

Engaging Business Practitioners to Develop Students' Faith and Talents

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ABSTRACT: *Bringing business practitioners into our classrooms provides unique opportunities to develop our student's faith and talents. We discuss the benefits of guest experts in terms of informing and inspiring our students as well as broadening our networks for internships, jobs, and philanthropy. We confront two challenges: 1) persuading the experts to come to offer advice, and 2) convincing the students to take it. We offer ten suggestions to maximize the benefits of engaging business experts in our classes.*

INTRODUCTION

Do we want our students to grow in knowledge and wisdom? Would we like them to be inspired to greater works? Would we welcome excellent internships and meaningful placements upon graduation? Could our business schools and universities benefit from alliances with corporate and individual philanthropists?

As a result of inviting business practitioners to speak with our students, Spring Arbor University has reaped all the above benefits. We have been able to attract entrepreneurs like founder of Domino's Pizza Tom Monaghan, Fortune 500 CEOs including Harold Poling of Ford Motor Company, and New York Times best-selling authors like Jim Collins to speak for free or nominal fees. Nationally recognized experts in business provide insights, wisdom, and inspiration that have been life-changing to our students. Yet beyond getting the guests to give the advice lays the challenge of getting students to take it.

In this article we consider the benefits and share what we've learned about choosing, attracting, and benefiting the most from business practitioners as special classroom guests. Specifically we aim to do the following:

- 1) Help our colleagues appreciate the value of bringing expert business practitioners to their business courses.
- 2) Help fellow faculty tap Christian business leaders from the community who can serve as "salt and light" and

"lamps on stands" to our students to grow in faith.

3) Help students invest their talents to the maximum benefit of their Lord.

4) Help business experts pass on the fruit of their labor to future generations.

5) Inspire students to live out their faith in their business practices.

6) Help our fellow faculty develop lasting ties with those in positions to offer internships, jobs, and monetary contributions to our schools and universities.

BENEFITS OF DRAWING BUSINESS PRACTITIONERS INTO OUR COURSES

Larry Saylor and Ivan L. Filby's presentation at the 2009 Christian Business Faculty Association Annual Meeting titled "Teaching Young Dogs Old Tricks" offers worthy advice on making optimal use of guest speakers, especially regarding encouraging faith development. E. R. Melander (2001), in his article "Educating the Practitioner: Strategies for Focusing on the Student in the Undergraduate Business Curriculum," emphasizes the importance of developing students into practitioners. One of his three fundamental strategies is "to identify and strengthen relationships with academic and student development professionals and agencies within the institution as

well as with actual practitioners” (Melander, 2001, p. 9) (emphasis added). Our approach provides an operational strategy to reach that goal among several others. By bringing business practitioners into our courses we set the stage for many benefits emanating from the immediate contact students have with the guest and continuing on through the later relationships that grow out of the visit. Students stand to gain almost immediately in several ways, including growing wiser, more skilled, and further inspired. As time goes on, students, faculty, and the university gain in other ways including excellent internships and job placements. These new friends of the school sometimes later contribute time serving on boards, and they also may donate substantial financial funds. Here we explore the benefits of bringing business practitioners into our courses more fully.

Students Gain Wisdom

Remarkably in today’s secular world, Webster’s Third International Dictionary continues to define wisdom as the “principle or personification of God’s will.” When we bring Christian business leaders to our campuses and classes, our students stand to gain not only good business advice but insight into the will and personality of God. For example, our students recently heard Lance Thompson describe how his firm rescued the Bank of Louisiana from impending bankruptcy following hurricane Katrina. Lance’s firm provides disaster recovery services to banks, essentially backing up their electronic records in case of disaster. Bank of Louisiana’s main computers were trapped in their flooded headquarters, and their back-up system was also destroyed by the hurricane. Because they could not open for business, they were one day away from being permanently closed by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. Though the bank was not a client of his firm, Lance arranged for the hard drives to be extracted from the bank’s computers and transported to his facility in Michigan. For several weeks the Bank of Louisiana operated relying on remote computers in Michigan. Our students learned that a wise business person often goes the extra mile as part of being a leading provider in their industry (Thompson, 2007).

Students Learn Techniques

When Domino’s Pizza founder Tom Monaghan visited our students, he shared a technique he called “the most valuable development tool I ever discovered.” This “job performance and review” process involved routine monthly meetings between each employee and their supervisor covering five specific questions. Our students learned a simple, manageable technique that will serve them well and helped to make its author a billionaire philanthropist (Monaghan, 2001).

