

The Value of the High School Sales Competition

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*Presented at the
SEF Sales Educators Forum*

About Professional Sales at Susquehanna

- Launched in the spring of 2021, The Professional Sales program includes:
 - Offering an interdisciplinary Professional Sales minor
 - Coaching students for participation in university sales competitions
 - Preparing students for careers in sales
 - Working with sales partners – promoting their businesses and providing opportunities for networking and recruiting on campus
 - Hosting and organizing an annual High School Sales Competition

In this Presentation

- Discuss:
 - The university competition
 - The value of a High School Sales Competition
 - Collaborations needed to successfully run a High School Sales Competition
 - How the competition day was run
 - Things to think about
 - Feedback on how we can improve

University Sales Competitions

- University sales competitions are valuable
 - Employers recruit
 - Participants gain skills and develop leadership capabilities
 - Students gain employment



Hosting a University Competition

- University sales competitions have become common
 - 25 listed as 'major' University Sales Competitions according to University Sales Center Alliance (SEF Annual 2022, p.50)

Hosting the High School Sales Competition

- High school competitions are less common
 - We only know of a handful across the USA
 - We know of no others in Pennsylvania
- They have value for the university in terms of recruitment
- Void in the marketplace

Value of a High School Sales Competition

- Like competitions for college students, can be valuable for high school students
 - Gain skills, potentially win prizes, could put on resume/college applications
- Value to college students running the competition
- Value to the university - recruitment



Collaborating to Create a High School Sales Competition

- Sales Committee
 - The committee was formed to help
 - Design and organize the full-day event
 - Promote the competition
 - Recruit competitors and volunteers to participate in the event
 - Run the event on competition day

Collaborating to Create a High School Sales Competition

- Sponsors
 - For funding
 - To run the event
 - To provide cash prizes for the top 10 place winners
 - For the additional \$1,000 scholarship for all competitors
 - To help promote the event
 - To be the firm the students would sell



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Collaborating to Create a High School Sales Competition

- Promotion
 - Build out on the university website with dedicated pages for the competition
 - Promotional flyer created and posted on
 - University website and social media
 - Admissions social media
 - WBS Penguins social media
 - Academic department's social media
 - Emailed
 - By Pennsylvania FBLA to PA business teachers/advisors
 - By Admissions to high schoolers who applied to our school

Attention PA High School Students!

Susquehanna UNIVERSITY HIGH SCHOOL SALES COMPETITION



MONDAY
March 21
2022
register by
3/7/22

FREE Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Penguins Ticket for all competitors
Cash prizes guaranteed for the top 10 place winners
Scholarship opportunities available for competitors

Showcase your selling skills in a professional sales encounter and learn about Susquehanna University's sales programs & careers in professional selling.

REGISTRATION IS FREE BUT LIMITED TO 40 COMPETITORS
Register today at:
<https://www.susqu.edu/high-school-sales-competition>
For more information, please contact Dr. Michele Welliver,
Sales Program Coordinator at welliver@susqu.edu

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Collaborating to Create a High School Sales Competition

- Admissions Office
 - Helped promote the event
 - Email: with pointed mailings to high school students who applied to SU
 - Social media: Facebook and Instagram posts with promotional flyer
 - Provided campus tours for all competitors and attendees



Collaborating to Create a High School Sales Competition

- Marketing and Communications
 - Built the competition page on our website
 - Promoted the event on the website and via social media
 - Covered the event and followed up with a press release packet with photos and sent to participating schools



<https://www.susqu.edu/academics/majors-and-minors/professional-sales/high-school-sales-competition/>

Collaborating to Create a High School Sales Competition

- Faculty
 - Served as ‘buyers’ and ‘judges’ for the competition based on availability and comfort-level
- Students
 - Advanced sales students served as ‘judges’
 - Students on campus over spring break (mainly athletes and students local to SU) volunteered in various roles including registration, technology, runners, and tallying up scores, etc.



