

# **Advanced Agri-Sales and Marketing**

## **Class Information**

AGEC 431 Fall 2015  
Tuesday, Thursday 8:30-10:20, Kran G-7  
And other times and locations as scheduled

## **Contact Information:**

Professor: Dr. W. Scott Downey  
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## **Other Expenses**

**Meals or small gifts for executives**

## **Course Objectives**

The specific objectives of the course are:

- To review, apply, and test previously learned selling skills and business concepts in a real world environment
- To enable students to improve their selling effectiveness and gain self-confidence.
- To utilize interpersonal and communication skills in a professional environment.
- To apply learning from other courses to the context of evaluating and developing sales and marketing strategies
- To locate, evaluate, prioritize, and communicate information necessary for marketing management decisions

## **Course Overview**

Advanced Sales & Marketing is designed as a capstone course for Sales & Marketing majors in the Department of Agricultural Economics. Its purpose is to provide senior students an opportunity to study and apply marketing concepts and selling skills in a realistic professional environment.

The course includes a variety of experiential learning activities and activities that are highly relevant to business-to-business sales and marketing. Students will work in groups that potentially become teams through much of the course, but will also have individual activities.

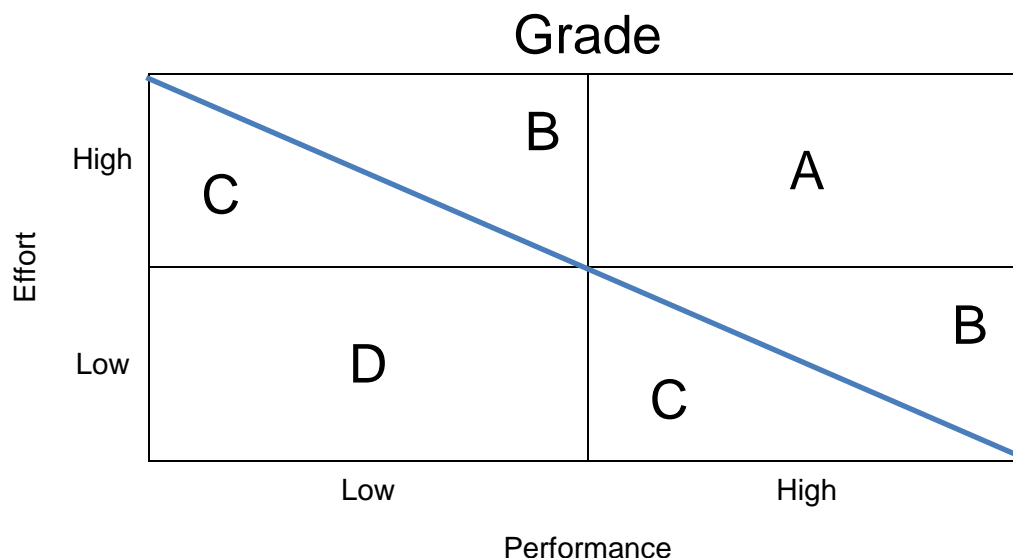
## **Grading**

Often in sales and marketing, the proper direction is unclear or subjective. Hard work doesn't always lead to perfect results. However, the process of obtaining imperfect results can lead to learning if the practitioner takes advantage of the opportunity. What is most important is to think and learn. Toward that end, I am inspired by Thomas Edison, who spoke about this topic frequently.

- "I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work."
- "The value of an idea lies in using it."

- **“There are no rules here -- we're trying to accomplish something.”**
- “Failure is really a matter of conceit. People don't work hard because, in their conceit, they imagine they'll succeed without ever making an effort. Most people believe that they'll wake up some day and find themselves rich. Actually, they've got it half right, because eventually they do wake up.”
- “Genius is 1 percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration.”
- “Just because something doesn't do what you planned it to do doesn't mean it's useless.”
- “Negative results are just what I want. They're just as valuable to me as positive results. I can never find the thing that does the job best until I find the ones that don't.”
- “The trouble with our way of educating is that it does not give elasticity to the mind. It casts the brain into a mold... It does not encourage original thought or reasoning, and it lays more stress on memory than observation.”
- “This problem, once solved, will be simple.”
- “To do much clear thinking a person must arrange for regular periods of solitude when they can concentrate and indulge the imagination without distraction.”
- “Unfortunately, there seems to be far more opportunity out there than ability.... We should remember that good fortune often happens when opportunity meets with preparation.”
- “What you are will show in what you do.”

