

Humboldt State University School of Business MBA Program

Marketing Research Plan

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The Humboldt State University MBA Program is looking for a solution to increase enrollment and expand the program. The focus of this plan is to identify ways to distinguish and promote the program to potential students, HSU faculty/advisors, and the local business community. The defined marketing research objectives focus on analyzing student target markets, the effectiveness of current marketing and promotional strategies, and the demand for specializations within the program's curriculum. To assess our research objectives, we have conducted a series of surveys, depth interviews, and secondary research to guide us in making concrete recommendations for the program.

Research Design

Our sampling methods were determined based on our target populations. Different techniques were required for each population to ensure accurate representations, as well as the statistical robustness and interpretation of the data. We chose to use a combination of surveys and depth interviews which were tailored to collect key information from each group. The populations that we surveyed at HSU consisted of: 20 current MBA students, 20 MBA alumni, 362 undergraduates, and 32 non-business faculty members from 19 different departments. The two populations in which we conducted depth interviews consisted of four HSU School of Business faculty members and 20 local business community members.

Target Markets

Of the undergraduate sample surveyed, 85.6% were from within the state of California, 11.3% were from out of state, 2.2% were international students, and .9% did not respond. Of the respondents from within the state of California, 18% were from Humboldt County, 8% from Sacramento, 18% from the Bay Area, 21% from Southern California, and 21% from other in-state. Of the undergraduate respondents, 15% were interested in an MBA program, and 23% were undecided. Over half of the undergraduate respondents were not aware that HSU currently has an MBA program, and of those, only 27% knew that the program is designed for non-business majors. Based on the large number of respondents who were unaware of the program, and also undecided about their interest in obtaining an MBA degree, it is apparent that there is great opportunity for the School of Business to attract these students to the MBA program through a cohesive marketing strategy.

Promotion

Marketing and promotional strategies, to include communication message and follow-up procedures, have been researched in order to identify awareness and perception of the MBA program. Only 46% of the undergraduate students surveyed responded that they were aware that HSU has a MBA program. While 88% of the non-business faculty were aware of the program, 66% had never seen any promotional materials, and 79% did not know that the current program is designed for non-business majors. When the undergraduate respondents were asked where they learned about the MBA program, 31.3% learned via the course catalog, 23.5% via the HSU website, and 20.5% via family/friend. In contrast, the School of Business MBA Program brochure had been viewed by only about 5.4% of these respondents. Several questions were also designed to measure the respondents' perceptions regarding various MBA program criteria. Of considerable interest, 69% of undergraduates surveyed had no knowledge of the respective criteria. Overall, the undergraduates' perceptions of the HSU MBA program were somewhat positive, whereas the current MBA students and alumni's perceptions were extremely positive. With regards to current MBA students and alumni perceptions, all of the criteria ranked positively with the exception of reputation, which ranked negatively.

Concentrations

In order to gain a more comprehensive understanding regarding concentration demand, each of the target populations was asked related questions, which were designed specifically for their unique perspectives. Of the undergraduate students who were interested or undecided in obtaining an MBA degree, the two most popular responses were Sustainable Business, with a 23.4% response rate, and Entrepreneurship, with 21.4%. Given the specific interest expressed by our client regarding demand for an International Business concentration, it is notable to point out that this concentration ranked 5th out of 8 options, and only 11.7% of the respondents showed interest. Of the current MBA students, the two most popular responses were Management, with a 45% response rate, and Accounting, with 15%. Of alumni surveyed, the

two most popular responses were Management and Entrepreneurship, with 26.3% response rates for each. Non-business faculty responded that the concentrations which would be most beneficial to their students would be Entrepreneurship, with a 59% response rate, Marketing, with 47%, and Management, with 38%.

Recommendations:

Develop a single comprehensive marketing campaign.

To create awareness, educate, and change perceptions about the MBA program among the target market, this campaign should be integrated throughout the promotional materials of the School of Business to have a seamless look and feel.

Implement one concentration for which there is sufficient demand.

Given that the research results did not indicate an overwhelming demand for a specific concentration, our recommendation is to begin by offering elective courses in the areas of Sustainable Business and Entrepreneurship, and begin allowing for elective options within the MBA curriculum. By gauging actual enrollment in these courses, the School of Business could justify exactly which concentration area the MBA program should implement.

Apply to have the program accredited by AACSB.

This will increase the overall perceptions of the program and allow the program to remain competitive in the market.

Conclusion

An overall lack of awareness among the sample populations indicates the marketing and promotion strategies of the MBA program are not as strong as they need to be. While the MBA program is comparable to other programs within the state of California, it does lack competitive advantage among most competition factors, including promotional effectiveness, market share, and product diversity. A specific competition factor in which the program lacks competitive advantage is accreditation. If the School of Business plans to significantly increase the enrollment within the MBA program, our client must create awareness, promote to individual target markets, begin phasing in concentrations, and get accreditation by the AACSB.

Scope of the Plan

The purpose of this marketing plan is to provide research analysis and marketing recommendations to our client, Dr. Mortazavi, for achieving his defined goal of increasing enrollment in the Masters of Business Administration (MBA) program at Humboldt State University (HSU). The focus of the plan is to identify ways to distinguish and promote the program to potential students, HSU faculty/advisors, and the local business community. This plan will present the specific details of primary and secondary research data obtained by the team regarding current awareness and perceptions of the MBA program. The defined marketing research objectives focused on analyzing student target markets and current promotion strategy effectiveness, and determining the demand for specializations within the program's curriculum.

Primary marketing research was conducted through the administration of questionnaires and in-depth interviews. Secondary research was also conducted using on-line resources. A thorough situation and SWOT analysis was completed by the team to examine and evaluate the program's current marketing position and promotional strategies, as well as to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats pertaining to the program. Additionally, a Competitor Communications Study was performed to help gain a more thorough understanding of how HSU compares with other MBA programs, which helped the team determine what procedures needed to be undertaken by the Business Department to create a more competitive program.

The team will make marketing recommendations to our client based on the findings as presented in this plan which offer explicit suggestions for marketing strategies that can be implemented to achieve the goal of increasing enrollment in the MBA program. These recommendations are presented in the marketing plan in the order of relevance and importance to

accomplishing the desired goal. An implementation schedule is not incorporated into this plan because the implementation of these recommendations will be decided and acted upon by our client and the School of Business.

In establishing the scope of this plan as well as the problem definition, exploratory research was conducted by interviewing our client, Dr. Mortazavi, and the MBA Coordinator, Mike Thomas. These interview questions and responses is included in Appendix A.

Primary Research

Research Objectives:

The following objectives were previously stated in the MBA Program Marketing Proposal (See Appendix B) submitted on March 7th, 2006.

- Analyze the student target markets.
- Analyze the effectiveness of the HSU MBA program marketing and promotion strategies.
- Determine the demand for specializations within the MBA Program curriculum.

Research Design:

In order to gain additional insight regarding stagnant enrollment within the HSU MBA program, the team identified target populations from which to gather information, determined the sampling methods to be used for each target population, and developed questionnaires and interview scripts designed to gather pertinent information. Questionnaires and interview questions were designed in a manner which cater to each target audience and specifically address the stated research objectives. The sampling methods employed were selected in an effort to gain the highest possible response rate while reducing the level of bias within the responses.

Defined Population	Sampling Method	Sample Size Obtained	Data Gathering Method
Undergraduate students of HSU	Judgment	362	Questionnaire via classroom in paper form
Current MBA Students of HSU	Population	20	Questionnaire via classroom in paper form
Alumni of HSU MBA program	Judgment	20	Questionnaire via mail in paper form
Non-business Faculty of HSU	Judgment	32	Questionnaire via face-to-face / e-mail in paper form
Business Community Members of Humboldt County	Judgment	20	In depth Interview via face-to-face or telephone
Business Faculty of HSU	Judgment	4	In-depth Interview via face-to-face

Prior to conducting research and beginning the data collection process, a set of quality assurance procedures were established by the team in an effort to reduce error and bias throughout the data collection and analysis process. Refer to Appendix C to review a copy of these procedures.

In addition to maintaining quality assurance, a detailed data collection journal was maintained throughout the research process. For detailed information regarding the team's data collection process, refer to the Data Collection Journal located in Appendix D.

Survey Research:

Methodology

Questionnaires were administered to undergraduate students, current MBA students, alumni of the MBA program, and non-business faculty.

HSU undergraduate students were targeted to assess awareness, perceptions, and interest in the MBA program. Team members met to determine division of labor for administering the questionnaires. A complete listing of the majors and programs at HSU, grouped by department, was reviewed to determine which departments to target. Our group administered surveys to 29 of the 45 departments offering degrees. In an effort to identify accessibility to undergraduate students, the spring semester Schedule of Classes was reviewed to identify specific classes available.

Professors/instructors were contacted requesting permission to survey their classes. Once approval was received, the team members attended the class and distributed the surveys. The questionnaires were then given to the quantitative analysis sub-team for data-base input.

Current MBA students were targeted to assess perceptions, satisfaction, and selection criteria. Students currently enrolled in the MBA program were administered the survey in class.

MBA alumni were also surveyed to assess perceptions, satisfaction, and selection criteria. The data coordinator in the HSU Alumni Office was contacted to obtain a contact list of alumni for the past 10 years. A mail survey cover letter was prepared and included with the questionnaire and mailed to those alumni who specifically requested contact from the University in that manner. There were 28 alumni who requested this form of contact. In addition, follow-up contact was made through e-mails and telephone calls to obtain responses from those alumni who did not respond to the original mailing, or were not mailed one. Several respondents did complete the survey on-line, while others gave their responses via telephone. For those responding by telephone, each question was read exactly as written to ensure a consistent response. Once the established deadline was reached, no further surveys were included in our study. All responses were given to the data-input sub-team.

Non-Business Faculty were surveyed to assess awareness, perceptions, and concentration areas from which they believe students will benefit. Within the targeted departments, faculty members who serve in a student-advisor capacity were administered the questionnaire via judgment sampling. These faculty members were contacted via e-mailed or in-person to request participation in the survey. Surveys were distributed to participating faculty advisors to be completed and returned at their convenience.

Refer to Appendix E to review a copy of each questionnaire administered during this research project.

Analysis

Codes were determined for questionnaires response possibilities. Refer to Appendix F for a copy of the Data Coding Instructions which were established prior to inputting survey data. As questionnaires were administered, the completed surveys were given to the statistics sub-team for input and analysis.

After the survey data was input but before any statistical tests were conducted, the entered data was checked for errors by running descriptive statistics on each question. Ranges were carefully examined to make sure each question was within its respective range. After fixing any data entry errors, tally counts and percentages were calculated to help get an overall feel regarding the respondents' perceptions and attitudes toward each question. Of the questions where measures of

central tendency were valid, median tests were conducted to determine whether or not medians within each question were statistically significant or not.

In analyzing survey results, questions were categorized by relationships to specific research objectives. Results were analyzed using charting and graphing methods, as well as reviewing descriptive calculations. To review the descriptive survey data, by question, for each questionnaire administered refer to Appendix G.

Results

Research Objective I: Analyze the student target markets

Of the undergraduate sample surveyed, 86% were from within the state of California, 11.3% were from out of state, 2.2% were international students, and 0.9% did not respond. Of the respondents from within the state of California:

- Humboldt County 18%
- Sacramento 8%
- Bay Area 18%
- Other in State 21%
- Southern California 21%

Figure 1. Breakdown of in-state respondents

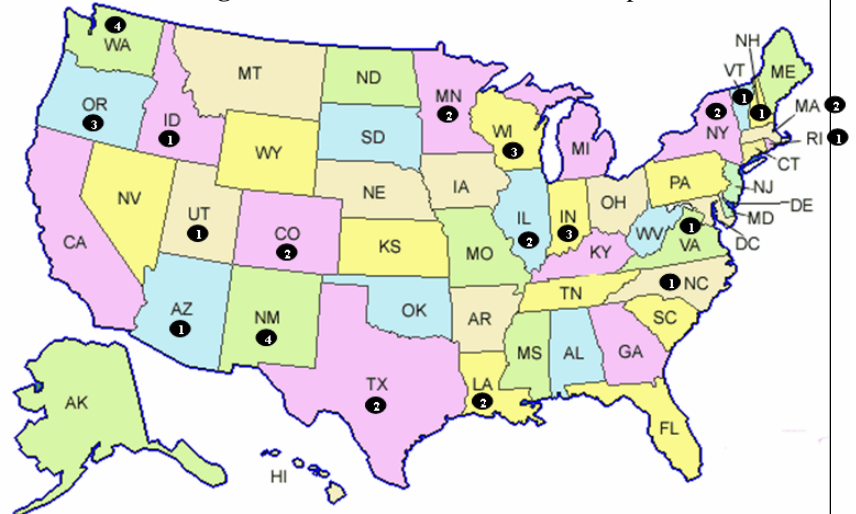


Of important interest regarding the respondents from “Other in State; the questionnaire design did not clearly define the regional options. Many respondents chose “Other in State” if they were from smaller towns just outside of the areas defined in the questionnaire.

