

3MPartnerships
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Synergism

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Annual conference to celebrate 10th anniversary of 3M Frontline Initiative

Sales practitioners, academicians and students will gather in April to share best practices, gain new ideas and celebrate the 10th anniversary of 3M's Frontline Initiative at the 2006 Frontline Customer Contact Conference. The College of St. Catherine will sponsor the fourth annual gathering with 3M in St. Paul.

With the success of last year's student project competition, the event will also be part of the 2006 conference. Students will present projects to be judged by a panel of faculty and sales leaders, while faculty members participate in a best-practice forum on the topic of sales curriculum.

"The forum will provide an opportunity for schools to talk to each other," says Lynn Schleeter, director of the Center for Sales Innovation, College of St. Catherine. "Each school will share a best practice. We all do things a little differently, so this will be a chance for each of us to get some good ideas and enhance what we bring to our pedagogy."

The 3M Frontline Education Partnership is an innovative, strategic educational partnership that provides benefits and service to all recipients.

Baylor University
Waco, Texas

College of St. Catherine
St. Paul, Minnesota

DePaul University
Chicago, Illinois

Indiana University
Bloomington, Indiana

North Carolina A & T University
Greensboro, North Carolina

**Southern University
and A&M College**
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Tuskegee University
Tuskegee, Alabama

University of Toledo
Toledo, Ohio

Xavier University
New Orleans, Louisiana

In another session including both table talk and large-group discussion, sales managers will examine the best ways to communicate effectively with new college graduates.


"Members of this generation want to advance quickly and always be learning," says Schleeter. "At the same time, graduates need to

understand that they have to deliver performance to move ahead. There are expectations on both sides, and good communication is important."

The three-day conference also will include school team meetings and faculty research presentations.

Among conference highlights will be the Leadership Awards Dinner, when conference participants will celebrate the 10th anniversary of 3M's Frontline Initiative and honor executives, many now retired, who first supported the idea.

Ten years ago, 3M began partnering with colleges and universities to raise awareness of the value of the frontline profession and give sales students the skills to succeed in the marketplace. Now with nine partner colleges, an annual class of 24 sales interns and a growing number of students seeking sales and customer service educations, 3M's Frontline Initiative has brought new respect to the profession and created a pipeline of performance-ready talent for 3M and other employers.

"3M now has solid performance data on the contributions graduates are making as well as their growth potential," says Schleeter, who worked with research data as a 3M faculty intern in 2004. "This initiative has really made a difference for partner schools and our students, and for 3M." 



Lynn Schleeter

College of St. Catherine's sales program gives students broad picture

To be successful, sales professionals need a wide range of business skills in addition to product knowledge. At the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul, sales majors develop acumen that takes them far beyond basic professional expertise.

“We create well-rounded business people,” says Lynn Schleeter, director of the Center for Sales Innovation, College of St. Catherine. “In addition to taking six sales courses, our students study marketing and earn an additional 80 liberal arts credits outside their sales major. The result is a sales professional able to talk with customers about things outside the product — such as politics, world economy and art — which helps build stronger relationships.”

In addition, the concept of leadership is integral to all College of St. Catherine (CSC) courses.

“It’s not necessary to be a manager to be a leader,” says Schleeter. “It’s how you lead a team, how you lead inside your organization or your customer’s organization. Students usually don’t start their careers at management level, but they need to understand issues such as organizational structure and how managers

Developing a program

It was 3M’s needs that inspired the college to launch a sales program in 1998. From the beginning, CSC offered a sales major.

“3M wanted to build a pipeline of talent with the skill sets to readily fill sales force vacancies of the future,” says Schleeter. “3M also wanted its sales force to mirror the diversity of its customer organizations. CSC saw an opportunity: Sales is a career that offers financial rewards for bright, entrepreneurial, creative individuals.”

In building its curriculum, CSC worked with 3M to define competencies required at various sales force levels and, using data from several organizations, validated the competencies. CSC developed specific coursework to effectively allow students to acquire these competencies.

Enrollment grew, and in 2001, with support from a financial services organization and a pharmaceutical company, CSC used the same method to add financial services and health care sales concentrations to its program, developing new courses to prepare students for sales careers in those fields.

