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**Edward H. Schmidt School of Professional Sales**

**Situational Analysis and SWOT Analysis**

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**BRAND**

Edward H. Schmidt School of Professional Sales (ESSPS)

**SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS**

The situational analysis was conduct as per an interview with Deirdre Jones. During the initial meeting, a PDF written by Hoffmeister was given to us by EESPS which they currently use to determine their competitors. It was advised that this information be used during our analysis.

*PROGRAMS*

As per Hoffmeister, for a fairly new program being introduced into the US, there is a variety of competition. The following programs compete for enrollment:

1. Robust Sales Program
2. Mature Sales Program
3. Developing Sales Program
4. Emerging Sales Program
5. Embryonic Sales Program

Robust Sales Program

As per Hoffmeister, for a sales program to be considered robust, it must have the following five characteristics:

* Undergraduate programs offering five or more sales specific courses.
* Undergraduate programs offer at least sales minor or major.
* Graduate programs offering two or more specific courses.
* Graduate programs offer at least a concentration.
* University has designated as a center (or equivalent).

The ESSPS falls into the robust category. Schools and programs that fit into this category can effectively compete on the basis of skill and offerings. In the United States, there are only five sales programs that fall into the robust category. These schools include Ball State University, DePaul University, University of Akron, University of Houston and the University of Toledo. However, only four would be in direct competition with the University of Toledo. The University of Houston is not in the Midwest region and therefore is not considered a direct threat. The University of Akron (UA) is the ESSPS’s biggest competitor. They are the only other program in the robust category that offers a major in sales. Also, not including the University of Toledo, UA offers the highest number of undergraduate sales classes. Another issue to be considered is the short distance between both the Universities which could sway a potential customers’ choice. (Hoffmeister)

Mature Sales Program

As per Hoffmeister, for a sales program to be considered mature, it must have the following characteristics:

* Undergraduate programs offering four or more sales-specific courses.
* Undergraduate program offers at least a sales concentration.

Mature programs, although not considered as much of a threat as a robust sales program, still need to be considered when evaluating competitors. These programs are a possible threat because they have the means to become a robust sales program. In the United States there are 16 Universities that have mature sales programs, of which nine are in the Midwest. These schools include the College of St. Catherine, University of Wisconsin, Central Michigan University, Michigan State University, Western Michigan University, Northern Illinois University, Aurora University, Illinois State University, and Western Kentucky University. (Hoffmeister)

Developing Sales Program

As per Hoffmeister, for a sales program to be considered developing, it must have the following characteristics:

* Undergraduate programs offering three or more sales-specific courses.
* Undergraduate program offers at least a sales concentration.

Schools that are developing are not in direct competition with the ESSPS. Even though these schools are only in the developing stages, they should not be forgotten about. Schools can easily move through the ranks with additions of one or two courses. In the United States there are 13 Universities with developing sales programs, of which four are in the Midwest. These four schools include University of Nebraska, University of Central Missouri, Bradley University, and Ohio University. (Hoffmeister)

Emerging Sales Program

As per Hoffmeister, for a sales program to be considered emerging, it must have the following characteristics:

* Undergraduate programs offering two to four sales-specific courses.
* Undergraduate program offers concentration or no degree.

Emerging programs tend to be appealing to those that have a small interest in sales or just want to see what it is about. With this being said, it is not likely that an emerging sales program would ever be in direct competition with the ESSPS. But, as stated before, underdeveloped programs do have the potential develop quickly. In the United States there are 21 Universities with emerging sales programs, of which five are in the Midwest. These schools include Minnesota State University, Bowling Green State University, University of Dayton, Indiana University, and University of Southern Indiana. (Hoffmeister)

Embryonic Sales Program

As per Hoffmeister, the final category of sales programs is the embryonic sales program. For a sales program to be considered embryonic, it must have the following characteristics:

* Undergraduate programs offering two or fewer sales-specific courses.
* Undergraduate program offers no degree.

An embryonic sales program is only in the beginning stages of development. Therefore, competition with an embryonic program would not be fierce. There are 13 Universities that have embryonic sales programs in the United States, of that only three are in the Midwest. These three schools include Purdue University, Kent State University, and University of Louisville. (Hoffmeister)

*DIRECT COMPETITORS*

The University Of Akron

According to uakron.edu, The University of Akron (UA) offers an integrated marketing mix and advertises its wide array of accomplishments:

1. The University of Akron’s Fisher Institute of Professional sales is integrated into social media
2. Website offers statistical information that would be very important to someone interested in sales
3. Their sales program is ranked 3rd in the US and Canada by the Sales and Marketing Management Magazine.
4. Akron’s website offers opportunities to become “business partners.”
5. 100% job placement rate
6. They offer one major, one minor, and two certificate programs in sales.
7. Appealing website to potential customers
8. Recent job placements of graduates include: The Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company, FirstEnergy, Equity Trust Company, Northwestern Mutual Financial Network, Pfizer Inc., and the J.M. Smucker Company.
9. UA offers Professional Sales organizations.
10. UA offers hands-on and real-world experience.