Of the 11.3% who responded out of state:

- Western U.S. - 39%
- Central / Midwest U.S. - 27%
- Eastern U.S. - 20%
- 2% did not specify

Figure 2. Breakdown of out of-state respondents

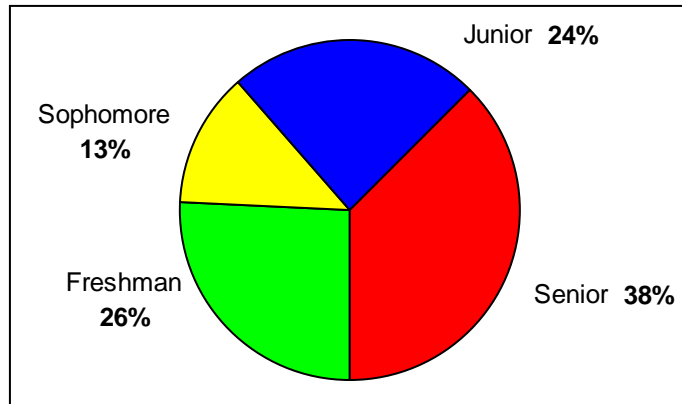


n Number of students from each state

The United States map below shows where students who responded “out of state” were from. The number within the black dot reflects how many respondents were from the respective state.

In further analyzing the target market, undergraduate students were evaluated based on their class level. The pie chart below presents the breakdown.

Figure 3. Percentage breakdown of students by class level



When asked “Are you interested in a MBA program?” we analyzed the interest by class level as presented in the table below.

Table 1. Undergraduates interested in an MBA

Class Level	Yes	No	Undecided
Freshman	14 15%	53 57%	26 28%
Sophomore	3 7%	28 60%	15 33%
Junior	11 13%	56 66%	18 21%
Senior	27 20%	82 61%	25 19%
All	55 15%	219 62%	84 23%

Of the undergraduate respondents, 15% are interested in an MBA program and 23% are undecided. Given that the most accessible target market to the HSU MBA program is current undergraduate students of HSU, these statistics indicate a potential internal market of 38%, which is approximately 2,430 undergraduates.

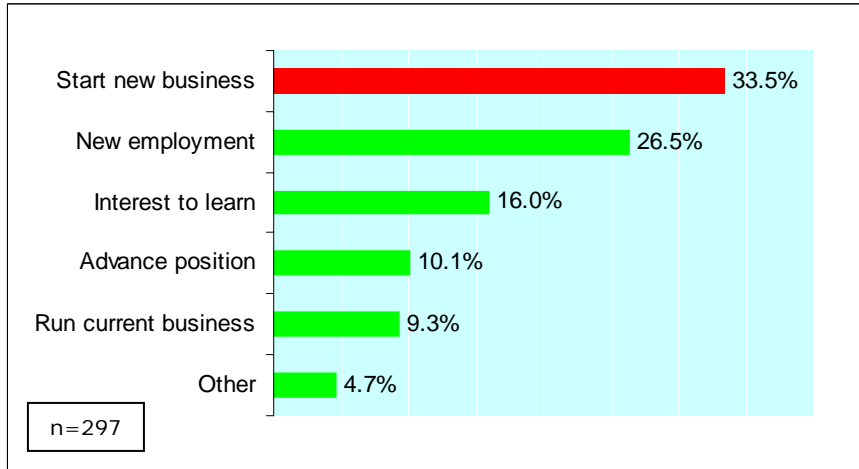
An important aspect of analyzing our target market is to understand the criteria which are most important to them when selecting a graduate program. Undergraduate students were asked to rate the level of importance based on certain criteria when selecting a graduate school. The results indicate that the most important criteria when selecting a graduate school is job opportunities. This conclusion was tested by running a Mann-Whitney statistical significance test and can be stated with 99% confidence. The second most important criterion is tuition cost, followed by location. Of least importance among these undergraduate students was class size. The results are reflected in the following chart.

Table 2. Level of criteria important for selecting a graduate school - Undergraduates

Criteria	Count	Not Important	Neutral	Important	Extremely Imp.	Importance Scale
Job Opportunities	351	15 4%	39 11%	113 32%	185 53%	
Tuition Cost	352	23 7%	68 19%	144 41%	117 33%	
Cost of living	350	21 6%	72 21%	165 47%	92 26%	
Location	351	24 7%	75 21%	146 42%	106 30%	
Time to complete	351	31 9%	73 21%	176 50%	71 20%	
Reputation	351	26 7%	92 27%	142 40%	91 26%	
Admissions Criteria	348	24 7%	107 31%	154 44%	63 18%	
Class Size	351	26 7%	110 32%	155 44%	60 17%	

When the undergraduate respondents were asked specifically how an MBA degree would be useful (Figure 4), the two most popular answers were to start a new business (33.5% response rate), and for new employment options (26.5% response rate).

Figure 4. Usefulness of an MBA program to the undergraduates.



The HSU MBA program currently targets non-business undergraduate students. This target market strategy is validated by the survey results of the current MBA students.

Table 3. Current MBA students' undergraduate school and major

Bachelor's Degree From	MBA Students	Business Major	Non-Bus. Majors
HSU	10 53%	3 37%	7 64%
Other University	9 47%	5 63%	4 36%
Total	19 100%	8 100%	11 100%

In analyzing the current MBA students and the important criteria in selecting a graduate school it was determined that location was the most important criteria (Table 3). Length of program and cost to attend were the next two most important criteria. The two criteria which were of least importance when selecting a graduate school were reputation and ease of application process.

Table 4. Level of criteria important for selecting a graduate school – Current MBA & Alumni

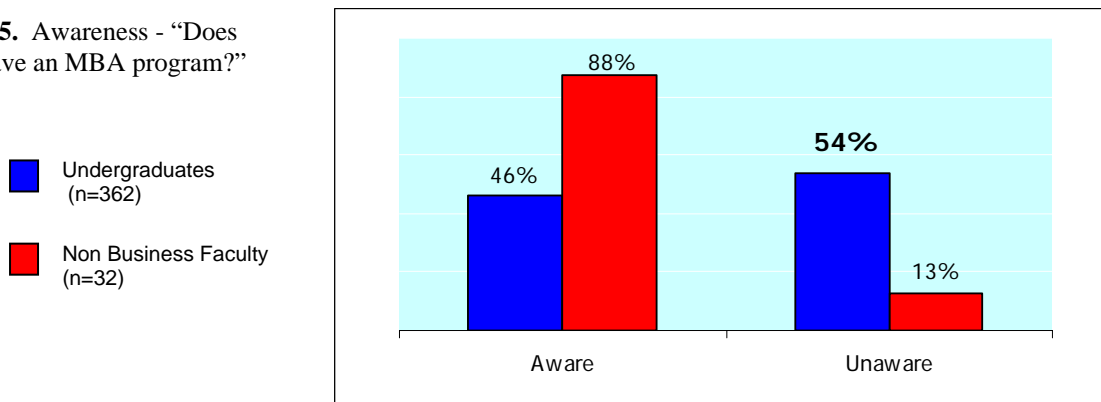
Alumni	Count	Not Imp	Neutral	Important	Ex. Imp	Importance Scale
Location	20	0	1	6	13	
Length of Program	20	0	3	10	7	
Tuition Cost	20	0	6	10	4	
Accreditation	20	2	5	10	3	
Class Size	20	2	5	12	1	
Ease of Applying	20	5	6	7	2	
Reputation	20	4	9	6	1	

Current MBA	Count	Not Imp	Neutral	Important	Ex. Imp	Importance Scale
Length of Program	20	0	2	9	9	
Location	20	3	1	7	9	
Tuition Cost	20	3	2	11	4	
Accreditation	20	1	10	8	1	
Class Size	20	2	10	7	1	
Ease of Applying	20	3	9	5	3	
Reputation	20	1	14	3	2	

Research Objective II: Analyze the effectiveness of the HSU MBA program promotion strategies

In order to gain perspective regarding the HSU MBA program’s effectiveness in reaching target audiences, questions regarding awareness were asked. The majority of the undergraduate students surveyed (54%) were unaware of the HSU MBA program. Of the non-business faculty surveyed, 88% were aware of the HSU MBA program.

Figure 5. Awareness - “Does HSU have an MBA program?”



In analyzing the methods by which the target populations were reached, questions were asked to determine where they learned about the program, and the effectiveness of the material provided. The following table details the responses of all the respondents.

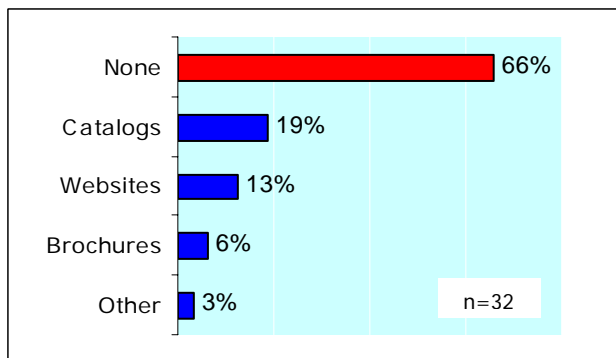
Table 5. Breakdown of methods used to learn about the MBA

Method	Undergraduate		Current MBA		Alumni	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
HSU Catalog	52	31.3%	8	40%	9	47.4%
HSU Website	39	23.5%	15	75%	7	36.8%
Family/Friend	34	20.5%	7	35%	3	15.8%
Faculty	24	14.5%	4	20%	6	31.6%
Don't Remember	23	13.9%	0	0%	1	5.3%
Advisor	21	12.7%	4	20%	3	15.8%
Other (Text)	18	10.8%	0	0%	0	0.0%
Current MBA Student	14	8.4%	0	0%	3	15.8%
Brochure	9	5.4%	2	10%	4	21.1%
CSU Mentor	6	3.6%	2	10%	1	5.3%
Alumni	5	3.0%	0	0%	0	0.0%
Other Website	1	0.6%	0	0%	1	5.3%
Total Counts	166		20		19	

Of the undergraduate respondents, 31.3% learned of the HSU MBA program via the course catalog, 23.5% via the HSU website, and 20.5% via family/friend. Of considerable interest, the brochure had only been viewed by about 5.4%. While in comparison, the current MBA students had learned of the program through the HSU website (75%), followed by the HSU catalog (40%) and family/friend (35%). Similar to the undergraduate respondents, the brochure had the lowest response rate of 10%. Finally, the alumni learned of the program primarily through the HSU Catalog, with a response of 47.4%, followed by the HSU website (36.8%), and faculty (31.6%). Surprisingly, 21.1% of these respondents had learned of the program through the brochure. There is a similarity between the undergraduates and the current MBA students' method in which they learned about the program when compared to the alumni, which we believe is due to the different time periods that the alumni attended the HSU MBA program.

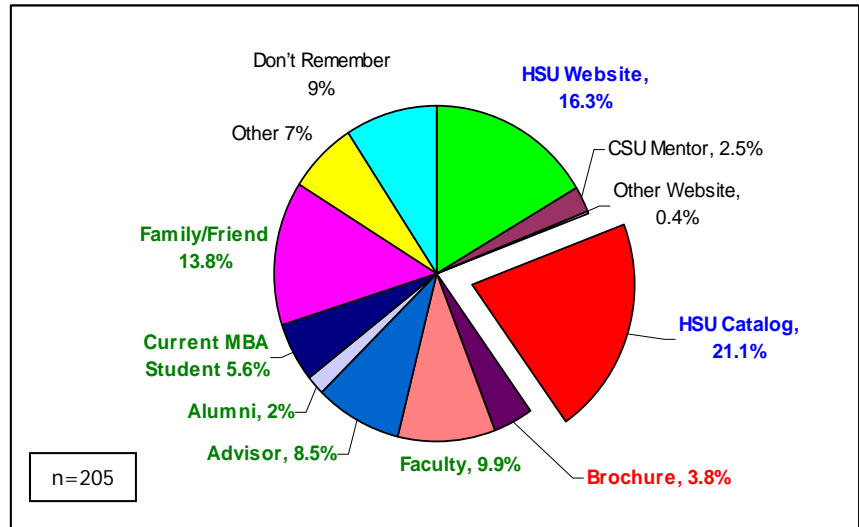
Of the non-business faculty surveyed, an astonishing 66% of the respondents have not seen any marketing material promoting the HSU MBA program (Figure 6).

Figure 6. MBA promotional material seen by the Non-Business Faculty



Overall, when comparing the marketing mediums on a weighted average approach, HSU course catalog is the single most commonly used source of information regarding the program (Figure 7).

Figure 7. The most common methods of learning about the MBA across all respondents



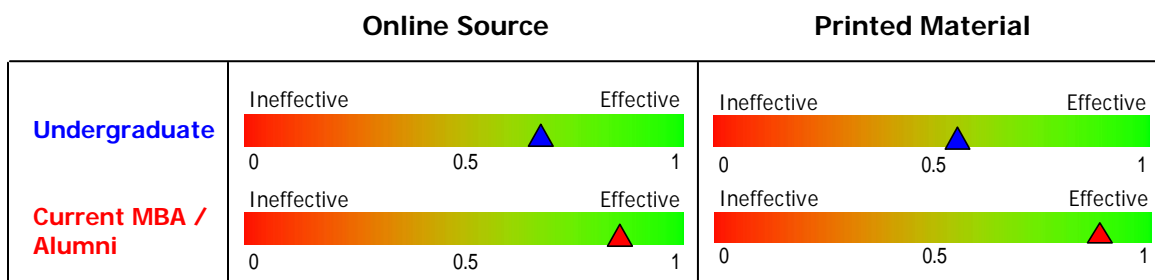
When combining these methods into categories of word-of-mouth, printed material, and online methods: word-of-mouth is the most common marketing method among all of the target populations.

Table 6. Overall - most common methods when combined (weighted average).

