

LEARNING BY GAMING

Universities adapt a cutting edge game-based sales training system

BY MARK J. SCATTOLON

Today's generation of university students were raised playing video games. Online gaming has become even more popular and many students are often reprimanded for gaming during lecture. However, several innovative US universities and colleges across North America are encouraging it – that is, when it comes to sales education.

A Canadian company from Burlington, Ontario, e=mz² Inc., is one of the first to capitalize on the trend of learning by gaming. They have developed a game that trains individuals to become more competent and confident in the sales world. The game allows the players to play through real-world simulated sales call adventures where they interact with an avatar, make decisions, and are given direct feedback based on their performance.

e=mz² Inc.'s cutting edge program is called Momentum. Before the program was designed, the company spent five years studying brain research on how people learn, absorb and retain information. They also examined the learning styles of baby boomers, Generation Xers and the echo generation as well as

RETENTION RATES

- 95%: Game-based learning
- 90%: Immediate use or teaching others
- 75%: Practice by doing
- 50%: Discussion group
- 30%: Demonstration
- 20%: Audio visual
- 10%: Reading
- 5%: Lecture

Source: Corporate Universities,
By Jeanne Meister

the most effective sales techniques based on client personality traits.

From what started as a corporate sales training system, used by a number of successful corporations today, has evolved into an academic educational resource. Learning by gaming is a methodology that already holds strong with this generation of students. Momentum is played outside the classroom on the student's free time – available 24/7 online. The game also tracks and measures each move and decision, where the professor can monitor their performance in real time.

Aurora University (AU), University of Wisconsin-Parkside (UWP), and Plymouth State University (PSU) were among the first schools to pilot



Momentum in the US. Dr. Robert Nadeau from PSU states that "Momentum has been the most effective tool I've used to engage students in their assignments."

"The results have exceeded expectations. Eighty percent of my students completed 100% of their weekly assignments, the remaining students completed approximately three quarters of these assignments. I have not seen a traditional text book achieve these types of results," he said.

The three schools went head-to-head-to-head in a Momentum competition this past fall. Awards were given out based on the top school's average score and the top 10 sales leaders across all three schools.

Aurora University emerged as the top school by having the highest average score among their students. Plymouth State University earned the title of having the top sales leader, Chris Roche, followed by Kyle Hagemann (UWP) and Chuck Bowlds (AU).

"The competition really increased the motivation and learning for the students. The professors at each school would mention how their students truly became captivated into the game and were obsessed with winning!" says CEO of e=mz², Marguerite Zimmerman.

It will be interesting to see what the future of education looks like. If research suggests that there are stronger and smarter ways to learn and

TOP 10 MOMENTUM SALES LEADERS

1. Chris Roche, PSU
2. Kyle Hagemann, UWP
3. Chuck Bowlds, AU
4. Griffin LaFleur, PSU
5. Mark Freeman, AU
6. Steve Brauer, AU
7. Mike Moody, PSU
8. Aaron Franzen, AU
9. Jordan Stocker, UWP
10. Matt Anklam, AU

retain knowledge, and if game-based interactive learning is the solution, then Momentum can very easily become the future of sales training/learning.

Dr. Nadeau mentions "...we need to find tools that engage students. There is also research that shows interactive types of 'games' can also be an effective method to teach today's students who are highly dependent on multitasking and stimulating types of media."

For more information regarding e=mz² Inc. and Momentum please visit www.emz2.ca.

mjscattolon@emz2.com
905-681-1440

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