Lombardi, the NFC Championship Trophy, for Halas) in the NFL. Yet none mentored assistants who would go on to succeed as head coaches. Belichick, the most successful coach in NFL history, has seen several of his assistants go on to head coaching positions, but to date, none have achieved more than a modest amount of success in the NFL. Several, including Josh McDaniels, Matt Patricia and Joe Judge, would return to the Patriots to work as assistant coaches under Belichick [see Rozum, 2012].

Case 12 – Mike Holmgren and Sid Gillman

Holmgren and Gillman both had success as head coaches. Holmgren would lead the Green Bay Packers to a Super Bowl victory and the Seattle Seahawks to a Super Bowl appearance. Gillman would be inducted into the college and pro football Halls of Fame. Holmgren assistants Andy Reid and John Gruden would go on to win Super Bowls as head coaches and several of Reid's and Gruden's assistants would also go on to win Super Bowls. Gillman assistants have won five Super Bowls, with three being inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

Teamwork

In the same way players' career paths can be shaped by the teams and coaches for whom they play, so too can the legacies of coaches. Winning championships is challenging, and good coaching can take mediocre players only so far. To win titles, coaches need at least some great players.

Case 13 - Bill Belichick, Greg Popovich and Joe Torre

Bill Belichick, Greg Popovich, and Joe Torre won numerous championships in their Hall of Fame careers.

Belichick took the New England Patriots to nine Super Bowls, winning six with quarterback Tom Brady. Before Brady joined the Patriots, Belichick only had a modest amount of success as a head coach. In the four years following Brady's departure in 2020, the Patriots missed the playoffs twice and were soundly beaten in the first round in 2022. On the other hand, Brady won a Super Bowl in 2021, his first year with Tampa Bay.

Popovich and the San Antonio Spurs had the good fortune of receiving the number one pick in the NBA draft in 1997 and selecting Tim Duncan. Duncan, whom many believe is the best power forward to play the game, led Popovich and the team to five NBA championships. During the years Popovich had Duncan and other NBA greats Kawhi Leonard, Tony Parker, and Manu Ginóbili, the team never had a losing record. However, since Duncan's retirement and the departures of Leonard, Parker, and Ginóbili, Popovich and the Spurs have failed to win a championship and have had five successive losing seasons. Popovich's and the Spurs' luck may have changed. In the 2023 NBA Draft Lottery, the Spurs received the number one pick. This allowed the Spurs to draft Victor Wembanyama, a 7'2" generational talent, whom many believe is the best draft prospect since LeBron James in 2003.

Joe Torre had a losing record in his first 15 years as manager of the New York Mets, Atlanta Braves, and St. Louis Cardinals when the New York Yankees hired him in 1996. Teaming up with an owner willing to spend for quality free agents and future home-grown Hall of Famers Mariano Rivera and Derek Jeter, Torre won four World Series titles and two more American League pennants. Following a contract dispute, Torre left the Yankees in 2008 for the Los Angeles Dodgers, where he failed to attain the same success he had had with the Yankees.

Although the above mini-cases focus on the importance of players in a coach's success, successful organizations are made up of many individuals who receive little or no recognition. Consider the following case.

Case 14 - Steve Pikiel

In 2016, Pikiell was hired as the Head Coach of the Rutgers University Men's Basketball. Before his hiring, the team had ten consecutive losing seasons. His success in turning the program around is partly due to recognizing the importance of everyone in the organization. At the end of every season, Pikiell spends days calling to thank everyone in the organization, including bus drivers, caterers, and the pep band [Asbury Park Press, 2023].

Succession Planning

Continuity in an organization requires that it adopt a succession plan. For example, Jack Welch spent the better part of a decade preparing his successor and considered it the most important decision he would make at the end of his tenure at GE. However, history likely will tell that he selected the wrong person. As in business, succession planning is critical to sports franchises. For example, in football, finding and grooming an heir apparent to an aging quarterback is vital for a team to remain competitive over a long period.