Medium	Weighted Count	%
Word of Mouth	82	40%
Printed Material	51	25%
Online	39	19%
Other	33	16%
Total	205	100%

In further analyzing each promotional method, the effectiveness level of the online and printed material methods were measured by asking the respondents to rank certain criteria (Figure 8). Of those undergraduates who learned of the program online, the overall rating of effectiveness was “somewhat effective.” Of the current MBA students and alumni who learned of the program online, the overall rating of effectiveness was also “somewhat effective,” however, the results were more skewed toward “extremely effective” when compared to the undergraduates. Of the undergraduates who learned of the program via printed material, the overall rating of effectiveness was “neutral,” whereas the overall rating of the current MBA students and alumni was “extremely effective.”

Figure 8. Effectiveness of online vs. printed promotional material



In analyzing the perception of the HSU MBA program among target populations, there were several questions designed to measure the respondents' perceptions regarding various criteria. Of considerable interest, 69% of undergraduate students surveyed had no knowledge of the respective criteria. Overall, the undergraduates' perceptions of the HSU MBA program were somewhat more positive than negative (Figure 9.1-A); whereas the current MBA students and alumni perceptions were extremely positive (Figure 9.1-B). An average of only 12% did not know anything about the respective criteria. With regards to current MBA students and alumni perceptions, all of the criteria ranked positively with the exception of reputation, which ranked negatively (Figure 10). The semantic differential graphs below depict the results among the different target populations' perceptions.

Figure 9.

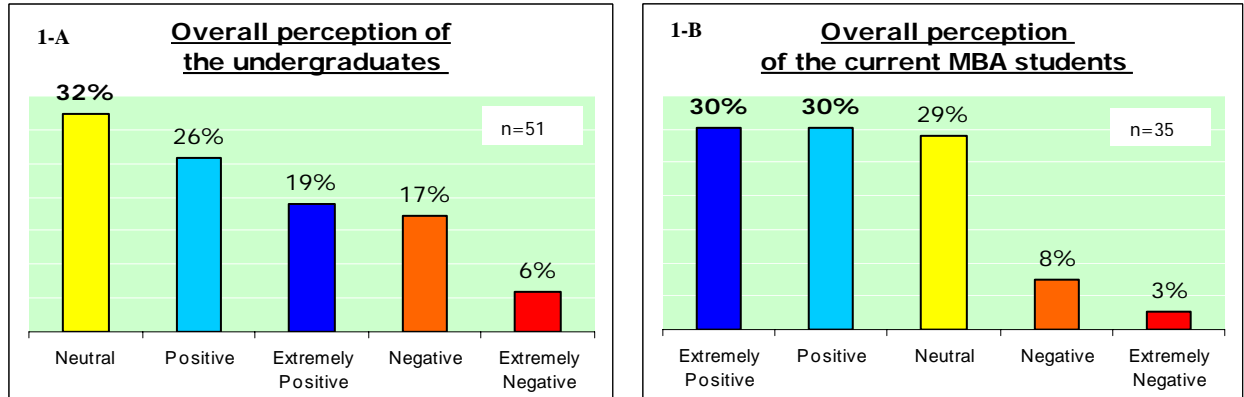
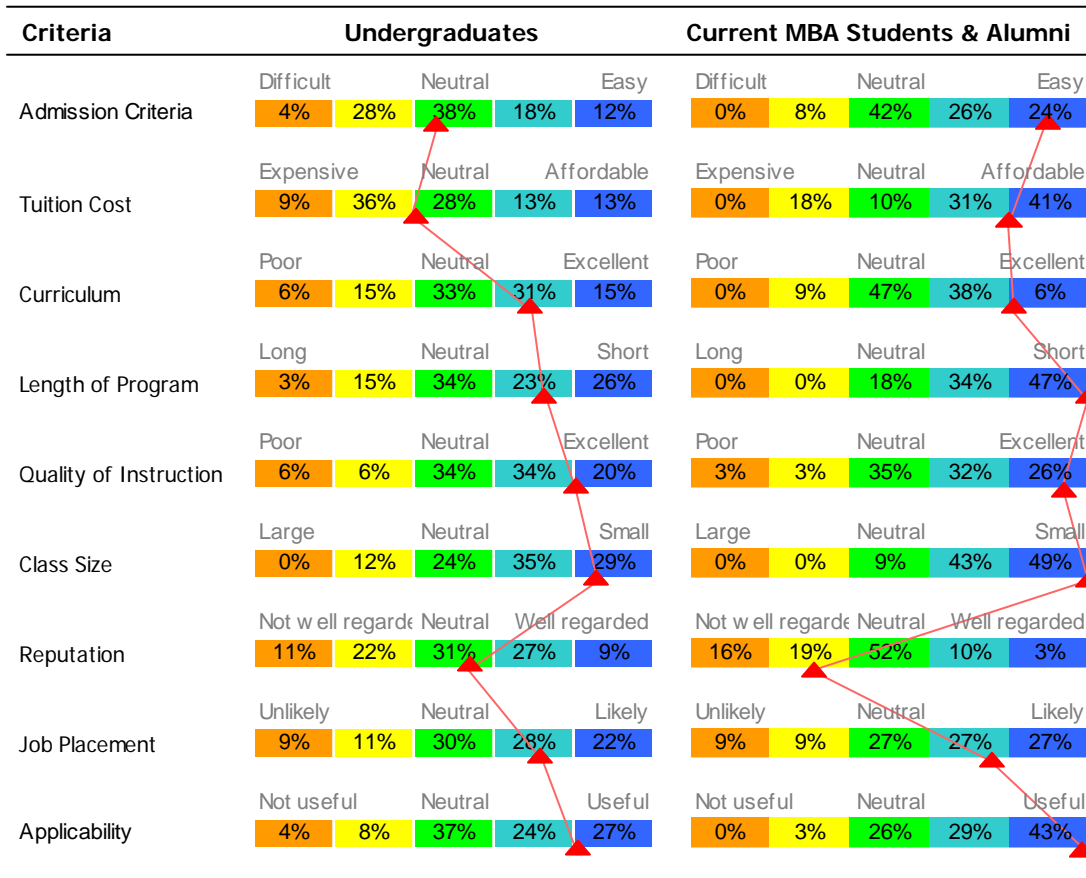


Figure 10. Perception of the HSU MBA criteria



Note
The percentages inside the colored rectangles represent the responses to each point in the scale. The red triangles represent the average net rating between positive and negative results, leaving out those who answered "neutral" since most respondents selected "neutral."

▲ Average ratings between positive and negative responses

Considering the HSU MBA program is designed for non-business undergraduate majors, it was of importance to determine the perception of whether or not the respondents were aware of this verity. When asked if the HSU MBA program was for business or non-business majors, only 38% of the undergraduate students were aware that the program is designed for non-business majors and 34% of the respondents did not know for whom it was designed. Of the respondents, 27% believed the program was designed exclusively for business majors (Figure 11). When asked a similar question, 79% of the non-business faculty respondents believed the program to be for business majors only (Figure 12). This finding validates the conclusion that there is a lack of awareness regarding the program among the undergraduates and non-business faculty.

Figure 11.
HSU MBA is only for business majors.

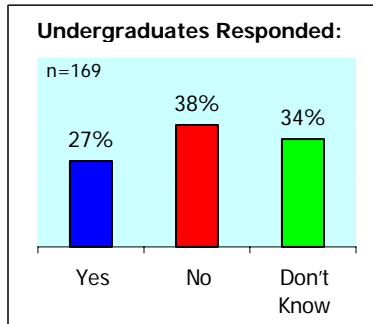
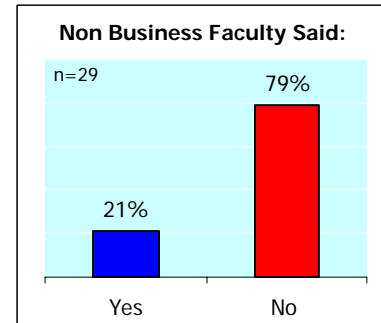


Figure 12.
HSU MBA is designed for non-business majors.

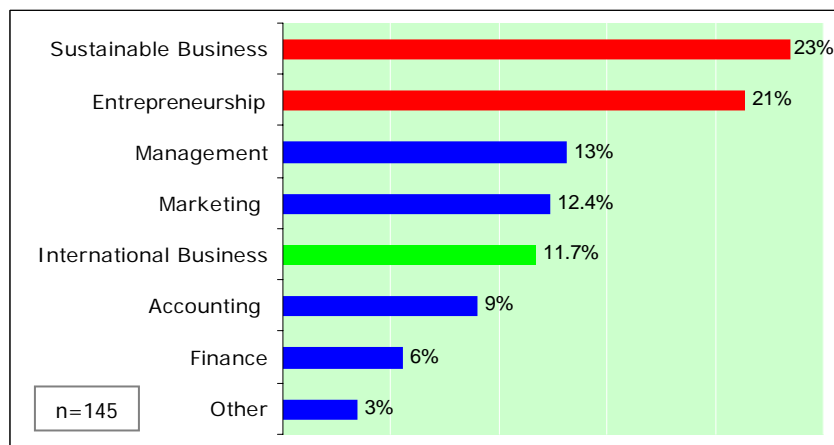


Research Objective III. Determine the demand for specializations within the MBA Program curriculum

In order to gain a more comprehensive understanding regarding concentration demand, each of the target populations were asked related questions, which were designed specifically for their different perspectives. Undergraduates were asked what areas of concentration they would like to see in an MBA program. Current MBA students and alumni were asked not only which concentration areas are preferred, but also how likely they would be to enroll in different concentrations. Non-business faculty members were asked which concentrations would be most beneficial to their students.

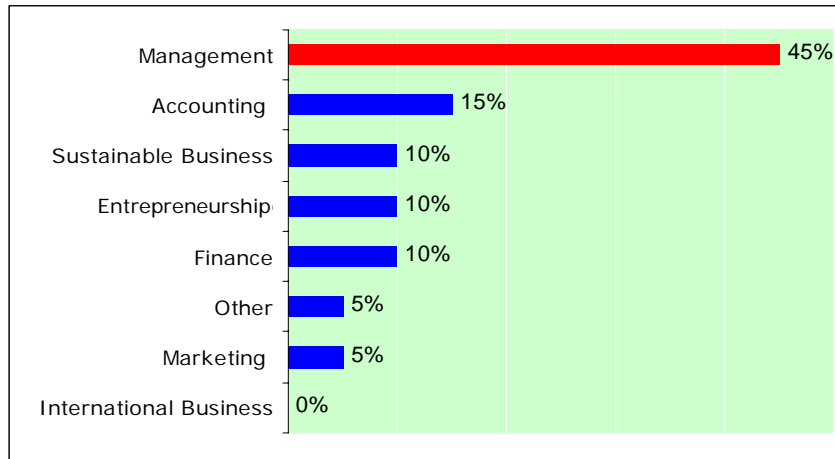
Of the undergraduate students who were interested or undecided in obtaining an MBA degree, the two most popular responses were Sustainable Business, with a 23% response rate, and Entrepreneurship, with 21% (Figure 13). Given the specific interest expressed by our client regarding demand for an International Business concentration, it is notable to point out that this concentration ranked 5th out of 8 options, and only 11.7% of the respondents showed interest.

Figure 13.
Preference for each concentration - Undergraduates



Of the current MBA students, the two most popular responses were Management, with the highest percentage (45%), and Accounting, with 15%. Finance, Entrepreneurship, and Sustainable Business each were equally preferred by this target group (Figure 14). With respect to the likelihood of actually enrolling in a concentration, the results were the same (Figure 16A).

Figure 14.
Preference for each concentration – Current MBA Students



Of alumni surveyed, the two most popular responses were Management and Entrepreneurship, with 26.3% response rates for each. With respect to the likelihood of actually enrolling in a concentration, the results were the same (Figure 16B).

Figure 15.
Preference for each concentration – Alumni

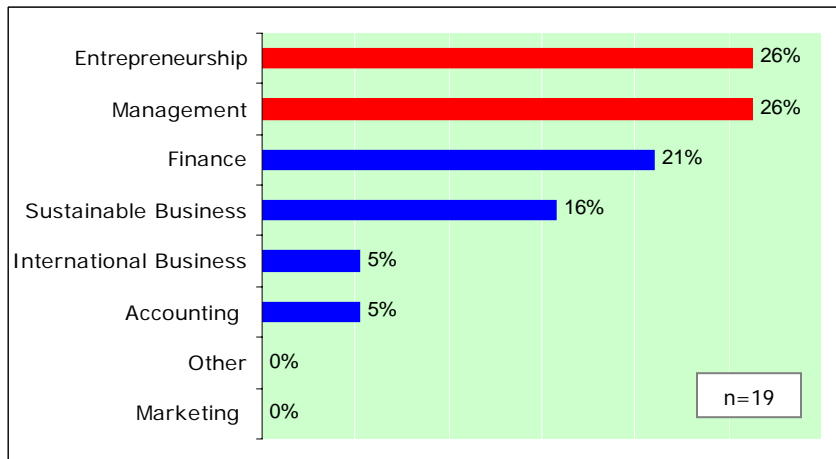
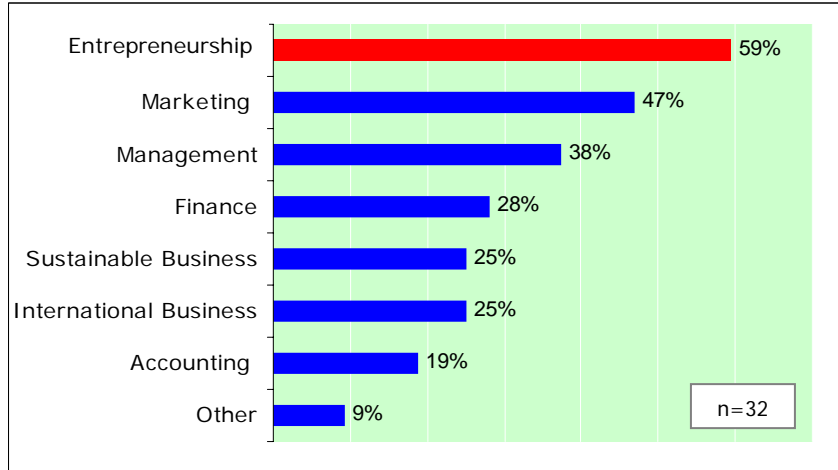


Figure 16.
Likelihood of enrolling in each concentration.