Students Become Inspired

A few years ago, best-selling author Jim Collins granted us an exclusive interview for our students, the video recording of which we continue to use in our courses. Jim urged the students to create a “stop-doing” list and asserted that such a list is more important than a “to-do” list (Collins, 2004). One of our students was inspired to stop investing his time in a particular video game that had consumed hours of his time each week. He reinvested the time in running for President of the Student Government Association and won! The opportunity to meet and be mentored by expert guests is often inspiring.

Students Make Contacts for Internships and Jobs

Several years ago we went seeking entrepreneurs to visit our courses in entrepreneurship. Many of these visitors have since hosted internships with our students and some have hired them. Both sides benefit. Students gain valuable experience and employment, and the guests find intelligent, loyal employees of high character. Over the past decade, one of our guests has hired half a dozen of our graduates into excellent positions.

Our Schools Form Important Alliances

In several instances individuals we have invited to coach our students have become lasting, generous, and influential friends of our university. Several members of our board of trustees first came to know the university through class visits. In one instance, a donor made a six-figure contribution because he was so impressed that we clearly integrate our religious faith with our business education. In another case, a credit union funded a specially equipped financial trading center room because they came to know us by visiting a class.

We All Enjoy the Experience

When we invest time in bringing business experts into classes, we all usually enjoy the experience. Our guests feel honored and valued. Our students experience a pleasant change of pace and new learning modality. Faculty members have a fresh learning experience of their own. College and university officials enjoy meeting new friends who may later return to lend support in other significant roles. The guest is a celebrity, and the day seems to be a celebration. Thus, we all enjoy the experience.

TWO OPTIONS: SPECIAL EVENTS OR ROUTINE CLASSES

We have benefited from encounters with business practitioners as guests in two formats: the special event and visits to routine classes. Our special event is completely built around distinguished guests while the routine courses

bring special guests in as an enriching element in our regular courses.

About 15 years ago, as a special project for her MBA, Lisa Lofgren helped design and develop our special event course called Solutions Seminar. This annual event, offered as a one-credit-hour course in leadership, centers on our special business practitioner guests. These are often people of national or international renown. Over the years our guests included the following:

Dennis Bakke, the former CEO and co-founder of AES, a completely decentralized *Fortune 100* corporation, who believes businesses exist primarily to glorify God and serve, not just to make money.

John Beckett, CEO and owner of R.W. Beckett Company, the world's leading producer of oil burners for heating systems. John wrote *Loving Monday, Succeeding in Business Without Selling Your Soul*, which has been published in several languages.

Ronald Beebe, Vice President of Acquisitions and Strategy for Airgas, and a major participant in growing that company from a few million dollars revenue to over 600 times its original size.

Bo Burlingham, Senior Editor, *Inc. Magazine*, author of *Small Giants*, co-author of *Open Book Management*, and *The Knack: How Street Smart Entrepreneurs Learn to Handle Whatever Comes Up*.

Jim Collins, author of two number one bestsellers in business, *Good to Great* and *Built to Last*.

Les Dietzman, CEO of Family Christian Stores and former close working associate of Sam Walton.

John Grettenberger, vice president of General Motors and General Manager of Cadillac Motor Car Division; during his tenure Cadillac received the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality award.

Mike Guthrie, CEO of Spectra LLC and Detroit Chassis LLC; he and his brother, Carlton, are sole owners of Spectra.

Harry and Juanita Hosmer, founders of Royale Energy, an oil exploration and production company, whose stock is publicly traded on the NASDAQ exchange.

Jack Lousma, astronaut and commander of the space shuttle.

Thomas Monaghan, founder of Domino's Pizza, the Ave Maria foundation, and Ave Maria University.

Ginny Morton, manager of the most profitable division of the largest employer in the world, Tad/Addecco.

Terri Norris, extraordinary sales representative who rose above over a thousand to be the best in the Cintas Corporation.

Harold "Red" Poling, CEO of Ford Motor Company, retired. During Poling's tenure as CEO, Ford grew in quality, market share, and profitability.

Jim Skivington, professor turned entrepreneur who left academia to buy and grow a multi-million dollar business and found another multi-million dollar business.

Christina Thompson, CEO of Lifeways, ranked the best community mental health center of its size in the United States.

Lance Thompson, entrepreneur in banking services.

Robert Watson, commander of the Salvation Army of the United States, America's largest charity.

