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## Assessing Sport-Sales Training Effectiveness: To Enhance Sales Performance of Prospective Sales Employees

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## Assessing Sport-Sales Training Effectiveness: To Enhance Sales Performance of Prospective Sales Employees

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### ABSTRACT

The majority of entry-level positions within the sport industry fall in the area of sales. Yet, only recently have sport-management programs begun to offer courses devoted to sales education and training. The discipline of sales provides an ideal opportunity to incorporate experiential-based learning. While several recent articles have examined the application of experiential-learning to courses focused on ticket sales, this article presents the results of the first systematic assessment of such courses' effectiveness. Specifically, this paper presents the results of an evaluation of sales-training programs that incorporate Southall, Nagel, LeGrande, and Han's (2003) metadiscrete experiential learning model and the application of this model to a sport-sales specific curriculum as presented by Irwin, Southall and Sutton (2007).

Among sampled students ( $N = 261$ ), survey results revealed significant differences in all assessed categories related to students' knowledge, skills and attitudes related to sport sales. This article discusses study findings and significance of conclusions for future sport-management program development.

### INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there have been repeated calls for sport-management programs to offer increased and focused sales-specific course offerings within curricula (Dolich, 2004; Helyar, 2006). In response, sport-management scholars have developed theoretical models and experiential-based curricula designed to provide sport-management students with hands-on sales opportunities (Irwin, Southall, and Sutton, 2007; McKelvey and Southall, 2008; Southall, Nagel, LeGrande and Han, 2003). However, while such developments have improved the sales-training landscape within sport management, ongoing research to examine the effectiveness of such efforts has been limited.

Proponents of experiential-learning courses contend such training is valuable not only in student development (Jowdy, McDonald and Spence, 2007), but also in preparing students for entry level positions in the sport industry (Irwin et al., 2007; Southall et al., 2003). McKelvey and Southall

(2008) contended such experience-based learning courses are effective because they allow students "...to practice skills and reflect on behaviors, actions, and activities that simulate 'real world' situations" (p. 225). Providing students with realistic opportunities to practice developed sales-training skills can be accomplished through many avenues, including a metadiscrete learning model that purposefully integrates theoretical constructs within an experiential-learning framework (Southall et al., 2003). Extending Southall's framework, Irwin et al. (2007) presented a sport-sales specific model: "The Pentagon of Sport Sales Training."

Before moving on to describe the research conducted for this manuscript, which evaluated the effectiveness of sales-education courses that utilize metadiscrete experiential-learning principles, we will first examine the broader theoretical background upon which these sport-industry training models are based.

## **THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

Experiential learning has been described as pedagogically effective by numerous educators in various fields for a number of years. As one of experiential learning's earliest proponents, Rogers (1969) identified two types of learning: cognitive (i.e. rote memorization activities without real-world applicability), and affective and experiential (i.e. real-world learning that requires critical thinking skills). Cognitive learning might involve learning multiplication tables and knowledge of sport trivia. A sport-management example of experiential learning would involve applying the fundamental elements of event management in order to effectively manage a sport event. Utilizing Rogers' definitions, Kolb, Boyatzis, and Mainemelis (2000) proposed experiential learning theory (ELT) as providing a holistic model of the learning process and differentiated it from cognitive learning, which tends to emphasize cognition over application.

Earlier, Kolb (1984) had described experiential learning as a transformative process in which a learner grasps and transforms the learning experience. Kolb's (1984) grasping modes involve two activities: (a) Concrete Experience(s) (CE), and (b) Abstract Conceptualization (AC). The transforming modes include: (a) Reflective Observation (RO), and (b) Active Experimentation (AE) (Kolb, 1984). According to this experiential learning cycle, abstract concepts are best utilized as frameworks from which to observe and reflect upon immediate, concrete learning experiences. Kolb's (1984) process allows learners and facilitators to utilize abstract theoretical concepts to reflectively observe previous and ongoing learning experiences in order to creatively develop and eventually test new learning experiences.

