

Optimé International to Develop Sales Competition with Miami University's Farmer School of Business

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OXFORD, Ohio – Marketing students will explore effective ways to win customers in a new sales competition this fall at Miami University.

In partnership with Toronto-based Optimé International, the Farmer School of Business is developing a sales competition that will help students learn, internalize, and apply critical selling skills. Underwriting the initiative is a generous gift from the Tom Flesch family. Mr. Flesch is President & CEO of the Gordon Flesch Company, one of the largest independent providers of office equipment systems in the United States; two of his sons graduated from the Farmer School.

Todd Stollberg, a Markley Visiting Professor in Marketing at the Farmer School, will lead the School's efforts to design and implement the sales simulation called the Miami Sales Challenge. The first trial is scheduled for December 4, 2006 in Oxford. The competition will allow student teams to apply their learning gained and practiced throughout the semester. The competition will challenge eleven student teams to make effective sales presentations to a variety of "customers," played by industry-leading sales executives. These sales leaders represent companies that recruit at Miami.

"The partnership makes sense," said marketing department chair James Stearns, "because the Farmer School now requires a sales course for its marketing majors. One of the texts for the course is *Championship Selling: A Blueprint for Winning with Today's Customer*, written by Optimé President and CEO Tom J. Blake."

"One of my goals in writing *Championship Selling* was to see sales play a much bigger role in school curricula," Blake said. "I think the success that Miami marketing students experience in the workplace is attributable partly to the fact that they study the sales process in this required class."

Optimé International is a leading Sales Consultancy Practice that has worked with Fortune 500 companies and over 50,000 sales professionals since 1994. Optimé specializes in highly customized sales effectiveness, training and development solutions that produce high performance sales organizations.

Ranked 17th nationally among U.S. undergraduate business schools, the Farmer School of Business combines a focus on undergraduate study with three small, select graduate programs. It seeks to be a premier business program that provides students with the life-long ability to acquire knowledge and translate it into responsible action in a competitive global environment.

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