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Haworth College of Business News



This year's PITCH Competition, held March 27 and 28, showcased 32 students from across WMU's campus pitching their business ideas to a panel of judges comprised of faculty and area business leaders. The top three pitchers earned prize money totaling \$4,000. First Place and People's Choice award winners Tyler Schramm (above front) and Jonathon Lysik will invest their winnings into their company, Illumipong.

[Read more about the competition and the eight finalists](#)



SHARING EXPERTISE

As co-host of the 2015 Michigan Association of Certified Public Accountants High School Leaders conference, the **Department of Accountancy** helped area high school juniors and seniors learn about the profession and how to save money effectively. Dr. Ola Smith (above), associate professor of accountancy, coordinated the event.



INSPIRED CHANGE

As vice president and controller at First National Bank of Michigan, Matt Morgan, M.S.A.'05, has the knowledge and expertise to make important decisions on a variety of business topics.

Meet Matt Morgan



The college's advanced purchasing executive education courses continue throughout summer 2015.

Registration is ongoing.

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The spring speaker events are in full swing. Check the schedule of upcoming breakfast series presentations.

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Honors students traveled across the country during spring break exploring startup communities with Dr. John Mueller.

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PITCH competition draws range of student led companies

Students from across Western Michigan University participated in the PITCH Competition on March 27 and 28. Tyler Schramm, a sales and business marketing student, pitched the Illumipong, an innovative beer pong table, earning the company \$1,700 for first place and \$300 as



the People's Choice award recipient.

“Presenting our idea to a large group of like-minded people was really fun,” says Schramm, who adds that he and partner Jonathon Lysik, an integrated supply management major, are currently raising capital and creating a manufacturing process. “The most challenging aspect was definitely communicating efficiently and effectively with the judges, as every word had to have substance behind it.”

From an application open to all WMU students, 32 companies were selected for the first round, which narrowed the field to the top eight for the final round. Each company was allowed one person to present the pitch. The eight finalists pitched live on March 28 to a group of judges composed of business community members, including local business owners.

Now in its third year, the PITCH Competition is sponsored by WMU's Haworth College of Business, Educational Community Credit Union and Great Lakes Architectural Products Group. The final round of competition was held at WMU's Starting Gate student business accelerator in downtown Kalamazoo.

WINNERS

First place (\$1,700) award and **People's Choice Award** (\$300): Illumipong pitched by **Tyler Schramm**, sales and business marketing. Illumipong is an innovative beer pong table designed to enhance player experience by using a series of sensors that determine cup count and illuminate three LEDs in the shape of a beer pong rack. Although there are similar products on the market, Illumipong is unique in terms of pricing and target market.
Team member: **Jonathon Lysik**, integrated supply management.

“Winning the People's Choice Award actually had a profound effect on our mindset. Both awards gave us even more confidence that people truly love our product and would be very interested in possibly purchasing units in the future,” says Lysik.

Second Place (\$1,200) award—Carbar.com pitched by **Rajae Adams**, engineering design technology.

CarBar is a web-based delivery service of alcoholic beverages and also a mobile bar experience. The services of the company are divided into two entities; one being the delivery of alcoholic beverages to local customers through online ordering and the other a mobile bar available for outdoor events by reservation.

“I think that my passion, knowledge and ability to fluently present my proposed business is what made me stand out,” says Adams. “My conviction in the content of my presentation bred my confidence during the pitch.”

Third place and \$800 award: **Mackenzie Sievers**, industrial and entrepreneurial engineering. Chill Out: This blanket is designed for people who get hot very easily. It cools a person down,

yet still allows sleeping with a blanket. Chill Out has cooling packets inside with an air vacuum that comes with the purchase.

“I wanted a platform to show off my product and see if I could convince people that a blanket that cools you down is a worthwhile item,” says Sievers. “I think what made me stand out was my dynamic start and memorable ending. I really focused on getting the attention of the crowd.”

Other finalists

Ball Strategy—An app that mimics basketball court actions to teach game strategy.

Pitcher—Julia Henson, textile and apparel studies - merchandising

Team member—Austin Richie, organizational communication

Agvantics Biosciences—A company developing technology that accelerates tree maturity from approximately 15 years to less than one year.

Pitcher—Alvar Carlson, MBA

Dualcast Design—A web development company

Pitcher—Jarrell Fields, advertising and promotion

Dress Me Mirror—An innovative mirror eliminates the need to try on clothes while shopping, providing a three-dimensional image of clothing items in a mirror.

Pitcher—Michelle Valente, industrial and entrepreneurial engineering.

Team members—Yorkiris Benitez, industrial and entrepreneurial engineering, and Shelby Rhein, engineering management

Ecodock—The company will offer a solar-powered phone dock and charger for cars.

Pitcher—Brad Short, industrial and entrepreneurial engineering

Team members—Matt Haan and Daniel Shorr, industrial and entrepreneurial engineering

Matt Morgan, M.S.A.'05 — An Inspired Career Change

Former IT professional Matt Morgan, M.S.A.'05, was looking to make a change, and decided earning his M.S.A. at WMU was the best way expand his knowledge of business and transform his career. Currently vice president and controller, as well as secretary and treasurer of the board, at First National Bank of Michigan, Morgan has used the last ten years to grow his experience as an accounting and business professional.

“Completing the M.S.A. program not only gave me knowledge and skills in accounting, but also exposed me to marketing, management and finance, to give me a well-rounded business education,” says Morgan. “Furthermore, group projects and study groups allowed me to experience work in a collaborative environment which easily translated to the working world.”



When collaborating or making important decisions, Morgan often recalls a tip from a business faculty member. “Dr. Jerry Krueze taught us that you don’t always have to know the answer, but as long as you know how to research and find the answer, you will be successful,” he says.

After earning his graduate degree, Morgan worked as an auditor and tax preparer at Plante & Moran and an accounting manager at Manatron Inc. and counts both positions as giving him noteworthy field experience.

“Plante & Moran gave me a vast array of experience and exposure to various industries and prepared me to work in private industry,” says Morgan. “Working at Manatron allowed me to experience the private industry side of accounting and gave me the managerial and supervisory experience to help me take the next step in my career.”

Morgan is actively involved in the greater Kalamazoo community, serving as a board member in several organizations and as a member of the planning commission for the City of Parchment. As a proud WMU graduate,

Morgan recommends the Haworth College of Business to any prospective business students and enjoys attending WMU sporting events.

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Faculty Research

Calendar of Events

Previous Editions



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