Case 15 – Green Bay Packers and San Francisco 49ers

For decades, the Green Bay Packers and the San Francisco 49ers competed at the highest level in the NFL by producing a succession plan for their future Hall of Fame quarterbacks. The 49ers selected Joe Montana in the 3rd round of the 1979 draft. Montana would lead the team to four Super Bowl victories from 1979 to 1990. In 1987, the 49ers acquired 26-year-old future Hall of Famer Steve Young from the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. Young would sit on the bench for four years before getting the opportunity to play in 1991 due to an injury to Montana. Four years later, Young would lead the team to a Super Bowl victory in 1995, throwing a record six touchdown passes. Young would retire after the 1999 season, in which he played a limited number of games. The Montana/Young era gave the 49ers stability and exceptional play at the quarterback position for two decades.

The Green Bay Packers had even greater success, acquiring future Hall of Famer Brett Favre from the Atlanta Falcons in 1992. In 2005, the Packers drafted future Hall of Famer Aaron Rodgers in the first round as the heir apparent to Favre. Rodgers sat on the bench for three years before replacing Favre in 2007, thus giving the Packers more than 30 years of stability at the quarterback position. Favre would lead the team to a Super Bowl victory in 1997, while Rodgers would bring them a championship in 2011.

Drafting an heir apparent is not without risks. In an attempt to continue the legacy of Favre and Rodgers, the Packers moved up in the draft in 2020 to take quarterback Jordan Love as the replacement for the 37-year-old Rodgers. This alienated Rodgers, who thought the team could have improved their chances of winning by filling weaknesses on the roster. Rodgers would be the MVP in the league in the two seasons following the drafting of Love, but the team failed to realize its goal of winning a championship.

Were the Packers and the 49ers lucky, or did they recognize the need to search for a suitable successor to their future Hall of Famers and invest resources in preparing them to take over?

Other teams were less successful in identifying a successor to their star quarterbacks. Unfortunately, this left the teams struggling for decades without someone to lead the team. Consider the following examples.

Case 16 – Buffalo Bills, Denver Broncos, and Miami Dolphins

The year 1983 may have produced the most extraordinary draft class in NFL history, with eight players inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame. Five quarterbacks would be selected in the first round, with three producing Hall of Fame careers. John Elway was selected first in the draft by the Baltimore Colts, but because of his desire to play elsewhere, was quickly traded to the Denver Broncos. Elway would lead the Broncos to five Super Bowl appearances, winning in the final two years of his career. Jim Kelly would be selected by the Buffalo Bills with the 16th pick in the draft, leading the team to four consecutive Super Bowl appearances from 1991 to 1994. Dan Marino would be the 27th pick and the final quarterback taken in the first round. Marino would take the Dolphins to the Super Bowl in his second year in the league and hold all the career passing records at retirement.

None of these three teams succeeded in identifying and mentoring a long-term replacement for their future Hall of Famers. As of this writing, the Dolphins have not identified a “franchise” quarterback since Marino’s retirement in 1999. The Bills spent more than two decades searching for a quarterback to lead their team and may have found him in 2018, 22 years after Kelly retired. The Denver Broncos had more luck than the Bills and Dolphins when they signed 36-year-old Peyton Manning after the Indianapolis Colts released him, some 16 years after Elway retired. Manning would play for the Broncos for four years and have three exceptional seasons, setting the single-season touchdown passing mark and leading them to two Super Bowl appearances and one victory.

The stability of an NFL team requires hiring the right head coach. Different from business, where a CEO may groom a successor, highly touted assistant coaches are usually lured away by other teams for head coaching jobs. This makes it critical for a team to find the correct person and to have the patience to allow him to succeed.

Case 17 - Pittsburgh Steelers

No team in professional sports has had greater success finding head coaches than the Pittsburgh Steelers. For more than 50 years, the Steelers have had only three head coaches. In 1969, the Steelers hired 37-year-old Chuck Noll. Noll would begin his head coaching career with three losing seasons before turning the team around and leading them to four Super Bowl victories in the seventies. Noll coached for 23 years and when he retired in 1991, the Steelers replaced him with 35-year-old Bill Cowher, who led the team to eight division titles, two AFC Conference championships and one Super Bowl victory in 15 years. Upon Cowher’s retirement following the 2006 season, the Steelers hired 35-year-old Mike Tomlin. Tomlin, the current head coach of the team, has led the team to two Super Bowls, winning one and in his first 17 years, never had a losing season.