The accomplishment of course objectives will require effort and performance. Ideally grades would be allocated in a way that reflects both, such as in the following figure.



Students will receive the highest grade earned according to the following numbers of points:

- A=450
- B=400
- C=350
- D=300
- F= Below 300

**Points:**

|                 |            |
|-----------------|------------|
| Learning        | 100        |
| Thinking        | 100        |
| Applying        | 100        |
| Communicating   | 100        |
| Professionalism | <u>100</u> |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>500</b> |

Points will be allocated at the end of the semester, based on observations throughout the semester. AT ANY TIME THROUGHOUT THE SEMESTER, students may request an assessment of their performance in each area.

**Learning Goals**

Students are responsible for their own learning. The role of the professor is to create learning opportunities and support the student's effort. Toward that end, each student will create written learning goals for the course at the beginning of the semester. These will be discussed in a one-on-one meeting with the professor. It is not expected that every goal will be achieved to perfection by the end of the semester. Many factors can affect successful accomplishment of goals, and the experience as a student is only one part of that journey. Students will report their progress or revisions of their goals at the end of the semester.

**Direct Sales Experience****Overview**

The Direct Sales Experience (DSE) is a project designed for students to learn, apply, and review selling skills that will be valuable to them on their career in Sales and Sales Management. Building on skills learned in AGEC 331 (prerequisite course), students will engage in selling products and be evaluated on their performance.

The DSE project offers the opportunity to put the full realm of selling techniques into practice. You will be able to experience the application of various selling concepts and techniques and immediately measure the results – rather than waiting weeks or months to know whether your efforts are paying off. Indeed, the DSE project is a great opportunity to really learn and practice sales techniques.

Before going to the field to make sales calls, students will make extensive preparation for their sales presentations. This will include an intense workshop conducted outside of class and practice sessions. This training is critical to success in this project and is designed to improve basic selling skills and build confidence in your ability.

You will be evaluated on both the effort you put into this project and your actual field success.

This project is an actual business. It will be part of an ongoing business entity in which you will be expected to participate in a professional manner throughout, just as you would expect any 'real' business to operate. You will be expected to learn and follow business procedures, meet deadlines, report your activities in a timely manner, dress and act professionally throughout the project. Part of your grade will be based on the professional manner in which you conduct yourself throughout the project.

To experience real world selling through a direct sales experience. You will be asked to present intangible value to an existing business. You will be expected to learn about your product and make an actual sales presentation, with the goal of generating revenue that will be tracked and reported periodically.

## Objectives

- To further develop basic selling skills that will enhance career sales and sales management potential
- To gain confidence as a salesperson
- To build experience that will demonstrate to potential employers that you understand and have achieved a degree of competency in real world selling

## Procedure

You will be asked to develop an appropriate sales presentation, make customer calls, generate revenue, evaluate and track your results.

You will . . .

- Learn about the product and the value it creates
- Do basic research on the potential customers
  - Develop a sales presentation
  - Prepare for a sales call with research on the prospect and clear strategy that sometimes includes the roles of peers
  - Establish rapport with the prospect
  - Ask questions to understand what role the value you represent plays in that business
  - Present your value to customers
  - Ask for revenue
  - Handle objections
- Report field sales activity
- Evaluate your progress

## DSE Project Evaluation

Points will be awarded for:

