



Sales Education Foundation
Elevating the Sales Profession Through University Education

Building a University Sales Program

*An Opportunity to Expand Sales
Education at the University Level*

<https://salesfoundation.org>

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Overview

As any college or university considers incorporating Professional Sales into their overall business curriculum, there are several things to consider.

The following outline addresses the most common needs and opportunities as seen by the Sales Education Foundation when developing a Professional Sales program.

Sections in this Presentation

Section I: Key Statistics and Opportunities

Addresses reasons that a college/university should consider a Sales program, particularly for the responsible and effective alignment of graduates to professional opportunities

Section II: Program Overview

Provides an outline of a successful Sales program, including Administrative structure, research opportunities and student alignment

Section III: Curriculum

Outlines opportunities for curriculum development

Section IV: Available Resources and Potential Partnerships

Defines potential support opportunities for Sales programs



Section 1

Key Statistics and Opportunities

- Over 50% of US college of business graduates entering the workforce, regardless of their major, find a sales role as their first career
 - Florida State University's Sales Institute research suggests some studies find the percentage of marketing majors accepting a job in sales as high as 88% and as high as 60% for all other business majors ¹
- Over 60% of first-time sales people either resign or are terminated from their first jobs ²
- According to the National Center for Education Statistics, there were 3,982 postsecondary institutions in the United States that offered degree programs, but less than 6% currently host recognized Sales programs
- Students from university sales programs, when compared to their non-sales educated peers:
 - Ramp up 50% faster with standard company training
 - Turn over an average of 30% less
 - Save companies approximately \$200K per hire within the first 18 months of employment
- Graduates of sales programs experience, on average, over 94% job placement within 3 months of graduation (2023 SEF Annual)
 - Comparison: According to the NACE, In terms of full-time employment, 55.3% of the the Class of 2021 was employed full time within six months of graduation ³

1 Florida State University Sales Institute Executive Summary: "Research Shows that Sales Center Education Makes a Substantial Difference in Student Performance After Graduation"

2 SEF/CareerBuilder Survey 2009

3 National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) First Destinations for the College Class of 2021

Section 2

Program Overview

Based on experience with multiple SEF recognized Sales programs, including multiple top-tier start-up programs, below are some best-practices to assist you in your efforts.

- Typically, the most efficient way to introduce a Sales program onto campus is to start with a certificate program (also referred to as a *concentration, emphasis, specialization, etc.*).
 - This should incorporate a minimum of three sales-specific courses. The most common initial offering of courses includes: Introduction to Professional Selling, Advanced Professional Selling, and Sales Management.
 - Current courses for consideration include Digital Sales, Social Selling, and Sales Analytics.
- Internships are an important component of a Sales program. According to the 2023 SEF Annual Survey, approximately 28% of Top Sales Programs required a Sales-focused internship.
- Recognized programs at academic institutions can take years to build. Internally, the program directors must engage the academic senate, the Dean, faculty members, and existing students. Externally, directors must engage recruiters, sponsors, new students, and alumni. On the next page is an example of a successful program set-up as seen by the Sales Education Foundation.

Section 2 continued

Component

Recommendations

Program Model

- Organize and implement as Strategic Business Units (SBU's) to promote autonomy and accountability in developing corporate partnerships, funding, curriculum, and research. Employ a minimum of two individuals:
 - One with focus on research and other academic requirements (academically qualified - AQ)
 - One to manage corporate relationships, fundraising, and other Sales functions of the programs (professionally qualified – PQ)

Curriculum

- Include a minimum of three Sales-specific courses. Possibilities include, but are not limited to, Introduction to Professional Selling, Advanced Sales, and Sales Management
- SEF does not recognize general education or marketing courses such as Public Speaking, E-commerce, Intro to Marketing, etc.
- Specialized courses are encouraged such as Negotiations, Digital Sales, Sales Analytics, Customer Success Management, Sales Technology, Sales and Social Media and Supply Chain Sales

Section 2 continued

Component

Recommendations

Research

- Conduct quality, relevant Sales research, exploring key areas of concern for Sales leaders and managers. Research should be disseminated in respected academic journals, and findings should be shared in more mainstream venues to promote industry awareness.
- Journals dedicated to Sales research include Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management (JPSSM), and Journal of Selling.
- Additional journal examples include:
 - Closely related Journals (B2B): Industrial Marketing Management, Journal of Business to Business Marketing, and Journal of Industrial and Business Marketing
 - Top Marketing Journals (include some Sales): Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, Journal of Marketing, and Journal of Marketing Research
 - Others to consider: European Journal of Marketing, Harvard Business Review, Journal of Business Research, Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice, Journal of Inter-Organizational Relationships (formerly known as the Journal of Marketing Channels), and Marketing Management Journal
 - For pedagogy studies: Journal of Marketing Education and Marketing Education Review
- SEF provides an annual Call for Proposals for the SEF Research Grant Awards. This program has been in existence since 2011. Past research summaries can be reviewed on the SEF webpage - <https://www.salesfoundation.org/elevating-sales/sales-research/> and the Call for Proposals is announced each Spring.