Contrast this with several less successful teams, such as the Detroit Lions, Miami Dolphins, Buffalo Bills, Cleveland Browns and Oakland (now Las Vegas) Raiders. All of them have had more than double-digit head coaches since 2000.

Contingency Planning

Organizations also need to be prepared for every possible contingency. For example, injuries are inevitable in football, and losing a starting quarterback can derail a potential championship season. Therefore, teams must find a competent backup quarterback and prepare him to take over the starting job should the need arise.

Case 18 - The 1991 Philadelphia Eagles

In 1991, the Philadelphia Eagles were one of the teams considered likely to compete for a championship until starting quarterback Randall Cunningham was injured in the first game. The loss of Cunningham left them finishing third in their division, albeit with a respectable 10-win season.

Finding a suitable backup quarterback can be extremely difficult. Players who can perform at a high-level week in and week out tend to be starters. Backups tend to be rookies and other players with limited experience, older players past their prime and players who lack the consistency to be everyday starters. However, there have been some cases of teams who have ridden a backup to a championship. For example, there is the previously mentioned case of Tom Brady and the following two cases.

Case 19 - The 1999 St. Louis Rams and the 2017 Philadelphia Eagles

The 1999 St. Louis Rams were a team with championship aspirations that were not derailed when starting quarterback Trent Green was injured in the first game. Instead, his backup, future Hall of Famer Kurt Warner, stepped in to have a historically great season and lead the team to a Super Bowl win. Warner, an undrafted journeyman and the topic of the movie *American Underdog: The Kurt Warner Story*, played in Europe and the Arena Football League, was undoubtedly not identified as a future star. However, Warner's success was likely a combination of his talent, determination and a coaching staff that invested time in preparing him should he ever be needed.

Perhaps a better example of contingency planning is the 2017 Philadelphia Eagles. The Eagles had second-year quarterback Carson Wentz, the overall number two pick in the draft the previous year as their starter. However, recognizing the importance of a competent backup, the Eagles invested significant money in Nick Foles, a former Eagle who had previously been a starter. As a result, when Wentz was injured late in the season, Foles stepped in and led the team to their first Super Bowl victory.

INCORPORATING THE CONCEPTS INTO THE CLASSROOM

One of the significant advantages of using sports to illustrate business concepts is that sports seasons run for finite periods, allowing instructors to evaluate decisions made by teams during that season. In addition, each season brings fresh new examples that can be incorporated into the classroom. There are numerous ways that an instructor can incorporate these concepts into the classroom. Professors who are sports fans might bring recent decisions made by sports teams either on the field or in human resource decisions to the classroom for discussion. Those instructors who are not sports fans might ask students to keep track of game day and human resource decisions. The issues faced by teams can be used to motivate business topics via some of the following questions.

Questions:

1. The National Football League has tried to improve minority hiring for head coaching and top front-office positions through the Rooney Rule. How has the Rooney Rule Changed? Has the NFL been successful? How does the percentage of leadership positions in the NFL compare to corporate America? Students can use Bloomberg or other sources to determine the number of women and minorities employed by a firm.

In 2024, the NFL had six Black head coaches and three other minority head coaches, or 28.1% of all head coaches. [see NFL Reaches "Major Milestone" With Record 9 Minority Head Coaches in Place for the 2024 Season, n.d.]. It should be noted that these percentages change regularly because of the small number of NFL head coaches and the constant turnover of coaches. In 2023, the NFL had three Black head coaches and three other minority head coaches, or 18.8%. Only time will tell if this jump in the percentage of minority head coaches is the beginning of a trend or an aberration from the norm. Although the verdict on minority head coaches is still out, it does appear that the number of women employed in prominent positions in the NFL is on the rise. From 2020 to 2024, the number of women working in full-time coaching or football operations roles has increased from 92 to 223, a 141% increase. [see NFL's look changing as more women move into prominent roles at teams across the league, 2023]. Compared to Corporate America, it appears the NFL is doing better at hiring minority head coaches, with only 1.6% of Fortune 500 companies being Black CEOs. Women fared better in Corporate America, holding slightly more than 10% of CEO positions.