A	Current MBA	Count	Definitely		Probably		Neutral		Probably Not		Definitely Not		Likelihood Scale	
			Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	<< Definitely	Definitely Not >>
	Management	20	4	20%	10	50%	3	15%	1	5%	2	10%	[Scale]	
	Entrepreneurship	20	3	15%	8	40%	6	30%	2	10%	1	5%	[Scale]	
	Other	20	2	10%	1	5%	0	0%	1	5%	0	0%	[Scale]	
	Accounting	20	3	15%	9	45%	3	15%	3	15%	2	10%	[Scale]	
	Marketing	20	3	15%	5	25%	6	30%	3	15%	3	15%	[Scale]	
	Finance	20	2	10%	5	25%	5	25%	6	30%	2	10%	[Scale]	
	Sustainable Business	20	4	20%	3	15%	3	15%	6	30%	4	20%	[Scale]	
	International Business	20	3	15%	2	10%	7	35%	4	20%	4	20%	[Scale]	
1 0.5 0														
B	Alumni	Count	Definitely		Probably		Neutral		Probably Not		Definitely Not		Likelihood Scale	
			Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	<< Definitely	Definitely Not >>
	Management	20	6	30%	10	50%	4	20%	0	0%	0	0%	[Scale]	
	Entrepreneurship	13	4	31%	2	15%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	[Scale]	
	Entrepreneurship	19	7	37%	5	26%	2	11%	4	21%	1	5%	[Scale]	
	Marketing	20	2	10%	5	25%	7	35%	5	25%	1	5%	[Scale]	
	Sustainable Business	18	4	22%	4	22%	3	17%	4	22%	3	17%	[Scale]	
	International Business	20	2	10%	5	25%	6	30%	5	25%	2	10%	[Scale]	
	Finance	19	3	16%	4	21%	4	21%	7	37%	1	5%	[Scale]	
	Accounting	19	2	11%	4	21%	2	11%	8	42%	3	16%	[Scale]	
1 0.5 0														

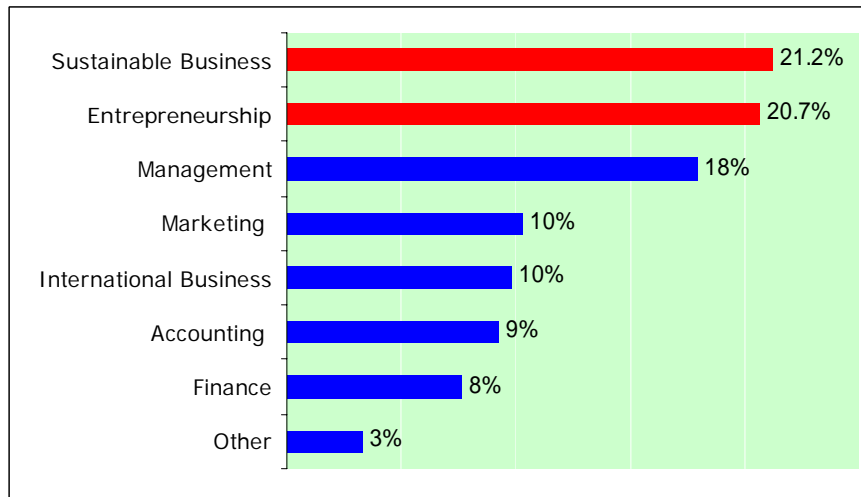
Non-business faculty responded that the most beneficial concentrations for their students would be Entrepreneurship, with a 59% response rate, Marketing with 47%, and Management, with 38% (Figure 17).

Figure 17.
Concentrations that would most benefit students of the non-business faculty.



Overall, the most popular concentration among the undergraduates, current MBA students and alumni is Sustainable Business with the highest weighted average preference rate of 21.2%, followed by Entrepreneurship and Management, with 20.7% and 18%, respectively (Figure 18).

Figure 18.
Most preferred concentrations of the overall targeted populations.



Note
Distribution of weights for the undergraduates, MBA students and alumni were 79%, 11% and 10% respectively. Each group's percentage distributions among the concentrations were multiplied by the weight, and totaled for the overall figures

In consideration of the specific interest expressed by the client regarding demand for a Sustainable Business coursework, current MBA students were asked about their interest in both a two-year Sustainable MBA, and a one-semester certification curriculum. In regards to a Sustainable MBA, a vast majority, 70%, of current MBA students stated that they were not interested. When asked about interest in a certification curriculum, 50% showed interest (Figure 19). When alumni were asked the same questions, 47% showed interest for both the Sustainable MBA and certification curriculum (Figure 20).

Figure 19. Current MBA students interest in Sustainable Business concentrations if offered at HSU.

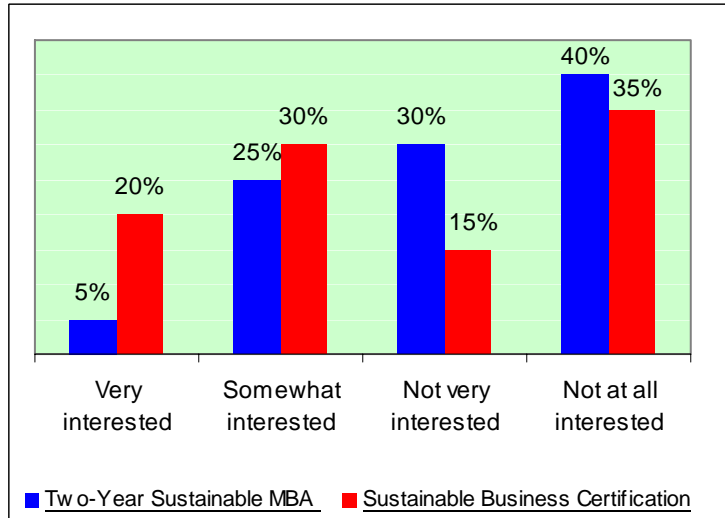
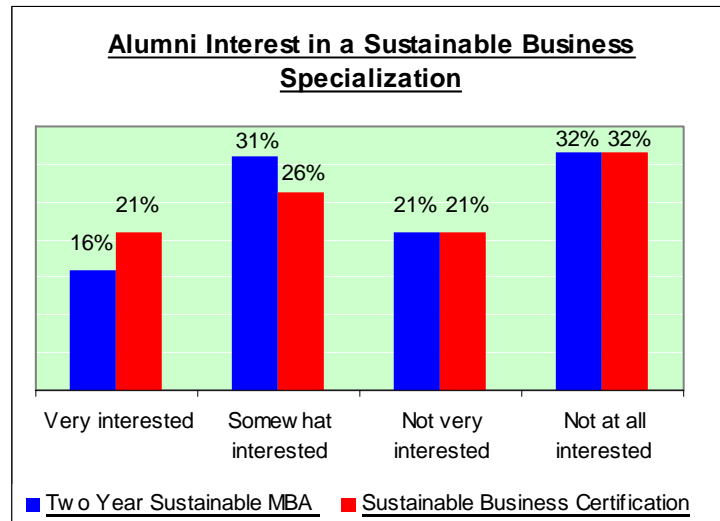


Figure 20. Alumni interest in Sustainable Business concentrations if offered at HSU.



Other Key Findings

Having identified a substantial target market for the MBA program through the undergraduate population at HSU, it was necessary to determine what additional factors might cause undesirable enrollment in the program. Therefore, a comparative study was conducted to determine whether there is a relationship between the respondents' current perception of the HSU MBA program and what the respondents believed were important when selecting a graduate school.

Figure 21. Selection criteria: importance vs. the perception of the Undergraduates.

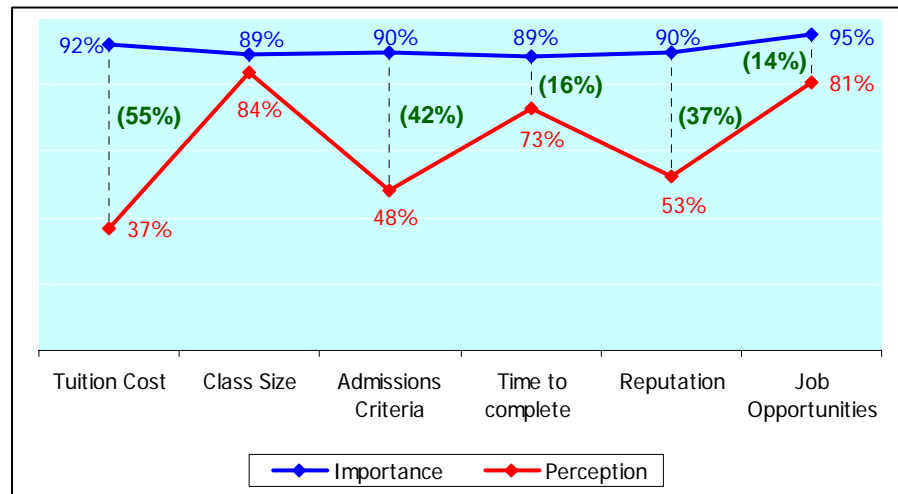
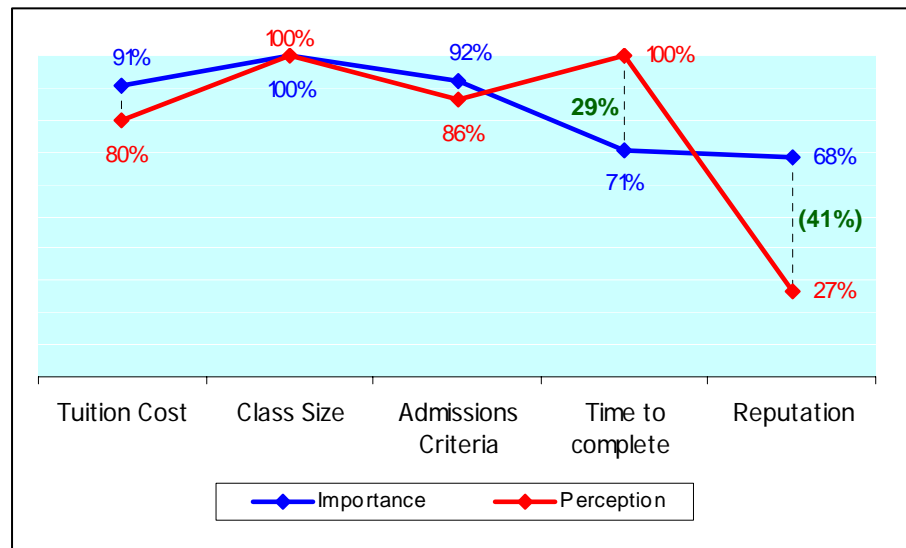


Figure 22. Selection criteria: importance vs. the perception of the Current MBA students & Alumni.



Note

The two populations, current MBA students and alumni, were together for the purpose of comparison with the undergraduates who have had no experience with the HSU MBA program.

The results in Figure 21 show that the undergraduates rated every criterion with highest importance; however, their current perception is substantially lower in most cases. The higher deviations from criterion importance ratings suggest that those students interested in an MBA are unlikely to enroll. Conversely, the current MBA students and alumni (Figure 22) rated tuition cost, class size, and admission criteria fairly high, while at the same time, believed that HSU's MBA program was meeting their expectations. The consistent positive perception and importance rating is a result of the MBA students and alumni being experienced with the true characteristics of the HSU MBA program. The less knowledgeable undergraduate students' perceptions tend to be more negative, and unless the perceptions are changed through effective marketing and communication, enrollment may continue to be stagnant.

Customer Satisfaction

To determine whether or not participants are satisfied with the HSU MBA program, several target populations were asked three different customer satisfaction questions. First, non-business faculty, alumni, and current MBA students were asked whether or not they had recommended the program. Second, non-business faculty were asked the likelihood of recommending the program in the future; and third, current MBA students and alumni were asked if they had the chance to do it again, would they still obtain an MBA from HSU.

Roughly 20% of the non-business faculty members have recommended the program, 73% of the alumni sample has recommended the program, and 55% of the current MBA students have given a positive recommendation (Figure 23). When the non-business faculty members were asked the likelihood of recommending the program in the future, 57% of the respondents were undecided, and 39% were either likely or highly likely (Figure 24) to recommend it. When the current MBA students and alumni were asked if they had the chance, would they still obtain an MBA from HSU, 65% of the current MBA sample said “yes,” and 95% of the alumni said “yes” (Figure 25).

Figure 23.