“All majors take fundamental sales and specialized courses for each concentration,” says Schleeter. “Those in financial services receive what is close to a minor in finance and bring special contributions to their organizations. Those who concentrate in medical sales take more science courses, although many health care sales concentration students come with medical or science degrees. We have former medical practitioners who are turning to sales. With a clinical background, they understand how a product works and how companies can benefit.”

CSC’s program continues to evolve. The faculty continually reviews curriculum to remain current. For example, customer-mapping methodology has been added.

“Our curriculum is still as relevant as the day we first offered it,” says Schleeter. “We keep it relevant by exposing students to successful sales professionals, helping them discover the skills they need through informational interviews, mentoring relationships and class project partnerships. Industry people requested our newest course, ‘Selling into Managed Care,’ which is the only one like it in the country. With our continuing focus on keeping up with business needs, we know our graduates are performance ready.” 🏠

“Students need to understand organizational dynamics of working with complex organizations and how they fit into the picture.”

— Lynn Schleeter, College of St. Catherine

develop compensation plans. Ethics also is embedded in each course because every organization needs ethical leaders.”

Similarly, “Advance Sales” students learn skills involved in working with large multinational and complex accounts, although they are unlikely to have such an assignment right after graduation.

“Students need to understand organizational dynamics of working with complex organizations and how they fit into the picture,” says Schleeter. “For instance, in 3M, one customer can receive products from several businesses. We expose students to the breadth of sales and possible career paths.”

Sales women sharpening management skills through leadership program

More women in sales management are honing the skills to help them advance in their careers through the annual “Leadership for Women in Sales” program hosted by the Center for Sales Innovation, College of St. Catherine in St. Paul.

In November, a cohort of 29 sales management professionals from 3M and 12 other companies across the nation met for three days of intensive sessions. These participants now are applying the skills they’ve learned to assigned projects within their workplace and will meet again in May for the second session.

“This year we added a strategic mindset component,” says Lynn Schleeter, director of the Center for Sales Innovation. “Strategic thinking skills are more important than ever now for sales managers, and we want to help these women develop their application and expert thinking to deliver results.”

Designed to create women leaders who can make an impact on their organizations, the program is in its sixth year. In addition to expanding skills, it has fostered professional networks as participants, who represent several industries, bounce ideas off one another during their project time. To Schleeter, those six months make the difference.

“Sitting in a workshop is only useful to a point,” she says. “The key is how they apply and integrate for execution. During the project period we get them to apply those skills as part of their normal work experience. Coming together to report on projects in the spring gives them accountability.”


“The value of the program for me is that I now see how my actions, thoughts and presence affect 3M, which helps me better know my present role and its

value to the company,” wrote a recent participant on her evaluation. “That will allow me to better support change rather than just watching from the sidelines. I learned a great deal about myself as a leader in identifying my talents and strengths.”

The program fits best for a woman who has been in management for two to three years, but it’s often difficult for companies to choose those who will benefit the most, says Schleeter.

“Participants are selected based on performance and growth potential, and organizations that leverage the program most successfully have clearly defined goals for the participant in these areas,” she says. “This year organizations did a good job of identifying the best individuals poised to assume greater responsibilities. They came with a wide age range and differing experience levels. Six companies sent participants for the first time.”

Next year, the Center for Sales Innovation plans to launch a second schedule of sessions to make it easier for more people to attend. The new cohort would begin in early February 2007.

“The alternative schedule will allow us to place participants in either the February-August or November-May sessions, based on a fit for their schedules,” says Schleeter. “This program has delivered results, therefore we want to make it available for additional organizations to nominate women to participate.” 

“Strategic thinking skills are more important than ever now for sales managers, and we want to help these women develop their application and expert thinking to deliver results.”

— Lynn Schleeter,
College of St. Catherine

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— A recent participant

Sales leaders share ideas in monthly forum



Bill Smith

After a 3M assignment in Europe, Bill Smith, sales director for Corporate Marketing and Sales, missed the frequent interaction he'd had with other American business people there.

"We would talk informally while our children engaged in Saturday morning sports activities at the American School," says Smith. "Our subjects were wide ranging, but I always seemed to get good ideas from the conversations."

