

Carl A. Gerstacker

Liberal Arts Institute for Professional Management

MAKING THE CASE

Have you ever been faced with having to make an important business decision involving conflicting business priorities, without all the information you need, in a timeframe that demands immediate decision and action? Experience is the best teacher, and that's why the case method is used at the Gerstacker Institute to introduce business reality into the classroom. The case method forms the basis of learning at Harvard Business School, as well as many other universities around the world, and is also used here in the Gerstacker Institute curriculum. In case discussions, students are introduced to the reality of decision-making—including incomplete information, time constraints, and conflicting goals—giving them firsthand experience in analyzing business situations. Case studies stimulate students' thinking, challenge their capabilities, and prepare them for future managerial decision-making.

The Gerstacker Institute recently held its first annual Case Competition. For this event, teams had just three days to analyze and develop recommendations for a business situation, this one being the launch of a new product, XM satellite radio. The teams immersed themselves in the same issues facing the real company as it prepared to race a competitor to market. Each team came up with a very different plan for its business model, target market, and marketing plan. The contest was judged by the Gerstacker Institute Visiting Committee, comprised of distinguished alumni and supporters of the Institute. The top four teams earned cash prizes and are: first place: Tom Jurasek, Caitlin McLean, Jason Short, Chris McCabe (shown left-to-right in photograph below with Gerstacker Institute director Mike Frandsen, center); second place: Nicole Anguilm, Shaun Bonnell, Marisa Fortuna, Gavin Smith; third place: Mallory Brown, Scotty Bruce, Sydney Campbell, Gary Peters; fourth place: Kevin Crofton, Russ Farnum, Christian Maciulis, and Peter McCarty.



ALUMNI LAND IN TOP 5 'BEST PLACES TO LAUNCH A CAREER'

BusinessWeek magazine has completed its second annual ranking of "The Best Places to Launch a Career" for new college graduates (*BusinessWeek*, Sept. 24, 2007). Gerstacker Institute alumni from 2007 were recruited by four of the top five companies on the list: Deloitte and Touche (#1), PricewaterhouseCoopers (#2), Ernst and Young (#3), and Google (#5). Here are the stories of four 2007 alumni, and how their experience at the Gerstacker Institute helped them land their positions.

Christine Matthew, '07 PricewaterhouseCoopers, LLP



Accounting firms today know that in order to attract top talent they must provide a work environment that is challenging and allows for professional growth. In my first year at PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), I have found the training and professional resources have been invaluable to my success. While each employee has a support group consisting of a peer mentor, career coach, and relationship partner, all of my co-workers have been open to questions or concerns. As the *BusinessWeek* article points out, PwC requires each employee to request feedback on major projects and encourages informal feedback frequently. Through this process I have been able to identify areas where improvement is necessary and areas of strength.

The Gerstacker Institute helped me prepare for my roles at PwC. Not only did I benefit from the required internships, but I also learned how to effectively handle a challenging workload. Further, when deciding which accounting firm to work for, I felt comfortable asking for advice from my professors and Institute leaders. Gerstacker prepares students for the working world by giving many opportunities to practice and develop professional skills.

Jason McAbier, '07 Deloitte & Touche, LLP



I began my senior year at Albion having no real idea what types of jobs I wanted to pursue. Taking advantage of the large number of employers who visit our campus to recruit, I interviewed with almost everyone who came. I felt comfortable and found it easier to get second interviews with the large accounting firms because most of the interviewers were Albion or Gerstacker Institute alumni.

After my interviews, it was clear to me that Deloitte & Touche was committed to its employees' success and would be the best place
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Jason McAbier *(continued from front side)*

for me to start my career. This was the same commitment to success I felt after visiting Albion and interviewing for Gerstacker. Soon after I started work, the *BusinessWeek* article came out, ranking Deloitte as the best place to launch a career, and I can't say that I was surprised. Everything at Deloitte is first class. People often ask me how long I plan to stay at Deloitte. If you asked me that question three months ago, I would have said only a few years. However, I quickly came to realize that Deloitte is more than just a stepping stone—it's a place where I can continue to grow and enjoy my career.

David Paniwozik, '07 Ernst & Young, LLP

When a company approaches you with an offer to further your career prior to your first day, you know you've made the right choice. Upon interviewing with Ernst & Young, I was offered the opportunity to combine my work experience with graduate study in accounting. This spring I will complete a master's degree in accounting from the University of Notre Dame. Yet this is only the beginning when it comes to the advantages associated with employment at Ernst & Young. You also have the ability to work with highly intellectual and skilled employees who foster an inclusive environment. This is done by putting people first, which is not just limited to the workplace. Ernst & Young is known throughout the world for its support of philanthropies and community involvement.

What separates Ernst & Young from many other firms is exactly what separates the Gerstacker Institute and its students from others. The Institute selects intelligent, talented, and unique individuals to participate in its program. But what separates Gerstacker students from the rest is that they are versatile—they are not just business specialists. Through the Gerstacker Institute you become knowledgeable in management, as well as in other relevant fields such as math, political science, communications, and ethics. It was this preparation that separated me from the rest of the pack. More importantly, the Gerstacker Institute kept me centered and poised. College can be tough, and no matter what happened, the Gerstacker staff and students were always there for me. That support gave me the confidence and courage to seek out opportunities and helped me get to where I am today.

Noel Williams, '07 Google, Inc.

My involvement with the Gerstacker Institute's challenging classes, professors, and fellow students helped me land a dream job at Google. In addition, my association with Gerstacker opened doors for multiple internships. Without this invaluable work experience, my resume would not have stood a chance against other graduates vying for entry-level jobs at Google. Google's Ann Arbor office is primarily focused on supporting AdWords—online advertising sales and operations, including jobs in account management and customer support. AdWords is our pay-per-click advertising model.

Google's emphasis on corporate culture and personal development has certainly been showcased in the media. From free gourmet lunches to Guitar Hero tournaments, it comes as no surprise that Google is consistently voted the best in terms of employee happiness. You might



think these perks would negatively impact the business that we need to get done, but, in fact, the opposite is true. The incentives that Google provides motivate us to constantly strive to meet the very real challenge of satisfying our customers and continuously improving the products and services we offer.

Google's culture, supporting mentorship, career development, and personal responsibility, provides the foundation for the perfect job for a recent college graduate. It is refreshing to work with enthusiastic and intelligent people who are excited about their careers and the opportunity to support the fastest-growing advertising sector.

MEET CHAR CRANDELL

Charlene Crandell joined the Gerstacker Institute as associate director in October 2007. In this role, her primary responsibility is to ensure that students have access to business internships that help them fully explore their career goals.

Char will leverage diverse experience and contacts from her past positions in brand management, marketing, product development, and engineering in companies such as Procter and Gamble, and Pharmacia and Upjohn.



Gerstacker students enjoying a Tiger baseball game. This is just one example of the many professional development, networking, team-building, and social events the Institute offers.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Admission to the Gerstacker Institute is selective. We are looking for good students—our average high school GPA is 3.6, and our average ACT is 26. Successful applicants also demonstrate leadership, express awareness of, and curiosity about, their world, and possess a "can do" attitude that is evident across a wide variety of endeavors. You'll find the Institute application form online at: www.albion.edu/gerstacker/.

To learn more about the Gerstacker Institute, or to schedule a personal visit, contact:

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