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Winter 2021
**NSSI Update**

Welcome to the Winter 2021 newsletter from the National Strategic Selling Institute! Although this year has looked different from previous years, I’m excited about the future for our students and NSSI. I’m already in the classroom teaching fully face-to-face – I never thought that would be a novel idea, but it is in 2020-2021! Our students are excited to be back in the classroom; I can feel the energy every time we meet.

We continue to operate in virtual and hybrid modes for many of our activities, with virtual events for Corporate Partners, including our upcoming virtual Sales Career Fair. The sales team is competing virtually for all events this year, as all competitions are being held online. Although we miss traveling, the students are excited to compete and hopefully bring home more hardware for our trophy case. Our Sales Ambassadors continue to work towards improving our program, with a particular emphasis on alumni engagement this year.

Even in a pandemic, our students continue to get great jobs and experience success in their sales roles after graduation. Companies continue to express interest in our program. We accepted another group of students into the program this past fall, with our numbers remaining steady. We will accept more students in March, and look forward to our biggest graduating class ever in May – 85 students! Finally, I am excited to announce we will be holding our 9th Annual NSSI Benefit Auction on May 7. More information is provided later in this newsletter.

Our achievements would not be possible without the ongoing support from our Corporate Partners and friends of the NSSI. As we continue to grow and expand, we value your support and advice for our program and students. I hope you enjoy this newsletter. Please let me know if you have story ideas or suggestions as we continue to move forward.

Dawn Deeter  
Director, National Strategic Selling Institute

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ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Ashleigh LaBarge | Spring 2016
Kansas State University Foundation
Development Officer
Manhattan, Kansas

Graduation Date: Spring 2016
Major: Marketing and Management
Certificate: Professional Strategic Selling and Leadership Studies

What was the most applicable thing you learned from the K-State Sales Program that you find yourself using in your professional career?
Honestly, I use just about everything! Whether you are talking to a prospect, peer, or coaching session with your manager, something from the Sales Program comes in handy! Most companies are switching to Salesforce, but lack basic training on it. My Salesforce.com knowledge has pushed me to the top of every team I have been on. Also, learning to be comfortable in silence! Most salespeople don’t stop talking and can talk themselves right out of the endzone. You seem more knowledgeable, confident, and tenured by pausing when you present and letting your words sink in for deeper questions.

What do you find most rewarding about your position at the Kansas State University Foundation?
Talking to our awesome College of Business (CBA) grads all day is the best. Everyone has a unique story about how they found their path to their current role. It is so rewarding to hear about their K-State experience and how we can connect that experience to a way to help future students. Our CBA grads are all about giving back where they can.

How has a mentor impacted your career? What role did they play?
My mentors have taught me all sorts of tricks for getting a sale, what books to read, and what projects will get me noticed by management. But the best advice I received was to know my worth. It’s important to give 100% to the job, but also know when you are not being valued and to look for a better opportunity. My best mentor stayed with me for not one, but two companies, because they cared about me and my professional career.

What is one thing you wish you would have known while you were in college that would have helped you transition to your professional career?
In college, most professors understand if you need an extension for a paper or if you were traveling for a CBA event and had to miss class. In the professional world, employers are not going to give you that leeway. There is no extension to hit your monthly sales goal. If you are double booked and miss a meeting, you can’t just get the notes. You might lose the sale. I encourage students not to rely on these and prepare themselves for hard deadlines.

Why did you choose to come back to K-State to work in fundraising after working in business-to-business (B2B) sales?
I loved B2B sales. I have an analytical mind and most business decisions are based on logic, so I did very well. However, nothing beats working at one of the nation’s Greatest Places to Work! I now get to use my B2B experience and apply it to our donors’ philanthropic passions, so that way everyone can benefit. It’s a win for all parties!
Anna Arends | Fall 2020
Insight Global
Recruiter
Denver, Colorado

Major: Professional Strategic Selling and Marketing
Minor: Hospitality Management
Certificate: Sports and Entertainment Marketing

Why did you choose a major in PSS?
I have always felt drawn to sales. I love making personal connections with people and I have a very outgoing personality. I originally started as a certificate but when K-State offered Professional Strategic Selling as a major, I knew it was too good of an opportunity to miss. I had fallen in love with my sales classes already and wanted to soak in all the sales knowledge I could during my time at K-State.

What did you value most from your time at K-State?
The National Strategic Selling Institute for sure. It was the true definition of the K-State family. I felt cared for by my teachers, classmates, and all my classes had such a special energy and environment. I felt like everyone valued me as a person which made me get the most amount of value out of the program as well.