2. In Case 17, we discussed the Pittsburgh Steelers' success in hiring head coaches. Why do you think they have successfully found and retained head coaches? What can companies learn from the Steelers?

    There are several lessons businesses can learn from the Steelers. First is patience. When the Steelers hired Chuck Noll in 1969 to be their head coach, the team had not had a winning record in seven seasons. In his first three seasons as Head Coach, Noll finished with losing seasons, winning only 12 games in total. The organization had the patience to allow Noll to build in winning culture. As a result, the Steelers were rewarded with back-to-back Super Bowl victories in 1974 and 1975 and again in 1978 and 1979.

    In 2007, the Steelers were searching for a new head coach after the resignation of Bill Cowher. Russ Grimm, a coach with the Steelers, had been widely reported as the next head coach. [steelernation.com, 2022]. However, during the interview process, the Steelers met with Mike Tomlin, the defensive coordinator of the Minnesota Vikings. Many viewed this as a formality to comply with the Rooney Rule, which required interviewing a minority candidate. The ownership of the Steelers viewed Tomlin's interview not as a means of complying with a rule named for their owner but as a part of an ongoing search. In the end, the open-mindedness of the Steelers' ownership to view every interviewee as a genuine candidate for the position rewarded them with a head coach who as of this writing has taken the team to two Super Bowls, winning one, and has never had a losing season.

3. Much of the New England Patriots' success comes from quarterback Tom Brady accepting less money to allow the Patriots to sign other quality players. What lessons can companies and CEOs learn from Brady?

    Finding and retaining good employees is one crucial factor in a firm's success. Corporations understand that employee turnover can be costly, and they may be able to reduce this turnover by providing a more equitable pay structure to employees. CEOs and Boards of Directors should recognize what Brady understood: that his and the organization's success required many people and that taking too much of the pie would hinder the team from acquiring and keeping good players. Companies might use the Brady approach by reducing compensation at the organization's top and increasing compensation for the rank-and-file workers. Does this approach improve employee retention? Cascio (2006) compares wages, benefits, and employee turnover at Costco with rival Sam's Club from a New York Times report. In the report, Costco paid $17/hour compared to around $10/hour at Sam's Club. In addition, over 80 percent of Costco employees are covered by health benefits compared to less than 50 percent of Sam's Club employees. The more generous benefits have benefited Costco with an unusually low turnover rate of 17 percent compared to Sam's Club's 44 percent. Cascio (2006) estimates the annual cost of churn per employee to be $3,628 for Costco and $5,274 for Walmart. Do these savings benefit shareholders and executives, who may receive compensation based on stock performance metrics? According to Pope (2024), Walmart trades at 25 times estimated 2024 earnings, whereas Costco trades at 46 times estimated earnings. Although many factors may impact the differences in multiples, it's possible that Costco's strong employee retention policy relative to Walmart's may be one of those factors.

4. In Case 12, we discussed two head coaches who have successfully groomed assistants for head coaching jobs. Are there CEOs or companies with a strong record of producing CEOs and top executives for other companies? [Botelho and Kos, 2020]

    Irene Rosenfeld of Mondelez is one executive who had great success mentoring those individuals she supervised over a 36-year career as an executive in the food industry. At the time of her retirement in 2017, she had mentored 13 future CEOs, including Bob Gamgort of Keurig Green Mountain, Tom Redding of Lending Tree, Tony Verdon of Kraft, Denise Morrison of Campbell Soup, and Michele Buck of Hershey.