Smith mentioned that fact to Lynn Schleeter, director of the Center for Sales Innovation, and Marjorie Mathison Hance, 3M Endowed Chair, College of St. Catherine in St. Paul. Their discussions sparked development of the Sales Executive Forum, now in its third year.

Every month, sales organization leaders from a variety of companies and industries meet for breakfast at the College of St. Catherine and discuss common concerns.


"It's an opportunity for like-minded leaders across companies to talk in a confidential environment," says Schleeter. "They find common ground and use each other as resources to meet similar challenges."

Meetings usually draw 15 or more participants. Some come every month, while others attend when they can. Everyone contributes; what one person has accomplished often applies in other organizations, says Schleeter. Discussions at one meeting lead to future meeting topics.

"We try to keep it flexible to deliver the most value to members," says Schleeter. "The key is to get the right level of people in the room. Participants get the most out of it when they are lifelong learners talking to their peers."

"For me the biggest benefit of this group has been the opportunity to escape '3M think' and hear about other's approaches," says Smith. "Not surprisingly, most of us deal with the same issues but come at them differently. Networking with other sales leaders outside the forum meeting has provided another avenue for sharing tips."

Although the College of St. Catherine facilitates these meetings to help sales leaders stay on the leading edge through inter-communication, the college has found value for itself in the forum.

"Hearing from sales leaders keeps our faculty current on issues, therefore keeping our curriculum relevant for continuing education as well as undergraduate programs," says Schleeter. "We want our graduates to have the skills they need to be effective contributors in their sales organizations." 

Bellamy brings internship experience and builds award-winning sales career

As a 3M summer intern, Matt Bellamy worked with both marketing and sales in the Packaging Systems (now Industrial Services and Solutions) Division. Since joining 3M full-time in 2002, he has used that experience to move seamlessly between the functions and into a new division to jump-start an award-winning sales career.

Bellamy graduated from the University of Toledo in Toledo, Ohio, with a professional sales degree, thinking sales skills would eventually earn him a marketing position. But his 3M internship experience in market research led to a part-time long-distance job working with customer-focus projects his senior year and a full-time marketing position with the Industrial Services and Solutions Division after graduation.

As a marketing development administrator, Bellamy served as a liaison between the division's management team and sales force, providing research on new and emerging markets and handling promotional projects. He also went through Six Sigma training, becoming green-belt certified his first year with 3M.

"I enjoyed my time in marketing, but after two years, I was anxious to get back into the field and work more closely with customers," says Bellamy.



Melissa Keefe

Strengthening the territory

In March 2004, Bellamy became a sales representative in the five-state Pacific Northwest and Rocky Mountain Territory of 3M's Security Systems Division. Since then, sales in the territory, which had declined, have increased 26 percent.

"It's a matter of finding innovative new ways to sell to our customers," says Bellamy. "I sell solutions. With my background in both marketing and sales, I offered a fresh perspective."

That perspective and the relationship he built with customers earned Bellamy the division's Big Hitter Award, a monthly employee recognition, in September 2005 for selling 137 percent of his quota during the third quarter.

"Matt has done a phenomenal job," says his supervisor, Melissa Keefe, regional sales manager, Security Systems Division. "He turned around a fiercely contested territory, using Six Sigma processes and tools to convince city councils

and public library boards that 3M is the best. One of his new accounts is Multnomah County Library System in Portland, Ore., the largest library system (measured by circulation) in the country. Thanks to Matt and his training, we're starting a Six Sigma program to help them see how they can improve patron service."

Bellamy has also developed his own method of monitoring business.



Matt Bellamy

"This is a large territory, and our division doesn't have a customer relationship management (CRM) system," he says. "My spread-sheet helps me keep track of my customers and ongoing programs. With my background, I almost unconsciously apply Six Sigma processes to my sales activities."

"When he joined us, Matt was one of the most prepared new sales representatives we've ever had and became an instant leader in our sales organization," says Greg Pfouts, national sales and marketing manager, Security Systems Division. "He took a difficult territory and produced immediately. With his sales and marketing experience, Matt mapped out his customers' work processes then provided them productivity-based solutions. He established several division best practices and has implemented new selling techniques, which he has since introduced to his colleagues."