- **Presentation**
  - Each student must think about the product and draw from the knowledge they have gained through sales and marketing courses in order to develop a sales presentation.
  - Each student will receive feedback from three peers and a teacher.
  - Students are expected to adjust their presentations based on this feedback.
  - Students should expect to present their value individually and in teams.
- **Feedback**
  - Each student will be expected to view and evaluate the sales presentations of peers.
- **Strategy**
  - The sales strategy will require the student to set goals for their sales efforts, and to develop a plan for accomplishing their goals. Goals should include calls, dollar sales, and closed call ratio.
- **Completed Sales Calls**
  - Completion includes a call report and a recording of the call, submitted within 24 hours of the call. Reports submitted 24-48 hours after the call will receive half credit. Reports submitted more than 48 hours after the call will be treated as if they did not happen.  
The teacher or his/her representative may, from time to time, make follow up calls to reported prospects to get feedback and check for the accuracy of the sales call reports. Any student found to be reporting inaccurate information will be disqualified from the project, dismissed from the class, and the incident reported to the Dean of Students.

- **Sales and Technical Training**
  - All students will be expected to successfully complete the training program – approximately 4-6 hours of intensive training. The training schedule will include regularly scheduled class periods, and evening sessions. Attendance at each of these sessions is mandatory.
- **Meeting With the Sales Team**
  - Students may be asked to participate in sales meetings. These may be held off-campus and outside of scheduled class meetings.

## **Professional Marketing Presentations**

### **Overview**

Professional Sales and Marketing professionals are often called upon to make presentations to customers, colleagues, and company leaders. Sometimes these presentations are done as individuals, but often, particularly with customers, these presentations are made as groups. Students are expected to have completed coursework at Purdue on general presentation skills in communication and writing courses at Purdue. However, an advanced course like AGE 431 should require that students be effective presenters of information within the scope of their professional interests. Therefore, students will be asked to make professional presentations on an assigned topic and to submit appropriate written materials in support of them. These presentations will be attended by executives and are part of the group's presentation to a broader group of executives during the field visit component of the Managerial Leadership Experiences.

### **Objectives**

As part of this activity, students will:

Learn and Think:

- Be able to evaluate the quality of information available on a business topic relating to sales or marketing.
- Think critically about a topic of interest to students.
- Be able to organize verbal and non-verbal communications effectively.

Apply and Communicate:

- Execute an effective business presentation, with a group, in a professional setting.
- Persuade the audience to take action.
- Evaluate and select appropriate media and tools to support communication of a desired message in a professional environment.
- Prepare effective written communications.

Be Professional:

- Consider the perspective, needs, and interests of an executive, peers, teachers and professional audiences.

### **Procedures**

Students will be assigned to groups. Early in the semester, students will brainstorm sales and marketing topics to present based on their experiences. Once approved by the professor, these topics will be researched, an outline created, and a written summary of the topic, to include use of conceptual models, will be developed with an annotated bibliography which will include at least five articles from peer-reviewed academic journals or books written by PhD researchers. If appropriate, students may wish to visit individually with a sales executive who has at least five years of experience in order to understand the practical application of their topic in the field.

Groups will be responsible for every aspect of the presentation including room layout, technology, handouts and activities in support of the topic.

Some topics for consideration include:

- Pricing perceptions with a non-negotiated, single price model
- Determining how sales efforts should be allocated across a company
- Integrating sales and marketing efforts through a channel
- The value and use of digital media
- Metrics for customer experience
- Datamining tools and techniques for marketing managers
- Developing consistent customer perceptions

## **Evaluations**

The projects will be evaluated throughout the semester in preparation for presentations. Students are expected to initiate consultation with the teacher throughout the project. It is suggested that input be obtained prior to completing each milestone. It should be expected that the teacher will challenge the thinking of the group and that often revisions will be required as a result. Students are expected to **manage** this project. Key milestones will include those related to content development and those related to presentation development:

### Content Development

- Topic selection
- Problem identification
- Outline (problem, research, criteria or metrics, alternatives, recommendations, suggestions for implementation)
- Executive summary

### Presentation Development

The group will prepare a 30 minute multi-media presentation. It is not a requirement to use PowerPoint or Prezi. It is suggested that students who choose these tools utilize no more than five PowerPoint slides or five Prezi levels. The number of words per slide should generally be limited to about 5 in the title and about 25 in the slide body.