In addition to allowing learners to develop their capacities to reflect on learning experiences and attach appropriate significance through such reflection, experiential learning provides faculty with a forum in which they can constantly upgrade and modify instruction methods to not only meet the changing needs of students, but also integrate new theoretical or technological developments specific to a subject area. In contrast to cognitive learning settings, in which students are seen as passive "vessels" into which a teacher "pours" knowledge utilizing a lecture or similar format, experiential-learning environments call on a "professor" to assume a more complex role as a *facilitator*, responsible for (a) setting a positive climate for learning, (b) clarifying the purposes of the learner(s), (c) organizing and making available learning resources, (d) balancing intellectual and emotional components of learning, and (e) sharing feelings and thoughts with learners, while not dictating the learners' attitudes and beliefs (Rogers, 1969; Southall et al., 2003).

Extending ELT, Verner, Keyser, and Morrow (2001) identified two fundamental types of experiential learning activities: *nondiscrete and discrete*. Most commonly, nondiscrete experiential learning activities can be viewed as extensions or components of a specific traditional course or program. Examples of such experiences often include: field projects, field trips, interviews, site visits, and rudimentary role-playing activities. On the other hand, self-contained discrete activities include

educational experiences such as cooperative education, field study or research internships, or self-contained service-learning programs that are separate entities from the on-campus educational setting (Verner et al., 2001). As Southall et al. (2003) noted, such sport-industry specific discrete learning activities allow sport-management students to be immersed in a setting in which it is hoped they come to understand the connection between previously presented theories and the present real-world sport experiences.

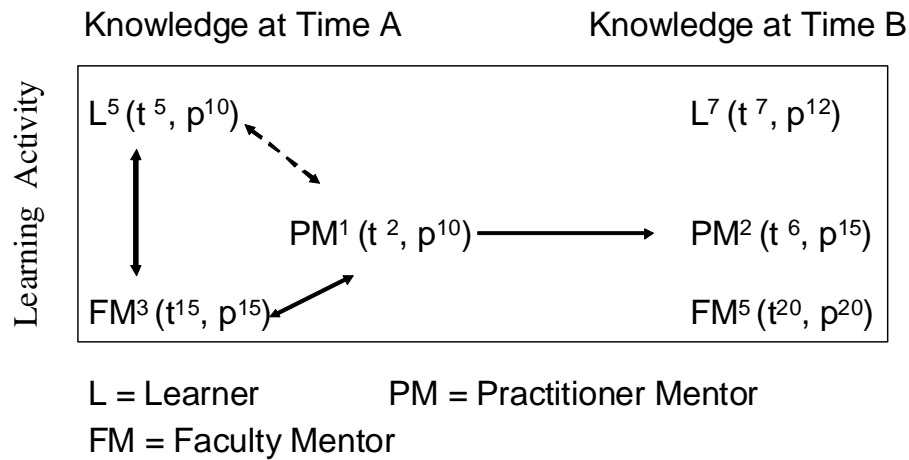
### **Experiential Learning and Sport Management**

Since at least 2000, participatory experiential-learning projects have been seen as a critical element in student preparation for sport-industry careers (Sport Management Program Review Council, 2000). More recently, the Commission on Sport Management Accreditation (COSMA) specifically lists experiential learning as a characteristic of excellence in sport management education: “The sport management program recognizes the role of practical and experiential learning as a relevant component of sport management curricula” (Commission on Sport Management Accreditation, 2009).

As a result, such ventures have emerged as a common feature in many sport management academic programs. Supporting the ongoing development of such curricular elements, Southall et al. (2003) contended their metadiscrete experiential learning model enhanced student understanding of entrepreneurship, sales, sponsorship, event management, and marketing research within the context of a university’s sport management program. In addition, they believed the model could be easily implemented within both undergraduate and graduate sport management programs in a wide variety of settings.

