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AN EXPLORATORY STUDY ON THE US BASED MBA PROGRAMS: STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES

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ABSTRACT

The Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree is a major decision to make toward a management career. MBA is attractive because MBA graduates have been heavily demanded and treated as future executives. Selecting the right MBA program is a complex and sometimes overwhelming process for any potential MBA student. Besides understanding important factors in selecting an MBA program, compromises made in comparing potential MBA programs, and supplementary benefits accumulated outside of classroom experience in adding value to one's career profile. Another goal of this study is to understand how students compare key critical variables that they find important in selecting an MBA program.

SPY VS. SPY: PROTECTING YOUR COMPANY'S INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ASSETS

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ABSTRACT

Today, spies might not be going after your military secrets. Instead, corporate spies might be attempting to steal your most valuable corporate secrets, often in the form of intellectual property. Even worse, corporate espionage attacks come from both domestic and foreign competitors. Corporate espionage could even be part of a foreign country's deliberate efforts to undermine the U.S. economy. Whether the espionage attack comes from a domestic or foreign source, the resulting impact can financially cripple a company. The FBI estimates the cost of corporate espionage to be \$100 billion per year (Kirby, 2007).

Companies large and small utilize competitive intelligence to help shape strategic planning. But companies may cross the line, and venture beyond ethical and even legal boundaries. Sometimes well-meaning employees justify their actions as attempting to assist their employers in gaining market share and increasing corporate profits. In other cases, corporate spying might be a deliberate strategy to undermine competitors or even an entire industry. When a nation allows its companies to engage in corporate spying without punishment, it could be a menacing approach to undermine another country's economy.

This paper presents an overview of competitive intelligence, including key examples of companies and individuals engaging in corporate espionage. The authors then offer a model for companies to consider as a means to defend against corporate spying, including specific counter-measures businesses could deploy in their defense.

Keywords: competitive intelligence, corporate spying, trade secrets

COLLEGE STUDENT KNOWLEDGE OF CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the knowledge of college students about chambers of commerce. The overall knowledge of chambers of commerce was low. There was little difference in the level knowledge according to sex, level in college, or work experience. An important issue facing chambers of commerce is reaching out the Millennial (18-29) age group. These are the business owners and executives of the future. One approach is to integrate the 18-29 year old age group with the Young Professional Group members (30-40 years of age) of the chamber. Another is to work with local community and 4-year colleges, e.g., the use of guest lecturers and student internship. Giving the technology savvy of the Millennial reason the use of social networking should be used. This may be the salvation of the chamber of the future.

INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of commerce, traders and merchants have banded together to govern the conduct of business, promote their businesses, and provide common protection against enemies (Morro Bay, n.d.). Trade and merchant guilds formalized these collective efforts during the Middle Ages (Guilds in the Middle Ages, n.d.). Over time guilds evolved into modern day trade associations, chambers of commerce and localized business groups such as the Magazine Street Merchants Association in New Orleans, Louisiana

The concept of a chamber of commerce originated in Europe at the end of the 17th century. The earliest locally-based chamber in North America was established in Charleston, South Carolina in 1772 (Morro Bay, n.d.). Today there are 2,800 state and local chamber chapters and 3,000,000 business members in the United States (U.S. Chamber of Commerce, n.d.). Early U.S. chambers limited their efforts to commerce. However, over time, the role of chambers expanded to economic development and community concerns such as housing, education and community services.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chambers of commerce are an important force in any community, large or small, yet little academic research has been done on them. Studies include one by Dawley, Stephens, and Stephens (2005) who studied the multi-dimension ability of organization commitment of

volunteer chambers of commerce board members. Modeling was used to examine the affects of organizational commitment on several critical roles the board member is to perform. Study results showed that normative, affective and continued commitment based on few alternatives had a positive effect on the role of board members.

Lacho (2008) studied the government affairs activities of for chambers of commerce in suburban New Orleans. Each of the studied chambers has a standing government affairs or public committee which monitors local, state and federal issues and informs the membership about them. Members have the opportunity to interact with local, state, and nationally elected officers at locally-based forums such as luncheons or meet them at the state legislature. A recent development is for government affairs committees to work with similar committees of other chambers on issues of common concern.

Lacho and Brockmann (2011) studied how a small business could be promoted through the services of a chamber of commerce. Their study of a single chamber showed that online listings are used. There are many opportunities for networking, e.g., at luncheons or special networking events.

A 2012 study by Lacho and Brockmann examined the educational services provided by a chamber to help small business owners improve their business skills. One service was the traditional lecture/workshop setting followed by a passive educational setting such as a luncheon speaker. Last, networking events offer knowledge transfer opportunities.

Another study by Brockmann and Lacho (2012) compared how small chambers in rural areas and a large urban-based chamber provided help to promote one's small business and to provide educational services. It was found that rural-based chambers have different priorities than a large chamber. Small chambers focus on the community first and then business. The purpose of this study is to examine the knowledge of college business students about the Chamber of Commerce. Specifically, we have speculated that there may be overall differences in their knowledge of the chambers between male and female students and between freshmen, juniors/seniors, and graduate students (see Research Questions 1 and 2 below).

Research Question 1: There will be no differences in chambers knowledge scores between male and female students.

Research Question 2: There will be no differences in chambers knowledge scores between freshmen and juniors/seniors.

METHOD

Subjects

Subjects in the sample were approximately 319 students from a four-year public university in the South. The students were roughly 153 from freshmen level class, 136 from junior/senior level class, and 30 from graduate level class. The students were roughly 40% female and 60% male with 46.3% in the 18-22 age group, 26% in the 23-27 group, 17% in the 25-30 group, 7.8% in the 31-40 group, and 3% in the over 40 group. Seventy-four percent of

these students were working full-time or part-time. Ten percent of the students were taking 1 to 2 courses, 42.4% were taking 3 to 4, 43.8% 5 to 6 courses, and 3.8% were taking 7 or more courses.