- Initial presentation materials
- Peer presentations
- Executive presentations

The presentation itself will be evaluated on:

- Content
- Logistics
- Organization
- Delivery
- Creativity
- Visual and Support Materials

### ***Students should consider:***

#### **1. Physical Arrangements**

- a. Arrangement of tables and chairs
- b. Signage, decorations, materials provided
- c. Lighting, equipment, etc.

#### **2. Introduction of the topic**

- a. Attention Getter - Catch and hold the attention of the audience

- b. Establish the importance of the topic for the audience
- c. Establish the objectives of the seminar
- d. Quick overview or outline of what the presentation will include
- e. Explain clearly what the audience can expect to get out of the presentation

**3. Introduction of Presenters** -- Each presenter will be introduced including minimally

- a. Name, home town, major, semester, when they expect to graduate
- b. Interests, hobbies, special skills
- c. Type of job or industry they expect to work in after graduation
- d. Professional experiences or any background or experience that qualifies the presenter to talk on the subject
- e. At least one interesting or 'fun' thing about each person that will 'humanize' the presenters

**4. Presentation of Content**

- a. Present the major points – content
- b. Each team member should be included in the presentation
- c. Points should be well organized
- d. Emphasize the significance or importance of each major area to the audience
- e. Utilize various forms of media to communicate ideas
- f. Smoothly transition between presenters – should look like a single presentation presented by four people rather than four presentations.

**5. Call to Action**

- a. The listener should be asked to take some action or hold a particular opinion about the topic being presented.
- b. If asked to take action, the group would be well served to describe the implementation of the idea within a sales organization.

**6. Summary and Conclusions**

- a. Summarize the key points as 'take-away' points that you want your audience to remember
- b. Relate back to the opening to demonstrate you accomplished your objectives

**7. Question and Answer Period**

- a. Open the floor to questions
- b. Give audience ample time to ask questions
- c. Work as a team

**8. Other Important Considerations**

- a. Use multiple forms of media to communicate your message (In addition to verbal and handouts)
- b. Elicit active audience participation during the presentation
- c. A handout – either a summary at the end or materials used during the presentation
- d. Reference industry professional sources during the presentation
- e. Reference written sources where appropriate
- f. Illustrate with stories and examples throughout
- g. Transition smoothly to each speaker – without pause or break. (This is not four or five speeches, but one team making one presentation.)
- h. Presenters will 'smile' and at least 'act like' they are having fun

Whether you are presenting or participating, you should treat the presentation like your own. Students who are not assigned to a given day must still be participative, engaged and their behavior should reflect positively on Purdue University. Failure to do so may result in a reduction of a presentation grade even when the individual is assigned to a different day.

## Managerial Leadership Experiences

### Overview

In addition to managing teams, sales and marketing professionals must manage upward. These skills include managing the experiences of executives from customer organizations as well as the executives in one's own organization. Sales and marketing professionals must spend time getting to know a customer, which often includes a tour of their facilities. Further, sales and marketing professionals must often make executive presentations to groups of internal and external decision makers. Toward this end, the managerial leadership experience will require that students manage a campus visit of an industry executive, visit a field headquarters for an agribusiness firm, meet with executives at that firm, and present a compelling reason why a firm should take action or pursue a concept within their organization. The presentation to management leaders will have all of the same expectations that the in-class presentations have.

### Objectives

Students completing the Managerial Leadership Experience will learn to:

- Manage the experience of an executive on campus.
- Balance hosting activities across a team, while coordinating the normal activities of a professional student life.
- Prepare for a visit to an agribusiness firm to include.
  - Arranging your schedule to participate fully.
  - Researching the company.
  - Preparing discovery questions, with the objective of gathering information that will help you successfully request adoption of an action or behavior.
  - Demonstrating flexibility as situations invariably change from what is expected.

