

DePaul Students Test Cubs Customer Service

By Robin Florzak | Photos by Kathy Hillegonds / May 10, 2018 / Posted in: Students, College and Schools, Faculty / [Twitter](#) / [Facebook](#)



DePaul business students spent five weeks working as "secret shoppers" with the Chicago Cubs to improve the organization's customer service.

How customer friendly are the “Friendly Confines” of Wrigley Field? Ten DePaul University students got a chance to explore this question during a class project they completed with the Chicago Cubs baseball organization.

The students spent five weeks as “secret shoppers” calling and emailing Cubs representatives to test the quality of customer service offered by the sports organization last fall. The project was part of a School of Hospitality Leadership course called “Event Sales, Service and Promotions” taught by Andy Clark, director of DePaul’s Sports Management Program and a lecturer at the hospitality school. Clark will lead another group of students in a similar project with the Cubs this summer.

Clark often incorporates behind-the-scenes projects and meetings with executives at Chicago professional sports teams and other businesses into his courses at DePaul’s Driehaus College of Business. In addition to working with the Cubs, students in his fall class completed another five-week project with United Entertainment Group by developing and presenting experiential event marketing ideas for their Doritos client.

For the Cubs project, Clark explains, students had three goals—“to test service quality by making standard fan requests by phone, email and social media; see how responsive the team’s service representatives were in the context of the organization’s expansion from baseball to a lifestyle brand; and provide insights into what millennial generation customers seek from the Cubs brand.”

Posing as fans, the students called or wrote to the Cubs with a variety of questions, such as where to find parking near Wrigley Field and what food the venue offers for people with dietary restrictions. They also assessed service at several non-baseball events, including a yoga class and a farmer’s market, hosted by the Cubs at Gallagher Way, a grassy plaza that the baseball organization opened next to Wrigley Field last year. Finally, the students took the initiative to design and conduct their own general survey of millennials about their customer service preferences.

The students incorporated their data and analyses into a report that they presented to 25 members of the Cubs’ Service Excellence Program team in marketing, ticketing and other public-facing areas, as well as several team mid-level executives. The students were asked at the beginning of the project to keep their proprietary research confidential.



Kenzie Mocogni

Project partner Bradley Nagel, Cubs assistant director of the Service Excellence Program and ticketing, says the students provided the team with valuable perspectives about the execution of service delivery during the five-week test period, which included several Cubs playoff games, as well as insights into “new segments of customers outside of the scope of baseball attendees.”

Hospitality leadership major Kenzie Mocogni describes working with the Cubs as “incredible.”



Sarah Musaali

“Their team spent so much time, via both conference calls and in-person meetings, explaining to us how important it is to them that they provide excellent customer service to their fans,” Mocogni says. “Knowing that the work we were doing was going to be useful right away was highly motivating. We were grateful they trusted us with something so pertinent to their front-office operations.”

“Working with a real client reminded us that what we are learning in the classroom at DePaul is preparing us for the business world,” she adds. “I think the best way to learn is through hands-on experience.”

Classmate Sarah Musaali sees the experience as useful preparation for her career. A senior, Musaali will earn a business bachelor’s degree in sports management in June. She has accepted a corporate partnerships and marketing position with the Dallas Cowboys. “This helps me to identify what will be important to my future clients, and how I can be successful in achieving service excellence in the future.”

For students who seek to enter sports hospitality and management, “the opportunity to work together and deliver real-time business solutions as a team is an invaluable experience,” Nagel says.

“It was a mutually beneficial partnership and we look forward to expanding the scope of this project and working with a new crop of DePaul students this summer.”