The Umass Practicum Experience

MBA Consulting Projects
What are Practicum Projects?

- Spring, semester-long sport industry consulting projects that culminate the dual-degree, MBA/MS education and serve as a curriculum “capstone” experience.

- High-level, strategic consulting assignments that challenge students to think critically about a business area of importance and deliver managerial recommendations that address client objectives.

- Group projects in teams of three (3) or four (4) students, with each group assigned to a particular consulting client based on level of interest and industry segment expertise.

- All practicum teams are overseen by a faculty advisor who organizes the assignment brief, meets regularly with each team, and manages the group internally.
Past Clients

Leaders in Sports & Entertainment from a range of valuable industry segments

- Under Armour
- Bank of America
- VISA
- The Basketball Hall of Fame
- 47 Brand
- The Dew Tour
- United States Bowling Congress
- EvoShield
- The Legacy Agency
- Boston Breakers
- Right To Play
- Michael Phelps Swim School
- Xenith Helmets
- MAAC
The Basic Client Requirements

• In concert with a McCormack Department faculty lead, each client must create a detailed brief/proposal that identifies and defines a consulting project that is both necessary and significant to the success of the organization, as well as strategically focused.
  – Each graduate student will sign an NDA; hence, full disclosure of any applicable information (including financials) is required if this is what will ensure strategic recommendations and insights

• Identification of a dedicated, accessible contact person for the practicum team throughout the duration of the project

• A $1,500 gift to the McCormack Department, that will cover relevant project management costs. If extensive travel or production is needed to meet the requirements of the brief, we would ask clients be able to help with funding.
Benefits to Our Students

- Students soon to enter the sport business world gain **invaluable exposure** to client-facing work.
- **Strategic thinking** simulates real-life consulting work, typical at common landing spots for our graduates (agencies, brands, teams, etc.).
- **Professional development skills** can be honed and refined in a formal environment: communication, presentation, writing, and critical-thinking skills.
- **Exposure to a living, breathing, real-world issue** of examination allows students to sharpen their industry acumen and cultivate industry relationships.

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**Strategic Thinking**

**Client Exposure**

**Professional Development**

**Industry Insights**
Benefits to Our Clients

- MBA students similar in experience to junior consultants at major consulting or professional services firms provide **full-time resources** to an area of need

- 3-month project with talented, inquisitive MBA’s leads to independent, vibrant recommendations **outside the box** of standard company thinking

- **At minimal cost**, clients gain strategic insights that form actionable recommendations for future decision making

- Clients looking to add entry-level and/or internship employees **can train and develop future company assets**
Our Graduate Students at Work!
Practicum Project Examples
• Working hand in hand with Under Armour’s Global Events group, students created a ROI and ROO dashboard for internal event measurement, focusing on consumer engagement within portfolio of national events
• Final deliverable included a measurement path for benchmarking event success, recommendations surrounding how UA can consumer tracking efforts, retail-driver tactics, and a “success path” for internal execution and alignment
Integrated marketing activation plan for 2016
#MLBMemoryBank MLB campaign

Students were tasked with conducting research on prior MLB campaign challenges and execution, & providing recommendations on how upcoming 2016 campaign engagement would increase attribution for the brand and key company growth segments.

Strategic thinking leveraged BOA’s overarching league partnership (with rights and assets in digital, social, and online), as well as customized local assets with sponsored teams in 9 select markets. Deliverable concluded with presentation at BOA’s Boston HQ to Sponsorship Marketing EVP/SVP’s.
The MAAC Men's & Women's Basketball Championship Tournament was hosted at a neutral site for the first time in March 2012.

The consulting team “shadowed” multiple departments throughout the entire planning and implementation phase, and then delivered multiple recommendations aimed at maximizing attendance and marketing revenues for future tournaments at the MassMutual Center in Springfield.
Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame

Assessed the perception of the Hall of Fame as a sponsorable property on both a national and regional basis.

Developed recommendations for how the client could better position itself in order to increase the value and quantity of its sponsorships.
This consulting project focused on strategies for maximizing event attendance based on research and assessment of the Dew Tour’s current marketing strategy, consumer experience and ticket offerings.

Strategies were integrated with the Dew Tour’s current brand campaign/messaging approach.
Students examined marketing and financial implications of combining the Men’s and Women’s National Championship Tournaments into a single, annual “mega-event” for bowling NGB. Delivered model for data collection, analysis and implementation.

On-site research included attending both 2012 events in Las Vegas and Baton Rouge, respectively.
This brand positioning consulting project tasked students to research and develop marketing strategies to target various market segments within Massachusetts.

Deliverable included strategic recommendations for how the Breakers (and women’s soccer) should position themselves in the Boston-metro marketplace (i.e. "best in the world" ⇔ "fun, family entertainment").

Group identified messaging, promotional, and engagement tactics necessary to market to untapped demographic segments.