Section 2 continued

Component

Recommendations

Corporate Relationships

Engage corporations for program support with one or more of several methods:

- Develop a corporate sponsorship program
- Host sales-specific recruitment activities for a cost
- Invite corporate partners into the classroom
- Host professional conferences
- Provide corporate sales training/consulting

University Recognition

- For inclusion in the “Top Universities and Colleges for Sales Education” SEF ANNUAL listing, the host college/university must recognize the sales program with one or more of the following: Certificate, Concentration, Emphasis, Major, Minor, Specialization.
- The program must have accreditation from an external source such as AACSB and ACBSP. International accreditation may be from GSSI, EQUIS, etc.

Section 2 continued

Component

Recommendations

Student Population

- Ideally, programs should be available to students of all majors, with encouragement of minor, concentration, certificate, etc. programs within various disciplines throughout the University.

Internships

- Students should be given the opportunity to participate in sales-specific internships, and faculty should encourage internship participation.
- While not all students will take advantage of the experience, all should be informed of the benefits and supported in their decision to explore Sales as a career.

Advisory Board

- Engage industry professionals to keep the program relevant, provide exposure, and encourage strategy implementation.
- Participants should be incorporated into the fundraising and PR efforts of the program.

Section 3

Curriculum

Colleges and universities are somewhat limited in their resources, both in course offerings and faculty availability, which helps determine the possibility of program expansion. However, many institutions currently offer several courses relevant to a Sales curriculum.

The traditional course load of university sales programs includes the following three courses: Introduction to Professional Selling, Advanced Professional Selling and Sales Management. In addition, programs may offer several elective and specialized courses to prepare their students including:

- Negotiations, Virtual and/or Digital Selling, Purchasing, Supply Chain Sales Ethics in Selling, Sales and Social Media.

By reviewing available course catalogs and current offerings, the Sales Education Foundation will highlight current resources which would be recognized as potential sales program offerings for preparing world class sales candidates. To launch a program, these initial courses, coupled with a special interest course, would be a reasonable undertaking for a college/university.

Over half of all universities surveyed in 2022 include some type of CRM course. Most popular technologies include Salesforce and HubSpot, although there are several new offerings recently added to this market.

For assistance with course review, or for feedback on an outlined program, please contact SEF at info@salesfoundation.org.

Section 4

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

With the expanded recognition of Sales education as a viable and essential offering to most university students, several resources are now available to assist universities in building their initial offerings.

- For a comprehensive list of university/college sales programs, as included in the SEF Annual listing of “Top Universities and Colleges for Professional Sales Education,” visit <https://www.salesfoundation.org/news/sefannual/> .
- Conferences, Sales competitions, professional and academic organizations can provide exposure and support to the sales program and its’ participants. A listing of these types of Events is maintained on the SEF website, visit <https://www.salesfoundation.org/events/>
- SEF provides a variety of resources housed in the Knowledge Center of the SEF website. Visit <https://www.salesfoundation.org/knowledge-center/>
- As part of our overall mission to “elevate the Sales profession through university education,” SEF we will be happy to connect you with current sales program directors and faculty, who are willing to share their experiences.
- Sales Educators’ Academy - Conference/workshop for faculty members who currently teach sales (or wish to start) at the university level. SEA is held on odd years at Rollins College, Winter Park, FL, and even years at Aston University in Birmingham, UK. Networking with experienced sales faculty, program directors, and industry thought leaders provides unique opportunities. Visit: <https://salesedacademy.com/>
- University Sales Center Alliance - Organization of sales academics at established Sales Centers provides networking with select existing university Sales program directors and programs of interest. Visit: <https://www.universitiesalescenteralliance.org/>
- Pi Sigma Epsilon - Professional fraternity for students interested in Sales and marketing. PSE provides support for collegiate chapters, regional and national Sales competitions and other resources. PSE also hosts the National Conference in Sales Management (NCSM) each year in conjunction with their National Convention. Visit: <https://pse.org/>



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Contact SEF

For details on SEF programs, research grants and sponsor opportunities, please visit <https://salesfoundation.org> or email info@salesfoundation.org

