CMSI connect

Center for Marketing and Sales Innovation Newsletter

Spring 2025

Smarter Learning: How AI is Revolutionizing Student Success

New Curriculum

A Night At The Gala: BDC

New Event: Super Bull

The Toughest Test in Sales Education

Unveiling the Future of Marketing: Empowering Tomorrow's Marketers with a Cutting-Edge Curriculum

Today is a big day.
I am thrilled to announce the launch of our new curriculum for the School of Marketing and Innovation, effective Fall 2025. This curriculum has been designed to equip our students with the skills and knowledge necessary to thrive in today's dynamic and rapidly evolving business environment.

Beginning in Fall 2025, all new students in the School of Marketing and Innovation will select a concentration in either Market Development or Marketing Research and Analytics. This strategic direction allows us to tailor our educational offerings to meet the specific needs and career aspirations of our students and employers.

Market Development Concentration
Students who choose the Market Development Concentration will delve into courses such as Advanced Professional Sales, Marketing Communications, Sales Management or Creativity and Innovation in Entrepreneurial Firms.

Additionally, students will have the opportunity to gain practical experience through internships in marketing or selective electives in marketing or entrepreneurship. This concentration is designed to foster a deep understanding of market dynamics, strategic sales techniques, and innovative marketing practices.

Marketing Research and Analytics Concentration
For those students opting for the Marketing Research and Analytics concentration, the curriculum focuses on developing expertise in data analysis, market research methodologies, and the application of advanced analytical tools.

Business Development Club members competing at Selling With The Bulls, one of several competitions available to students.

From Left to Right: Juan Harraca, Robert Hammond, and Jay Civitillo discussing the new curriculum.

Foundation (3 Credit Hour): *Basic Marketing (MAR 3023)*	
Core (12 Credit Hour): Professional Selling (MAR 3400) Buyer Behavior (MAR 4503) Marketing Technologies & AI (MAR 4741) Marketing Problems (MAR 4824)	
Market Development Track (12 Credit Hour)	**Digital Marketing & Analytics Track (12 Credit Hour)**
MAR 4333: Marketing Communications MAR 4415: Advanced Professional Selling MAR 4403 or ENT 3613: Sales Management or Creativity and Innovation in Entrepreneurial Firms MAR 4940: Internship or Marketing/Entrepreneurship elective	MAR 3613: Marketing Research MAR 3700: Digital Marketing MAR 4615: Marketing Analytics MAR 4940: Internship or Marketing/Entrepreneurship/Information Systems and Management elective

Breakdown of new curriculum for the School of Marketing and Innovation.

The Marketing Research and Analytics concentration aims to prepare students to make data-driven decisions and provide valuable insights that drive business success.

Core Courses for All Marketing Majors

Regardless of the chosen concentration, all marketing majors will be required to take Professional Selling, Buyer Behavior, Marketing Problems (capstone) and the Marketing Technologies and AI course.

The center and our marketing partners are critical resources in enabling many of the courses in the new curriculum including sales courses and a neuromarketing research project in the Marketing Technologies and AI course. These core courses are essential in ensuring that our graduates are proficient in the latest marketing technologies and possess strong selling skills, both of which are critical in today's competitive landscape.

Curriculum Development Process

The process of revamping our curriculum began with direct involvement from our industry partners to identify the entry-level jobs in the marketing field and key skills.

Faculty then built interlocking course objectives and learning outcomes that align with these job skills across the course progressions. Our goal is to ensure that our students are ready to contribute effectively from day one in their professional careers.

We are excited about these changes and how they will provide our students with a comprehensive and forward-thinking education that prepares them for success in the marketing industry.

Also, don't miss the article about generative AI in the classroom that follows. It is amazing how much is being done.

Rob.

