Guiding Students in the Selection of a Promising Client for the Google Online Marketing Challenge

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The Google Online Marketing Challenge (GOMC) is the world's largest online marketing competition (Murphy et al. 2009; Murphy et al. 2013) and is known for being extremely flexible with the potential for implementation in a wide variety of college-level courses (Flaherty et al. 2009). Working in teams of 3-6 members, students spend real money, develop AdWords strategies, and then execute their campaigns to meet the client's marketing goals (Miko 2013). Students make many decisions throughout this learning journey, but one of the most critical decisions is selecting the right type of client.

The GOMC website provides basic guidance on selecting a business or non-profit organization (c.f., http://bit.ly/1FZEVvG). While this advice is helpful, students may be more successful if given more specific information before making a final choice. By considering factors beyond those presented on the GOMC website, the key constituents of students, sponsoring professors, and the respective clients are more likely to have a rewarding experience.

The authors share the process they use to advise students in the selection of suitable clients for the GOMC. Their guidance is based on fifteen combined years of coaching teams in the GOMC, which includes seven global and regional awards from their winning teams. In addition, the authors are actively engaged in helping academics, from all over the world, who are participating in the GOMC. Through their shared experiences and successes, the authors offer valuable tips in an effort to positively impact marketing pedagogy.

The contribution to interactive marketing is an enriched understanding of how to guide students in selecting their clients for the GOMC. Specifically, this presentation will address:

- organizations to avoid and organizations that may be especially promising to select as clients for the GOMC,

- how to evaluate the content on landing pages of prospective clients as it relates to sound AdWords strategy,

- common problems encountered with clients and how to avoid these problems, and

- how students can effectively present the complexities of the GOMC in a clear manner to prospective clients, with the end goal of securing them as their ultimate client.

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