Data

In this study, we measured the knowledge of college business students about the chambers with a series of 24 statements using a true/false scale. These statements include the chambers' governance and functions/services.

RESULTS

The result table summarizes the statements about the chamber's governance, operations, and functions/services that received the lowest scores from students. The biggest misconception is "There are roughly 5,000 chambers of commerce in the United States today." Only 22% of the students answered this correctly. The next is "Ms. Sally Hunter is looking for an accountant. She contacts the local chamber of commerce. The chamber will recommend an accountant to her." with 33% answering correctly. The statement "Chambers of Commerce are funded by local government" has 37% answering correct. Forty-four percent answered "Chambers may endorse a person running for a local political office" correctly. "Members of a chamber board of directors are paid a fee to serve on the board" and "Chambers of commerce are local government agencies" have roughly 46% answered correctly. "Chambers are not allowed to influence governmental regulations at the federal level" has 47% being answered correctly. Table 1 lists the statements which have correct percentages below 50% summarized by 1000, 4000, and 6000-level class.

Our first research question considered the possibility that male and female students may have different levels of chambers knowledge. An ANOVA was used to test if the overall scores are different between male and female students. The ANOVA result is not significant. This implies that male and female students seem to have roughly the same level of knowledge of the Chambers. On average, male students scored 14.17 (59%) out of 24 questions correctly and female students scored 13.62 (57%) out of 24 correctly.

Our second research question examined whether there would be a difference in Chambers knowledge between freshmen, juniors/seniors, and graduate students. An ANOVA was used and the result is not significant. This implies that regardless of their levels, undergraduate and graduate students seem to have roughly the same level of knowledge of the Chambers. On the average, the freshmen have an average of 14.37, the juniors/seniors 13.79, and the graduate students 13.60.

Additional ANOVAs were run comparing working vs. not working students and among different age groups. The results are not significant but the average scores are consistent with our thinking. Working students average is 13.97 which is slightly higher than students who are not working (average of 13.62). Younger (18-22) students' average score (13.59) is slightly

lower than older students (13.97 for 23-25 group, 14.22 for 25-30 group, and 14.57 for 31-40 groups). The differences in scores are not statistically significant but it suggests that as students get more matured, they have higher level of knowledge of the Chambers.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The findings of this study suggest that student respondents have a low knowledge of chambers of commerce. What is disturbing is that a large percentage of students had misconceptions about some of the basic aspects of a chamber. These include the perception that the chamber is funded by local government, will recommend a business service provider, endorse a political candidate, and that chambers are local government agencies. A study by Fok, Lacho & Mitchell (2012) of college student knowledge of Better Business Bureaus found similar lack of knowledge about that agency by college students.

An important issue today facing chambers of commerce is how to get its message across to people 18-29 years of age, also known as the Millennials. The Millennials represent the new face of the United States (Keeter & Taylor, 2009). They are most familiar with digital technology and social media. Many have their own Facebook page. They far outdistance prior generations in the use of cell phones to text, create a personal social networking profile, and to have a wireless internet away from home. (Keeter and Taylor 2009); (Fok, Lacho, Mitchell, 2012).

One approach to reach the Millennial is personal selling by having chamber representatives, staff members, and Ambassadors give guest lectures in business classes at nearby community colleges and four-year universities. Student campus leaders may be invited as guests at chamber events. A chamber booth could be set up at a campus career day. Promotion could be carried out by advertising in the school newspaper or if the school has one, the campus radio station. Advertising may be purchased in local media using those which target the 18-29 age group.

A chamber must have a well-done website for the Millennial to use as well as a Facebook page. Social networking via a Facebook page and Twitter are free, however, there are time and personnel costs. A social-media expert may be needed to be put on staff, although this person may be used to maintain the chamber website as well.

Another opportunity for researching the Millennials is the Chamber of Young Professionals group, ages 30-40. Such groups can also reach out to the 18-29 age group.

This study suggests areas for future research about college student knowledge of chambers. Research could be expanded to other colleges, e.g., large, small, private, and rural. Student knowledge of the chamber can be examined by age, race, parental education and occupation, and urban versus rural areas. The use of social media by chambers should be studied in different markets, e.g., by population size, size of chamber membership, urban versus rural, and geographical area of the United States. Of those chambers using Facebook, what have been their successes and obstacles?

LONGITUDINAL & CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDIES TO INVESTIGATE NARCISSISM IN COLLEGE BUSINESS MAJORS

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ABSTRACT

This paper proposes longitudinal and cross-sectional research designs to investigate narcissism in college business majors. We begin by exploring several issues that need to be addressed in future research on the subject, including clarification of “narcissism” as a construct, measures of the construct, and research design. We propose a longitudinal research design to further investigate two results previously reported in Management literature: 1. business students enter college displaying greater narcissism than students in other majors (Sautter, et al 2008) and 2. narcissism increases in business students across four years of college more than it does in students in other majors (Manley 2012). We propose to collect data for this research yearly, beginning with first-year business and communications majors taking the first-semester introductory course in their major. Fortuitously, the business school’s introductory Global Business Perspectives course creates a unique context that allows for a cross-sectional research study to be conducted with every data collection required for the longitudinal research. These cross-sectional studies afford the opportunity to investigate whether relationships between narcissism and leadership and task performance previously reported in other organizational contexts (e.g., Wallace and Baumeister 2002; Judge, LePine, & Rich 2006; Campbell & Campbell 2009) generalize to business students at college.