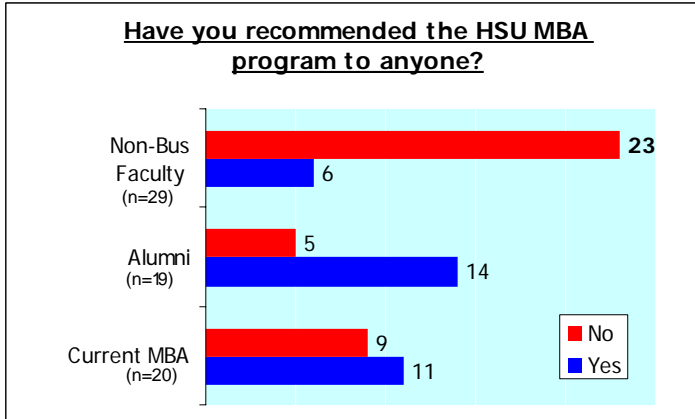


Figure 24.

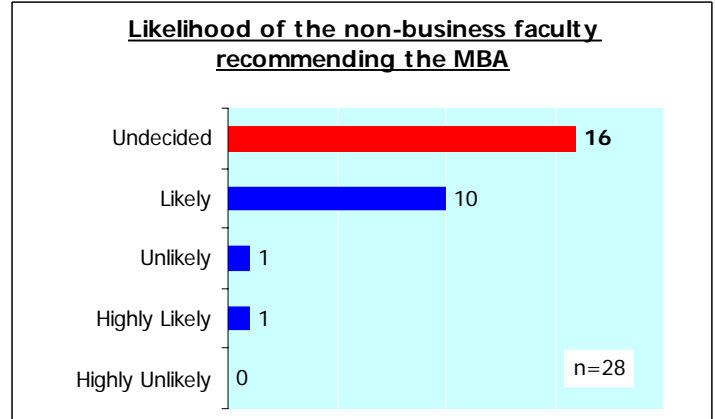
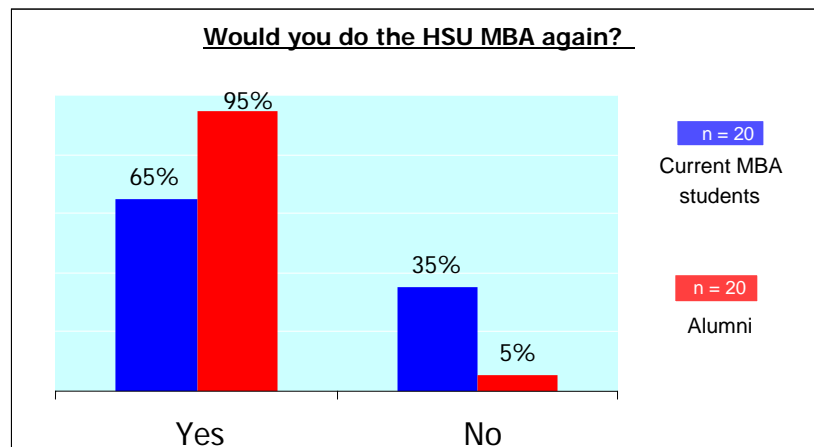


Figure 25.



Limitations

After running all the descriptive statistics, tallies, and percentages, it was important to further analyze the data by running cross tabulations and statistical significance tests. Of the questionnaires that had an insufficient sample size “n,” cross tabulations yielded little useful information, which also could not be tested for statistical significance due to the rule of 5 (chi-squared). Additionally, a small “n” inflated some of the percentages and made it difficult to establish accurate, comparative results across questionnaires. The questionnaires affected were: non-business faculty, alumni, and current MBA students.

With regards to the non-business faculty questionnaire, respondents may have been slightly biased in their opinions regarding a program within the university in which they are employed.

In the case of the undergraduate student questionnaire, responses to some of the questions may have been either erroneously answered, or lightheartedly answered. These particular questions were not recorded and used in the analysis.

On the undergraduate student, current MBA student, and alumni questionnaires, question design made it difficult to statistically compare criteria, as a result of scaling being different from question to question. (i.e.: 3a vs. 3b vs. 3c vs. 3s, etc.). By making scaling uniform, statistical analysis would have been able to determine whether one criterion was statistically significantly more important than other criteria.

Due to the marketing research being done over one semester, the limitation of time was a significant factor. This limitation affected response rates and overall breadth of study.

Since the questionnaire e-mailed to the non-business faculty members and the MBA alumni was not in an interactive format, respondents were unable to complete the questionnaire on-line. Those respondents who did not print out the survey to answer the questions, either failed to respond, or contacted a team member to complete the questionnaire by phone, which could result in some bias among responses.

Depth Interviews:

Methodology

Local business community members were interviewed in an effort to determine the overall knowledge of the MBA program at HSU. Humboldt County was divided into geographic regions with a concentration based on those areas within the county with the highest business concentrations. The geographic areas covered included Arcata, Eureka, and Fortuna. In each of these areas, at least five businesses were randomly selected to be interviewed using judgment sampling. A total of 20 businesses were selected and interviewed. These included a cross-section of various local businesses such as financial services industries, small business establishments, as well as local offices of corporate conglomerates. The industry types varied and the types of small business categories represented included martial arts, a restaurant, brewery, hardware store, sporting goods store, advertising agency, a video store, a food coop, and a community college. The size ranged from businesses with as few as four employees, to businesses with over 50 employees. Owners or managers with decision-making authority were targeted to be interviewed. A script of questions was devised to ensure that team members asked the same questions. Businesses were contacted via telephone, the purpose of the call was stated, and respondents were asked for their participation in the survey. Interviews were scheduled at the respondents' convenience. Respondents who were willing to participate were interviewed either by telephone or face-to-face, depending on preference.

Members of the business faculty were interviewed regarding their perceptions about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to the MBA program at HSU. Again, a script was used to ensure consistency in questioning procedures. Judgment sampling was utilized in selection of faculty members to interview. Faculty members were contacted to solicit their participation. Interviews were scheduled and conducted in a face-to-face manner.

Refer to Appendix H for a copy of each interview script, including the questions asked during these interviews.

Results

Input was requested from the local business community regarding two of our marketing research objectives.

- MBA program curriculum awareness
- Business concentrations which might prove useful in the business community

The responses for the twenty business owners indicate that the majority of the owners are aware of the program. However, there has been little contact with promotional materials. The one respondent who had seen promotional material, referred to the website as the source of information. Given that 70% of the respondents were aware of the program, it can be concluded that this target population primarily learned through word-of-mouth. (See Table 7.)

Table 7. Program Awareness & Perception

	Yes		No	
Are you Aware of MBA Program?	14	70%	6	30%
Have you seen Promotion Materials?	1	5%	19	95%
Are you Familiar with MBA Curriculum?	5	25%	15	75%
Would you Recommend?	2	14.3%	12	85.7%

When asked which specific concentrations should be offered in the program’s curriculum, the respondents’ answers are listed in Table 8 below:

Table 8. Summary of Concentration Responses

Concentration	# of Respondents
Accounting	5
Finance	2
Management	2
Marketing	0
Sustainability	1
Entrepreneurship	1
International Business	1
Human Resources Mgmt	1
Research	1
Statistics	1

The concentration area which received the most responses was Accounting, followed by Finance and Management which both received two responses. Marketing which was offered as an example in the question asked was not mentioned by any respondents. In addition, human resources, statistics, and research were listed by respondents as possible areas of concentration. While one respondent did not have an opinion regarding a specific concentration, she felt strongly that curriculum should mirror “real life experiences.” Other feedback received from various respondents was that the program curriculum should offer “real life applications of the business concepts” and “classes should be geared toward teaching students how to run a business.”

There was an overwhelmingly positive response, by those interviewed, expressing an interest in an internship/work-study program. These results are shown in Table 9 below.

Table 9. Relationship with HSU Results

	Yes		No	
Existing Relations with HSU Business Department?	2	10%	18	90%
Existing Relations with HSU Career Service Center?	6	30%	14	70%
Interest Internship/Work Study program?	16	80%	4	20%

Non-business faculty members of HSU were also interviewed in an effort to gain a broader perspective regarding program attributes such as strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The convenience of a one-year program was unanimously listed as a primary strength. In considering the responses regarding weaknesses, the overall consensus among the faculty members were related to program curriculum. The responses from these questions are summarized in Table 10 below.

Table 10. Interview responses regarding S.W.O.T. information

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
General management curriculum	Lack of course flexibility	HSU students-target population	AACSB and image/perception
One-year time to complete	Limited foundation courses	Local community -target population	Insufficient resources
Location for Humboldt residents	University mandates	Add a concentration area	Transition of faculty
Small class size	Weak curriculum	Sustainability	Lack of funding
Accessibility to faculty	Limited faculty size	Promotion (currently lacking)	Poor administration & P.R.
	Cross-sectioned courses		Competition

Business faculty members were also asked questions regarding inquiry from prospective students. In terms of prospective student inquiry frequency, the responses varied. While one faculty member receives daily inquiries, others rarely receive inquiries. The primary information that is requested by these students is related to program structure, application process, and accreditation. One faculty member responded that students usually are clarifying program structure, “students usually cannot believe they can get an MBA without having an undergrad degree in business.”

In terms of promotion by faculty members, respondents were asked if they have recommended the program. One had recommended the program. Similar to recommendation responses, only one faculty member actively promotes the program, while others simply inform students about it. A faculty member who actually promotes the program says, “I think we have a high quality MBA program. You can’t beat the cost, do it in one year, with small class sizes!” One faculty member does not promote the program to students who are looking to specialize in a particular area of business.

Interview responses, from both local business community and business faculty, are included in Appendix I.

Limitations

One of the limitations regarding the in-depth interviews of the local business community involved the selection of those businesses interviewed. The goal was to interview owners or managers with decision-making authority in the local business community. In two of the businesses interviewed, the managers stated they had decision-making authority; however, it was determined during the interview that their authority did not include the ability to establish internships or work practicums with the School of Business.

Our goal was to interview five members of the business faculty. Due to scheduling issues, we were unable to obtain sufficient interviews of full-time faculty to meet our goal. Another limitation involves the possible perceived bias of the respondents. Since all of the faculty members interviewed work in the School of Business, they may not have provided as objective and complete answers as they would if they were not so closely related to the department.

An overall limitation for both the local business community members and members of the business faculty involves the small sample size. An increased sample size in each of these populations could have yielded more robust and less biased information relevant to this research project.

Situation Analysis

Market Analysis:

The primary geographic market in which Humboldt State University (HSU) competes is within the state of California. In an on-line search performed at www.CaliforniaColleges.edu, there were 45 institutions across California that offer a graduate program in business. Of these universities, 8 were located in Northern California; however, there is not an MBA program within 140 miles of HSU.

In Fall 2005, there were over 10,000 students enrolled in MBA programs across California. Of these students, 4,576 were enrolled within the California State University (CSU) System; HSU accounted for 21 of these students. Students enrolled in MBA programs usually have professional goals which include becoming more competitive among applicants in the job market, increasing salary range, changing career path or industry, and improving leadership and entrepreneurial skills. The MBA student market can be broken out into several segments including full-time student with business undergraduate degree, full-time student with a non-business undergraduate degree, and working professional or executive part-time students.

In an effort to cater to these different segments, universities across the nation, including California, have implemented various types of MBA program formats. These program types include General MBA, Specialized MBA, Executive MBA, and On-line MBA. The most popular is the general MBA, which is designed to teach and orientate the student in all functional areas of business. For full-time students who have a business undergraduate degree, these programs can usually be completed within one year of study. For full-time students who have a non-business undergraduate degree, these programs usually take two years to complete because business prerequisite courses must be met prior to taking graduate level courses. Many universities also offer a Specialized MBA degree, which allow the student to gain increased knowledge within a specific area of business, which include Accounting, Finance, Marketing, Entrepreneurship, Management, International Business, and Sustainable Business. Specialized MBA programs are often targeted to students with business background, and usually take the full-time MBA student two years to complete. This program type is structured in the same format as the general MBA, course requirements in all areas of business but also require additional course units to be taken within the specialization area. Another type of MBA program is the Executive MBA program which is usually targeted to working professionals and executives wishing to improve or renew their business skills but require flexibility within the schedule. These programs most often offer night and weekend class schedules, utilize both

on-line and in-class teaching methods, implement a cohort group learning environment, and require work experience for acceptance. For the working part-time student who requires the most flexibility, some schools offer strictly on-line programs. These programs allow the student to logon at their convenience to view lectures and rely specifically on internet based methods of instruction, communication, and learning environment. While these programs are growing in popularity, there is still debate regarding the quality of the learning experience and their reputation among recruiters and employers.

The HSU MBA program currently targets the market-segment of non-business undergraduates. The most convenient and accessible customer market for the MBA program is the undergraduate students of HSU. HSU students are typically California residents, and are from areas including Humboldt County, Bay Area, Sacramento, Los Angeles, and San Diego. While HSU non-business undergraduate student has experienced stagnant growth, the HSU average enrollment of non-business undergraduate students for the last 5 years is approximately 6,200 students. As of Spring semester 2006, HSU has approximately 5,800 undergraduate students enrolled in non-business majors and 489 of these were undeclared. For the academic year 2004/05, HSU issued 1,598 degrees of which 1,329 were issued to non-business majors.