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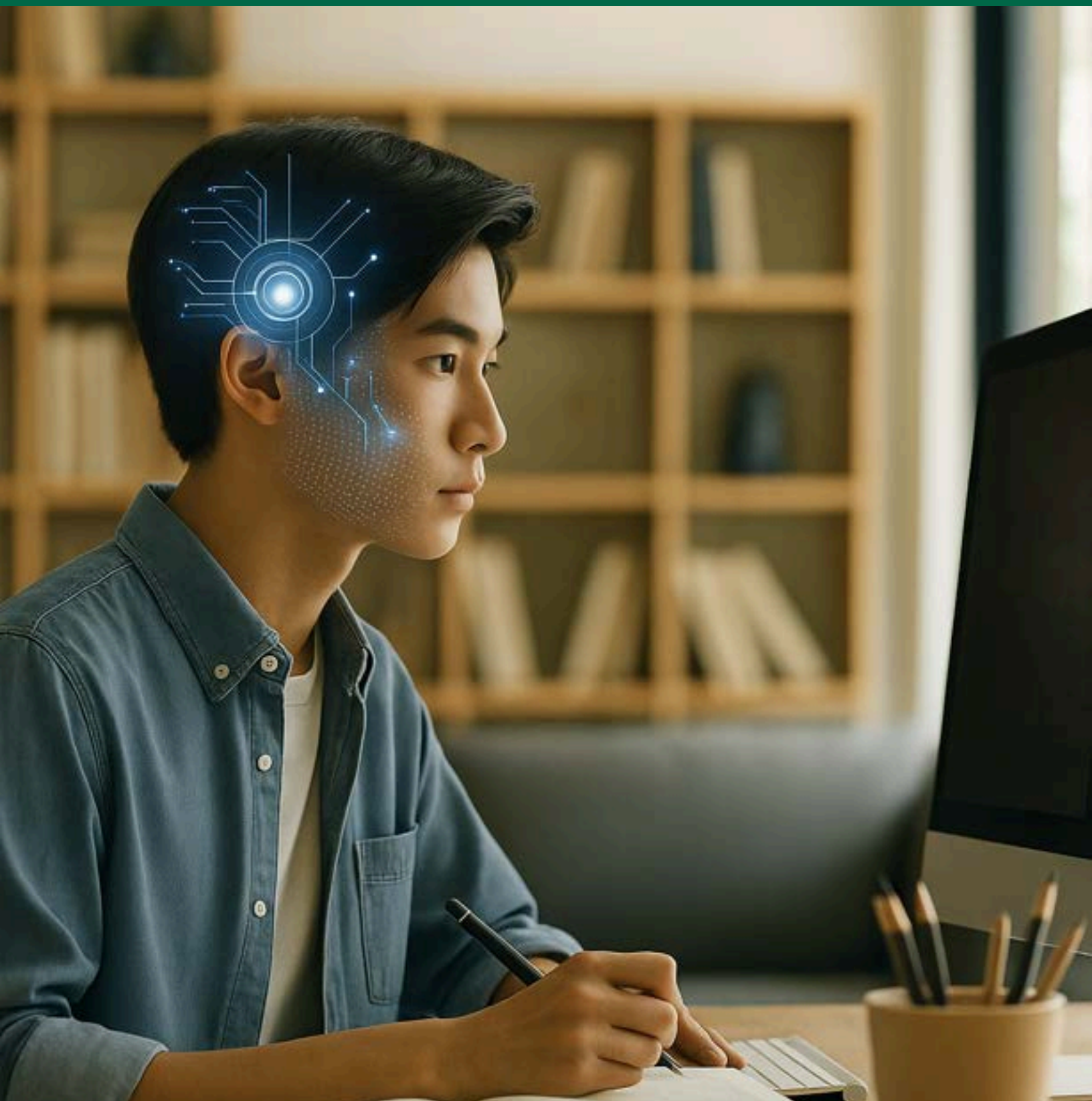
How AI Is Revolutionizing Student Success in Marketing and Sales

By Eva Javorek



Rethinking Evidence of Learning in the Age of AI: Why Outcome-Based Evaluation Is No Longer Enough

By Eva Javorek - Center for Marketing and Sales Innovation

In today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, artificial intelligence (AI) is no longer a futuristic concept - it's a practical tool embedded in the way students learn, create, and grow. Nowhere is this more evident than in marketing and sales education, where AI is actively reshaping how student success is measured and achieved. Rather than punishing students for using AI, forward-thinking institutions are encouraging its use as a means to develop deeper learning and demonstrate evidence of mastery.

