

Best Practices

Building A Marketing Case Around A Campus Ministry

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By using Christian organizations for marketing case studies, Clark enriches his marketing class while presenting fundamentals of the Christian faith.

Abstract

Christian business educators, in both Christian and secular colleges, can both enrich students' understanding of course materials and provide an education regarding fundamentals of the Christian faith by assigning a campus ministry case based on an organization like Campus Crusade for Christ, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, or the Navigators. A basic case for the first few weeks of an introductory marketing class is presented. This is followed by some insights into 1) how the technique can be used for more specific marketing topics, 2) potential concerns (especially in secular settings), and 3) ways to handle these concerns. Lastly, some positive outcomes of using this technique are presented.

Introduction

Andrews, Baker, and Roller (1999) found that the rapidly increasing numbers of non-traditional students at Christian institutions of higher education are more career and job-oriented, rather than Christ-focused, when compared to traditional students at those same institutions. Similarly, the work of Jung and Kellaris (2001) found that students in public universities are becoming more secular and less knowledgeable of Christian business principles.

As noted by Van Duzer and Dearborn (2003), it is this lack of knowledge that has led to businesses pushing the limits on what they feel they can legally get away with, rather than focusing upon God's principles. However, as these authors note, the end result is exemplified by

the fall of once mighty Enron, since God's principles are steadfast and cannot be violated without negative repercussions.

Because these authors' findings are consistent with the biblical principles that violating God's laws leads to death while obeying them leads to life (e.g., Deuteronomy 30:15-20), **JBIB** readers might want to consider the words spoken through the prophet whose name means "God will strengthen." As Ezekiel 3:18-19 states:

When I say to the wicked, "You shall surely die," and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, that same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. Yet, if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul.

Unfortunately, however, it is often very difficult for Christian business faculty, especially those teaching in secular environments, to tell students how certain beliefs will lead to death. As the Christian Leadership Ministries Web site

(<http://www.clm.org/menus/deptmsu.html>) noted on February 10, 2003:

In the past 100 years, Christianity has been relegated to the unimportant or trivial regions of the university. Today, there is no place in the university for Christian thought — no place in the curriculum for Christian ideals and no place in the university's research enterprise for Christian ideas. What is to be done about this?

The issue must be addressed on two fronts — an intellectual front and a personal front. The intellectual front has to do with the appropriate role of Christianity in the university. The personal front has to do with how Christian academics attempt to impact students, associates, and individual universities for Christ.

Nevertheless, according to Matthew 28:19-20 Christians are to go and make disciples and teach these disciples to obey Christ's commands. This being the situation, Christian professors may want to develop strategies whereby they can relay their beliefs to classes, as well as look for one-on-one opportunities in which they can share their convictions.

Ways to Share Christ and Reasons to Use a Campus Ministry Case

Fields (2001), in essence, dealt with how to have an "allegiance" to a university (i.e., company) as well as to God. In his work, he focused upon the Matthew 10:16 passage regarding sheep and wolves, and he addressed ways that Christians can be salt and light in keeping with Matthew 5:13-14. Christians can be salt and light by speaking about Christ (Colossians 4:6), paying attention to His Word (II Peter 1:19), and being at peace with others (Mark 9:50). By discussing such biblical passages, Fields (2001) gave valuable insights into how to provide students with interpretive abilities that will help them more clearly "see the ropes," including the ladders to climb and the snares to avoid.

Similarly, Chewning (2001) gave useful information regarding how educators can integrate biblical principles into their teaching. However, neither of these scholars provided a practical way whereby business professors, and especially those in secular environments, can take to heart the Apostle Paul's comments in I Corinthians 9:23. In essence, Paul stated that he

worked hard to relate to those with whom he was ministering, which is shown by his using examples that were familiar to his audience, such as his marriage illustration in Romans 7:1-6. (It should be noted that the purpose of this paper is not to fault Chewning or other academicians; rather its intent is based upon Proverbs 27:17, which states, "As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.")

From a practical standpoint, one can implement the Apostle Paul's approach to teaching by assigning, as a case, an organization like Campus Crusade for Christ (<http://www.ccci.org>), the Navigators (<http://home.navigators.org/us>), or InterVarsity Christian Fellowship (<http://www.ivcf.org>). Regardless of whether a student is a Christian or not, many students, including those at public universities, have at least heard of such an organization by their junior year. Therefore, professors can truthfully tell their students that they have built a case around an organization that has a campus presence.