Consistent with Kolb’s (1984) experiential learning cycle, proponents contend metadiscrete sport-sales training programs that provide concrete sales experiences allow for higher levels of student observation and reflection (Irwin, et al., 2007; McKelvey and Southall, 2008). In such an environment, facilitators are truly *mentors*, assuming a more involved relationship with learners (see Figure 1). With the guidance of such mentors, student reflection involves both abstract sales concepts, as well as top-of-the-mind real-world experiences from which a student can draw implications for future actions. Applying a client-based, metadiscrete learning model to a sport-sales education course is a logical response to sport-industry professionals’ concerns with the lack of sales training in sport-management curricula (Dolich, 2004; Helyar, 2006).

**Figure 1**  
**Sales-Training Program Metadiscrete Learning Model.**



Adapted from Southall, et al., 2003)

Recently Irwin et al. (2007), building upon Southall et al.'s (2003) pedagogical approach, developed a curricular model specific to sport-sales training called the "Pentagon of Sport Sales Training." This model (See Figure 2) consists of five training modules: philosophy; product knowledge; prospect knowledge; practice and performance. These five modules incorporate client-based interaction with both internal and external assessments of competency-based performance measures (Irwin et al., 2007; Southall et al., 2003; Southall, Dick, and McKelvey, 2006; Southall, Irwin, Kadlecek and Dick, 2006).

**Figure 2**  
**The Pentagon of Sport Sales Training (Irwin et al.; 2007)**



## Sales-Training Evaluation

Based upon Lupton, Weiss, and Peterson's (1999) *Sales Training Evaluation Model* (STEM), this study sought to examine two of the five unique aspects or categories identified in STEM: (1) reaction of any participant involved including sales trainers and trainees; (2) changes in attitude, knowledge, and skills among the trainees involved (Lupton et al., 1999). These two aspects were chosen, because as Leach and Liu (2003) noted, students who reported positive reactions to sales training were more likely to learn and retain course material, and reported higher levels of knowledge retention resulting in an increased likelihood that learned material would be applied in a work environment. In order to validate these contentions, the authors conducted longitudinal analyses designed to gather data related to participants' perceptions of knowledge and skill acquisition resulting from developed sales curricula, as well as pre and post-training attitudes toward sport sales. The following sections delineate these analyses, including a discussion of the methodology employed, the study's results, and conclusion and implications.

## METHODOLOGY

In addition to gathering basic demographic information and developing a summary of descriptive statistics, this study sought to examine two specific areas of interest: (a) expressed individual organizational-culture values, and (b) perception of pre and post-course level of sales skills and attitudes toward sport sales. These two areas of research are concurrently descriptive and evaluative. Examining students' expressed organizational-culture values was undertaken to develop a snapshot of students' expressed values. Investigating students' perceived level of sales skill was undertaken to gauge students' satisfaction with the sales-training program and begin to evaluate the program's effectiveness.

### Organizational Culture Profile (OCP)

In order to determine students' organizational-culture self-perceptions, an Organizational Culture Profile (OCP) questionnaire was utilized (See Table 2.). The OCP presented subjects with 54 descriptive statements and asked them to sort the items into nine categories based on the criteria of how characteristic the statements are of them or their values (Caldwell and O'Reilly, 1990). The nine-category Q-sort format allows for "a rich assessment of individual and organizational values" (Chatman, 1989, p. 342). This research study followed the general use of the OCP as outlined in O'Reilly, Chatman, and Caldwell (1991), in which respondents sort the 54 items into nine categories, putting a specified number of statements in each category. The required item-category pattern is 2-4-6-9-12-9-6-4-2. The forced-choice Q-sort methodology produces a normal distribution for the resulting profiles. The 54 statements utilized are consistent with value statements found in both academic and practitioner-oriented writings on organizational culture (Chatman, 1989; Martin, 1992; Martin and Siehl, 1983; O'Reilly, 1989; O'Reilly and Chatman, 1996; Schein, 1984, Southall, 2000; Southall, Wells, and Nagel, 2005).