Roy Westran, Former CEO of Citizen's Insurance who led the firm to forty-fold growth and its initial public offering.

We generally invite three or four featured guests to each seminar. Students read about them and their work in advance of their campus visit. The campus visits happen on a Friday evening and Saturday. We usually have four time segments, one for each guest. Each segment involves an interview with our host, a question and answer session with a panel of students, and a time for general questions from the audience. Following the visit, students set goals based on what they learned from the guests and seek to work changes in their lives. Several weeks later they submit their workbook from the course that includes their notes from the speakers' presentations, the goals the student sets, and an essay detailing the outcome of implementing their new initiatives. Often students report dramatic growth from this course.

We also benefit from involving special business prac-

tioners in our regular courses. While I teach primarily in the areas of leadership, organizational behavior, and human resources management, the approach of involving expert practitioners can enrich courses in other sub-disciplines such as marketing, accounting, and finance. Although we are somewhat less likely to bring internationally known figures into routine courses, we have managed to bring some extremely interesting people into relatively small courses. Over the years we have enjoyed visits with the following:

John Drake, a Senior Vice President of Human Resources for CMS Energy and employer of nearly 20,000 people.

David Rawson, former U. S. ambassador.

Jan McCubbin, mother of 28 children, all adopted, most from other countries, many with major challenges such as blindness or severe injuries.

Mary Ellen Sheets, Founder of Two Men and A Truck.

Harvey Gainey, founder of Gainey Transportation Systems, record holder for longest run on list of fastest growing companies in Michigan.

One benefit of having brought a person to the special event is that we may later be able to involve them with smaller groups of our students. For instance, Dennis Bakke initially came to our Solutions Seminar as a featured guest to address a class of over one hundred students. Months later Bakke was happy to grant a live phone interview so that the eight students in a graduate seminar in human resource management had the opportunity to hear and talk with him.

TEN STEPS TOWARD GREAT RELATIONSHIPS WITH BUSINESS PRACTITIONERS

We have learned a great deal about how to bring special guests to work with our students, how to help students benefit, and how to foster lasting alliances with our guests. The principles that work are quite similar for special events and routine courses, so we will offer generic advice and where appropriate adapt the general suggestion for the special circumstances of the special event format or the routine course one.

1. Ask Yourself, "What Do You Want?"

Jesus' first spoken words in the Gospel of John, "What do you want?" (John 1:37) provide a good starting place

for us. Beyond the excitement of bringing a celebrity to class, what do we really want? For example, at Spring Arbor University, we want our students to have the opportunity to learn from the best of the best. Each time we bring in a guest, I learn something as well. Beyond learning techniques, students learn valuable emotional, moral, and spiritual lessons. Thinking about what you want students to learn will lead you to who to invite. For instance, I like to show students that really successful leaders are seldom as arrogant and abrasive as Donald Trump. Students learn an important lesson when they see how humble and gentle very powerful people like Red Poling (Ford CEO), John Beckett (R. W. Beckett Co CEO), and Robert Watson (commander of the Salvation Army of North America) are. Many of these lessons go beyond words into the realm of inspiration and role modeling. An epiphany may happen when the student realizes "Christians can be winners," or "I think I could one day do something like our guest did."

What do you want? Most of the guests we host come from the area of leadership since that is my major teaching interest; perhaps you teach accounting, marketing, or finance. Would your students benefit from having an expert practitioner visit to talk about a day in the life of a Certified Public Accountant, an advertising executive, or a Certified Financial Planner? Might your students be inspired to take Christian principles into these fields by listening to someone who is already doing this?

2. Ask Yourself "Who Do I Want?"

What would you like your students to be like as they grow? Think about who you would like them to emulate. I personally feel great that my students have had a chance to speak with Dennis Bakke, the Christian co-founder of AES, a \$35-billion-dollar company that has been #40 in the Fortune 500. I am delighted that Jim Collins, author of *Good to Great*, has given our students valuable personal advice. I feel really great that our students have been able to learn from the words and example of John Drake, senior vice president for Human Resources for CMS Energy who has "retired" from the business world to build, staff, and oversee the growth of a Christian orphanage in the Philippines. I am also grateful that scores of other people I admire have come to help students grow into people whom God will regard as "good and faithful servants." Based on what you want to accomplish, who would you like to bring to your students?

3. Develop a Strategy

Consider where the speaker best fits into the context of your course. Recognize this as an opportunity to help students learn something that they would not learn from

“textbooks.” With a little forethought, you can find the most appropriate way to fit the guest to the course. This will help you to guide the guest in knowing what subjects you will be discussing. Target your guest’s areas of expertise rather than expecting them to “cover” some of your routine course topics.

