ALL FOR ONE ... AND ONE FOR ALL: THE VALUE OF A STANDARDIZED INTRODUCTORY MARKETING EXPERIENCE

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ABSTRACT

There are a variety of advantages to standardizing course content for multiple sections of a class taught by different instructors. From applying the quality enhancement principles laid out by TQM and Six Sigma, to minimizing inefficiencies or omission of content, to enhancing student learning and accommodating the requirements of accrediting bodies such as the AACSB, there is ample justification to proceed with the standardization of curriculum. Our marketing department has developed an efficient and effective way to address the potential for cross-sectional variance in a required introductory marketing course while still allowing instructors to use their own classroom management styles and teaching approaches. This paper describes the process we went through to create and integrate a standard set of concepts for all of our introductory marketing courses.

Each semester there are, on average, 15 sections and 600 students enrolled in the introductory marketing class. These classes are typically taught by six different instructors. This allows for wide variation in the concepts that instructors choose to cover in their classes. In an effort to standardize our students’ learning experiences in the introductory marketing class, all faculty and part-time instructors began discussions in spring 2004 to identify a set of fundamental marketing concepts that are central to understanding marketing and to which all students must be exposed.

Fourth, the standardized approach creates more opportunities to highlight connections between marketing courses. By referring to the models, faculty can more easily remind students how topics covered in a marketing research class might relate to a consumer behavior theory or a discussion in international marketing. Fifth, a standardized set of concepts creates a variety of opportunities for the evaluation and assessment of students. Not only can assessments be made of students across sections, but the standardization provides some guidance to determine levels of retention and learning as students near the end of their marketing program. Sixth, the standardization process used for the introductory marketing class can be utilized in any situation where there are multiple sections taught by more than one instructor. Finally, all faculty and part-time instructors met regularly throughout the standardization process to identify key concepts and to share valuable information regarding teaching tips, examples, cases, or classroom management strategies that were particularly effective. This increased dialogue about effective classroom teaching has been extremely valuable.