

CMSI connect

Center for Marketing and Sales Innovation Newsletter

Fall 2024



Innovating Sales Education and Empowering Future Leaders

New Textbook

Sales

Competitions

Student Spotlight

Sales Competency

Certification Program

USF Sales Education Reimagined: New Textbook, Expanded Programs, and Nation- Leading Competition Underscore Innovation in Marketing and Sales

The cover of this semester's newsletter features a screen capture of our new Professional Selling (MAR 3400) textbook. This textbook is the result of a multi-year effort to reimagine sales education. The Center for Marketing and Sales Innovation is enabling changes in what we teach, where we teach, and how we teach both sales and marketing.



Business Development Club Members partaking in the Selling with the Bulls competition at USF.

We are also excited to share that this coming spring, our Selling with the Bulls intercollegiate sales competition will be the largest sales competition in the country by role-play count. A total of 160 students from 32 schools, representing 22 states, are registered for the 'Toughest Test in Sales Education' this February. Our competition is unique in both the breadth of evaluated skills and the intensity of the competition. All students will compete in all events, including networking, prospecting (phone, email, social media), discovery, and sales meetings.

“Bridging the gap between classroom learning and real-world application is essential. By integrating hands-on experiences like networking events, sales competitions, and vocationally relevant courses, we empower students to apply their knowledge and accelerate their career readiness.”

There will be 480 sales role-plays and nearly 1,000 scheduled student-business networking sessions over the course of less than 30 hours (see the calendar on page 14).

We now offer a new Sales Minor, available to all undergraduate students at USF. Additionally, we've transitioned our networking events from extra-credit evening activities to 'trade show'-style networking class assignments held during class. This past fall, 250 students participated in these networking events over the course of two days on two campuses (see the story on page 7). Another recent change is the close integration of our sales classes with outside programming. We now offer two no-cost, no-credit Credly Badges in sales, multiple experiential sales events, and a vibrant, large student club focused on sales.



Photo of students conducting mock sales calls in the CMSI Customer Experience & Behavioral AI Lab.

Building on the momentum in the sales program, the entire undergraduate marketing major will change in Fall 2025. Marketing majors will select a concentration in either Market Development or Marketing Research and Analytics. All students in the major will be required to take the Professional Selling (MAR 3400) course, and the Market Development concentration will require the Advanced Professional Selling (MAR 4415) course. We are excited about the transparency and alignment these changes bring between rewarding careers in sales and the curriculum for our students.

The Center for Marketing and Sales Innovation has also introduced a new Marketing Technology and AI course (MAR 4190). The course will be required for all marketing majors. Some of the hands-on topics covered in the course include Web 3, generative AI, surveys, CRM, and neuromarketing.

It has been a fabulous semester, and it is gratifying to see some of our long-term projects come to fruition. The simple truth is that there would be no center without you. We are blessed by each of you. May everyone be filled with peace and joy this holiday season. Enjoy the newsletter!
Rob.



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New Professional Selling Textbook Equips Marketing Students with Real-World Sales Skills

The University of South Florida continues its commitment to innovative and accessible education with the launch of a new e-textbook for the MAR 3400 Professional Selling course. This textbook has been developed to ensure that students acquire the essential skills needed to become effective communicators and successful sales professionals. CMSI partners provided direct feedback to help identify the key competencies that companies seek in potential interns and full-time employees upon graduation.

The textbook is published as an e-textbook to minimize costs for students. All sections of the Professional Selling course use the same textbook and deliver its concepts uniformly, ensuring consistency in learning and providing a similar experience for all students regardless of the instructor.

The Professional Selling course is a required component for all marketing students and often serves as their first formal exposure to sales. While the course focuses on sales principles, a foundational belief is that students must first be exceptional communicators. This emphasis strongly influenced the development of the textbook.

