



Western Michigan University
ScholarWorks at WMU

Haworth College of Business News

Haworth College of Business

4-2017

Haworth College of Business News (04/2017)

Haworth College of Business

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/business_news



Part of the Business Commons

WMU ScholarWorks Citation

Haworth College of Business, "Haworth College of Business News (04/2017)" (2017). *Haworth College of Business News*. 65.

https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/business_news/65

This Newsletter is brought to you for free and open access by the Haworth College of Business at ScholarWorks at WMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Haworth College of Business News by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact wmu-scholarworks@wmich.edu.



HAWORTH COLLEGE OF BUSINESS



ALL IN THE FAMILY

Using an opportunity during college to develop a business plan as part of his honors thesis, Ryan Kohsel, B.B.A.'16, and his father launched Next Generation Services.

[READ MORE](#)



SALES COMPETITION

Three sales students—one coach, two competitors—placed third overall and earned individual honors at a recent sales competition.

[READ MORE](#)



I LANDED THE JOB!

Our students are proud to share where they will be interning or starting their professional careers. Check out the photos on Facebook, tag your company or new employee, post a congratulatory note and follow along as we add more.

[VIEW THE PHOTO ALBUM](#)



FACULTY-STUDENT SUCCESS

Crediting Dr. Muhammad Razi and the Microsoft Dynamics Academic Alliance, John Wohlgemuth, B.B.A.'13, has found professional success. Now, Microsoft has shared the story of Wohlgemuth's career path and his continuing connection with Razi.

[READ MORE](#)

- Looking for **summer activities** for your middle school and high school kids? Registration is now open for our [Finance Camp](#) and [Entrepreneurship and Innovation Camp](#).
- [Mercantile Bank of Michigan Breakfast Series](#)
- [Entrepreneurship Forum](#)
- [Previous Editions](#)

Ryan Kohsel, B.B.A.'16—Business Student to Business Manager



By Jenna Giragosian

Spending every day working with a family member ... for some, this sounds like a recipe for disaster, and for others, the opportunity of a lifetime. For Ryan Kohsel, B.B.A.'16, a family business was exactly what he wanted—coming to college with a plan to open a business with his father upon graduation.

After Kohsel's father left his career with an oil distributorship, the two decided to open Next Generation Services LLC. The business focuses on the manufacturing industry and helping companies improve their machine reliability while simultaneously reducing costs and environmental impact.

The pair started with zero customers and has built the business from the ground up since June of 2016. Both started the business with their own strong skill sets that have helped the business grow and reach profitability within just one year—an enviable accomplishment.

Kohsel's father had developed many relationships in the industry and gained valuable experience throughout his career about the potential market as well as customer needs and wants. That,

paired with his sound chemistry background in the formulation and application of oils, set the father-son duo up for success.

Kohsel brought his own knowledge base to the table as he was finishing his management major. He made connections with a number of faculty members, including Dr. Matthew Ross, assistant professor of finance. The two met when Kohsel was forming his honors thesis, which he used as an opportunity to author the business plan for Next Generation. He went to Ross for feedback on the financial portion of the plan, and Ross found the plan so intriguing that he joined the thesis committee to provide further guidance.

“Ryan stands out in his ability to find resources and rapidly incorporate new information,” says Ross. “With a solid educational experience and support system, he and his father have Next Generation Services set up for growth. I am excited to follow their story as they work toward continued success.”

That educational background was critical for Kohsel feeling that he could take on the challenge of a startup.

“My education at WMU provided me with understanding in areas that were critical to my career as an aspiring entrepreneur,” says Kohsel. “I still have quite a bit to learn, but I have been able to master elements of my profession much faster with thorough understanding of a variety of business principles.”

To complement what he learned as a student, Kohsel’s experiences and relationship with his father are what really contributes to his current success. “Most employers will tell you that the single most important factor in hiring candidates is how well they fit in the organization. Although he was busy throughout my life, my father took time to be a dad. Experiences such as playing catch, taking vacations together or going to the ice rink all led to a healthy relationship with my family and a healthy working relationship. Without it, we would not be able to work together.”

While the two specialize in different areas, they share many roles. Kohsel handles the marketing side of the business, while his father is the primary point of contact for financing and banking relations—but he still brings his son along to meetings to learn the process. The pair shares the responsibilities of making sales calls, customer visits and performing the day-to-day work.

Though both Kohsels have been planning and dreaming for the day they would own a family business, there are also challenges. “When we come to a hurdle, we don’t lose our minds but understand that every problem has a solution. By working out problems, we can continue on and are better prepared for the next one,” says Kohsel.

When asked about his hopes for the future of Next Generation Services, Kohsel says he wants to grow the business to more than just him and his father, and he wants to grow his knowledge and abilities with it. “I look forward to the day when I am capable of running the business successfully with what I have learned from my father along the way.”

One of Kohsel's greatest hopes for the business is for it to be a blessing to his community—a place where people seek out employment and enjoy going to work. "Creating a business is about more than just that industry, it's about the overall impact."

Rising stars in WMU sales and marketing program place at competition

contact: Stacey Markin and Mark Schwerin
March 21, 2017 | WMU News

KALAMAZOO, Mich.—A team of two Western Michigan University sales and business marketing students placed third overall at the University of Toledo Invitational Sales Competition, with one student placing second in individual standings and the other in ninth place.

Junior **Kaitlyn Phillips**, of Rockford, and sophomore **Lauren Nowakowski**, of Granger, Indiana, represented WMU. They were tasked with selling 3M VHB Tape, an industrial strength tape, to buyers, role-playing for 15 minutes per round with groups representing different stakeholders at a Display Sign Manufacturing Company.



From left: Jeremy Juday, Kaitlyn Phillips and Lauren Nowakowski

Nowakowski made it to the semi-final round, and Phillips went on to the finals to finish as the runner up. Students were coached by a student coach, senior **Jeremy Juday** of Dowagiac, and associate professor of marketing **Dr. Kelley O'Reilly**. The students met three times per week for two-hour sessions for seven weeks, doing research, practicing role plays and getting feedback on their presentation skills.

"Really owning the role of a rep for 3M was a challenge," Phillips says. "Role-playing can be odd in that you are pretending to be something you are not, and the person you are selling to is doing the same. You might think that would be uncomfortable, but it was actually much easier and more natural than I expected as I became more and more immersed in my role and selling scenarios."

The competition is unique in that it focuses on beginning sales students or students interested in sales as a major, and in its second year is drawing students from across the country to compete.

Nowakowski has yet to take her first formal sales class at WMU, but is still getting competition experience as a younger student.

"I have learned so much about my sales style and how it will help me throughout my education and career," she says.

O'Reilly is proud of the team's third place finish, moving up five spots over last year.

"This year, I engaged a student to coach the team with me," O'Reilly says, "and the success of the team is directly related to how strong Jeremy's coaching was."

First-time coach Juday learned about what it takes to achieve successful results. "Throughout this process, the concept that in sales you really do get out what you put in was reaffirmed for me. Preparation is key. I also learned that sales is a tough concept to teach because there are so many variables to the process. You can only control the interaction from one side of the table, and then you must think outside of the box regarding the responses you could receive at different points throughout the interactions. I think preparing for a competition like this makes us appreciate all the more the tremendous sales faculty we have guiding us in our program."

For more WMU news, arts and events, visit wmich.edu/news.