Similarly, educators may want to indicate that the particular case ministry they chose has beliefs consistent with their own.

They may also note that they realize that just as some Christians might not agree with a fraternity's values, some non-Christians may not agree with a Christian organization's beliefs. Moreover, they can tell students that they will not be penalized if they disagree with the views presented in the organization's literature. Furthermore, they can indicate that, if a student is totally offended by Christian doctrine, then that individual can choose to evaluate a different campus organization and answer similar questions without being penalized.

An instructor, assigning more than one case in a secular environment, may choose to instead address sensitivities in the case section of his/her syllabus. For example, he/she might want to add the following written statement: "Students do not have to agree with the viewpoints expressed in any case to receive a top grade on that case. Likewise, since it is recognized that someone might be offended by the perspectives presented in any case, substitute cases, without any penalties, will be allowed in those situations."

For those who choose to do the campus ministry case which the professor selected, the teacher

can supply some of that organization's literature and also mention that students should feel free to visit the organization's meetings or talk with its leaders. In such fashion, Christian educators will (in keeping with their beliefs) potentially be planting or watering in order that God can give the increase (I Corinthians 3:6-9). Thus, they will be fulfilling the Great Commission spoken about in Mark 16:15.

However, lest readers question if case methods are effective in relaying information, it should be pointed out that Michlitsch and Sidle (2002) found that business schools rely more on case studies than any other tool to assess learning. As they further note, this is due to cases being a much more effective learning assessment tool than multiple choice exams or group projects. Yet, the efficacy of case studies as a learning tool should not be surprising to Christians, since the Luke 15 parables of lost sheep, the lost coin, and the prodigal son represent Christ's use of cases to teach his disciples (Bailey, 1998). Marketing professors who are Christians and who are not presently using cases might want to consider not only assigning

cases, but also making one of them about an organization like Campus Crusade, for reasons previously given.

Example of Marketing Case Assignment Based on Campus Crusade

In an introductory marketing class, where a text such as that of Pride and Ferrell (2000) is used, one defines terms such as marketing, customers, target market, marketing mix, product, exchanges, relationship marketing, marketing environment, marketing concept, marketing orientation, value, and marketing management in the very first lecture. This is because these terms appear in the first 24 pages of the text. Thus, using the information present on Campus Crusade's Web site, a professor teaching an introductory marketing course can provide an assignment with the following instructions within the first few weeks:

1. After you reach the Campus Crusade for Christ home page (www.ccci.org), please click on the link to learn more about Bill Bright (billbright.ccci.org). Once you arrive there, please click on "Public" and read those paragraphs. The purpose of this is

to provide you with background information about Campus Crusade.

2. Once you have completed this task, go back to the Campus Crusade home page and click on the "World Headquarters" link under "Other Resources." After the page with the picture of the world headquarters loads, click on the "About Us" link on the left. When this page appears, you will find Campus Crusade statistics and the mission statement. Please read this information, and at the bottom of the page you will see "Click Here to Read our Statement of Faith." Do exactly that and read the Statement of Faith page that appears on your monitor.

3. When you have finished reading the Statement of Faith

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information, please go back to the home page. Under "Other Resources" you will find "Stewardship Guidelines." Please click on this link and read the information that appears before you answer the following questions: a) What is Campus Crusade's product? b) How is Campus Crusade's product

distributed and promoted? and c) Since the price variable is the only marketing mix variable that generates revenue, what is Campus Crusade's price variable?

The reason that a case such as this should be more intellectually challenging to students than, for example, a consumer goods company is that students should recognize that there are three types of products — goods, services, and ideas. As revealed by its Web site, Campus Crusade's product is the idea (i.e., belief) that 1) the Old and New Testaments are God's infallible Word, 2) God's Word was inspired by the Holy Spirit, and 3) the Bible is the supreme and final authority in all matters on which it speaks. This basic idea is then dealt with in more detail in the 17 affirmation statements that are found on the same page as the Statement of Faith.