**Table 1**  
**Organization Culture Profile (OCP) Answer Sheet**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Flexibility                                    | 28. Action orientation                       |
| 2. Adaptability                                   | 29. Taking initiative                        |
| 3. Stability                                      | 30. Being reflective                         |
| 4. Predictability                                 | 31. Achievement orientation                  |
| 5. Being innovative                               | 32. Being demanding                          |
| 6. Being quick to take advantage of opportunities | 33. Taking individual responsibility         |
| 7. A willingness to experiment                    | 34. Having high expectations for performance |

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 8. Risk taking                          | 35. Opportunities for intellectual growth     |
| 9. Being careful                        | 36. Rewards for good performance              |
| 10. Autonomy                            | 37. Security                                  |
| 11. Being rule orientated               | 38. Offer praise for good performance         |
| 12. Being analytical                    | 39. Low level of conflict                     |
| 13. Paying attention to detail          | 40. Confronting conflict directly             |
| 14. Being precise                       | 41. Developing friends                        |
| 15. Being team orientated               | 42. Fitting in                                |
| 16. Sharing information freely          | 43. Working well in collaboration with others |
| 17. Emphasizing a single culture        | 44. Enthusiasm                                |
| 18. Being people oriented               | 45. Putting in long hours                     |
| 19. Fairness                            | 46. Not being constrained by many rules       |
| 20. Respect for the individual's rights | 47. An emphasis on quality                    |
| 21. Tolerance                           | 48. Being distinctive-different from others   |
| 22. Informality                         | 49. Having a good reputation                  |
| 23. Being easy going                    | 50. Being socially responsible                |
| 24. Being calm                          | 51. Being results orientated                  |
| 25. Being supportive                    | 52. Having a clear guiding philosophy         |
| 26. Being aggressive                    | 53. Being competitive                         |
| 27. Decisiveness                        | 54. Being highly organized                    |

9. Extremely characteristic (2)
8. Quite characteristic (4)
7. Fairly characteristic (6)
6. Somewhat characteristic (9)
5. Relatively neutral (12)
4. Somewhat uncharacteristic (9)
3. Fairly uncharacteristic (6)
2. Quite uncharacteristic (4)
1. Extremely uncharacteristic (2)

### **Sport Sales Knowledge, Skill and Attitude Inventory (SSKSAI)**

In order to assess the sales-training programs' possible effect on students' perception of their sales skill and expressed attitudes, four unique aspects or categories were developed: (1) reaction of assessed students to course elements; (2) changes in reported attitude, knowledge, and skills among the assessed students; (3) behavior changes among sampled students; (4) tangible measurements such as sales performance. This study presents results related to the first two developed categories: reaction to course elements and changes in reported knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Data pertaining to students' perceptions of acquired knowledge, skills and attitudes, was gathered through completion of a Sport Sales Knowledge, Skill and Attitude Inventory (SSKSAI) that asked students to rate their present level of sales knowledge and skills, as well as their attitudes toward sales. The SSKSAI consisted of both open-ended and 10-point Likert-scale questions (See Table 2.).

**Table 2**  
**Sport Sales Knowledge, Skill and Attitude Inventory (SSKSAI) Items**

Items
Present skill level
Present level of enjoyment
Present understanding of sales process
Present attitude toward "sports sales"
Present attitude toward clinical experience
How prepared do you feel presently for a job in sports-sales department?
How much do you presently like sales?
Present attitude toward telemarketing
Present familiarity with product
Present skill in dealing with customer objections
How prepared are you right now to initiate telemarketing calls?
Are you comfortable calling people you don't know?

### Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

There are two possible explanations for differences in pre and post-training student sales-skills perceptions: (1) The differences are due to the treatment effect (e.g. sales-training program), or (2) The differences occur simply due to chance. In order to answer the study's research question: "Is there a significant difference in students' pre and post-training perceptions of their knowledge, skills and attitudes related to sport sales?" an analysis of variance (ANOVA) with an experiment-wise alpha level of .05 was conducted.