We provide our guests with a standard set of sample questions we have developed to guide our conversations. We suggest that you ask guests to discuss their faith biography, how they practice their faith at work, and some of the challenges and setbacks they have faced. Students appreciate authenticity and will usually respond better to testimonies than mini sermons. We also have students submit questions of interest to them and allow the guest select from those questions. Finally, we maintain and open informal atmosphere where students are encouraged to pose questions that arise during the visit.

4. Ask Your Students “What Do You Want?” and “Who Do You Want?”

When we first began inviting guest experts to class, we thought we were pretty good at picking those who would help most; over time I’ve gained great respect for the ability of students to recognize great potential guests. Recently I hosted eleven experts on leadership in a one semester course. At the end of the course, I asked each student to rank them according to their benefit to that particular student. I learned a lot. In a field that included a United States ambassador and Jim Collins, the top ranking went to the mother of one of the students who, having been raised in poverty by two blind parents, went on to become an assistant United States attorney who had recently successfully argued a case in the United States Supreme Court. I have learned to ask my students what they wanted, who they wanted, and who really benefitted them.

I have also learned to ask the students “Who do you know who would make an excellent guest speaker?” It was by using this approach that we were able to identify and recruit some of our most beneficial guests, including the aforementioned prosecutor. She inspired students with her persistence in overcoming personal challenges, and she also impressed them with practical career advice, specifically, that it was okay to back away from a path you had started down if it proved to be a mistake.

5. Create a Comfortable Setting

When we first began our special event, Solutions Seminar, we asked distinguished people to come to give a speech. This actually proved daunting for some of them. A major executive from one of the five largest firms in the country confided, “Since I’m recently retired, I no

longer have a speech writer.” Also, speeches often prove not the best learning vehicle for students. So we learned to ask instead, “Would you please come in for a virtual fireside chat? Think of the students as your nephews and nieces, and share with them what you have learned that you would like someone to have shared with you at their age.” This neutralizes the resistance to having to write and deliver a “speech,” and it creates a much more vibrant and interactive setting for learning.

6. Show the Guest You Really Want Them!

How have we attracted world-class talent either for free or at nominal cost? The key has been to show an authentic passionate desire for them come visit and to do so in innovative ways. Repeatedly very well-known guests have told us that they usually decline invitations to speak, yet they accepted ours. Why?

Originally we made very conventional approaches to our guests — a business letter followed up with a phone call — and we were often disappointed with the results. But persistence and innovation paid off. A case study helps illustrate our growing understanding and effectiveness. I had read a great deal about Tom Monaghan, his business success, his approach to developing people and their talent, and his faith. I was convinced he would be a great guest speaker. I wrote a very careful letter inviting him to speak at the first Solutions Seminar. I followed up with a call to his public relations person and received a very polite and professional rejection. Later, I was reading about Dale Carnegie’s success in bringing speakers to his courses in Brooklyn, New York:

“So we wrote them, saying we admired their work and were deeply interested in getting their advice and learning the secrets of their success. Each of these letters was signed by about a hundred and fifty students. We said we realized that these authors were busy — too busy to prepare a lecture. So we enclosed a list of questions for them to answer about themselves and their methods of work. They liked that. Who wouldn’t like it? So they left their homes and traveled to Brooklyn to give us a helping hand” (Carnegie, 1981 p. 57).

The next year we approached Monaghan again. We asked for an interview rather than a speech. We sent a large custom invitation created by a skilled calligrapher and signed by nearly one hundred students, faculty, and administrators. This time I requested my assistant to mail it to Mr Monaghan, and when she asked for his address I suggested she look it up. I assumed she would send it to his office, but she actually sent it to his home. The invitation went directly to Monaghan rather than his staff, and he loved it. He mentioned it as he emerged

from his car upon arrival, he mentioned it again when he met our president, and again he mentioned it during his interview. He said, "That was quite an invitation. And the thing that impressed me the most was your emphasis on Christ."

More recently we moved to a 20' x 30" sheet of parchment like paper. On it a calligrapher pens a greeting that resembles the Declaration of Independence. It says something along these lines:

"We hold these truths to be self evident: that students learn the most from those who know the most. We greatly admire your achievements in [specific achievements, such as founding Domino's Pizza and using your wealth and influence to launch a major university]. We would like to bestow on you the top honor of the School of Business at Spring Arbor University to be a featured guest at our Solutions Seminar.