Having the right background

Bellamy praises his internship experience.

"My internship exposed me to 3M culture and the company's various businesses and products," he says. "That enabled me to move right in as a full-time person and easily change divisions two years ago. Through my marketing experience I learned how things work in the company, something many sales people don't get to do. I've applied that knowledge in the field."

Bellamy's success has earned him a transfer to a larger territory in the Midwest with more responsibility, which he will take on this spring.

"Customers respect Matt tremendously," says Keefe. "With his background and skills, I expect a smooth transition to his new territory." 📖

Internship, C4 experience jump-start top-producing sales career

When Candace Alfred joined 3M's Construction and Home Improvement Markets (CHIM) as a sales representative in September 2004, she was already familiar with the division. That fact accelerated her productivity and helped her earn a top award her first year in the field.

Alfred gained a broad knowledge of 3M as an intern and built on that knowledge as a full-time customer relationship management (CRM) project analyst in the Corporate Customer Contact Center (C4) for 1 1/2 years.

"My internship helped me learn 3M culture and procedures," says Alfred, now sales representative in CHIM's Southern California Territory. "Working in the Call Center gave me a snapshot of 3M's various businesses, so I knew about CHIM and its products before I joined the division. It really gave me a leg up."

In CRM, Alfred helped build customer loyalty by contacting customers to discover what they liked and disliked, analyzing the information to determine how 3M should respond. She also handled incoming customer calls.

"I went into the field because I wanted to work more directly with customers," she says. "On the phone we were usually resolving problems. Now I'm able to be there in person to see what's not working — and what is. I'm seeing both sides and am fully engaged with my customers."

That engagement led to an 18 percent sales increase among her retail hardware accounts in 2005, including a 13 percent growth in one of her key accounts. She also made significant contributions to her team's paint chain accounts, helping the business grow 23 percent. Her accomplishments placed her among the top 25 CHIM representatives for 2005, her first full year with the division, earning her the Golden Touch Award and a trip to Marco Island, Fla.

In addition, in November 2005 Alfred became headquarter representative for a \$1.6 million distributor account, one of the largest in her branch.

"Candace has created tremendous working relationships with distributors, so I felt comfortable in promoting her to work with a major account," says Dan McGinley, sales manager, CHIM Southwest Region.



Dan McGinley (left) and Candace Alfred.

Alfred credits her ability to contribute so quickly to her 3M internship.

"Because of my internship, I was able to jump right in with minimal training time," she says. "My experience helped me make a smooth transition to the field, and once there, to pick up and grow the business."

McGinley, who has supervised several student interns, also praises the program highly.

"We have had nothing less than top-notch students each year," he says. "I have assigned these eager future 3M sales reps to specific territories with genuine objectives to increase sales, and every time they have not only met our expectations, they have exceeded them — and our sales teams love them! As a supervisor I feel it is rewarding to work with these Frontline students who have no less an objective than to 'be the best.' We have extended permanent sales positions to the four students I worked with in years past, and they are currently doing great in their sales careers."

To McGinley, Alfred is one more example of former-intern success.

"Candace is an awesome individual," he says. "She's a quick learner and a self starter with a determination to succeed. I can't say enough good things about her; I'm glad she's on our team. I see nothing but success for her and her career at 3M." 🏢

Recruiting relationship grows into 3M frontline partnership

The University of Toledo, located in Toledo, Ohio, has been supplying 3M with performance-ready sales students at since 1998. Last fall, that relationship strengthened when the university's Edward H. Schmidt School for Professional Sales (ESSPS) became 3M's newest frontline partner.

"We're very excited," says Dr. Richard Buehrer, director and professor, ESSPS. "When you can partner with a company like 3M, it makes your program stronger and attracts support from other companies. Four other firms want to work with us because of 3M's involvement."

One of the first universities in the nation to develop a sales curriculum, the University of Toledo offered its first two courses in 1990.

"University officials discovered in the late 1980s that most members of our Business Advisory Council had begun their career in sales," says Dr. Buehrer. "We wanted to give legitimacy to the sales profession."