Where do you hope to see your career take you in the next three to five years?
In a short time, I have already fallen in love with my job. Everyone starts out as a recruiter with the hopes to be promoted to an Account Manager. I have enjoyed recruiting and staffing so far. I would love to see my career grow even further at Insight Global in three to five years as an Account Manager or growing beyond that. The growth opportunities are endless and I feel the K-State Sales Program has set up for the foundation to have a very successful sales
SALES CUP TOURNAMENT

Overview: Sales Cup Tournament

When thinking of ways to get students more involved in the different activities the National Strategic Selling Institute (NSSI) hosts throughout the semester, the Sales Cup Tournament was created to incentivize involvement with the program. Since a role in sales is competitive, the idea was generated to also make a friendly competition among current sales students. Each semester, any student enrolled in either the Certificate and Major in Professional Strategic Selling is allowed to compete. The tournament is set-up with current sales students being split into two tiers based on whether or not they are involved in Sales Ambassadors or the K-State Sales Team, as those students are likely and expected to be participating at a higher level.

Throughout the semester, students are invited to come to the different events that are hosted by the NSSI including orientation sessions, sales competitions, Sales Week events, virtual branded events, Pi Sigma Epsilon meetings, and various other events to earn points. Students can also earn points through student recruitment efforts, becoming involved with either the K-State Sales Team or Sales Ambassadors, or gaining real-world experience through internships or job opportunities. At the end of the semester, these points are tallied, and winners are given varying amounts of student merit awards depending on how they perform.

This has proven to be a great way to get students involved and provides valuable insight into a sales career where performance is tied to compensation. Also, it allows students to get out of their comfort zone and participate in events in which they might normally have an interest.

Fall 2020 Champions

The following students placed in the Fall 2020 Sales Cup Tournament, and were awarded student merit awards for their participation.

Tier 1
Current Sales Ambassadors and K-State Sales Team Members

Overall Winner: Cameron Jones
Second: Lucas Johnson
Third: Hunter King
Fourth: Collin Thompson
Fifth: Emily Dendy

Tier 2
All other students earning a Certificate or Major in Professional Strategic Selling

Overall Winner: Jacqueline Anzalone
Second: Kaley Coffman
Third: Morgan Waterman
Fourth: Natalie Beck
Fifth: Myah Robke
Sixth (tie): Abbie Barron, Grace Barron, and Eli Kistler
Ninth: Cam Butler
Tenth (tie): Lilah Harris, Megan Underwood, and Halle Zwetow

Cameron Jones
Junior | Professional Strategic Selling

Jacqueline Anzalone
Junior | Marketing
SALES TEAM


Fall 2020 Recap

Even though the K-State Sales Team did not get to travel this fall, they were still busy attending virtual competitions hosted by universities across the nation. The 13 member team competed in five competitions where they were able to showcase their skills, allowing each member to compete in at least one event.

The team started strong at the Great Northwoods Sales Warm-up hosted by the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire where 66 competitors representing 23 universities competed in the event. Landen King, senior in professional strategic selling, Overland Park, placed fourth overall in the competition and was recognized as the university champion from Kansas State University. We had two other competitors compete – Hunter Hartner, freshman in professional strategic selling and marketing, Belleville, and Quin Napier, sophomore in professional strategic selling, Fairway. The team was lead by Lucas Johnson, senior in professional strategic selling, Shawnee, serving as a student coach.

The team then went on to compete in the Northeast Intercollegiate Sales Competition (NISC) hosted by Bryant University. The competition had 24 universities and 168 competitors that competed in both speed selling and role-play events. In the individual role-play scenario sales competition, Cecilia Nancarrow, senior in professional strategic selling, Overland Park, placed first overall in the competition. The K-State Sales Team was also recognized for its efforts, tying for the second-place team in the sales competition. The team consisted of the following students: Lydia Johnson, a sophomore in professional strategic selling, Prior Lake, Minnesota, Kara Krannawitter, senior in professional strategic selling and marketing, Lawrence, Stacia Mendoza, sophomore in business administration pre-professional, Lenexa, and Benjamin Rauth, senior in professional strategic selling, Kansas City, Missouri. Katie Horton, senior in marketing and professional strategic selling, Overland Park, led the team serving as the student coach.

Other competitions the K-State Sales Team competed in included the following: Huhtamaki Sales Competition, CSI Collegiate Virtual Resume & Job Interview Competition, and the International Collegiate Sales Competition.
Get Ready for the 9th Annual NSSI Benefit Auction!

Although a pandemic required a format change last year, we are happy to announce the NSSI Benefit Auction is back! We are going with an Olympic theme: Bring Home the Gold for the 9th Annual NSSI Benefit Auction.