Moving from Memorization to Mastery

Marketing and sales are dynamic fields that demand creativity, adaptability, and analytical thinking - skills that can't be memorized from a textbook. CMSI faculty are empowering students to apply classroom AI concepts in real time, generating content, analyzing market data, and simulating customer interactions to produce actionable insights.

> **Students are no longer just learning about marketing - they're doing marketing, and AI is accelerating that transformation.**

Generative AI with CMSI

At CMSI, generative AI isn't a shortcut - it's a collaborative tool that helps students apply their learning in real-world contexts. The following are just some of the CMSI faculty related activities:

- Generative AI Sales Training
- Chaired Muma CoB AI Curriculum Committee
- Podcasts on learning processes over outcomes
- Using Gen AI in marketing challenges
- Evaluating Gen AI output for accuracy

These efforts go beyond academics - students build portfolios that showcase real-world skills. CMSI's AI integration ensures graduates are ready to lead in a tech-driven, data-informed world.

Encouraging Process Over Perfection

By focusing on how students use AI, rather than penalizing its use, instructors can better assess critical thinking, problem-solving, and ethical decision-making. Did a student simply ask an AI tool for answers? Or did they use it to refine their ideas, justify strategies, and iterate based on feedback? This shift encourages a growth mindset. AI becomes a tool for experimentation, exploration, and improvement - not a means to an end. Students learn how to ask better questions, critique AI-generated results, and integrate human creativity with machine efficiency.

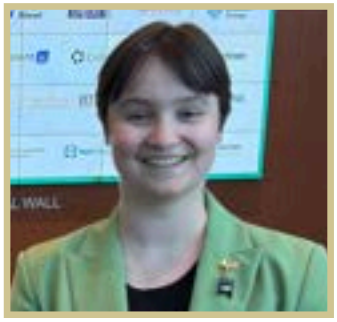
Preparing Students for the Future Workforce

Marketing and sales professionals already rely on AI for campaign automation, customer relationship management (CRM), and trend analysis. By embracing these tools in the classroom, students gain firsthand experience with the platforms and skills they'll be expected to use on the job. In fact, students who learn how to collaborate with AI are developing AI literacy - a vital, future-ready competency that differentiates them in a competitive job market.

A Culture of Innovation, Not Fear

The conversation around AI in education is shifting from one of restriction to one of opportunity. Leading institutions are creating guidelines that promote ethical use while encouraging students to showcase how they're using AI as part of their learning process. It's not about banning AI - it's about building integrity and innovation into its use.

Ultimately, the question is no longer "Should students use AI?" but "How can students use AI to become better thinkers, creators, and professionals?" In marketing and sales education, the answer is clear: AI isn't replacing learning - it's revolutionizing it.

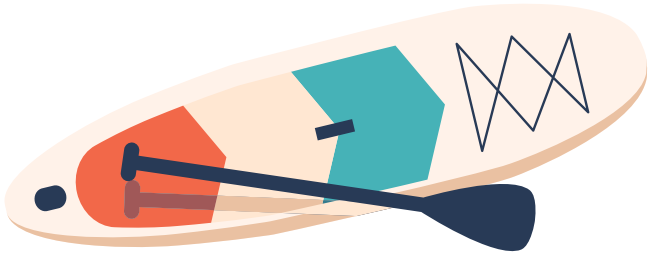


Eva Javorek
Editor
Center for Marketing and Sales Innovation

SPRING 2025 SEMESTER IN REVIEW

SELLING BY THE BAY

ST. PETERSBURG, FL – The Spring 2025 "Selling by the Bay" event, hosted by the Center for Marketing and Sales Innovation (CMSI), provided University of South Florida (USF) students with a dynamic, hands-on sales experience against the scenic backdrop of St. Petersburg. Participants engaged in role-playing exercises, selling products like paddle boards, custom bikes, and water sports equipment, reflecting the local Tampa Bay culture.