## RESULTS

### Description of the Sample

The study's sample ( $N = 261$ ) consisted of primarily undergraduate students (85%) enrolled in sport-ticket sales training courses at three universities from 2005-2009. A large number of students (89%) were between 18-25 years of age. Similar to the sport-industry's gender makeup, 68% of the students were males. In addition, approximately 85% of the students described themselves as white. According to their reported sales experience, approximately 74% of the students had either no sales experience (58%) or one year's (16%) experience.

### Organizational Culture Profile (OCP) Results

In describing themselves and/or their values, sampled students listed the following statements as most characteristic of their values: being competitive ( $M = 6.62$ ), having high performance expectations ( $M = 6.20$ ), being easygoing ( $M = 6.17$ ), being people oriented ( $M = 6.16$ ), being team oriented ( $M = 6.01$ ), and valuing a good reputation ( $M = 6.01$ ). The least characteristic items listed included: valuing a single culture ( $M = 2.81$ ), being demanding ( $M = 3.26$ ), being reflective ( $M = 3.59$ ), valuing autonomy ( $M = 3.77$ ), having a clear guiding philosophy ( $M = 3.81$ ), and confronting conflict directly ( $M = 3.81$ ).



## Sport Sales Knowledge, Skill and Attitude Inventory (SSKSAI) Results

### *Pre-Test Results*

Prior to completing sales-training, most students had little or no sales experience – on average, approximately one year, and most commonly no experience at all. As would be expected, students with little or no sales training were somewhat ambivalent about their present skill levels ( $M = 5.80$ ) and level of enjoyment ( $M = 5.87$ ). However, such students still felt they “understood” the sales process fairly well ( $M = 6.62$ ), and had an overall positive attitude about sport sales ( $M = 7.34$ ) and the upcoming sales-training program ( $M = 7.26$ ).

Prior to completing the sales course, students expressed they “liked” sales ( $M = 6.24$ ), and expressed a slight antipathy toward telemarketing ( $M = 4.57$ ). Specific to the sales process, prior to completing sales training, all students felt they lacked product knowledge ( $M = 2.66$ ) and felt they were unprepared to initiate sales calls ( $M = 3.70$ ). In addition, the pre-test results revealed students felt unprepared dealing with customer “objections” ( $M = 4.23$ ) and uncomfortable calling people they did not know ( $M = 4.46$ ).

### *Post-Test Results*

Upon completing the sales-training program, students perceived they had acquired a higher level of sales skill ( $M = 7.09$ ), enjoyed sales more ( $M = 6.98$ ), and had an increased understanding of the sales process ( $M = 8.34$ ). The students’ present attitude toward “sports sales” continued to be positive ( $M = 7.88$ ), and they expressed a more positive view of telemarketing ( $M = 5.64$ ). As was hoped, students expressed a higher degree of product knowledge ( $M = 5.35$ ) and also felt well prepared to initiate telemarketing calls ( $M = 6.51$ ). In addition, at the end of the training program, students felt well prepared for a sport-sales job ( $M = 7.81$ ), more skilled in dealing with customer objections ( $M = 6.00$ ), and comfortable ( $M = 6.50$ ) in calling strangers.

Table 3 provides comparisons of pre and post sales-training SSKSAI item responses.