Another critical factor in the book is the curriculum-co-curriculum model used in the sales program. Students are introduced to specific sales techniques, topics, or concepts in class and then have the opportunity to practice those skills during Business Development Club meetings. This approach bridges academic learning with practical application and fosters a deeper understanding of sales principles.

While students frequently apply these skills in sales competitions, the content also prepares them for real-world sales scenarios beyond role-play events. The textbook consists of eight chapters or modules, each covering essential topics required for a successful career in sales:

- ▶ **MODULE 1**
Starting and Maintaining Quality Conversations
- ▶ **MODULE 2**
Making a Great Impression/Executive Presence in Meetings and Job Interviews
- ▶ **MODULE 3**
Power Networking
- ▶ **MODULE 4**
What is Sales
- ▶ **MODULE 5**
Lead Generation and Prospecting
- ▶ **MODULE 6**
Asking and Answering Questions in a Sales Scenario
- ▶ **MODULE 7**
Designing and Giving Effective Pitches and Presentations
- ▶ **MODULE 8**
Resolving Pushback and Objections

The midterm is a networking event with business partners that students prepare for and deliver using the course material. The course concludes with a final sales role-play project, which requires students to create scripts for lead generation, discovery, presentation, and handling objections.

FALL 2024

SEMESTER IN

REVIEW



SELLING BY THE BAY

Selling by the Bay is the inaugural event of the semester, hosted by the University of South Florida's Business Development Club. Held on the St. Petersburg campus, this event is tailored for both new and experienced students interested in sales. It offers a unique opportunity for students to understand intercollegiate sales competitions through a one-day, student-led activity. Unlike traditional events, no instructors or business professionals are involved in the role-playing process. Instead, students take turns playing the roles of buyer, seller, and judge in various sales scenarios, gaining a comprehensive understanding of the sales process.



Students from the Tampa campus were transported to the St. Petersburg campus to participate in the event and had the opportunity to tour the campus afterward. This year's Selling by the Bay had nearly 40 students attending. The relaxed beach theme, with students dressed in beachwear, created a casual and comfortable learning environment. The event is not a competition but rather a practice session where students can receive feedback to help them prepare for future intercollegiate sales competitions.

The sales activities centered around beach-themed products, reflecting the local Tampa Bay area. Students engaged in selling surfboards, beach clothing, and gift shop items. Each student was given an hour to prepare one of three business cases and worked in teams to plan and practice their sales pitches. They rotated through the roles of buyer, seller, and judge in small groups, learning to handle different aspects of a sales event.



SELLING WITH THE *BULLS*

The Fall USF System **Selling with the Bulls** event was hosted on the Tampa campus and was open to all University of South Florida (USF) students. This event served as the first official sales competition of the academic year and introduced students to an intercollegiate competition format. Leading up to the competition, students participated in a networking event in the school atrium, where they engaged with partners of the USF Center for Marketing and Sales Innovation. Additionally, students were required to prepare and submit a prospecting email before the event.



Students participating in Selling With The Bulls prepare for the presentation portion of the event.

The competition consisted of three progressive rounds of sales activities. In round one, students used Microsoft Teams in the sales lab to make prospecting calls to business partners acting as prospects. The objective was to generate interest and schedule a meeting. During the second round, students conducted a discovery session with the prospect based on a provided business case. They aimed to uncover key information, such as specific problems, value-added benefits, budget, timeline, and decision-makers involved in the buying process.

The final round involved presenting a tailored solution to the prospect based on insights gained during the discovery session. Students overcame objections, addressed questions, and gained the prospect's commitment to purchase. The business case for the competition featured Gray Matter, a product from CMSI partner ReliaQuest. Students were required to understand the company's unique value proposition, product features, advantages, and benefits. The event was a resounding success, with nearly 75% of participants being new to sales competitions. This initiative provided a unique platform for students to step out of their comfort zones, sharpen their sales skills, and gain hands-on experience in a competitive yet supportive environment.