The event emphasized experiential learning, allowing students to rotate through roles as sellers, buyers, and judges. This approach fostered a comprehensive understanding of the sales process, from pitching to negotiation and feedback.

The event wasn't just about products—it was about practice. Thanks to the incredible team from KnowBe4, students participated in live roleplays that challenged them to refine their pitch, handle objections, and close the deal under pressure. These high-impact simulations gave participants a realistic taste of professional sales scenarios, helping them build confidence and skill in a fast-paced setting.

Looking ahead, CMSI plans to expand the "Selling by the Bay" initiative, introducing new partnerships and opportunities for students to apply their skills in real-world settings. These events continue to bridge the gap between academic learning and professional application, preparing students for successful careers in sales and marketing.

SELLING WITH THE BULLS

Key Highlights:

- 150+ Competitors
- ~500 Role Plays
- ~1000 Networking Conversations
- 31 Universities from 20 States

All Within 30 Hours!

The Toughest Test in Sales Education!

SELLING WITH THE BULLS

Now in its 7th year, the 2025 Selling with the Bulls competition continues to stand out as one of the most rigorous and rewarding sales education experiences in the country. Hosted by the University of South Florida's Muma College of Business, this premier intercollegiate sales competition brought together over 150 top sales students from across the nation to test their skills in real-world sales scenarios.

This year's event featured four key components: prospecting, networking, discovery, and sales meetings. Over two days, students participated in nearly 500 role plays and close to 1,000 scheduled networking conversations with more than 100 business leaders, creating invaluable industry connections. The competition pushed participants to develop critical business skills such as persuasive communication, relationship-building, and problem-solving - hallmarks of top-performing sales professionals.

But Selling with the Bulls isn't just about competition; it's about opportunity. For students, it's a chance to gain hands-on experience, receive direct feedback from industry leaders, and open doors to potential career opportunities. For business partners, it provides access to some of the best emerging sales talent in the country, fostering relationships that could shape the future of their organizations.

The success of this event wouldn't be possible without the support and dedication of our business partners, who play an essential role in mentoring, judging, and engaging with the next generation of sales professionals. Their commitment ensures that Selling with the Bulls remains a top-tier learning experience.

Affective(ly) Research

Affective(ly) Research is an annual gathering where researchers working with biometrics and emotional insights gather to collaborate and exchange best practices. This year's event was held on February 28th, 2025, at the USF St. Petersburg campus.

Event Highlights:

Presentations offered insights into biometrics, emotional research, generative AI avatars, and educational innovation. Additional topics included:

- Screen-Based Eye Tracking
- VR Technology and Eye Tracking Glasses
- Remote Data Collection for Education
- Facial Dynamics as Predictors of Reciprocity
- ECG, Respiration, and EEG
- Neuromarketing Lab: Student Engagement
- Examining Body Surveillance through Biometric Sensors
- Consumer Behavior and Online Reviews

Future Sales Leaders:
USF Students Make Their Mark at NCSC

This past March, two students from the University of South Florida's Muma College of Business had the honor of competing in the National Collegiate Sales Competition (NCSC), the longest-running sales competition in the U.S. Hosted at Kennesaw State University, the event brought together top student talent, faculty coaches, and corporate recruiters from more than 70 universities nationwide. Representing USF, our students showcased professionalism, confidence, and strategic thinking as they advanced through multiple rounds of role-play-based challenges simulating real-world sales meetings.

Each round required participants to uncover client needs, deliver compelling value propositions, and handle objections—all while applying the consultative sales techniques learned through USF's professional selling class and the Business Development Club. Their strong preparation and composure under pressure reflected not only their dedication but also the strength of USF's sales curriculum.

Beyond competition, NCSC provided an outstanding professional development experience. Students participated in career expos, résumé workshops, and networking sessions with Fortune 500 companies and high-growth startups. Competing on a national stage and connecting with top employers gave our students valuable exposure and confidence as they prepare for careers in business development, account management, and sales leadership. We are proud of how they represented USF and remain committed to developing future sales leaders through competitive experiences, hands-on coaching, and industry engagement.