    General Electric and its former CEO, Jack Welch, had a strong record of producing CEOs who would lead other companies. As of 2001, at least 16 of Welch's underlings led publicly traded U.S. companies, including Lawrence Johnston of Albertson's Inc. and James McNerney of 3M.

5. The 1999 St. Louis Rams and the 2017 Philadelphia Eagles won Super Bowls with backup quarterbacks. What lessons can corporate America take from these teams?

Contingency planning is critical to maintaining stability in a firm when the founder or CEO passes away unexpectedly. Sales can decrease dramatically, and jobs can be lost (see Business News Daily, 2023)

Unlike companies that lacked a contingency plan, Steve Jobs of Apple identified a person who could lead the company in his absence. When Jobs stepped away from Apple in 2009 for pancreatic cancer treatments, Cook stepped in as CEO. After Jobs resigned as CEO, Cook was permanently appointed CEO shortly before his death, and the company has continued to thrive under his leadership.

6. Throughout history, we have seen numerous successful assistant coaches who failed as head coaches. Why did so many of these assistants fail? What can companies learn from this?

    One way firms can avoid the Peter Principle pitfall is to place less emphasis on current job performance when the new position requires greater responsibility and where current performance is rewarded by relatively strong pay for performance.

    Another approach firms can take is to provide adequate training to employees interested in moving up to management. For example, a hotel looking for housekeeping staff to be promoted to a managerial position might invest in training for those interested in using scheduling software and other relevant management areas. [King, 2023]

7. In Case 9, we presented two examples of quarterbacks who had limited success until they were traded to a new team or their team hired a new coaching staff. In Case 10, we presented examples of two quarterbacks who may not have reached their potential due to the organization where they began their careers. So, what lessons can students take to manage their careers?

    Working for the right organization and boss can make an enormous difference in an individual's career path. Good bosses help their employees succeed by putting them in positions that utilize their strengths and allowing them to grow by giving them greater responsibilities. They can also assist them by pointing out weaknesses and helping them to improve.

8. In every organization, some individuals are the faces of the firm. In sports, players and coaches receive the bulk of the attention. In the academic world, we have found that administrators always single out the faculty at open houses. In the movie business, the spotlight is shined on the actors and directors. Who are some of the essential, although often unrecognized individuals that allow for success in these organizations?

Sports teams require many people working behind the scenes to succeed. Some of these include individuals handling catering, transportation, facilities, payroll, season tickets and concessions.

Universities require a variety of employees: admissions officers to recruit students; financial aid counselors to assist students in paying for college; individuals in fundraising to award scholarships to students and help build endowments for additional facilities; IT managers for maintaining computers used in teaching and research.

In the movie business, hundreds, if not thousands of individuals are responsible for making a film. Some of these include location managers, special effects people, stunt people, costume and set design, sound and film editing. These include some jobs like "best boy" and "gaffer" (head electrician and chief lighting technician) that many of us have never heard of.

These are just a few examples of questions and possible answers that instructors can use to stimulate discussion on various management issues. Instructors can use the above questions to see what answers students propose. They can also encourage students to formulate their own questions on topics that parallel sports and business.

SUMMARY

Sports provides instructors with numerous examples that can be used to engage students in many business practices. Sports are unique from other businesses because team strategies and human resource decisions are played out in a public forum. This allows instructors to provide current, real-world examples of many practices that are essential to business. Instructors can use the examples to promote discussion or as written assignments. Examples can be tailored to the course being taught. In addition, instructors can improve engagement by using local professional teams and the college's teams to illustrate key points. Students who are sports fans are likely to enjoy delving into the practices of sports teams. Whether interested in sports or not, all students will learn that sports teams are just another type of company that faces the same issues as other firms, something that several women from non-sports backgrounds learned when they joined the Philadelphia Eagles [The NFL Team Run by Women—WSJ, 2019]. In addition, students who know little about sports will broaden their backgrounds, something that may benefit them when engaging with clients who are fans.