By the mid-1990s, the sales program had grown. With encouragement and support from Toledo alumni in the local business community, the university established a sales major in 2000, attracting 12 students its first semester. Today the program is one of the few AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business International)-accredited in the country, with 270 students, including those with non-business majors such as engineering or pharmaceuticals who are minoring in professional sales. A three-track program allows sales majors to specialize in financial service, technical or industrial (business-to-business) sales.

"Our enrollment growth has been overwhelming, thanks to the affirmation of firms like 3M," says Dr. Buehrer. "In just five years professional sales has become the third largest major in the college of business, behind marketing and finance."

"ESSPS has a solid program," says John

Lanning, sales and marketing recruiting and training manager for 3M's Consumer and Office Business, and University of Toledo team leader, who also serves on the ESSPS 18-member Business Advisory Council. "Because

required courses overlap, many students major in both sales and marketing, so they graduate with an understanding of not only sales, but everything related to it. ESSPS prepares these students to work in many types of businesses, so their business acumen is strong. The University of Toledo has provided us with many qualified candidates who can readily fill our openings. Over the last seven years, we've hired seven interns from the school."



Dr. Richard Buehrer

Involving the business community

In addition to serving on the Business Advisory Council, members of the business community participate in ESSPS' curriculum development, serve as guest lecturers in sales classes and, in the Advanced Sales course, partner with students on live-action role-play projects.

"Business people offer valuable insight on students' strengths and weaknesses, giving us ideas on how we should tweak our curriculum," says Dr. Buehrer. "We think we have a good curricula, but nothing is ever perfect — we're constantly updating it to include the skills business people are asking for."

Lanning, who has been recruiting sales intern and full-time candidates at the University of Toledo about three years, says he has seen a marked improvement in students' skills and attitudes.

"The caliber of students has risen significantly," he says. "They are better prepared, and they have a greater understanding and more realistic expectations of what a sales career is all about. Years ago, students were reluctant to leave Ohio. Now it's evident that students accept the likelihood of relocation as part of holding a position with a major company."

"We're constantly developing our curriculum to ensure that students have the skills they need to be successful in their careers," says Dr. Buehrer. "Graduates must think more strategically now than they had to five years ago, so we want especially to improve their math and analytical skills. We also plan more engagement with the business community to keep in touch with its changing needs. As students continue to come, we as sales faculty will keep working to develop and deliver the best possible frontline sales talent possible." 📚



University of Toledo

Loftus, Mitchell make quick start toward Frontline Initiative goals

As new co-chairs of 3M's Frontline Initiative, Frank Loftus and Paula Mitchell have already begun to develop the successful program even further toward building 3M's sales force into the nation's best. In November, they took the first critical planning steps by hosting a meeting with more than 30 representatives of 3M and Frontline partner colleges and universities to discuss program goals and share ideas on strengthening the partnerships.



Frank Loftus

During the sessions, 3M presenters emphasized the importance of solution selling and customer relationship management to 3M sales processes and highlighted the skills 3M considers in selecting intern and job candidates.

Faculty and team leaders separated into small groups to discuss several topics, including steps partners can take to ensure that graduates are able to sell solutions, and the best way for teams to work together to achieve that goal.

"The meeting was a great opportunity for Paula Mitchell and me as new Frontline Initiative co-chairs to meet leaders from our partner schools and 3M team leaders," said Frank Loftus, general manager, 3M Automotive Market Center in Michigan. "Breakout sessions provided input that we'll use to formulate an overall strategic plan for this critical initiative. The feedback also will be valuable as we look for ways to continually improve everything from the internship experience to partnership programs we have at the schools."

Paula Mitchell, regional sales leader, Medical Division West in California, agreed.

"During the conference we were able to have meaningful dialogue with our partner schools so they can see how they fit into our vision of building a world-class sales organization," she said. "By providing us top sales talent, our partners develop greater capability at the schools. We're looking forward to similar conferences and continuing to work toward our goals."

Seeking solution selling skills

Kalebyra Henry, channel development supervisor, 3M Industrial and Transportation Business, and team member for Southern University, praised the

conference for bringing partner schools together with a common focus: to help 3M achieve its goals.

"If each partner is teaching solution selling, it will help remold students' thoughts about professional sales," she said. "When students think of selling they usually think product. Students should know that if they choose a career with 3M, they'll be expected to sell solutions."



