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What is one of the most helpful tools for a college student today? A laptop computer has an abundance of uses, especially when it comes to the needs of the average college student. Our team is representing Microsoft, and we are going to be showing the University of Cincinnati the benefits of partnering with us to provide their students with their own Microsoft Surface Pro. This partnership will be a win-win for both our company and the University of Cincinnati College. This will increase productivity for the students and will boost enrollment for the college as well. A bright future awaits the University of Cincinnati with Microsoft. There are many benefits to this partnership.

Question 1: What “real” company and product or service did your team select? Why did you select it? What is your company’s level of credibility? What products and/or services does this company have that will be useful to the company you are choosing to potentially partner with?

The company that our team selected was Microsoft. We specifically selected this company as we all have worked with technology and computers in some way shape or form for our jobs and school program. In 2019, Business Insider’s Julie Bort had this to say about the company in her article, “*Microsoft’s reputation is soaring as trust in the tech industry flounders, according to new research*”, “Microsoft has always enjoyed a high reputation in the Reputation Institute surveys, but this year it earned praise from respondents for high quality products and services, its leadership, and its governance” (Bort, 2019). Microsoft is a popular company that sells many laptops and tablets. These products are used daily by college students, and giving access to these high-quality products would better enable the learning capacity and functionality

of the students using them. Essentially, high-quality products like the Surface Pro from Microsoft will enable higher quality learning.

Question 2: What other “real” company does your team want to partner with?

What is this second company’s level of credibility? Which products and/or services will be of use to your company and why? Why are both your companies a good fit for a partnership?

The other company we will be partnering with is the University of Cincinnati (UC). Our goal is to obtain a partnership with Microsoft where they will provide all enrolled students with Surface Pro computers. The goal behind this idea is to allow students to have an equal chance for success by providing them with a device at no cost to them upon enrollment. Instead, the cost will be included in their tuition as a part of Microsoft’s partnership with the UC. Microsoft’s partnership with UC will allow them to sell laptops at a discounted price because UC will be placing bulk orders. UC is a highly credible college that was founded in 1819. UC has 47,914 students enrolled as of 2023. They offer 426 different degree programs and have a student-teacher ratio of 19:1. The University of Cincinnati is a public research university that ranks number four in US News & World Report’s survey for co-op and internship programs. They are number one among public institutions (About UC, Pg. 1). The partnership between Microsoft and the University of Cincinnati will be beneficial for both companies for several reasons. By providing all students with tablets, UC is likely to see an increase in tuition rates. UC will also be able to promote an eco-friendlier environment by cutting back on paper. Microsoft will gain revenue through their partnership with UC just as they would by selling their products elsewhere. All these reasons make both companies a great fit for a partnership.

Question 3: What is the situation that sets up a meaningful partnership between your two companies? Why is such a partnership going to be beneficial for both companies? How will you both be better, more profitable, and productive together rather than alone, and more beneficial to consumers? How can you enhance your companies' levels of credibility for increased sales through this partnership?

Now that we have spent some time going over our companies, let's take some time and diagnose the overall partnership between our company, Microsoft, and our partner, the University of Cincinnati (UC). The situation at hand, that sets up this meaningful partnership, is providing computers to all UC students that are enrolled in a degree program at the university. According to an article posted by educause.edu, one in ten college students reported that their primary learning device was not equipped to perform a task required for a course during a class/lecture/lab/etc.

This directly ties into why such a partnership is so beneficial for both companies. For UC, it allows them to give a working and capable device to every student. This way every student has the ability to complete tasks for school. For Microsoft, it will grow business relations and build a new partnership with an organization. It will also introduce Microsoft products to students, who will be potential new customers.

This will also allow UC to save various costs on things like printing paper, desktops used in UC libraries, printed textbooks, etc. This lowers costs at UC and allows for a greater profit margin. At Microsoft, having UC as a client will increase sales on the Surface Pro AND allow for an opportunity to gain customers with the students who liked their device. In a Michigan State University article titled, "*Does learning improve when every student gets a laptop?*", it was found that when both students and teachers have the appropriate support, like a laptop, academic

achievement improves. Improved academic achievement will increase overall productivity at UC. More specifically, with the Microsoft Surface Pro, it can be used not only as a laptop and provide students with vital programs and support they need but also it can double as a tablet that can be used for notetaking, presentations, and more. This is more beneficial to the students (consumers) because it will allow them to carry out all essential functions and activities.