This year’s auction will be slightly different. It will include an online silent auction and a much smaller and socially-distanced live auction, to be held on May 7, 2021, at the Hilton Garden Inn. Even though the live auction will be a much smaller event, our students still will have the opportunity to develop and practice their selling skills by finding items and soliciting sponsorships and donations. The funds raised through the NSSI Benefit Auction go straight back to students in the form of merit awards and scholarships. Similar to K-State Proud, the NSSI Benefit Auction involves students raising money to pay it forward to future sales students.

Additionally, the Advanced Selling students will be selling raffle tickets for a K-State-themed golf cart (pictured here). The money raised through the golf cart raffle goes directly to Coming Together for a Cure (CTFAC), a charity started by K-State alum Blake Benton and his siblings, including Ryan Benton, who suffers from Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy. CTFAC devotes its resources to supporting people with life-threatening diseases such as Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy by providing information and resources regarding helpful therapy. Blake took the Advanced Selling class while at K-State and participated in selling for the auction. We are thrilled to be partnering with a K-State alum to raise funds for a great cause.

The skills developed by students in the Advanced Selling class are unmatched by other classroom experiences. The course is designed to simulate a real-world sales environment within the classroom. The students are in the process of developing their sales stories and getting ready to do practice voice mails and phone calls, in preparation for the sales cycle to begin. Students use a CRM system, Salesforce.com, to track prospects and their sales pipeline as they work towards meeting or exceeding activity and performance quotas. Students make calls during class, with faculty coaching on the spot to improve skill sets. The sales students experience the joy of making a sale and learn how to deal with rejection. After taking this class, know what to expect in their first sales role and are prepared to start their sales careers.

If you would like to get involved with this year’s auction, please contact Dawn Deeter at ddeeter@k-state.edu to be put in touch with a student sales representative.

To donate directly to the endowment fund for sales student scholarships, visit: ksufoundation.org/give/nssi-scholarships
Jen Riley hired as New Sales Professor

Generous donations from Doug Hill and the Edward Jones Foundation have allowed us to hire a new professor to teach Fundamentals of Professional Selling. Professor Jen Riley is a native of Atlanta, Georgia, and a third-year doctoral student at Kennesaw State University.

Before entering academia and joining the National Strategic Selling Institute (NSSI), Professor Riley was an award-winning corporate marketer and entrepreneur. She earned her undergraduate degree from Oglethorpe University and her Master’s in Marketing from Georgia State University. Professor Riley is a proud member of the KPMG Ph.D. project, the American Marketing Association, Toastmasters International, and a Direct Selling Education Foundation fellow and grant recipient. Riley has also served as a peer-reviewer, been featured by numerous organizations for her research, presented at multiple industry and academic conferences, and published three books and a solo-author academic journal article.

Exhibiting academic service at every level, she also serves as a board member for a non-profit organization, Struggles to Strengths, headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, serving trauma-impacted families. Professor Riley’s research studies the cross-section of professional sales and technology adoption.

We are thrilled to have her join the NSSI team and thank Doug Hill and the Edward Jones Foundation for investing in the growth of our sales program.

Students Navigate Campus Amid a Pandemic

Article written by Lucas Johnson, Senior in Professional Strategic Selling

This past semester was unlike anything that both students and faculty have ever dealt with. It was full of challenges, surprises, disappointments, and opportunities. Every person at K-State felt as if they were simultaneously taking a crash course in adaptability, which wasn’t an easy A.

When asking students at K-State about the most challenging part of the semester, it all came down to the unpredictability of the future. It felt like any moment you could be placed into quarantine or the professor would need to move the class to a different format. Thus, it would disrupt the little rhythm you had already established. With the challenges in mind, both students and faculty at K-State had a couple of options for a semester full of lemons: make lemonade or let them rot. And, I saw a LOT of spiked lemonade as people were creative in how they dealt with the lemons given.

When talking to those same students about the most rewarding parts of the semester, a diversity of answers came into play. Multiple students talked about the increased availability with recruiters through Zoom, the increased adaptability that they were able to develop throughout the semester, along with many other positives that came out of a very abnormal semester.

While this past fall and upcoming spring semester are far from ideal, students and faculty at K-State will continue to adapt to maximize the time we do have during our college career. Moving into next semester, while there’s still uncertainty about in-person classes, we all are more equipped to take advantage of the positives that can come out of this time.
UPCOMING EVENTS

Spring Sales Week
February 15 - 19, 2021

Certificate and Major in PSS Applications Due
March 1, 2021

March Virtual Alumni Happy Hour
March 3, 2021

April Virtual Alumni Happy Hour
April 7, 2021

NSSI Advisory Board Meeting
April 16, 2021

NSSI Open House
April 30, 2021

9th Annual NSSI Benefit Auction
May 7, 2021

Spring Commencement
May 16, 2021

CONTACT US

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