This sheet is individually signed by our president, dean, business school faculty, and about 120 students. Other speakers, many of whom normally command fees we could not afford, have had similar reactions to that of Tom Monaghan. A best-selling author and senior editor from Inc Magazine said "I never do this sort of appearance, but the approach was so persuasive." The founder of a multi-billion-dollar international corporation told us, "I don't usually speak at Christian schools, but what an invitation!" One entrepreneur had the invitation framed and brought it with him to show it to us.

We have also had success with another approach we learned about in Bob Briner's *The Leadership Lessons of Jesus* (Briner and Pritchard, 2001). Briner observes that Jesus Christ personally approached those he invited to be disciples. When we decided John Beckett would be a beneficial guest, I drove two hundred miles to have lunch with him and to personally invite him. He accepted.

One reviewer of the manuscript for this paper made a worthy observation:

"The idea of a personalized, hand-designed invitation to speak to the students is an interesting innovation. The design uses calligraphy and the invitation is signed by a large number of students and sometimes faculty and administrators. The invitation explains how much the students admire the work and character of the speaker and has to be very persuasive. It makes it clear that being invited is a great honor. Great psychology or salesmanship!"

One pitfall here is that it is so good that others may be tempted to copy it by rote. It should instead be interpreted as showing the need to yourself be innovative and to come up with your own methods of attracting high profile speakers. Indeed, if many schools copied this approach, it

would no longer be novel and business executives who talk with one another would recognize it as routine rather than special for them.

Our approach to expressing the breadth and intensity of our desire for a guest to join us is only one of many possibilities. Our students, especially with their knowledge of contemporary technology, could provide a variety of novel ways to show a guest how much our students would appreciate a visit.

7. Make It Easy for Students to Take the Advice and Hard for Them Not to

Encouraging and enabling the students to incorporate the advice and inspiration of our guests is the most important part of the process. The students are ultimately more important than the guests, since they can make the whole process worthless by simply not taking any of the advice or drawing any inspiration. To help students find a lasting benefit, we use a workbook in which they take notes and on which they are graded. In the special event, Solutions Seminar, students are charged with taking good notes, extracting the best advice for them personally, setting up a plan to implement it, and weeks later writing a paper that describes the outcome of their plan.

When we bring guests into our routine courses, we use a different approach to engage the students. We tell the students that after the interview we will ask them to review their notes and then some of them will be called on to tell the speaker and the class the most significant thing they learned and what they intend to do differently based on that learning. In our regular leadership classes we also use a workbook that guides the students and provides a standard place for notes. We engage the students in setting written goals and working in accountability partnerships so that the goal is revisited and progress measured and encouraged.

8. Honor the Guest by Showing Them the Student Growth

After our special events we send samples of completed workbooks to our guests. The guest knows that they offered advice, and now they see exactly how students took, applied, and benefited from it. When guests visit our routine courses, the follow up questions to students mentioned above serve to assure engagement and this honors the guest. We also prepare and send a large thank-you notes (11x17 folded in two) with a class picture, signed by each student with a brief comment about what they appreciated about or gained from the guest visit.

9. Capture The Moment For Future Students

Make video recordings of your special guests. With our guests' permission, our students continue to benefit from video recording of the guests' campus visits. The chances of

getting Tom Monaghan or Jim Collins to visit a class or allow an interview again are small, but students still show us that they benefit from their advice, even when it is delivered through video recording. Five and even 10 years after a visit, we continue to use excerpts from guest interviews, and students continue to change their lives in response. For example, our guest Terri Norris, the super-star sales representative, discussed the significance of her habit of starting each day with a quiet time, and several students have since adopted that habit based on encountering her by means of a video recording. Through video recordings great guest visits continue to bear fruit years later.

10. Build Lasting Alliances with Your Guests

We have enjoyed many benefits from our associations with guest speakers. Though I have never solicited donations from guest speakers or the people who come to hear them, our university has received substantial donations and pledges as a result of bringing Christian business practitioners to our students.

Spring Arbor University makes a strong commitment to find internships for our students, and we go the extra mile to help our students find initial job placements. In many cases, we have been able to match talented students to our guests' needs for excellent interns and employees to their mutual benefit.

Finally, when we look at our current board of trustees for the university, we find several outstanding members of that board whose first contact with our university was being invited to be a featured guest in one of our courses.