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HELPING STUDENTS UNDERSTAND POSITIONING, COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE, AND KEY SUCCESS FACTORS: AN EXPERIENTIAL EXERCISE FOR STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT CLASSES

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ABSTRACT

While the strategic management course usually employs a variety of active learning techniques, such as case studies and simulations, which allow students to directly apply course concepts, it is difficult to utilize students' actual personal experiences and perspectives, given their lack of real-world management experience. This exercise allows students to apply the processes they used as consumers in their decision to enroll at their college or university to gain a heightened understanding of and appreciation for the higher education industry as well as their own institution, its positioning in the marketplace, and what drives its success.

Rationale

Experiential learning pedagogies have become the hallmark of management education. There is a distinct challenge, however, in utilizing experiential learning strategies in the undergraduate strategic management course, given the fact that most undergraduate students have little to no professional full-time work experience and what experience they do have rarely, if ever, exposes them to strategy. MBA students, unless they are enrolled in an Executive MBA program, similarly have limited experience relative to the utilization of integrative, cross-functional skills required for the development and implementation of strategy.

To allow strategic management courses at both the undergraduate and graduate levels to focus more on application of theory to the development of integrated, holistic strategic decision-making skills, case studies and simulations have become popular pedagogies. As described below, both have benefits as well as limitations

Cases

The case study method originated at Harvard Business School in 1912 and remains the primary teaching method at most business schools, particularly at top-ranked business schools (Levy, 2015), in both undergraduate and graduate courses in strategic management (David, 2003). One reason for this is that cases are designed to help students understand the realities of strategic decision-making as well as provide a substitute for actual work experience (Chang, et. al., 2001). Cases present selected data and other information about an organization to facilitate the development of decision-making skills (Bocker, 1987).

Despite the popularity of case study pedagogy, it has been criticized due to the fact that cases present true-to-life facts and information in a structured, orderly manner, whereas real-world business problems aren't encountered with the tidy organization and structure of a case (Levy, 2015). Cases have also been criticized for their lack of ability to excite and engage students; promote deeper inquiry than the information presented in the case; and inability to present material that is current and up to date (Bonner et. al., 2018). Indeed, it has been argued that cases can become completely dated and irrelevant within six months of initial publication or even sooner, given the volatility of our global economy and the changing global business environment (Mello, 2017).

"Live" cases have been promoted as a means of overcoming some of the limitations of traditional case studies (Roth & Smith, 2009; Singh & Eischen, 2007). Live cases require students to study an actual organization in real time by visiting the organization, interviewing key employees, and collecting primary and secondary data to analyze either a specific, defined, strategic problem or the entire organization's strategy. The use of live cases has been growing in popularity and allows students to develop additional skills, such as communication and consulting skills, above those associated with regular cases (Mello, 2017). However, the use of live cases involves a significant amount of additional work on the part of the instructor as well as the commitment of sponsoring organizations to provide access to both employees and critical data, the latter of which might be considered highly proprietary.

Simulations

The use of simulations has been gaining in popularity within the strategic management discipline as an increasing number of new simulations are being created and marketed each year as part of a rapidly growing gaming and simulations industry. Simulations have been found to facilitate both the development of holistic thinking skills and the ability to respond to complex problems (Senge, 2006). Simulations also provide time compression, whereby a lengthy period of time can be simulated in seconds, facilitating immediate feedback on decision making (Gibbons et al., 2022). This can be contrasted to case studies which only consider a ”snapshot” of an organization at a particular point in time. Hence, simulations allow students to see the consequences of decisions, allowing them to refine and adjust strategy and decision-making in the light of such unforeseen consequences, much as real-world executives need to do. Hence, simulations are more aligned with the real world of dynamic, ongoing strategic decision-making, which may need to be adjusted to address unexpected and dynamic situations.

Despite their benefits, simulations are far from perfect. Mintzberg (2004) argued that simulations “only compound the problems created in other courses, by giving the impression that managing is far more orderly and analytical than it really is” (p. 44). Lean et al. (2006) found a number of barriers to the use of simulations, including the amount of time required for preparation, the frequent lack of alignment with course content, limited class time available relative to the extensive amount of time required to conduct simulations properly, technical and quality issues with products, and available of funding to purchase varied simulations. In fact, the amount of time required to effectively use a simulation largely precludes the use of any other type of accompanying learning strategy in the strategic management course. While the use of simulations in management education and research on their use has been increasing, there has been no evidence that management simulations impact either cognitive learning outcomes or the values, skills, and employability of learners (Hallinger & Wang, 2020).