The HSU MBA program has also experienced stagnant growth and even enrollment decline, as is also the trend among MBA programs CSU system-wide. MBA programs included in the CSU System have experienced a decreasing trend, where Fall semester enrollments decreased by 6.2% in 2003, 8.5% in 2004, and 4.7% in 2005. In consideration of these contracting market trends and anticipating student demands for obtaining an MBA, the MBA job market is the most direct indicator. Employer recruiting activity among college business schools is a way to measure this indicator. A severe downturn of MBA recruiting began in 2001, following the internet bubble burst and 9/11 terror attacks, which directly impacted enrollment into MBA programs across the United States. With many MBA undergraduates unemployed and decreased supply of jobs in the MBA market, the number of students entering MBA programs decreased nationwide.

Although there has been a lean MBA hiring period over the past several years, college career counselors and employment recruiters believe the MBA job market is positioned for recovery. In a survey of business school placement directors which was performed for Winter semester 2006, the MBA Career Services Council found that the recruiting activity among 75% of the schools has increased, 25% reported recruiting activity is the same, and no one reported a recruiting activity decrease. According to the survey results, the primary business functions for which MBA recruiting activity and student interest have increased are Finance, Accounting, Consulting, and Marketing. These recruiting trend results indicate that we can anticipate increasing MBA enrollments within the market for the near future.

Another important market trend is the increasing popularity in coursework focusing on topics such as ethics, corporate social responsibility, and environmental sustainability. The Aspen Institute, whose mission is to develop leaders for a sustainable global society, and the World Resource Institute, who strive to create profitable solutions to environment and development challenges, teamed up to perform extensive market research during 1999. This research was developed to examine MBA Programs globally and assess the level of education in topics regarding sustainability. The group published a report called "Beyond Grey Pinstripes" which spotlights full-time MBA Programs and faculty that lead the way in integrating issues of social environmental stewardship into business school curriculum. The report "Beyond Grey Pinstripes" is now published biannually and is used by tens of thousands of student, academics, and major corporations. Sponsors of "Beyond Grey Pinstripes" include Alco Foundation, American Express, Citigroup, Ford, Johnson & Johnson, Microsoft, Motorola, Prudential Foundation, and United Technologies.

The "Beyond Grey Pinstripes 2005" survey found that an increasing number of MBA Programs surveyed (54% in 2005, up from 45% in 2003 and 34% in 2001) require one or more courses in ethics, corporate social responsibility, sustainability, or business and society. During an interview published in an article by SustainableBusiness.com, Meghan Chapple, manager of the business education sustainable enterprise program at WRI, stated that students are showing an increasing interest in the role of business in society, and a higher percentage of graduate schools now have required courses in sustainability, ethics, and social responsibility. The growth in the "greening" of MBA programs is due to students growing interest, as well as, corporation demands for candidates with this knowledge. More than 2,000 companies issue annual social responsibility reports, and in the wake of the many corporate scandals, many Fortune500 companies are looking for leaders who can take a holistic approach to problem solving to gain competitive advantage.

The “Beyond Grey Pinstripes, 2005 Ranking of MBA Programs” top 5 schools were Stanford (USA), ESADE (Spain), York (Canada), ITESM (Mexico), and Notre Dame (USA). Two schools who made the list which are geographically close to HSU are UC Berkeley, who ranked 11, and Portland State, who ranked 20. The ranking was compiled from survey results which involved 600 full-time MBA programs across six continents. Schools were ranked based rating scores among four categories, which include student opportunity, student experience, course content, and faculty research.

While most of the business schools included in the “Beyond Grey Pinstripes” survey are adding these types of classes and course topics slowly, some Universities are adding Sustainable Business as an area of Specialization within the MBA program. Two model programs that have experienced success in implementing Sustainable MBA programs are New College of California, located in San Francisco, California, and Bainbridge Graduate Institute, located in Seattle, Washington. Bainbridge Graduate Institute (BGI) began offering the Sustainable MBA in Fall of 2002. The program launched with 14 students and enrollment has increased to 78 students as of Fall 2005. Other California schools that are reportedly developing plans to offer this specialization include University of California (UC) Berkeley, UC Irvine, UC Los Angeles, UC Riverside, and UC Davis.

Product Analysis:

The HSU MBA program was redesigned by the School of Business during Fall of 2000. The two-year program was revised due to low enrollment. The current program is designed as a one-year (three-semester) program which is specifically tailored to accommodate students from any undergraduate major. Most students enrolled in the MBA program are full-time; however, some complete it on a part-time basis. As of Fall 2005, there were 21 students enrolled in the program.

Presently a day program, HSU MBA courses are generally offered during morning and afternoon hours. MBA class sizes are small (15 to 20 students), which enhances the quality of education offered and allows students more accessibility to professors. The program’s faculty all have a doctoral degree or the equivalent, with expertise in the areas that they teach. The MBA program provides students with the necessary knowledge and skills in business management to effectively face the challenges of today’s highly competitive business environment. The HSU MBA program is a part of the California State University (CSU) system and the program’s tuition costs are considerably lower than the national average for MBA programs. At present, the MBA program is accredited by the Western Association of Collegiate Schools of Business (WACSB). While HSU School of Business has not received accreditation from the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), the client indicated the possibility of seeking this accreditation for both the undergraduate and graduate programs at some point in the future.

General admissions requirements must be met for admission into the HSU MBA program and are as follows:

- Completion of a BA or BS degree,
- Minimum score of 500 on the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT), or Graduate Record Exam (GRE) scores of at least 430 verbal, 570 quantitative, and 4 on the analytic components
- International students-minimum score of 550 on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), or 213 or higher on the computer-based TOEFL
- Minimum undergraduate G.P.A. of 2.75
- Approval of the graduate coordinator

In addition to the general admission requirements, students must complete 24 units of business undergraduate prerequisite courses prior to beginning the Master’s level courses. These courses are equivalent to a minor in business and can be taken while completing undergraduate studies. The required prerequisite courses are in the areas of economics, business law, statistics, marketing, accounting, finance, and management.

The MBA program consists of 32 units of core courses. Three four-unit courses are offered in both Fall and Spring semesters, as well as 8-units of Capstone courses during the Summer semester. In order to meet graduation requirements,

students must complete the required courses, maintain a 3.0 minimum G.P.A., as well as a minimum grade of “C” to receive credit. The program curriculum schedule for the HSU MBA program is as follows:

Fall Semester: MBA 600 International Economics
 MBA 610 Data Acquisition/Analysis/Presentation
 MBA 620 Managerial Accounting

Spring Semester: MBA 630 Managerial Marketing
 MBA 640 Managerial Finance
 MBA 650 Management Theory

Summer Semester: MBA 675 Social Environment/ Ethics
 MBA 679 Strategic Management
 MBA 692 Master’s Degree Project

Promotion Analysis:

Promotion methods employed by the HSU Business School for the MBA program are various internet websites, HSU Catalog, and word-of-mouth. The primary tool of promotion to prospective students is the HSU School of Business website (<http://www.humboldt.edu/~sbe/>). As observed by the Competitor Communication Study performed during this project, prospective students inquiring about the program via e-mail receive a response with links to program information (www.humboldt.edu/~sbe/mba/admission.html) and (www.humboldt.edu/~sbe/mba/1yr_prog.html), application information (www.humboldt.edu/admissions/), and fee information (www.humboldt.edu/~fiscal/fees/shtml). The responses to the prospective student were cordial, directive to information, and offered further assistance for additional questions; however, the program was far from actively promoted. At no time during the study did the prospective student receive a passionate “sales pitch” explaining why she should select HSU, or even follow-up communication to solicit further information. One reason why providing website links to an e-mail inquiry is not effective promotion is that, more than likely, the e-mail address was obtained from the “request information” link on the School of Business website, and therefore the prospective student has been sent back to where he/she started.

In reviewing the HSU School of Business website, it is displayed in an informational format, contains minimal graphics, and does not give the prospective student the vision of being an MBA student at HSU. While the prospective student must go through various click patterns and read closely, the primary promotional points can be found on the website: small class size, friendly non-competitive atmosphere, accessible professors, excellent academic standards, lower costs, recreational and cultural activities, student projects on campus and in the community, companies who employ recent HSU graduates, and student success stories. Awards, achievements, and events promoted on the website are: Money magazine’s listing of “top educational values in the country”, HSU business student’s national outcomes assessment test rank of top 20% among other U.S. business schools, and the annual Watson Lecture series. In reviewing the faculty section of the website, the listing is not up-to-date and is inconsistent with the areas-of-expertise list. In analyzing the website as a promotional tool, while it does provide easy access to information, there is no clear marketing message, and it lacks visual enthusiasm. In comparing the HSU School of Business website to competitor websites, it is not memorable, nor does it stand out.

Other internet websites where HSU is promoted are www.californiacolleges.edu, www.csumentor.edu, www.Gradschools.com, www.GradSource.com, and Peterson’s Guides. These sites provide brief summaries and statistics about the program, as well as provide links to the HSU School of Business website and/or the HSU Graduate Studies website. In reviewing the content of these websites, information is not up-to-date and some are inconsistent.

The School of Business does not have printed promotional materials designed specifically for the MBA program; such as brochures, viewbooks, or newsletters, that are currently distributed to prospective students or community members.

Given the lack of active advertisement and printed promotional material for the MBA program, the school relies on word-of-mouth promotion among the local community.

Copies of the HSU School of Business website, as well as the School of Business brochure can be reviewed in Appendix J.

Competitive Analysis:

In an effort to better understand the competitive positioning of the HSU MBA program, a complete analysis has been performed by comparing HSU against its top five competitors. The competitors selected for the analysis are those specified as most important by our client, and are similar in geographic location and target market. The competitors included in this analysis are:

- Humboldt State University
- Sonoma State University
- CSU Chico
- CSU Sacramento
- UC Davis
- UC Santa Cruz

The specific areas which define the competitive environment in the MBA market are:

- Product Diversity and Quality
- Student Cost / Benefit Perception
- Promotional Effectiveness
- Market Share

Product diversity and quality is the primary area of competition within the MBA environment. An MBA program that is able to offer quality education which can also meet the specific needs of its individual students is considered the most competitive. Competitive advantage factors within the area of product diversity are: number of different program types offered, number of specialization degrees offered, number of courses offered, and program format flexibility options. Competitive advantage factors within the area of product quality are represented by accreditation, admissions criteria, and class size.

Student / cost benefit perception is an important competitive position because it is directly related to the student decision-making process when selecting an MBA program. Factors students initially consider when selecting an MBA program are the cost of tuition, the time it will take to complete, and the career development opportunities that will be offered.

Promotional effectiveness is related primarily to the ability of the School of Business to attract prospective students to attend the MBA program. To analyze the competitive position of the competing MBA programs, the universities were compared based on the specificity of their target market, the processes employed in communicating with prospective students, as well as both the informational and promotional content within the university's School of Business website.

Market share is primarily measured by enrollment statistics, and higher enrollment indicates greater competitive advantage in this area. For the purposes of this analysis, enrollment headcount for Fall semester of 2005 was compared among the competitors.

In comparing the competitors' positioning among each of the competing factors, a point-ranking system was used to score each program. The point-ranking system used is 1 to 6, with 1 being least competitive and 6 being most competitive. In the event that programs are equally competitive, the same point-rank was assigned. By summing the points scored in each area, the competitive ranking of the HSU MBA program can be compared to competitors, thus allowing for the

identification of current competitive advantages as well as areas for improvement. In assigning a point-ranking to each competitive factor for each MBA program, the following definitions were used.

- Degree Program Types Offered – both the number of program types and target market were considered in ranking this factor. A program offering multiple program types appealing to a broad customer target received a 6; a program offering a single program appealing to small specific target market received a 1.
- Specializations Offered - the number of areas for specialization offered by the MBA program. A program offering the most areas for specialization received a 6; a program offering no areas for specialization received a 1.
- Courses Offered – the number of different courses offered to MBA graduate students. A program offering the highest number of different courses received a 6; a program offering the least number of different courses received a 1.
- Program Format Flexibility Options – the number of required courses versus electives courses specified by the program curriculum. A program specifying the most electives received a 6; the program specifying the least electives received a 1.
- Accreditation – the two accreditation programs considered were WASC and AACSB. A program accredited by WASC received a 1; a program accredited by WASC, but in process of receiving accreditation by AACSB, received a 2; a program accredited by AACSB received a 3.
- Admissions Criteria – the specified minimum admissions criteria including GMAT score, GRE score, GPA, required prerequisites, letters of recommendation, resume, and statement of purpose. A program employing the most strenuous admissions criteria received a 6; a program employing the least strenuous admissions criteria received a 1.
- Class Size – the average number of students per course. A program with the smallest class size received a 6; a program with the largest class size received a 1.
- Cost – the tuition was reviewed on a semester / quarter basis and also calculated in total MBA cost. A program costing the least scored a 6; a program costing the most received a 1.
- Time to Complete – as specified by the university, the time the average student takes to complete the program. A program taking the shortest time to complete received a 6; a program taking the longest time to complete received a 1.
- Career Development Opportunities – the number of different programs offered by the university or school of business which assist students in resume-building, gaining work experience, or job placement.
- Target Market Specificity – the breadth and specificity of the target customer as indicated by program promotional material. A program catering to a specific target received a 6; a program catering to multiple or broad target customers received a 1.
- Communications Study Result – the business schools’ processes of communicating with prospective students, including response time, information provided, and follow-up process. A program responding with the requested information the fastest received a 6; a program responding with minimal information the slowest received a 1.
- Website as an Informational Tool – the informational content and ease of search/click patterns within the school of business website. A program website where all competition factors could be found easily and quickly received a 6; a program website where competition factors were hard to find and took more time received a 1.

