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Students Win Case Study Competition By Developing Metrics For Skullcandy Training Efforts

By Allie Jeppson



In search of finding a quantifiable way to measure training efforts, Skullcandy turned to USU students for a help during the Jon M. Huntsman School of Business Marketing Case Competition.

The competition put participants into a real-life training and marketing situation as teams of two to five students were given a problem that the company was facing and 48 hours to put together a presentation that offered a solution.

This case asked students to analyze a college ambassador program that Skullcandy will be implementing in the future. Skullcandy is a global designer, marketer, and distributor of performance audio and gaming headphone and other accessory related products. The company markets its products under the “Skullcandy,” “Astro Gaming,” and “2XL by Skullcandy” brand names.

Huntsman School of Business alumnus and Skullcandy Global Training Manager Cohen Summers, told students in presenting the case study on Feb. 20, that the company was looking specifically for metrics, a way to quantify how well the new program is doing.

“Traditionally with a lot of marketing activations we challenged to find ways to quantify, in a tangible way, the return on investment,” Mr. Summers said, adding that the company traditionally looks to “sell-through” metrics — a cause and effect relationship between an event and the sale of a product.

Skullcandy was launched in 2003 and quickly became, according to the company, one of the “world's most distinct audio brands by bringing unique technology, color, character and performance to an otherwise monochromatic space; helping to revolutionize the audio arena by introducing headphones, earbuds and other audio and wireless lifestyle products that possess unmistakable style and exceptional performance.”

Mr. Summers said that many marketing returns, other than sell-through, are intangible, such as brand loyalty, awareness, and customer perception. The company was seeking a way to measure the impact of the program in order to justify spending the money that will be invested in it, he said.

After 48 hours of preparation, the seven participating teams presented their solutions to Skullcandy.

Students Jon Edwards, Ace Beorchia, Spencer Hall, and Brad Cannon took the first place prize winning an overnight stay in Park City, Utah near Skullcandy headquarters, a day on the ski slopes and a tour of the company.

The highlight of their presentation was the generation of a unique equation to specifically measure the effectiveness of an event hosted by one of the Skullcandy college ambassadors.

Ace Beorchia related the equation to a funnel that measured an event in layers. He said it first measured advertising success through event attendance. Then, in the next part of the equation, the number of students that visit a website because of an event is measured. Lastly, he said that the equation measured the number of sales related to a specific event.

According to Ace, the Skullcandy ambassador would then receive a score, based on the equation and according to event attendance, site-visits, and sales. An overall event score that would help calculate brand loyalty and awareness, as well as the effectiveness of the ambassador, would also be produced.

"The great thing about the equation is that many of the variables can be changed to add weight to one section, while also tailoring the numbers for each individual university," Ace said. "We understand that no two universities are the same so Skullcandy needs a measurement that is both uniform and flexible. That is what we created."

The equation created by the team reads:

$$Ea = A/\#P$$

$$Eh = h/\#A$$

$$Es = \{[(S/xh)][(w1/xh) + (w2/xh)1.1 + (w3/xh)1.2]\}$$

$$ETotal = .5(A/\#P) + .15(h/\#A) + .35\{[(S/xh)][(w1/xh) + (w2/xh)1.1 + (w3/xh)1.2]\}$$

Where,

E= Efficiency Rating

A= Attendance

P= Student Body Population

h= Website Hits from Event

S= Total Sales from Event

W= Weekly sales

#= Expected percent in attendance

#= Expected percent of website hits

X= Expected percent of sales

Mr. Summers stated that the overall event and experience was a great success for Skullcandy because of all the ideas and insight that they gained.

"It was a complete success and we are really, really excited about the results on so many levels," Mr. Summers said. "We look forward to doing more with the Huntsman School."

Skullcandy's products are sold and distributed through a variety of channels in the U.S. and approximately 80 countries worldwide. Those interested in more information may visit skullcandy.com, or facebook.com/skullcandy or follow the company on Twitter [@skullcandy](https://twitter.com/skullcandy).