Making it Relevant

While cases and simulations both have some advantages and remain popular pedagogical choices for many strategic management faculty, neither provide actual experiences for students (dos Santos & Gomide, 2013) and are unable to duplicate the complexity associated with real-time strategic decision-making. It has been suggested that student learning can be enhanced by studying examples of organizations which are currently in the news rather than traditional “classic cases” from the past (David, 2003). Current organizational examples allow students to better understand the actual, in-the-moment realities that challenge decision -makers, particularly as they try to anticipate and respond to dynamic changes taking place in their external environments and design a strategy for the future.

It has also been suggested that students can also benefit from studying a company with which they are familiar as customers. Allowing them to integrate their experiences as consumers, and to possibly survey peers and family members to learn about their experiences and perceptions, with strategy recommendations within their strategic analysis can heighten learning outcomes (Mello, 2017). This is particularly true for both traditional undergraduate students without work experience, as well as MBA students without management experience, who generally lack the associated practical knowledge to be able to correctly conduct strategic analysis (Hansen, 2021;

Lohrke, et al., 2022; Mintzberg, 1990) without an appropriate frame of reference. Employing students' personal experience as a customer and the associated analysis of their own "purchase decision" can provide that frame of reference to facilitate enhanced learning. Hence, the value of this exercise is that it allows students to directly apply their experience as customers to the strategic analysis of a real-world organization in real time.

In light of the above, the following experiential exercise has been designed for students in the strategic management course. This exercise has three distinct learning objectives.

Learning Objectives

After completing this exercise, students will be able to

- understand market opportunities and positioning in the marketplace
- identify the means of attracting and retaining customers
- discern how the means of attracting customers are similar to and different from the means of retaining customers

Exercise

This exercise has been used successfully at both the undergraduate and graduate levels in the capstone strategic management course. The process followed is identical for both audiences.

Students are asked to do a strategic analysis of their own academic institution based on their personal experience and, later, that of their group members, from the perspective of the organization's customers. The exercise is completed early in the semester after students have been exposed to the fundamentals of strategic management, namely, the topics of (sustainable) competitive advantage, market positioning, industry key success factors (KSFs), SWOT analysis, and aligning resources and capabilities with strategy.

The exercise involves several distinct steps which sequentially build upon each other.

Step 1 - Individual Written Assignment (approximately 10-15 minutes)
Students are asked to think about and then write down their responses to the following questions.

- To what colleges did you apply and why did you apply to each of them? (critical attributes sought by customers)
- What were the most important factors you considered in deciding where to apply versus where not to apply? (key success factors in industry)
- What made you choose ____ over the other institutions to which you were accepted? (positioning and competitive advantage)
- Why have you stayed at ____, rather than transfer elsewhere? (critical customer retention factors)

Step 2 - Team Analysis (approximately 40-50 minutes)

Students are then placed in teams of 4-5 (or asked to convene with their already-established team if teams have been formed), share their responses from Step 1 with their teammates, and complete a three-pronged strategic analysis as described below.

As a team they, first, identify and agree upon

- their institution's main competitors
- the criteria they used in deciding where to apply
- the extent to which others (parents, guidance counselors, rankings, etc.) influenced the decision on where to apply
- what factors ultimately influenced their final choice to enroll where they did
- how their institution competes and whether it has a competitive sustainable advantage
- how their institution actively attempts, if at all, to retain its customers (students)
- (for undergraduates) whether perspectives of those who transferred in differ from those who enrolled straight from high school (or whether the perspectives of traditional students differ from those of adult learners, depending on the makeup of the class)

Second, the team completes a mapping / two-dimensional positioning of the marketplace for their institution and its competitors, carefully selecting and identifying appropriate x and y axes factors which are critical to positioning. The mapping will illustrate the nature of both competition and untapped opportunities and justification should be provided for the measures utilized on the axes (see Appendix A for an example of the mapping / positioning devised by one team).