- Website as a Promotional Tool – the appearance and visibility of graphics and boastful comments regarding achievements, awards, and events within the school of business website. A program website that had the most boastful comments and consistently themed graphics received a 6; a program website that had the least boastful comments and inconsistently themed graphics received a 1.
- Enrollment – enrollment headcount statistics were used effective for Fall semester 2005. A program with the highest enrollment figure received a 6; a program with the lowest enrollment figure received a 1.

The following table depicts the ranking scores assigned to each competing MBA program and sums the competitive score for each competitive area. (To review the details for each program, refer to the table included in Appendix K

Competition Factors	HSU	Sonoma State University	CSU Chico	CSU Sacramento	UC Davis	UC Santa Cruz
Product:						
Degree/Program Types Offered	3	2	4	6	4	1
Specializations Offered	1	1	3	4	6	2
Courses Offered	1	3	4	2	6	5
Program format flexibility	1	3	3	3	6	2
Product Diversity Subtotal:	6	9	14	15	22	10
Accreditation	1	2	3	3	3	1
Admissions Criteria	5	3	6	4	2	1
Class Size	6	4	3	2	1	5
Product Quality Subtotal:	12	9	12	9	6	7
Total Product:	18	18	26	24	28	17
Student Cost/Benefit Perception:						
Cost	6	3	5	4	1	2
Time to complete	6	1	3	3	3	3
Career Development	1	2	5	4	6	1
Total Student Cost/Benefit:	13	6	13	11	10	8
Promotional Effectiveness:						
Target Market Specificity	4	5	4	2	3	6
Communication Study Result	2	1	3	4	6	5
Website – Informational	5	2	3	4	6	1
Website – Promotional	2	2	6	5	4	1
Total Promotion Effectiveness:	13	10	16	15	19	13
Market Share:						
Enrollment (Fall 2005)	2	4	3	5	6	1
Total Market Share:	2	4	3	5	6	1
Grand Total	46	38	58	55	63	39

Product Competition Results:

The HSU MBA Program is overall more competitive regarding product offering than the UC Santa Cruz M.S. in Applied Economics and Finance program and most competitive with Sonoma State University. UC Santa Cruz does not currently offer an MBA program, but instead offers a specialized Masters degree that is targeted specifically at students who wish to enter a career in banking, finance, and international business. Of important significance for future competition, UC Santa Cruz School of Economics is currently seeking approval to launch a General MBA and Executive MBA program. The stated geographic target markets for these programs are Silicon Valley and the Bay area. The proposal posted on their website states there is room for entry into the market, and current demand in the area will support the new program. Sonoma State University does offer an MBA program similar to HSU; however, it is primarily targeting part-time, evening students and actually refers prospective full-time students to consider other programs within the CSU system.

While the HSU MBA program scores low in terms of product diversity, it has the most competitive advantage regarding product quality. The low product diversity score is primarily related to the lack of flexibility for electives within the current curriculum criteria, the lack of specialization area offerings, and the low number of different courses offered to MBA students. In each of these product diversity categories HSU actually scores the lowest against its competitors. The current competitive advantage for the HSU MBA program lies in the realm of quality. While HSU is not accredited by AACSB, the program does have the smallest class size, and admissions criteria which are more strenuous than all competitors except for CSU Chico. Regarding AACSB accreditation, Sonoma State University is currently in the final year of the accreditation process, and in the near future, will be more competitive than HSU based on this competitive factor.

Student Cost / Benefit Perception Results:

The HSU MBA program has greatest competitive advantage in the area of student perception regarding cost / benefit. While the HSU program scores the highest in both cost and time to complete, it scores the lowest in career development opportunities for students. The HSU MBA program is most competitive with CSU Chico in this area, which is primarily related to career development opportunities. While HSU currently has a Career Services Center and offers internship opportunities to business graduate students, CSU Chico has a Business Resource Center and Center for Entrepreneurship, in addition to those services offered by HSU. These centers at CSU Chico offer student-consulting services to local businesses, and build partnership relationships with local business members for work study opportunities.

Promotional Effectiveness Results:

The HSU MBA program is competitive in promotional effectiveness, but most competitive with Sonoma State University and UC Santa Cruz. While the HSU website ranks high based on informational content, the promotional aspect is not as competitive. Refer to Appendix L to view copies of website for competing MBA programs. The HSU School of Business' response to prospective students experienced from conducting the Competitor Communication Study, was only better than Sonoma State University. UC Davis ranked the best in two of the three promotional categories and employed a consistent and clear marketing identity in all forms of communication, including website, e-mail, and viewbook.

Market Share Results:

The HSU MBA program is most comparable with UC Santa Cruz in terms of market share. In comparison to HSU, Sonoma State University and CSU Chico have twice as many students enrolled, CSU Sacramento has eight times as many students enrolled, and UC Davis has 21 times as many students enrolled in their MBA programs. Of important interest regarding these headcount statistics is the magnitude of part-time students enrolled in the larger competing programs. Part-time student enrollment accounts for approximately 40% of CSU Chico student headcount, 60% of Sonoma State University student headcount, 70% of CSU Sacramento student headcount, and 73% of UC Davis student headcount. As of Fall 2005, HSU MBA part-time students accounted for only 30% of the student headcount. The difference among the programs' student status can be attributed to the offerings of the Executive and Working Professional MBA programs by these competitors.

Competitor Communications Study:

Introduction and Methodology

An important component of assessing the Humboldt State University MBA Program's promotion effectiveness and recruitment positioning in the marketplace, is to study how competitors are positioning themselves in their recruitment communications. In addition to analyzing the content of the communications, it is also critical to understand competitor processes and relationship-building attempts. This report looks at how the HSU School of Business and its competitors respond to a self-initiated inquiry over a period of one month.

Initially a list was comprised of HSU, ten "same market" competitors, and one "out-of-state" competitor. These competitors were selected based on geographic location across California as suggested by our client. These competitors are a part of both the California State University (CSU) System and University of California (UC) System. One out-of-state competitor was selected based on its success in implementing a Sustainable MBA program, which has been stated as a possible future goal for HSU. The following institutions were contacted regarding their MBA programs:

- Humboldt State University
- Sonoma State University
- CSU – Chico
- UC – Santa Cruz
- UC – Davis
- UC – San Diego
- CSU – Sacramento
- San Francisco State University
- San Diego State University
- UC – Los Angeles
- UC – Berkeley
- Bainbridge Institute (Seattle, Washington)

While posing as a prospective student, each institution was contacted via e-mail or on-line request form (if available). Each institution was asked to send a prospective student information packet or brochure about the program. The anticipated enrollment date given to each school was for Fall 2006 semester. The contact information given to each school was the same, and included mailing address, telephone number, and e-mail address. During the one month period, each institution was contacted once and the institution responses were noted in a log that tracks the interactions. As information was received, the following information was noted: date of arrival, response method, postage amount (if mailed), personalization method, faculty position of respondent, and whether materials sent were those requested.

Given that the purpose of this study is to better understand communications efforts, and the information requested for this study is brochures or prospective student information packets, this study will not analyze university websites as a communication tool. Our client and the School of Business faculty are encouraged to review the materials, letters, and e-mails received as they are included in Appendix M along with a table which itemizes and describes all materials received via email. Viewbooks sent by mail and brochures sent by e-mail have also been provided in folder inserts at the back of this binder for review by our client.

While assessing HSU and its competitors' responses, the following questions were kept in mind:

- Do the subject institutions respond in some form?
- Do the subject institutions respond in a timely manner?
- Do the subject institutions send what was requested?
- Do the subject institutions follow-up or contact the prospective student multiple times?
- Are communication responses personalized to the prospective student?
- Who, within the school of business, contacts the prospective student?
- What types of information does the program consider important to include in communications for prospective students?
- Is there a graphic design theme and consistent marketing theme which identifies the university on each piece of communication?

Study Results Summary:

Do the subject institutions respond in some form?

- 11 of the 12 universities replied. UC Berkley was the only university that did not reply
- All of the respondents replied via e-mail
- None of the universities replied via telephone
- 2 of the universities sent mailings

Do the subject institutions respond in a timely manner?

- 8 of the 12 universities replied on the same day of inquiry (HSU did a great job in timely response as both e-mail inquiries were replied to in the same day)
- Sonoma State University and CSU Sacramento replied in 3 business days
- UC Los Angeles replied in 10 business days

Do the subject institutions send what was requested?

- 2 of the 12 universities mailed MBA Program viewbooks: UC-Davis and San Diego State University
- 4 of the 12 universities attached brochure files to e-mail response: UC Santa Cruz, UC San Diego, CSU Sacramento, Bainbridge Institute
- 5 of the 12 universities directed prospective student to websites for additional information: HSU, Sonoma State University, CSU Chico, San Francisco State University, UC Los Angeles

Do the subject institutions follow-up or contact the prospective student multiple times?

- 3 of the 12 universities made follow-up attempts via e-mail: UC Davis, UC San Diego, and Bainbridge Institute
- The follow-up attempts by UC Davis and UC San Diego were mass-mailings which included newsletter access and invitation to admissions events.
- The follow-up attempt by Bainbridge Institute was to inquire about receipt of the mailing package, and solicit additional questions. This e-mail also had attachments which included Mission, Vision, History, and Program curriculum information. (**Note – the mailing package referred to was never received)
- 2 of the 12 universities contacted the prospective student multiple times; however, these contact attempts were made by different individuals within the organization and all communication was on the same day of inquiry. These universities were HSU and San Diego State University.

Are communication responses personalized to the prospective student?

- 11 of the 20 e-mails received were personalized to the prospective student's name
- The 2 mailed information packets were not personalized to the prospective student's name
- HSU personalized all 3 e-mail messages. To remain anonymous, the e-mail inquiry was signed using a fake name which was different than the name shown in the e-mail address. 2 of the 3 e-mail responses were addressed to the name appearing in the e-mail address and the third e-mail reply was to apologize for this oversight and was addressed to the fake name.

Who, within the school of business, contacts the prospective student?

- The MBA Program Director / Coordinator was the respondent from 2 universities: HSU and Sonoma State University.
- The Department Assistant replied from 3 universities: HSU, UC Santa Cruz, and CSU Sacramento.
- The MBA Admissions Director replied from Bainbridge Institute.
- 5 university responses were from the Department Name and did not specify an individual.
- The respondent from CSU Chico replied with only a first name and did not specify a title within the organization.

What types of information does the program consider important to include in communications for prospective students?

- All university responses included website addresses to review for further information.
- Admission Information, Application deadlines, and Fee information were included in communications most often.
- Student-faculty ratio, class size, and reputation within the business community were included least often.
- UC Davis and San Diego State University provided the most information about their programs. Both provided 13 of the 15 information / promotion categories tracked in this survey.
- San Francisco and UC Los Angeles provided the least amount of information about their programs. Both provided only 2 of the information / promotion categories tracked in this survey.
- HSU provided 3 of the categories tracked; however, the information provided included several website links for which to obtain additional information. The categories for which links were provided were Admissions, Fees, and School of Business home website.

Is there a graphic design theme and consistent marketing theme which identifies the university on each piece of communication?

- 7 of the universities did not include graphics or a marketing theme within any communications. HSU was one of these universities.
- UC Davis and UC San Diego included graphics and a marketing theme on e-mail communications which was also consistent with their brochure or viewbook.
- San Diego State University did not include graphics or a marketing theme within e-mail communications; however, the university did provide a viewbook that had a consistent color theme and marketing message.
- CSU Sacramento did not include graphics or a marketing theme within e-mail communications. The university provided 9 attachments to the e-mail response; however, the color and marketing theme was different on each attachment.

E-mail Inquiry Log:

Institution Name	Date of E-mail Inquiry	E-mail Address	Date of First E-mail Response	Total Messages Received	Respondent(s) Title
HSU	04/05/06	sbe@humboldt.edu & sm5@humboldt.edu	04/05/06	3 e-mails	ASC & MBA Program Director
Sonoma State University	03/22/06	karen.thompson@sonoma.edu	03/27/06	1 e-mail	MBA Coordinator
CSU - Chico	03/22/06	rboykin@csuchico.edu	03/22/06	1 e-mail	No specification, Signed first name only
UC – Santa Cruz	03/22/06	econ_grad_coor@ucsc.edu	03/22/06	1 e-mail	Dept of Economics Assistant
UC - Davis	03/22/06	On-line RIF	03/22/06	2 e-mail & 1 mail	MBA Admissions & Grad School of Management – no personal signature
UC – San Diego	03/22/06	On-line RIF	03/22/06	5 e-mails	No personal signature – all are auto-responses from MBA Admissions Team @ The Rady School at UC San Diego
CSU Sacramento	03/22/06	cbagrad@csus.edu	03/27/06	1 e-mail	Admin Support Assistant
San Francisco State University	03/22/06	gradstdy@sfsu.edu	03/22/06	1 e-mail	Grad Studies – no personal signature
San Diego State University	03/22/06	gra@mail.sdsu.edu	03/22/06	2 e-mail & 1 mail	Graduate & Research Affairs, Graduate School of Business – no personal signatures
UC – Los Angeles	03/22/06	mba.admissions@anderson.ucla.edu	04/07/06	1 e-mail	MBA Admission
UC - Berkley	03/22/06	On-line RIF	No response	N/A	N/A
Bainbridge Institute	03/22/06	On-line RIF	03/22/06	2 e-mails	Director of Admissions

Materials Received via mail:

Institution Name	Date of Inquiry	Delivery Date	Postage Rate	Mailing Content	Title of Respondent	Personalized?
HSU	04/05/06	N/A				
Sonoma State University	03/22/06	N/A				
CSU - Chico	03/22/06	N/A				
UC – Santa Cruz	03/22/06	N/A				
UC - Davis	03/22/06	04/10/06	\$1.83	2006 MBA Program Viewbook	UC Davis Grad School of Mgmt	No (cover letter was not included)
UC – San Diego	03/22/06	N/A				
CSU Sacramento	03/22/06	N/A				
San Francisco State University	03/22/06	N/A				
San Diego State University	03/22/06	03/27/06	\$1.11	Cover Letter; Graduate School of Business Profile Sheet; ‘Which Degree Program Should I Select?’ Sheet; Graduate School of Business Viewbook	Graduate School of Business	No (cover letter was addressed to Prospective Student)
UC – Los Angeles	03/22/06	N/A				
UC - Berkley	03/22/06	N/A				
Bainbridge Institute	03/22/06	N/A		**E-mail suggested mailing packet was sent, but no package was received.		