**Table 3**  
**SSKSAI Pre and Post-Training Results**

SSKSAI Item	Pre	Std. Dev.	Post	Std. Dev.
Present skill level	5.80	1.977	7.09	1.231
Present level of enjoyment	5.87	2.255	6.98	1.877
Present understanding of sales process	6.62	2.144	8.34	.979
Present attitude toward “sports sales”	7.34	2.072	7.88	1.744
Present attitude toward clinical experience	7.26	2.220	7.85	1.734
How prepared do you feel presently for a job in sports-sales department?	6.17	2.152	7.81	1.481
How much do you presently like sales?	6.24	2.323	7.01	2.207
Present attitude toward telemarketing	4.57	2.483	5.64	2.456
Present familiarity with product	2.66	2.861	5.35	3.360
Present skill in dealing with customer objections	4.23	3.248	6.00	3.008
How prepared are you right now to initiate telemarketing calls?	3.70	3.065	6.51	3.315
How comfortable are you calling people you don't know?	4.46	3.492	6.50	3.373

### *Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)*

In order to answer the study's posed research question: "Is there a significant difference in students' pre and post-training perceptions of their knowledge, skills and attitudes?" an analysis of variance was conducted. The results can be found in Table 4. For all dependent variables (SSKAI items) there was a significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) in pre and post-test student-perceptions' of their sport-sales knowledge, skills and attitudes.

## CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this paper was to examine the pedagogical effectiveness of developed sport-sales courses. In reviewing the theoretical underpinnings of a sport-sales course, outlining such a course's components, and presenting such course stages, the authors hope to demonstrate the benefits and potential impact of such experiential sales-training on students' knowledge, skills and attitudes. Since the most widely available jobs in sport are in sales, exposure to sales philosophies, the sales process and experiential sales training allows students to engage in meaningful personal and professional development. Even for students who will not make a career of sport sales, being able to enter the sport industry with heightened levels of self-confidence and self-awareness is valuable. In addition, the benefits of experiential sales training are threefold. In addition to the hiring organization - as well as any new employees with such training - benefiting from this enhanced form of preparation, the school benefits by its sport-management program's reputation being enhanced.

**Table 4**  
**Analysis of Variance for SSKSAI Items**

Item	<i>df</i>	F
Between/Within Groups		
Present skill level	(1, 259)	36.493**
Present level of enjoyment	(1, 259)	17.637**
Present understanding of sales process	(1, 259)	61.426**
Present attitude toward "sports sales"	(1, 259)	4.880 *
Present attitude toward clinical experience	(1, 259)	5.370 *
How prepared do you feel presently for a job in sports-sales department?	(1, 259)	47.677**
How much do you presently like sales?	(1, 259)	7.304**
Present attitude toward telemarketing	(1, 259)	11.854**
Present familiarity with product	(1, 259)	48.266**
Present skill in dealing with customer objections	(1, 259)	20.061**
How prepared are you right now to initiate telemarketing calls?	(1, 259)	49.816**
How comfortable are you calling people you don't know?	(1, 259)	22.609**

05. \*\* $p < .01$ .

The evaluative measures conducted throughout this study's sports-sales training programs were designed to provide students with constant feedback. Students were provided call sheets to log all calls placed and received during each call session. Students were also frequently videotaped and periodically assessed, and provided performance feedback by instructors and client representatives. Similarly, external measurement records were maintained. These records contain number of calls placed per caller per session, accounts/tickets renewed, new tickets sold, referrals obtained, and referrals closed. Ultimately, a total sales figure was generated for each student and each class. As recommended by Sirianni (2005), and consistent with protocols for evaluation of a sport-property internal sales force, individual and group performance standards, as well as agreed-upon reward programs, were established.

While a ticket-sales training program can provide a tremendous opportunity to acquire sales-related knowledge, such a program cannot necessarily ensure participating students will acquire a "passion" for the product(s) being sold. The probability of "passion-acquisition" is significantly enhanced when those directing the training (e.g. the mentoring course instructors and sport-property representatives) have a passion for educating students and are committed to helping students achieve their goals. In addition, everyone (faculty, university administrators, students, and sport-property staff) involved in the course must be enthusiastic and passionate about the program's educational value. While it can be tempting to overemphasize the program's anticipated sales results, no one involved in any metadiscrete sales-training program should forget that it is the process, rather than the outcome, that must be the program's focal point. When making the decision to incorporate an experiential learning program, it is critical that everyone is committed to such a program and seeks to develop meaningful and valued partnerships with sport organizations that are genuinely supportive of the training program's academic values.