USF Excels at ICSC Fall 2024: Outstanding Achievements, Career Networking, and Halloween Fun in Orlando



The students who participated in the sales role-play competition had been preparing since the summer, focusing on discovery and presentation role-play meetings. The sponsoring company for the competition was an international financing company, and students concentrated on project financing, products, and services in the South American market. This experience allowed participants to refine their sales techniques and gain insights for future careers.

The sales management case competition, sponsored by ReliaQuest, required students to prepare sales plans for the challenge. Two students from each school had 24 hours to prepare a sales management presentation based on a case provided at the start of the challenge. Additionally, a speed selling competition had students deliver elevator pitches to business partners, and a career fair allowed all attendees to meet with companies.



USF attended two intercollegiate sales competitions this fall. The first event of the semester was the International Collegiate Sales Competition (ICSC). ICSC takes place in Orlando, Florida, each fall and is the largest intercollegiate sales competition of the semester. The competition includes events in sales role play (discovery and sales meetings), speed selling, a career fair, and a sales management case.



With the support of our center's sponsors, USF filled the room with 18 students traveling to the event. Five students competed in the competitions, and 13 attended the career fair. USF was well represented, with multiple near-perfect scores from the judges. The event also offered social opportunities, including a Halloween party. Even Dr. Jay joined the Halloween festivities, helping the team win first prize in the costume contest.

USF's Success Continues at NISC 2024: Stellar Performances by Students in Sales and Spanish Speed-Selling Competition

The Northeast Intercollegiate Sales Competition (NISC) is a tournament-style event hosted in Rhode Island. The competition featured four rounds of events, including a traditional speed-selling competition and a Spanish-language speed-selling competition.



Students from the Business Development Club at the NISC competition.

Many of the students who traveled to participate had also competed in the "Selling with the Bulls" competition two weeks prior and spent the fall preparing for both events. During the competition, students alternated between role-plays, practicing for upcoming rounds, and attending skill-building workshops provided by the university.



The NISC offered an excellent opportunity for students to bond and network with peers from other institutions. While the event was held in New England, USF was joined by familiar schools like the University of Tampa and the University of Central Florida, creating a sense of local camaraderie in a distant region.



Photo of Caiden Freimann (USF), Spanish Speed Sell Winner.

The USF team performed exceptionally well this year. Two competitors advanced to the quarterfinals and were also recognized as finalists in the speed-selling competition. Additionally, one of the team's new members excelled, making it to the semifinal round and winning the Spanish speed-selling competition!

Congratulations Bulls!



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA

New this fall, the Business Development Club launched a Sales Competency Certification Program to recognize students' sales skills and participation in professional development events. This initiative seeks to recognize student development and foster community and professional growth.

The program features three tiers of certification, each with progressively challenging requirements. Participants receive badges, pins, and certificates to highlight their accomplishments on resumes and LinkedIn profiles. At the Elite level, students also earn a Credly Badge—an online, verifiable credential that showcases their expertise and achievements.

By rewarding consistent engagement and skill-building, the program helps students stand out in the job market while strengthening their sales competencies.



Pictured: Makena Corenlus presenting Dennis Iglesias with his Elite Seller Certification.



Professional Seller

- ▶ Complete BDC basic training practice.
- ▶ Learn the basics of a sales competition, including the meeting opening and introduction, discovery questioning, making a presentation, and handling objections.
- ▶ Participate in 1 BDC-approved role-play event.



Expert Seller

- ▶ Attend 4 virtual intercollegiate sales competition training calls.
- ▶ Participate in 4 BDC-approved role-play events.



Elite Seller

- ▶ Attend 8 virtual intercollegiate sales competition training calls.
- ▶ Participate in 6 BDC-approved role-play events.

OR

- ▶ Participate in 5 BDC-approved role-play events & assist as a Bulls Ambassador at the Intercollegiate "Selling with the Bulls" competition.