The University of Akron and the University of Toledo are comparable in size and offerings. However, the University of Toledo’s ESSPS has a competitive advantage over UA’s sales program because Toledo offers 10 undergraduate sales classes and UA only offers six. Also, the city of Toledo is larger than Akron and therefore customers of Toledo would be more likely to find better, more enriching internships and job offers because of the size of the city.

*MARKET DATA*

Customer Behavior

Upon review of the market data in relation to sales, we found the reason there is such a high demand of sales is that on the whole employment of “advertising, marketing, promotions, public relations, and sales managers is predicted to increase by 13 percent through 2018.” “Job growth will be spurred by competition for a rising number of goods and services, both foreign and domestic, and the need to make one’s product or service stand out in the crowd.” Another important factor considered by customers is that “Sales managers and their departments constitute some of the most important personnel in an organization and are less subject to downsizing or outsourcing than are other types of managers” which creates a field with job security and makes the education worth the investment. Customers, current and potential students, are choosing Sales as their area of study because of this increasing demand. (Occupational Outlook Handbook)

A few statistics found in regards to sales jobs and programs with regards to customer behavior are listed below:

* In sales programs, most institutions have a higher percentage of women than men. (Hoffmeister)
* Growth areas in sales are Communication, Advanced Selling, and Sales Management. (Hoffmeister)
* 7 out of every 10 business school graduates get a career in sales. (The University of Akron: Sales Careers)
* One issue with the Sales program is that people have a negative mindset about sales. (ESSPS faculty: Deirdre Jones)

Economic Trends

Another external advantage that ESSPS has is the increase in enrollment within universities during economic downturn. According to Kantrowitz, “During a recession and for one or two years afterward, the average annual change in total college enrollment increases significantly to about 3.7 times the average annual increase in total college enrollment between recessions.” Currently, the economy is in the middle of a recession and historical data shows that during these times, enrollment in universities increases. This will provide ESSPS with more recruitment opportunities for the program and provide more students to educate and turn over to companies (another form of customers).

As part of an economic analysis, below you will find a few statistics regarding trends for sales programs:

* 70 percent of sales programs reside in the Midwest, Southwest, and Southeast. (Hoffmeister)
* 48.5 percent of institutions offering sales programs do not offer any degree recognition at any level. (Hoffmeister)
* Only 8 percent of schools with sales programs offer graduate level classes. (The University of Akron: Sales Careers)
* 75 percent of hiring firms compensate on base plus commission systems.(The University of Akron: Sales Careers)
* Average compensation of top performers is $101,900. .(The University of Akron: Sales Careers)
* Only half of all firms provide leadership training.(The University of Akron: Sales Careers)
* Sales is ranked as the 10th best job in America.(The University of Akron: Sales Careers)
* Sales are the 5th best paying job in America.(The University of Akron: Sales Careers)
* Advantages of sales are: Job Security, Advancement Opportunities, Immediate feedback, Prestige, Job Variety, Independence, and Compensation. .(The University of Akron: Sales Careers)

**SWOT**

A SWOT analysis was provided to our team upon the initial meeting with Deirdre Jones. The following is a synopsis of the SWOT received during the meeting.

*STRENGTHS*

* Technology/facility
* Curriculum – approach, applied, integration, major
* Reputation, ranking, winning, first mover
* Dedicated board members
* Sales competition participation
* Faculty – dedicated, quality, experience
* Engage Corporate Partners – recruiting, events, board
* Other
* International
* PSE
* Placement rates
* Support from executive/university administration
* Operating funds
* Research

*WEAKNESSES*

* Resources and multiple hats/non – ESSPS responsibilities
* Perception is on outside sales (little/no on inside sales)
* Need more emphasis on other skills such as phone skills, prospecting, channels, etc
* Brand recognition to stakeholders
* Relationship with alumni – no formal/regular process to engage
* Other
* Lack of student diversity
* Geographic limits on brand recognition
* Overuse of technology
* Communicating faculty credentials

*OPPORTUNITIES*

* Training and development for alumni, working professionals, and businesses – includes use of technology to facilitate
* Brand recognition to stakeholders
* Changes in the sales profession

1. Perception – strategic, ethical
2. Role – strategic, problem solver/preventer, co-creation, collaboration

* Sales as a legitimate academic discipline

1. Collegiate/Academic growth – competitions, conferences/research, new programs

* Marketing communications to prospective students and stake holders
* Economic recovery – hiring and development
* Alumni channel – feedback, training, recruiting, branding, etc
* Other
* Available technologies
* Social media marketing tools
* Joint research with businesses
* Working with incubators, newer businesses, and start-ups
* Clarity on the focus of the ESSPS – B2B, B2C

*THREATS*

* Budgets cuts to the state, university, and COBI
* Increasing number of competing university sales programs
* Midwest is heavy with sales programs
* Better known and funded
* UT reputation, website
* Other
* Demand to hire experienced sales professionals
* Competition for tenure/tenure track faculty
* Geography – not a college town

**CITATIONS**

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*ESSPS SWOT*. Toledo, Ohio: Edward H. Schmidt School of Professional Sales. PDF.