Third, the team makes strategic recommendations to their institution regarding how it can compete more effectively in its current marketplace (and/or enter new or different markets). These recommendations can be presented in one of two ways, as outlined below in Step 3.

Step 3 – Presentations or Class Discussion of Team Analyses

Option 1 – Formal Team Presentations to the class (approximately 15-20 minutes each) of the results of Step 2. This allows students to see the analysis done and recommendations made by other teams and can be followed by a full class discussion (approximately 30 minutes) of the various recommendations and strategic factors considered in making these recommendations.

Option 2 – Full class discussion without formal presentations (approximately 30 minutes)

Debriefing

This is a relatively straightforward exercise in which students are asked to think about their personal experiences as customers of their institution and frame this customer perspective relative to strategic management concepts. Student experiences provide a rich basis for the application of strategic management concepts, especially when comparing what different students perceive to be their institution's competitors and strengths as well as how they feel their institution competes and how effectively it does so. Typically, a spirited, yet friendly, discussion takes place among students regarding the institution's strengths and weaknesses as well as opportunities and threats. At my institution, senior management has shown an interest in learning about these student perceptions and recommendations to assist them in their own strategic planning.

I also use this as a "warm-up" exercise for students who later in the course will be asked to complete a more detailed strategic analysis, utilizing a similar framework, of an assigned organization within an industry in which they hope to be employed upon graduation.

Evidence of Learning

I utilize Option 1 in Step 3 where I have student teams deliver formal PowerPoint presentations to the class on which I provide feedback (and a grade) relative to their analysis of the areas noted in Step 2. As noted in the debriefing above, students later complete a comparable strategic analysis of another organization in real-time and I have found, anecdotally, that the level of strategic analysis students are able to complete in the second assignment is far more developed than that they are able to do for their own institution. I have also found that students who have completed the strategic analysis of the own institution do far better on the strategic analyses of their later assigned organization than those who were not afforded the opportunity to analyze their academic institution. Students have commented repeatedly that this "warm-up" exercise in analyzing their institution, getting feedback on their work, and hearing the analyses done by the other teams in the class greatly improves their understanding of how to conduct a more thorough strategic analysis on a real-world organization.

Conclusion and Suggestions for Future Research

True experiential learning has typically been absent from the strategic management course, largely because the overwhelming majority of students lack the appropriate work experience and frame of reference which can be applied to strategic decision making. While simulations and case studies allow for the application of strategy-related course concepts and models, they both have limitations and don't allow students the opportunity to draw upon their own experiences. This exercise allows students, both individually and as part of a team, the opportunity to apply their own experiences as consumers / customers to heighten their understanding of strategy relative to their own institution. Students have both enjoyed the exercise and been able to start to develop critical analytical skills related to strategy which can be further developed in subsequent assignments in the course.

The exercise has been utilized thus far at the undergraduate level with a relatively racially and ethnically diverse yet homogenous (graduating seniors who enrolled in college directly from high school) student population. Future use and application of the exercise could examine differences in student responses among different groups. For example, within the current sample of traditional, undergraduate students, do transfer student perceptions and responses differ from those of "native" students, as noted above? Do international student perceptions and responses differ from those of domestic students? Do commuting student perceptions and responses differ from those of resident students? Do student athlete perceptions and responses differ from those of non-athletes? Such data could be of great value for marketing and enrollment services staff.

The exercise can be used at the graduate / MBA level with similar expected learning goals and outcomes. Again, the perceptions and responses of students can provide valuable data points in helping marketing and enrollment services staff better understand and target potential students. Hence, the exercise has the added value of potentially providing important market research data to the institution while it simultaneously provides enrolled students with a unique opportunity to apply their own insights and experiences toward the development of skills related to strategic management.

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Appendix A – Mapping / Positioning of Institution

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