Top Bulls! Congratulations to Sandro Alonso, Dennis Iglesias, and Ricardo Fernandez - Super Bull 1 Winners!

BDC Hosts Inaugural Super Bull Team Selling Event

The Business Development Club (BDC) proudly launched its inaugural Super Bull event on March 28th, bringing a fresh and competitive spirit to the world of collegiate team selling. This dynamic competition challenged student teams of 2 - 4 members to present a strategic sales pitch in one of three industries - medical, technical, or financial - based on a detailed company, product, and scenario brief. A panel of expert judges evaluated each team's performance, focusing on communication, creativity, and business acumen.

Adding a creative twist, the event also featured an advertising competition where teams produced commercials aligned with their chosen industry. To celebrate the top-performing teams, the BDC awarded "Super Bowl" - style championship rings, an official Super Bull trophy, and $400 in scholarships - making the victory as rewarding as it was prestigious.

With its fast-paced format and emphasis on teamwork, Super Bull is poised to become a signature event in the BDC's lineup, blending sales strategy and innovation into one unforgettable experience.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CLUB

A Night At The Gala

The Business Development Club closed out the spring semester with an elegant Formal Gala at Tampa Palms Golf Club, welcoming over 40 members for an evening of celebration, recognition, and connection. The event marked the end of a successful semester filled with networking events, professional development workshops, and sales competitions. Members arrived dressed to impress, reflecting on the year's achievements and toasting to shared accomplishments. A standout moment was the heartfelt tribute to 12 graduating seniors, who served as mentors, leaders, and role models. Their contributions shaped the club's culture and legacy, and their presence will be greatly missed.

More than just a celebration, the Gala highlighted the power of community and the lasting impact of relationships built through shared goals. Each senior was honored for their impact, with several offering parting words of encouragement to younger members. As the Business Development Club looks ahead to the next academic year, the momentum from this spring and the inspiration of the graduating class will continue to drive a spirit of ambition, leadership, and collaboration.

Dr. Jay Civitillo and Dr. Robert Hammond with the 12 graduating seniors of the Business Development Club, Class of 2025.

Pictured (left to right): Dennis Iglesias, Makena Corenlius, Kian Viegas, Khoi Le and Dr. Jay Civitillo at the Gala.

Congratulations to Dr. Jay Civitillo on being the 2025 Outstanding Student Org. Advisor Award Recipient!

Honoring Excellence: Dr. Jay Civitillo Recognized for Transformative Student Leadership

Dr. Jay Civitillo, faculty coordinator of the Business Development Club and coach for all of USF's student sales competitions, was recently honored as the **2025 Outstanding Student Organization Advisor** for the entire university. This prestigious recognition highlights Dr. Civitillo's unwavering commitment to student success, professional development, and experiential learning. Under his guidance, the Business Development Club has grown into one of the most active and professionally driven organizations on campus, providing students with hands-on opportunities to develop their sales, leadership, and networking skills.

As a coach, mentor, and role model, Dr. Civitillo has played a transformative role in preparing students to compete - and win - at regional and national sales competitions, while also fostering a culture of excellence, inclusion, and real-world impact within the club. His ability to connect with students, industry partners, and faculty alike has elevated the visibility of USF's professional selling program and helped launch the careers of countless aspiring sales professionals. This university-wide award is a fitting tribute to the dedication, innovation, and heart Dr. Civitillo brings to everything he does.

Thank you Dr. Jay!

Looking Ahead...

Fall 2025

Selling by the Bay
9/19/2025

In-Class Networking Events
9/24-9/25/2025

Sales Stampede Networking
9/24/2025

Sales Stampede
10/24/2025

ICSC
11/5-11/8/2025

Selling on the Road
11/7-11/8/2025

Spring 2026

Super Bull Sales and Ad Competition
2/6/2026

In-Class Networking Events
2/11-2/12/2026

Selling with the Bulls
2/19-2/20/2026

Selling Safari
3/6/2026

MDC Gala
4/10/2026

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