Sport-industry practitioners have identified a "disconnect" between what *our* curricula provide and what the sport-industry needs. The challenge facing sport-management faculty is to make their sport-management curricula more relevant by adding sport-sales courses. To do so is in our own best interest. After all, if the business of sport is simple: "Sell or die," how long can sport-management programs survive without incorporating sales-training into their curricula?

The analysis of variance demonstrated that the metadiscrete experiential sport-sales training program significantly affected students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes. This study offers evidence that this type of well-developed sales training program can substantially improve the quality of sales-training afforded sport-management students. In addition, such programs significantly increase the likelihood that participating students will acquire a "passion" for the sales process. This passion acquisition will be enhanced if all parties involved in the course exhibit high levels of enthusiasm, or passion, for the inherent educational value of the program. While it can be tempting for all parties involved to overemphasize a program's anticipated sales results, no one involved in any metadiscrete sales-training program should forget that it is the process that is of utmost importance.

## **IMPLICATIONS FOR MARKETING PRACTITIONERS**

Providing metadiscrete experiential sport sales training as part of the collegiate experience will also provide significant benefits to the sports-sales practitioner community. As entry-level employees begin their professional sales careers, they will be significantly better prepared and, as a result, more productive in the early days of their tenure with their organization. Through continued adoption and development of a metadiscrete experiential sport-sales curriculum, sport-management programs can address identified curricular shortcomings and provide students with entry-level skills valued within the sport industry (Dolich, 2004; Helyar, 2006). Sport-industry practitioners have identified a "disconnect" between the training that sport-management programs provide and what the sport-industry needs. Continued development and implementation of metadiscrete experiential-learning sport-sales programs are in the best interest of everyone involved in the sport industry.

The research results presented in this paper demonstrate that young sales professionals can indeed benefit from participation in a metadiscrete experiential sports-sales program. Participating students not only gain real world experience but also receive constant valuable feedback in a non-threatening, mentoring type of relationship.

Much of the discussion and the report on the measurement of results in this paper have focused on the student. As a result of the research conducted for the paper, the authors conclude that students benefit greatly from the inclusion of an experiential learning approach within the curriculum. Actual real-world experience helps to create confidence and knowledge with human interaction – conditions that cannot be taught in a lecture or similar format setting. Little has been said about the impact of such experience on the organizations that hire these students. However, they, too, derive significant benefits when they employ the student who has participated in an experiential-based learning program. The value of course-related experiential learning benefits the marketing practitioner in the following ways:

- Training costs are reduced;
- Entry-level employees are better prepared and more productive;
- Entry-level employees have a better understanding of organizational culture and the sales process;
- Entry-level employees have had an opportunity to connect theory and practice;
- Entry-level employees apprehensions have been addressed, and they are more confident in their sales ability and interpersonal dealings;
- Early employment efficiency and effectiveness are improved; and
- Employers' income stream is improved.

The benefits listed above accrue to the practitioner, but the schools that integrate metadiscrete experiential learning into their sales curriculum will also benefit. Their programs will be deemed more appealing to the prospective employers and will be distinguished by the incorporation of experiential learning dimension into the curricula.

As stated earlier, educators have a certain responsibility to respond to the needs and suggestions of those organizations that employ our graduates. Many programs formalize this “feedback from business” by soliciting the advice of established advisory boards. This research project originated because sales practitioners had identified a potential weakness in typical marketing and sales curricula. This research validates some of the beneficial aspects of the inclusion of a metadiscrete experiential sales experience within the curriculum to the school, the student and the practitioner. It also demonstrates the value of maintaining a cooperative working relationship with stakeholders that employ graduating students. Thus, a triple win is the end result – student, school, and practitioner are the three winners.

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