Communication Content Information:

(*This does not include website information, only considers communications in e-mail body, attachment brochures, & mailed brochures)

X = subject receives mention

Institution Name	Program Quality	Faculty Quality	Alumni Success	Student-Faculty Relations / Ratios	Accreditation	Career Prep	Reputation among Business Community	Class Size	Location	Student Life & Activities	Fees	Admission & Application Info	Deadlines	Links to website	Invitation to visit campus / chat on-line
UC - Davis	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
San Diego State University	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
UC – San Diego	X	X	X			X	X		X	X		X		X	X
CSU Sacramento	X				X	X					X	X	X	X	
CSU - Chico	X				X						X	X	X	X	
Sonoma State University											X	X	X	X	
Bainbridge Institute	X								X			X		X	
HSU											X	X		X	
UC – Santa Cruz	X												X	X	
San Francisco State University													X	X	
UC – Los Angeles														X	X
UC - Berkeley															

Communication Graphics & Marketing Theme:

(*This analysis does not include website information, only considers communications in e-mail body, attachment brochures, & mailed brochures)

X = subject receives mention

Institution Name	Notes About University Identity
HSU	No graphics included on communications
Sonoma State University	No graphics included on communications
CSU - Chico	No graphics included on communications
UC – Santa Cruz	No graphics included on communications
UC - Davis	1 of 2 e-mail communications had color graphics & marketing theme. The mailed viewbook had color graphics & marketing theme. Graphics included blue & gold color scheme and marketing slogan: “Innovation, Collaboration, Excellence – A Partnership in Success”
UC – San Diego	4 of the 5 e-mail communications had color graphics & marketing theme. The e-mailed attachment brochure had color graphics & marketing theme. Graphics included blue & green color block scheme and marketing slogan: “Transforming Innovation into Revolutionary Change”
CSU Sacramento	The 1 e-mail communication did not include graphics Graphics included on the 9 e-mail attachments was not consistent in color or marketing theme.
San Francisco State University	No graphics included on communications
San Diego State University	The 2 e-mail communication did not include graphics. The mailed viewbook had color graphics & marketing theme. Graphics in the viewbook were consistent in red color scheme & contained marketing slogan: “Top-Rated, Relevant, Innovative, Business, Education”
UC – Los Angeles	No graphics included on communications
UC - Berkley	N/A
Bainbridge Institute	No graphics included on communications

SWOT Analysis

Strengths:

- Only one year to complete the program
- Low cost of tuition and affordable local housing
- Program tailored for non-business majors
- Quality of program, offering courses in all aspects of business management
- Non-competitive admissions environment for prospective students
- Small class size, accessibility of professors
- The addition of new School of Business full-time faculty
- Non-competitive atmosphere and diverse student backgrounds among students in the program
- Applicability and project involvement: MR plan, Student Managed Investment Fund (SMIF), business interviews
- Strong community involvement: community events and local entertainment establishments
- Unique business community: appealing to small business entrepreneurs
- Beautiful location in Humboldt County

Weaknesses:

- Lack of specialization area within the program curriculum
- Lack of AACSB accreditation
- Absence of internship and work-study opportunities
- Limited number of full-time faculty, often resulting in the cross-listing of MBA and Undergraduate courses
- Limited class offerings/time schedules: No evening program offered; only 1 section per year for each class
- Limited budget of School of Business
- Lack of an integrated promotional strategy and goals for the program, including marketing materials
- Outdated website: inaccurate information and lacking visual components
- Not actively competing with other MBA programs for students via marketing materials and processes

Opportunities:

- Student demand for specializations
- SMIF implementation for Fall 2006 may improve perceptions of the program
- Industrial Technology moving under the Business Department
- Exploring Majors and Careers (SP280) course – inform undeclared majors about the program
- Oregon and Washington expansionary markets – Western University Exchange (W.U.E.) program
- Business and Economics Club expansion of activities
- Commitment to promote and expand the School of Business by HSU administration
- Recruitment of international students by the Study Abroad Program
- Local business community's interest in participating in student internship or work-study programs
- New facility for the School of Business
- Small Business Development Center (SBDC) moving headquarters location to HSU campus.

Threats:

- Budget cuts, either from low enrollment or overall university cutbacks
- Competition from other MBA programs
- Lack of employment possibilities in the local area
- Lack of awareness of the program among students, faculty, and the business community
- Negative image of the program: the program is not recommended to current business undergraduates
- Small local job market and limited recruitment for jobs after graduation

Recommendations

Immense opportunity exists for increasing enrollment in the HSU MBA program. Right now, less than half of our target market is aware of the MBA program, and many of those students who are aware have misperceptions. This lack of awareness and knowledge is primarily due to a lack of a cohesive marketing strategy. The HSU MBA program is depending heavily on word-of-mouth communication, which can be problematic in establishing a clear image. The only way to increase awareness and change perceptions of the program is to promote it directly from the Business Department. This goal can be achieved by launching an aggressive and comprehensive campaign using a multi-pronged approach. Change is never easy, but with some dedication, developing an effective marketing program can assist our client in achieving the desired goal. The outline below summarizes recommendation strategies, and is followed by specific action items which address the findings of our research objectives.

OVERVIEW OF RECOMMENDATIONS:

I. Develop a single comprehensive marketing strategy to create departmental identity

- A. Educate and create awareness for the program
- B. Build relationships

II. Phase in an area of concentration

- A. Add electives to the program curriculum
- B. Follow-up review for concentration demand
- C. Implement a concentration into the program

III. Begin the application process to have the program accredited by AACSB.

IV. Other Recommendations

- A. Address program flexibility
- B. Improve department assessment reviews
- C. Research Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software options

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS:

I-A The organizational identity should include a cohesive mission statement, logo, slogan, letterhead, and marketing materials. The HSU identity should be the foundation for this marketing campaign, and should flow through to the MBA program's promotional materials. This would allow for a "seamless look and feel" for a consistent marketing message.

1. Printed materials, including brochures, posters, and banners should be developed and displayed.

- ✚ A specific strategy could involve a future marketing class project which utilizes focus groups to define and develop the program's image.

2. Upgrade the HSU School of Business website to include this brand identification.

- ✚ Graphics should be incorporated into the already informational format of the current website.
- ✚ Information should be in a more easily read format versus paragraph form.
- ✚ The website should give the prospective student the vision of being enrolled in the MBA program at HSU.
- ✚ Keep information current and conduct periodic reviews to update MBA program material.
- ✚ Use the website to advertise events, for example: The winners of the Economic Fuel competition, Videoconference events (i.e. Chomsky & Mortazavi), Global Economy forum, 2006 Chung-Watson Lecture Series in Business Ethics (featuring Michael Crooke former CEO of Patagonia as well as other ventures.)
- ✚ Implement a "Request Information Form" for prospective students to complete online instead of relying on the current e-mail contact method.
- ✚ Develop a "Prospective Student Package" that can be distributed either by mail, e-mail, or in person.

3. Marketing Material Distribution Strategy

- ✚ Determine protocol in distribution method of the "prospective student package," for example, mail, email, or in-person.
- ✚ Brochures should be distributed and made available through the Student Business Center and other Non-Business Advisers at HSU, as well as by faculty members at the College of the Redwoods.
- ✚ Brochures and flyers can be left for display at the storefront of local business partners established with the Business Department.
- ✚ Advertisement in "The Lumberjack"; could include information concerning program requirement deadlines (i.e. GMAT, application) along with new class offerings. This could also include leaflets or flyers in the paper.
- ✚ Other distribution methods for advertising the program could include flyers in local newspapers, such as Eureka Reporter, Times Standard, Arcata Eye, and Tri-City Weekly.
- ✚ For business minor courses, professors should announce in class that the course being taken meets MBA prerequisite requirements.
- ✚ Distribute brochures at Career Fairs, Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Chamber of Commerce, and Rotary Club.

I-B The department should develop relationships with prospective students, faculty within other departments, and with members of the local business community.

1. Prospective Student Relationships

- ✚ Have MBA students and faculty speak to the students in the Exploring Majors and Careers (SP280) course; utilize this class time to promote the minor in business that will allow easy transition into the MBA program.
- ✚ The Business School should sponsor lunch and learn sessions to promote the business minor and MBA program to undergraduate students. (Example: Bar-B-Q outside Siemens Hall)
- ✚ Implement a protocol for follow-up procedures regarding prospective student inquiries. These procedures should specify the individual(s) responsible for contacting and conducting follow-up with these students. Communication methods to be used during the phases of the relationship-building process should be clearly outlined.
- ✚ Implement on-line chat sessions, and e-mail invitations to join in these sessions to all prospective students.
- ✚ Organize admissions events specific to students interested in the MBA program.
- ✚ Formalize a program with class lectures open to prospective students. This is especially important when guest speakers are scheduled to attend MBA classes.
- ✚ Develop relationships between Business and IT to draw IT majors into the MBA program. Cross-section activities between the two majors such as field trips regarding manufacturing.

2. Faculty within other departments

- ✚ Promote the minor in business through information sessions and luncheons with non-business faculty.
- ✚ Join in effort with the University and the Study Abroad program to promote the MBA program to international students.

3. Local Business Community Members

- ✚ The business department should initiate an Entrepreneurship Center. This could either be in conjunction with the HSU Career Center, or could be held within the Business Department. Students are involved and able to gain work experience for resume building, and businesses in the community receive free consulting services.
- ✚ The Entrepreneurship Center could be promoted through the SBDC, and the School of Business should sponsor “get acquainted” mixers for MBA students, business community members, and business faculty.
- ✚ Develop a cooperative and work-study / internship program with the new SBDC headquarters and their clients.
- ✚ Take a more active role and lead in the coordination of events like Economic Fuel.

II-A. Electives

- ✚ Electives should be phased in for demand testing within specializations. These elective courses should be in the areas of Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Business. A complete listing of courses offered at competing programs is included in Appendix N for review by our client.
- ✚ HSU MBA program faculty members should refer to the Grey Pinstripes website (www.greypinstripes and www.caseplace.org) for course syllabi, course descriptions, and case studies for assistance in implementing

sustainability courses. Bainbridge Graduate Institute is also a commendable model in the Sustainable MBA program market and website information has been included in Appendix O.

II-B. Follow-up

- ✚ Faculty should review enrollment statistics, implement satisfaction surveys, and review student feedback on the courses offered, to assist in determining which concentration courses garner the highest enrollment.
- ✚ Further research is needed in order to determine the students' awareness of what the course content of a Sustainable MBA program entails. This study would allow the School of Business to determine if implementation of a Sustainable MBA program would directly affect actual enrollment in the program.
- ✚ Conduct course-specific interest surveys among prospective MBA students in preparation for the phase-in of the concentration.

II-C. Implementation of Concentrations

- ✚ After conducting the preliminary research to ascertain which concentration to phase-in, the School of Business should offer courses within the selected specialization.

III. Begin the process to have the program accredited by AACSB.

IV-A. Program Flexibility

- ✚ Consider adding more course sections which allow students to enroll in evening classes, have elective options within the curriculum, and increase the number of course sections per year.

IV-B. Assessment Reviews

- ✚ Review on a regular basis the results from the graduate self assessment survey completed by MBA students prior to graduation. This will allow the School of Business to better gauge customer satisfaction.
- ✚ The School of Business should implement a Balanced Scorecard system approach which reflects its mission, goal, and measurement strategies, to enable the department to conduct on-going performance evaluations.

IV-C. Software Options

- ✚ Research Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software which would assist business school faculty in developing prospective student relations, follow-up procedures and communications. This CRM could interface with the online Request Information Form (RIF) and send automatic emails to prospective students.

Implementation Schedule

The highest priority in the implementation schedule is that the School of Business develop a comprehensive marketing strategy to create program identity and awareness. While phasing in an area of concentration is also important for the long-term goal of improving the program curriculum, our recommendation is to implement the concentration over a period of time.

Budget

Many of the recommendations offered by this study require minimal financial investment. While time and dedication are required for implementation, current resources are sufficient (i.e. student projects, interest from business community) to meet these goals.

Controls

This section is beyond our stated scope, however, we recommend that business school faculty utilize implementation scheduling tools such as Gantt charts, faculty committee progress reviews, and other necessary measures, as faculty see fit, which would enable the assessment of reaching the goals.