Evidence of Talent and Faith Development

What evidence indicates that engaging business practitioners actually does develop students' talents and faith? In their course workbooks students often report that they have grown better at investing their talents as well as in their faith. The following statements drawn from these workbooks illustrate this growth:

Student A: "My life has changed since I got my priorities in order. I have learned that while work should and will always be a priority, it will not be my top priority. I have made the decision that I do not want my life to be centered on my job, but rather my family. Success means different things to different people and my personal success includes a loving family that will be prioritized"

Student B: "I have always been one to believe that knowledge is power, and Blake's comments just furthered my belief of this philosophy. I love learning and I am especially pleased when a concept that I learned in school can be applied the very next day. Now that is power! This goal speaks for itself as I am pursuing an

MBA at age 42! You are never too old to learn new things and although I am not sure what I will be doing with my MBA, I know I am where God intends me to be and that the knowledge that I gain will lead me to some place great!"

Student C: "I think that my fifth commitment to make cards with encouraging words on them not only helped me but also helped my roommates and suitemates! I wrote some verses on a few different note cards and put a different one up on the mirrors and in the bathroom every week. I thought about what the verse means and what God was trying to tell me for a few minutes before going about my day."

Student D: "This course has also helped me to demonstrate the care and personal relationships that I want to foster with others. My personality tends to run more heavily along the lines of task-orientation rather than relationship-based living. It has been a long-standing personal goal to be able to connect with others relationally more frequently, as I have come to realize more and more how crucial this is for a truly meaningful life. This provided me an opportunity to "put feet" to those desires in a more concrete way, and it was very encouraging to me to receive the positive responses that I did from others. I think that out of the wealth of information and advice that I will continue to use from this class, that this final outcome is most important of all."

Student E: "My last commitment was to witness and pray for the students I am currently going to school with. There was one kid in particular I focused on these last few weeks. I met a student named Nick who is really neat but he isn't a Christian. I prayed for Nick and really got to know him over this semester. One thing I sometimes forget to do is write down specific requests and names to pray for. Overall, I believe I did an excellent job of fulfilling my commitments and the main object in this course."

Student F: "This summer is going to be huge for me. The internship at the church is going to be in New York, so I will be moving July 1 to start a new journey in life. I pray that the things I learned this year and through this class will continue in molding me into the person God wants me to be. God has blessed me, and I want to pass that blessing onto others around me."

Also, at Spring Arbor University we routinely evaluate courses and faculty by means of a standard survey instrument that provides student anonymity. Two items on this instrument help us gauge the success of our courses and faculty: 1) Do you believe that you have become (or will become at some future date) a better manager because of

this course? 2)As a result of this course, or working with this professor, my Christian faith has increased.

The data dealing with expert practitioners are encouraging. In the most recent edition of the Solutions Seminar, our special events course, 97.6% of students reported they had or would become better managers as a result of the course, and 81.6% indicated their Christian faith had increased. This compares favorably with the average scores for all business classes offered that semester, where 92.7% reported becoming better managers and 69.0% indicated they had grown in their Christian faith. These data suggest that a course based on guest speakers fosters growth better than our other business school courses which place less or no reliance on guest expert business practitioners.

Should the faculty evaluate the advice given by the guests? Fortunately our guests almost always offer valuable advice. As a faculty member I will sometimes mention a point the speaker made that was especially useful to me. We often encourage students to tell the guest something they found valuable from the visit, either on the day of the visit or in a thank you note. Our guests respond very positively to this procedure. We have not found it necessary to contradict advice given by a guest, although we strongly encourage students to sift the advice they are given. We are careful in inviting guests to choose individuals whose lives seem to embody the spirit of our school and especially the Spirit of our Lord.

Further Development

We continue to refine our approach to using experts wisely in our courses and we welcome others joining us. Our course and faculty evaluation tool asks open-ended questions that help us identify elements of our courses that are more or less valued by our students. For instance, we ask, "What was especially useful and should be retained? What was not especially useful and could be eliminated? What was missing that should be added?" Over time these questions have helped us to better focus our courses on the needs of our students.

CONCLUSION

Our students, our faculty, and our university have been richly rewarded through our attempts to enhance learning by bringing outstanding Christian business practitioners to our classrooms. This is an investment that requires considerable effort, but the benefits far outweigh the costs. We believe our business faculty colleagues at other colleges and universities will find this a worthy investment of resources from which they will reap joy as they and their students learn, become inspired, and forge valuable relationships that benefit the business school and university long after the guest appearance.

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