The aforementioned pages indicate that Campus Crusade distributes and promotes their product by using nearly 25,000 full-time staff and more than 553,000 trained volunteers serving in 191 countries. Similarly, the *Jesus* film (which is in more than 730 languages), more than 100 books and booklets, and thousands of

articles by the late Bill Bright and the Lighthouse Radio Show distribute and promote the idea. "Four Spiritual Laws" tracts are handed out, meetings are held, and conversations between seekers and believers also distribute and promote the product. Additionally, the organization's idea/belief is distributed and promoted with the posting of fliers on campuses, rallies in public areas, Web pages, and members sharing with fellow students.

Lastly, for the price variable, the aforementioned Web site with the 17 affirmation statements specifically mentions God's free grace. However, for the purpose of grading, one can focus upon Campus Crusade's fund-raising activities. Top students will recognize from reading the assigned materials (as well as by possibly checking out unassigned portions of the Campus Crusade Web site) that money is generated by book and pamphlet sales, conference admission fees, and the like. Furthermore, they will note that, when it comes to generating funds, Campus Crusade adheres to Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA) principles and that it strives to avoid conflicts of interest.

While delineating the many possible modifications of the preceding marketing case is beyond the scope of this paper, it will be mentioned that cases can be designed to focus on a specific marketing mix variable. Beginning with the product variable, there are distinctions between consumer and business products, product lines and product mixes, product life cycle and product adoption stages, successful and unsuccessful products, line extensions, product modifications, and the stages for developing new products. Since the Campus Crusade Web site speaks about the organization's use of focus groups, principles of test marketing, and commercialization, as well as marketing research, product quality, and product management, these can be focused upon by directing students to relevant areas of the Campus Crusade Web site. Moreover, branding, packaging, brand protection, characteristics of ideas and services vs. goods, and the differences between nonprofit and for-profit businesses can be emphasized. In so doing, one would reinforce the product chapters in an introductory marketing text. For Pride and

Ferrell (2000), these are represented by Chapters 10-13.

In a like vein, the basic Campus Crusade case can be modified to focus upon the distribution variable with the focus being on channel relationships, supply chain management, or the intensity of market coverage. Focusing on this last item, Campus Crusade uses selective rather than intensive or exclusive distribution. Moreover, because Campus Crusade uses some retailing principles, students can be asked to compare and contrast the retailing activities of Campus Crusade vs. Wal-Mart. By doing this, the distribution principles found in Pride and Ferrell's (2000) Chapters 14-16 would be highlighted.

Moving next to the promotion variable, Campus Crusade makes use of the advertising, personal selling, and the public relations activities found in the promotion mix. Thus, the basic case that was previously presented can be slightly modified so that it can be linked to the promotion sections in a marketing text, which for Pride and Ferrell's (2000) book are represented by Chapters 17-19.

Lastly, for the pricing variable one can delve into price and nonprice competition, pricing

objectives, evaluations of product prices, pricing strategies for different Campus Crusade ministries, and pricing systems of other ministries. In so doing one would highlight the information found in Chapters 20-21 of Pride and Ferrell's (2000) text, which are near the end of their 24-chapter text.

Concluding Remarks

The beauty of organizations like Campus Crusade for Christ, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, and the Navigators are that they have enough different links and topic areas covered that cases can be designed for almost any marketing topic. These range from strategy to planning, the marketing environment to social responsibility, global marketing to information systems, segmentation and evaluation to consumer and organizational buying, e-marketing to performance evaluation, and developing marketing plans to financial marketing analysis. (Focusing upon this last issue of financial or accounting issues in marketing, the InterVarsity income statement on February 10, 2003 at <http://www.ivcf.org/aboutus/corpinfo.php> was an excellent link.)

By no means is it suggested, however, that Christian educators should "hammer" their students with all of the preceding insights or focus on only Christian organizations. Nor is it recommended that they should ignore secular business issues or shirk their duties to teach course fundamentals. Rather, the aforementioned perspectives were given to show how Christian educators might use a campus ministry case to better convey what is important (hopefully most important) to them, as well as educate students about how campus organizations operate. In the process, the professor may see individuals becoming involved in such organizations and/or see students putting their trust in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, as has been witnessed by those who use such approaches.

Finally, it is recommended that since each professor's unique talents and gifts are somewhat different, those wanting to use campus ministries as cases should first find out which Christian organizations are present on their campuses and then investigate each to find the best fit. Instructors at secular universities may desire to let those students who disagree with Christian

principles research a different campus organization. This makes the professor less vulnerable to being attacked for proselytizing, and it is hoped that the last verse in the Bible will ring true. As Revelation 22:21, states, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

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