Paula Mitchell

Merging academics and practice


For Professor Anthony Freeman of Tuskegee University, who was attending his first partnership conference, the opportunity to interact with 3M professionals was especially valuable.

"The meeting provided a real assessment of what is happening in the business world from practicing sales professionals," said Freeman. "We in the academic world tend to get wrapped up in theory. If we can make the connection from theory to practice, it will be a win-win for the college, the company and society."

Freeman said the discussions have already prompted some enhancements to Tuskegee's curriculum. For instance, his Promotional Strategy and Operations Management class now includes a project that gives students experience in leadership and evaluating the leadership skills of fellow team members. In addition, Freeman is working to incorporate into classes a software program that will acquaint students with key elements of customer relationship management.

Dr. Japhet Nkonge, professor of marketing, North Carolina A & T State University (NCA&T), said he was impressed with how well 3M professionals understood the challenges of academicians. "We need to be equally aligned to what employers want and how we in academic training can provide it," he said. "Having a dialogue with 3M people and getting a feel for what is on their front burner will help us do that."

Meeting partnership colleagues also was helpful, said Nkonge.

"It was good to see what others are doing," he said. "I think we at NCA&T are moving in the right direction." 

Davvie Mims brings world of sales to students

As a sales manager, Davvie Mims seeks top-notch, performance-ready candidates motivated to help 3M succeed. As 3M partnership team leader for North Carolina A and T University (NCA&T) in Greensboro, N. C., his goal is to help students gain the skills they need to fit those qualifications.

In his team leader role, Mims, area business manager, 3M Industrial Business and Transportation, serves as a liaison between NCA&T and 3M, facilitating communication and helping the partnership run smoothly. He participates in planning meetings with NCA&T faculty and 3M representatives from St. Paul, speaks to classes about the sales profession, and interviews applicants for 3M summer internships.

“The experience is enlightening and educational for me,” says Mims. “It’s wonderful to see how the sales curriculum is evolving. The more relevant and attractive the courses become, and the more students choose to study sales, the more respected sales will be as a profession. We’re planning a 3M Sales Connection meeting on campus in 2006, which will bring NCA&T and 3M even closer together. I think we at 3M have tapped into a good school.”

“Having been with 3M for 24 years, the last 20 in sales, I’m encouraged to see the level of involvement in today’s students because they’re the professionals of the future. Everything involves selling, and everyone needs to be good at it. Sales is the only way if you want to go far.”

— Davvie Mims, 3M

Mims enjoys interacting with students and feels he’s serving as their role model.

“As a minority, I can represent history, the road traveled,” says Mims. “When I visit sales classes, I try to

be honest with students about what they can expect in the business world, and let them know the type of person I look for as a new-hire. I’ve been as vocal about it as possible, and I think they’re listening.”

As he interviews for internships, Mims is impressed with the steadiness and resolve of students he meets.


“They’re outstanding and have a good background in sales,” he says. “Having been with 3M for 24 years, the last 20 in sales, I’m encouraged to see the level of involvement in today’s students because they’re the professionals of the future. Everything involves selling, and everyone needs to be good at it. Sales is the only way if you want to go far.”

Mims, who is based in Charlotte, N. C. — about an hour-and-45-minute drive from Greensboro — is beginning his third year as NCA&T team leader. He

works with 3M team member Doug Burton, a sales representative in Philadelphia, who helps interview prospective interns. Mims volunteered for the position after hearing about the opening.

“I knew about the good things happening with the Frontline Initiative and the internship program,” says Mims. “My name came up for team leader, and I took advantage of it. 3M has done an outstanding job in minority recruitment and retention, with help from this initiative.”

The partnership has brought mutual value to NCA&T and 3M, says Mims.

“While affiliation with 3M makes NCA&T more attractive to students, the partnership enables 3M to recruit interns directly from the top pool of candidates,” he says. “A few years down the line, that ability will be even more valuable because competition for top talent will be a lot fiercer. Our advantage is that with the Frontline Initiative, students will look at 3M as one of the first companies to offer career opportunities to a diverse workforce. All 3M businesses should participate in this program — we are on the right path for the future.” 



Davvie Mims



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