Student Spotlight:

Makena Cornelius

By Eva Javorek - Center for Marketing and Sales Innovation

Meet Makena!

Makena, originally from Kansas City, Missouri, is a senior at the University of South Florida's Muma College of Business, set to graduate in Spring 2025 with a bachelor's in Marketing. After starting her college journey at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, she transferred to USF for a change of scenery and to pursue her goals. As the current president of the Business Development Club, she leads initiatives that foster growth and networking among aspiring business professionals. In addition to her leadership role, she's also a member of the Women in Business Club and is starting a non-profit to drive positive social change!

Learn more about Makena and her journey below!



What made you come to USF?

"The weather! Seriously though, I had been home during the holidays and a girl that I knew had talked about being at USF and, at the time, I knew I wanted a change so I decided to transfer to USF. No campus tour or anything, I just registered and the rest is history!"

Tell us about the Business Development Club and how it has helped you become a better business student.

"The BD Club is so near and dear to my heart. We're fortunate to have so many networking and travel opportunities through the club that exposes us to experiences we couldn't have dreamed of. In addition to that, we learn valuable skills through our participation in sales competitions."



Makena presenting Prisha Visen her Pro. Seller Pin.



Makena Cornelius (Right) with Dennis Iglesias (Middle) and Khoi Le (Left) of the Business Development Club at a tabling event.

How do you balance your academics with other commitments?

"A very organized calendar [laughs]. I try really hard to schedule things in 15-minute blocks and that really helps me plan out my weeks! My bosses also make it easy for me to take time to focus on academics when it's needed and I'm very grateful for their flexibility."



In this photo (from left to right): Ella Extejt, Dennis Iglesias, Makena Cornelius, Kian Viegas, and Brooke Ealy at the International Collegiate Sales Competition (ICSC 2024) in Orlando, Florida.

Walk us through your current internship, how you got it, and some of the responsibilities you have?

"I'm a Business-to-Business content creator for a communications company, making unboxing and tutorial videos for their products. I learned about the position through Dr. Jay Civitillo, one of my professors. I was initially hired as a sales intern, but they discovered I was a marketing student and asked if I'd like to run their YouTube channel. It was new to me, but I took the opportunity and have had so much fun with it since then!"



In this photo (from left to right): Dr. Jay Civitillo presents Makena with her Elite Seller Certificate and Pin.

If you could give one piece of advice to incoming students, what would it be?

"Take advantage of those unexpected opportunities because you never know where it'll take you. I would not be in the position I am now if I didn't take that leap of faith and move to Tampa, join the BD Club or start my internship with a communications company. Growth often comes from stepping out of your comfort zone and it might be scary at first but it's all worth it in the end."



Makena and Ella Extejt stopping to pose for a picture at ICSC 2024 in Orlando, Florida.

Join us at the 2025 Affective(ly) Research Conference!

Affective(ly) Research is an annual gathering where researchers working with biometrics and emotional insights gather to collaborate and exchange best practices.

Event Showcase:

- ▶ Networking & Dinner Session
- ▶ Research Presentations & Panel Discussions
- ▶ Insights into Biometrics & Emotional Research

Prepare for a Thrilling Exploration into Affective(ly) Research!

- ▶ Dates: February 27th - February 28th 2025
- ▶ Hosted By: Center for Marketing and Sales Innovation, University of South Florida
- ▶ Platinum Sponsor: iMotions - World's Leading Biometric Research Platform
- ▶ Location: University Student Center, USF St. Petersburg Campus

Contact

- ▶ rwhammond@usf.edu to register for event



Additional Information: Discover iMotions at
<https://imotions.com/>



Future Events

Selling by the Bay	02/03/25
Spring Networking	02/11 - 02/12/25
Intercollegiate Selling with the Bulls	02/20 - 02/21/25
Affective(Iy) Research Conference	02/27 - 02/28/25
Spring Dinner and Discovery	04/02/25

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