### Procedures

Previously assigned student groups will be responsible for managing all communication with and the itinerary for an executive who will visit campus. Students will be asked to plan in advance for this visit and create an experience for the executive they are assigned. As a team, the group will be responsible for an assigned set of times, and in some cases will be given activities that have already been scheduled. Students will be required to interact with the executive in a professional manner by **telephone**, email, and in person. Groups are not allowed to text, except as in reply to an executive who initiates a text and even then must communicate in full sentences with punctuation. Each interaction with the executive should be considered a formal business interaction and should be planned in advance. The use of tobacco, alcohol, or texting in the presence of the executive is ill advised in the presence of the executive. Similarly, the use of handguns, laser beams, or nuclear weapons is strongly discouraged. In all seriousness... please keep ALL interactions professional during the visit.

Previously assigned student groups will be assigned to one of two to three companies which they will visit together in order to learn about the company and present a call to action. Students should prepare for these visits by gathering information about the company, its products, and customers. The same rules of professionalism that applies to executive visits should be in place during the company visit.

### Evaluations

Key points in the executive visit process at which students will be assessed include:

- Developing a plan for how to communicate with the executive in advance of the visit and following it. This includes:
  - Researching the company and the executive as possible.



- Understanding the company's competitors, customers, organizational structure, products and opportunities.
- Selecting when and how to communicate in advance, during, and following the executive's visit.
- Developing and communicating an itinerary for the executive which should include.
  - Visits to Purdue classes as appropriate.
  - Meals, breaks and personal time.
  - Transportation to, from, and within the visit.
  - Points of interest to the executive or meetings with campus officials.
  - Gifts to thank the executive for their visit.
  - Managing the logistics for any presentations the executive may make while here (making sure there is back-up presentation equipment, water for the presentation, determining the needs for sound, projection, sizes of audiences and topics in advance of a presentation).

Key points in the site visit process at which students will be assessed include:

- Researching the company, its competitors, its customers, its organizational structure, its products and opportunities.
- Planning questions to ask during the site visit.
- Incorporating lessons learned or knowledge gained during the visit into the presentation.
- Feedback from executives and peers following the visit.
- Follow up communications with all contacts inside the company to thank them for hosting you.

## **Discussion Preparation**

### **Overview**

Throughout the semester, specific topics may be assigned that encourage discussion. These may be case readings or scenarios that will be discussed in class. In some cases these assignments will be distributed the class period before the discussion, in some cases they may be provided during class time. In all cases, students will be expected to actually prepare. If students are prepared for class, then we may finish class in less than the scheduled time for some class periods. During the class, students are expected to demonstrate their preparation through their active and voluntary participation in discussions. At the beginning of class, students may expect to be called on randomly to summarize the case or readings assigned.

### **Objectives**

Students will:

- Treat class meetings in a professional manner as they would in an employment situation.
- Contribute to the discussion.
- Draw from their own experiences and share them with others

### **Procedures**

Students will be expected to:

- Read
- Outline the reading
- Prepare questions or answers as assigned
- Share their questions and answers with peers, guests, and teachers verbally in class or, upon request, submitted in writing.

### **Evaluations**

Each student should plan to be evaluated by peers, guests and teachers. These will be qualitative assessments of the degree of preparation and participation in discussions. All

grades for this section are at the discretion of the teacher. Informal feedback to the student will be provided by the teacher at any point requested by the student, and students are requested to seek this feedback out, particularly if they have concerns. Formal assessment will take place two weeks prior to the end of the semester so that students who wish to discuss how they were evaluated will have ample time to do this before grades are due.

## **Learning Reviews**

### **Overview**

Occasionally the teacher may choose to assess learning, thinking, communicating, applying, or professionalism through some activity. These could be “quizzes,” one-on-one discussions, written assignments, or any other method that seems appropriate to a course topic.

### **Objectives**

To provide incentive for students to prepare, and to assess individual learning.

### **Procedures**

Procedures for Learning Reviews will vary. These reviews will rarely be scheduled in advance.

### **Evaluations**

Each student will be scored on their performance. Assessment methods will vary.