Collaborating to Create a High School Sales Competition

- Events Management
 - Encompassed dining services and AV and included
 - Room reservations and AV and equipment accommodations
 - Indoor/outdoor signage and media burst
 - Continental breakfast and lunch in the dining hall
- Bookstore
 - Opened for our event from 9am-3pm and reported steady sales
 - Committed to opening for next year's event

Collaborating to Create a High School Sales Competition

- Susquehanna Alumni
 - Served as judges for the event
 - Those from a distance were able to participate virtually
- Business Professionals
 - Sponsors and others from industry participated as both buyers or judges for the event



Collaborating to Create a High School Sales Competition

- Local Hotels
 - Block of rooms at Holiday Inn Express in Selinsgrove, 2 miles from the university, excellent review
- University IT
 - Provided technology in all 8 competition rooms for transmission from buying to judging rooms
 - Stayed on sight and provided technology help as needed

How did the Competition Work?

- The company: The Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Penguins
- The product: Customized Group Ticket Packages for WBS Penguins Ice Hockey Games
- The prospect: The HR manager for a Health Care System with four locations across the Susquehanna Valley region



How did the Competition Work?

- Overview: Designed as a 2-round role-play, students were directed to meet and build rapport with the client, uncover needs, make a presentation, and answer objections, and close in a 15-minute sales call with a professional buyer
 - The expected close for round 1: follow-up appointment
 - Round 2 close: the sale



How did the Competition Work?

- Students were given scenarios for both rounds prior to the competition
- Additional instructions were provided in documents on the competition sight and in an instructional video by the sales professor
- The top 10 students moved on to round 2
- Prizes for students
 - All competitors received a WBS Penguins ice hockey ticket
 - All competitors eligible to receive \$1,000 SU scholarship

1st place: \$750	2nd place: \$600	3rd place: \$500
4th place: \$400	5th place: \$250	6th – 10th: \$100

How did the Competition Work?

- Admissions tours
 - Partnered with admissions – distributed draw string SU bag with admission info and competition info
- Radio and TV station tours
- Workshops for students and teachers
 - Provided in morning only, Teachers earned Act 48 (continuing education) credits



Outcomes

1. Experiential learning for high school students
 - Gained business skills
 - Learned about university sales programs
2. Experiential learning for university students at the host school
 - Networking with and learning from faculty, alumni, and business professionals
 - Learning how to compete and deliver a successful sales call
 - Understanding what it takes to run a successful event
3. Student enrollment at the host university

Enrollment

- 4 students enrolled at our university
 - 2 students who had paid a deposit prior to the competition
 - 2 students made the decision to commit after participating in the competition



Post-Competition Survey

8 questions: mix of closed-and open-ended; 25% response rate

Questions centered on:

- their role in the competition
- favorite part of the competition
- other parts of the event they found valuable
- overall experience
- if they were planning to return next year
- suggestions for improvement

Feedback

Regarding their favorite part of the event, responses were very positive and included:

- *“Seeing the amount of preparation some of these students put into this was impressive. Some students that came in seem like they have a serious interest in a career in sales, which is something that is going to help them out immensely as their careers go on.”*
- *“Networking - As a judge you probably would not have thought this, but in this one event there was engagement with faculty, university students, administration, buyers and other judges, as well as with some of the participating school support members.”*
- *“Talking with students who planned on coming to SU and discussing the business school with them.”*

Some suggestions for us moving forward:

- *“Having a Q & A with any of the business professionals -Giving business professionals a chance to give some general feedback on what they saw during the competitions to help students learn from their mistakes and improve on them as they grow.”*
- *“Ability for teachers or advisors to see students compete.”*

Things to Consider

- Commit to running first time ... even if numbers are low
 - We decided in January to run with only 1 student committed
 - Opened up to unlimited number competitors/school
 - Our final numbers: 24 competitors, 15 student guests
- Be deliberate about inviting guests to travel with competitors - comfort in numbers
- Think about reimbursing travel costs
- Network with high schools
- Promote with organizations, personal emails, and social media
- Determine what prizes to offer
- Follow up with a survey

Things to Consider

- Limiting competitors per school
 - You don't want a competition of 40 students, and all are from the same school
 - But you also want to engage as many students as possible in your event
- Admissions tours - may work better to offer only in pm when less students competing
- Workshops for students and for teachers – may work better if offered in pm
- Technology matters - test audio/video to make sure all competitors can be seen and heard

