Instructions for Round 1 – The Elevator Pitch

In Round 1, each student competitor will interact with a person posing as a high school student in the following role play scenario: In the hallway, you run across a high school student (i.e., the prospect) waiting by an elevator. The prospect notices that you are wearing a BGSU tee shirt or hat, and asks if you are a student there. The student is interested in attending BGSU, but has not yet decided. You have up to 3 minutes to interact with that student (i.e., conduct a “sales call”), and present a few compelling, relevant reasons why BGSU is a great place to attend college. The role play will end no later than the 3 minute mark, at which point the student will leave/get on the elevator.

- Dress code for Round 1 is casual, and ideally involves some BGSU “wearable.”

Your performance on this role play will be judged by BGSU faculty using the evaluation instrument below. As you can see, you will be assessed on each of the five steps of the sales process; and in addition, your overall communication skills will also be assessed. This will go by very quickly – so you must be efficient!

Each of the following categories will be scored on a scale from 1 to 5, using the following scale:
1=well below average; 2=slightly below average; 3=average; 4=slightly above average; 5=well above average

___ Step 1: APPROACH (5%) The idea here is to make a positive first impression, & then build rapport. You should introduce yourself in a polite, friendly manner; and briefly/very quickly build rapport through some relevant small talk. (10-15 seconds)

___ Step 2: NEEDS IDENTIFICATION (25%) The idea with this step is to obtain an understanding of the prospect’s situation, such that an appropriate, customized presentation can be done in the next step. Consequently, this step would typically involve asking lots of questions; however, in this time-shortened situation, you will be limited to just a couple questions. So your goal should be to uncover at least one or two facts about what the prospect wants/needs in a university; and then if time permits, ask a follow up question (or two) to be sure you understand… (50-60 seconds)

___ Step 3: PRODUCT PRESENTATION (25%) The idea here is to persuasively explain why BGSU is a good match for this prospect – especially with respect to needs identified in Step 2. You should present 2-3 compelling reasons why BGSU is an especially good match for the prospect. Ideally, this presentation is built around facts uncovered in Step 2. The presentation should be somewhat interactive; that is, you should try to involve the prospect in the conversation. (50-60 seconds)

___ Step 4: OVERCOMING OBJECTIONS (15%) The idea here is to understand/clarify any objections that might be raised, and then hopefully eliminate/overcome that concern. If the prospect raises any concerns/objections about BGSU, you should first try to gain a better understanding of the issue. Next, you should effectively answer the objection; and then finally, you should confirm that the objection is no longer a concern of the prospect. Given the short time frame of this role play, it will be difficult to fully address and overcome objections – do the best you can in a hurry! (~15 seconds)

___ Step 5: CLOSE (10%) And in this final step, you should take the initiative to determine where the prospect stands with regard to the decision about where to go to college. This should involve a final, persuasive statement about the benefits of BGSU; and then a question that asks the prospect if he has indeed decided to “buy” – or attend – BGSU. (~30 seconds)

___ OVERALL COMMUNICATION SKILLS (20%) Overall – throughout your entire role play – you should use effective verbal communication skills (active listening, restating, rephrasing, clarifying questions, probing questions to get greater detail/understanding); appropriate non-verbal communication (facial expressions, hand gestures, tone of voice, etc.); and clear, concise and professional verbiage – in a manner that is enthusiastic and confident.

Our recommendation is that you should be finished with “needs identification” at about the one minute mark, and then you’ll have about one minute for the “product presentation,” and then finally, about one more minute to wrap things up. Again, be efficient with your time! The prospect leaves at the three minute mark…

We strongly encourage you to rehearse this a few times with a friend – or perhaps a co-competing – who plays the role of the prospect. And also, be sure to study each of the above categories; and do not hesitate to contact faculty members Greg Rich (garich@bgsu.edu) or Mearl Sutton (msutton@bgsu.edu) if any of this is confusing.

The ten finalists will be selected based equally on (1) Round 1 role play score, and (2) the accomplishments regarding relevant coursework, internships, and co-curricular activities.