Lastly, the partnership between Microsoft and UC will allow us at Microsoft to have a higher level of credibility due to the sole fact that an entire public university, like UC, trusts us and our devices to carry out all the important work needed to be successful. Showing the general public that UC trusts us will gain trust amongst consumers.

Question 4: Who is your audience for both sides of this partnership? Who will buy your product(s)/service(s)? What relationship do your companies have with varying audiences already? What new audiences might be generated from this partnership? Why will your companies interest them and motivate them to buy from and/or invest in them?

Our target audience for this partnership would be the University of Cincinnati (UC) Board of Trustees. UC's webpage titled *Board of Trustees* outlines their duties saying, "The board is responsible for selecting and appointing the president; setting the operating budget; approving personnel appointments; granting all degrees awarded by the university, including honorary degrees; establishing tuition and fee rates; approving contracts; and approving all rules, regulations, curriculum changes, new programs and degrees of the university." The Board of Trustees will be the audience who needs to be convinced that the partnership with Microsoft and the use of Surface Pros would be beneficial to the university and students. UC would be the purchaser of Surface Pros from Microsoft, which would need the approval of the Trustees.

Microsoft has over 2,000 partnerships with various companies all around the globe. These partnerships have a wide range of industries including education, finance, marketing, data management, and so many more. Some notable partnerships in the education industry include UNICEF and The Johns Hopkins University (*Microsoft Partnerships* 2023). UC also has its fair share of partnerships. Some notable partnerships listed on UC's webpage titled *Corporate Partners* include Fifth Third Bank, Proctor and Gamble, and Kroger.

New audiences that may be generated from this partnership may be students, parents, and alumni to the university. It could also attract the attention of other universities to spark ideas of similar partnerships for their own students. On the other side of the partnership, it could inspire other technology companies to branch out to create partnerships with universities to create better access to technology that is needed.

A major motivational factor in buying the Surface Pro from Microsoft is that it is an extremely flexible and powerful tool for education. The Surface Pro is easily transportable from classes, labs, or clinicals. It also functions using the same components which are required to have by the university such as Word, PowerPoint, Outlook, and other Microsoft Office programs. Many students struggle to gain access to the required technology needed to get through the courses and programs offered by UC. Helping students to have access to consistent, reliable technology can improve their learning experience.

Question 5:**What forms of research will you use for this project, and why?**

For this project, we will use several forms of research including, UC library materials, scholarly articles, articles found on the internet related to the topic, our textbook, both Microsoft and UC's website, etc.

Who is assigned to locate which types of references? Map this out now in this paper.

For our project, Grant will be assigned to locate references associated with both organizations, Microsoft and UC, and our product, the Surface Pro. Haley will research references related to ethical and legal guidelines in our selling to UC. She will also look at references related to relationship building and adaptive selling techniques. Nicole will research references related to objectives we want to make, how to make an appointment with our customer, UC, and 5 key questions to ask. Lastly, Jack will research references related to why our partnership will be very beneficial for both companies and heavily researching the Prospect, UC.

What in addition is the timeline for completing your Narrated Ppt presentation: that is, what needs to be done by when (including dates), how will it be communicated to other teammates, and by whom? Map this out now in this paper.

For our project, we plan to complete the paper by Friday February 17th. We will spend time checking over our paper before submitting. Then between Friday February 17th and Friday February 24th, we will work on individual sections of the presentation. We will communicate VIA group chat and Zoom calls. On Friday the 24th we will meet to discuss how we did on our

portions of the presentation and to coordinate how to present. We will record our presentations on the 24th and submit the same day.

How will your research help to create an effective Team Sales Plan Narrated Ppt presentation?

The research allows us to fully understand both companies. It will allow us to ask the right questions to make sure our client, UC's, needs are met.

The partnership with Microsoft will bring many benefits to the University of Cincinnati and its students that will allow for a bright future for many years to come. Laptops and tablets have proven several benefits for students such as more efficient and detailed note taking, faster writing and editing, and convenient group work and studying (Magher, Pg. 1). By providing students with laptops/tablets, UC will be a more advanced college which in return will bring in more students and higher admission rates. "Laptops are embraced because of the technological tools they offer combined with their portability (Magher, Pg 1)." Students are likely to be more successful when provided with the tools needed to achieve. In addition, by providing all students with the same hardware system, the University will be able to cut back on issues related to personal student laptops, etc. They will be able to train their IT staff on one system which will also allow for a more efficient working environment. IT will be able to quickly resolve issues as they will be proficient in Microsoft Surface Pro tablets because it will be the only hardware they are working with each day. Providing students with hardware is essential for their success and both the University of Cincinnati and Microsoft will have a positive impact on them.

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