## **Professionalism**

Each student will be expected to arrive on time, prepared for class, to participate in exercises and activities, and to demonstrate leadership and other skills learned through other classes and experiences. Professionalism includes participation in discussions with teacher, peers, guests, and trainers, demonstrated attitude about the projects, and communication. Participation includes preparing written summaries of readings or outlining solutions for cases when they are presented in advance. Participation also includes polite use of cell phones, tablets, and laptops, which means putting them away during discussions and silencing ringers. Unprofessional behavior, particularly when a guest is present, will be grounds for dismissal from the class and will have a direct consequence on your grade, up to and including failure in the course for repeated violations of this policy.

Students are expected to attend class in business attire when guests or executives are scheduled. Business attire includes properly-tied ties, jackets, dress pants and polished shoes for men, business suits and polished shoes for women. Students who are dressed in a sloppy or inappropriate manner when guests are expected to be present will be asked not to participate in those class sessions and will not receive any points for their attendance.

Ultimately the evaluation of professionalism is at the discretion of the teacher.

- **Missing Class or Meetings** – Students who miss class or required events may expect to have their professionalism grade negatively impacted in a substantial way. Missing two required events or classes could result in a score of zero for professionalism and the removal of the ‘distance handicap’. Missing classes with executive guests will be particularly noteworthy in calculating grades for professionalism. Students should communicate clearly with the teacher in advance of any course activity that they will miss.
- **Scheduled meetings** – Meetings with the teacher will be considered similar to class meetings. Students are expected to show up on time and prepared or to communicate effectively if a situation arises that prevents them from meeting.

- **Late Arrival** – Students who are late for class or required course activity may expect to have their professionalism grade negatively impacted in a substantial way. Arriving late to any required event or class may result in as many as 50,000 points deducted from their score for professionalism (meaning, this is a very big deal). Students should communicate clearly with the teacher in advance of any course activity for which they may arrive late.

Severe problems in these areas (more than three times late or two classes missed) will require a meeting with the teacher to discuss further impact to the grade, up to and including failure in the course.

### **Teacher Feedback**

Students are expected to provide quantitative and qualitative feedback about their experience to the course at the end of the semester in the formal course evaluations, however students are strongly encouraged to provide feedback earlier in the semester. Both positive and negative feedback directly from students help shape the experiences of future students. Students often perceive a hierarchy in their relationships with professors because of the assessment required by the teacher. My personal belief is that assessment is not the primary focus of the student-teacher relationship; learning is. Anything that gets in the way of that should please be addressed immediately.

### **Academic Integrity**

University policy on academic misconduct is clear - academic dishonesty in any form is strictly prohibited. A statement of Purdue's rules is at (<http://www.purdue.edu/ODOS/osrr/integrity.htm>). Instances of academic dishonesty will be referred to the [Dean of Students for disciplinary action](#). Penalties are severe and may include failure on the exam, quiz, paper, or project, failure in the course, and/or expulsion from the University. The risks associated with academic dishonesty far outweigh the perceived benefits. Academic dishonesty includes citing someone else's work as your own, representing real life situations as occurring in a different manner than they did, using unauthorized "crib sheets" during exams, or sharing your answers with someone else. If you are unsure whether an action you are considering constitutes academic dishonesty, seek clarification from your teacher.

### **Tolerance**

Sales and marketing professionals are required to work with many different types of people. Anyone with whom the students interact including peers, guests, or others on campus should be treated with dignity and respect. Intolerance of others' views, perceptions, or actions inside or outside of class will not be tolerated. Yes, that is a play on words, but please take the point seriously.

### **Communication**

Please note that my primary out-of-class method of communication will be via email to your @purdue.edu email address. I will not generally attempt to contact you at other addresses. It is your responsibility to check your purdue email account on a regular basis. I recommend checking your account twice a day.

### **Special Needs**

If you have a special need that requires some accommodation in order to better facilitate your learning, please let me know during our first one-on-one meeting during the semester. Please note that you will be asked to register with adaptive programs in the office of the Dean of Students.

### **Campus Emergencies**

In the unusual event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstance. To get information about changes in this course, please contact me at [downeyws@purdue.edu](mailto:downeyws@purdue.edu) or 765-494-4325.