To Conclude

- HS Competitions can be amazing for competitors and a learning experience for sales students
- Being intentional and thoughtful can help
- Ultimately a great way to recruit sales students while developing key partnerships on campus



Susquehanna University High School Sales Competition Schedule of Events

Welcome Ceremony and Registration plus continental breakfast (ROOM: DEGENSTEIN THEATER)

7:30 am – 8:15 Registration 8:20-8:45am: Brief welcome talk

STUDENT workshops AND Campus Tours:

9:00 am – 9:45 am: Professional Polish with Professor Burkley (ROOM: AH 319)

10:00 am – 10:45 am, 1-145 pm, & 2-245 pm: Campus Tours by Admissions (begin in AH ground floor lobby to meet tour guide)

11:00 am – 11:45 am: Critical Thinking with Angela Hummel (ROOM: AH 319)

1:30 pm – 1:45 pm: TV station Tour by John Foltz (AH ground floor lobby)

2:00 pm – 2:45 pm: Radio station and Quill tour (AH ground floor lobby)

TEACHER workshops for Act 48 credits:

9:00 am – 10:00 am: Dr. Rousu “How to teach business using TV, Music and Movies” (ROOM: AH 132 – 30 seats)

10:30 am – 11:30 am: Professor Burkley, "The Cost of Bad Behavior" (ROOM: AH 132)

Student Sales Call Role Play COMPETITION SCHEDULE: (All competitors report to waiting room – AH 318 no later than 8:45 am)

SUSQUEHANNA UNIVERSITY HIGH SCHOOL SALES COMPETITION AGENDA
MONDAY, MARCH 21, 2022

The campus bookstore in Deg Lower Level will be open from 9 am - 3 pm today for our guests!

7:30 am - 8:15 am	Registration in Degenstein (Deg) Campus Center
8:20 am - 8:30 am	Welcome – Dr. Matt Rousu in Deg theater
8:30 am - 8:35 am	SU Welcome from Admissions – Patrick McCabe in Deg theater
8:35 am - 8:45 am	Overview of the Competition - Dr. Michele Welliver in Deg theater - Buyers/Judges please stay in theater for orientation meeting immediately following presentation
8:45 am	Student competitors, guests and advisors depart for Apfelbaum Hall (AH) for competition and workshops. Buyers to follow after meeting.
9:00 am - 10:15 am	Round One Role-plays in AH – ALL competitors report to AH 318 waiting room where a volunteer will take you to your 15-minute role play at your set time. 4 competitor rooms/4 judging rooms going at the same time
10:15 am - 10:30 am	Fifteen-minute break
10:30 am - 11:25 am	Round One Role-plays continue in AH 15-minute role plays 4 competitor rooms/4 judging rooms going at the same time
11:30 am - 1:00 pm	Lunch provided for everyone in Evert Dining Hall (in Deg)
12:30 pm	Top 10 Finalists announced and posted in Apfelbaum & Deg The top 10 finalist from Round One will move on to Round Two
1:15 pm - 2:25 pm	Round Two Role-plays in AH
1:45 pm – 2:00 pm	TV Station tour - John Foltz in AH – meet in ground floor lobby area
2:00 pm - 2:30 pm	Radio Station & Quill tour - departs from AH ground floor lobby area
3:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Awards Ceremony and Closing Remarks in Deg theater

STUDENT WORKSHOPS AND CAMPUS TOURS

9:00 am – 9:45 am: Professional Polish Workshop with Professor Burkley in AH 319
10:00 am – 10:45 am: Campus Tours by Admissions office depart from AH ground floor lobby
11:00 am – 11:45 am: Critical Thinking Workshop with Angela Hummel in AH 319
1:00 pm – 1:45 pm & 2:00 pm – 2:45 pm Campus Tours by Admissions office depart from AH

TEACHER WORKSHOPS FOR ACT 48 CREDITS:

9:00 am – 10:00 am: Dr. Rousu in AH 132
10:30 am – 11:30 am: Professor Burkley in AH 132

Questions?