

## Grad's human services path, passion leads through doorway into sales

by Derek Paulus - Thursday, May 09, 2013

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Graduation season is in full swing, transitioning students across the country from life as a student to life as a working professional. Many of these students, however, are still struggling through their job hunt.

But this is not the case for University of Wisconsin Oshkosh students like Brent Persch, who will be working with Kimberly Clark as a sales strategist after having received not one, but multiple offers for job interviews and positions.

Persch is a human services leadership major graduating this month who took what some might consider an unexpected career path. After all, the sales field is one often thought to be reserved for College of Business graduates.

But Persch said both his major and selected career field ultimately have the same focus—helping people in need.

“I realized that when you sell the product it pretty much is trying to find how the product can be useful and beneficial to the customer,” he said.

Persch said he originally became a human services leadership major with the idea that he wanted to help people by going into counseling or case management. After a representative from J.J. Keller visited his class, taught by Field Placement Director of the program Annette Larie, his interest in sales was piqued and he realized he could accomplish his goal of helping people in the sales field as well.

“The obstacles there are pretty much identical to what you’re dealing with in human services—trying to figure out what people need ultimately for you to help them out,” he said.

This led to Persch receiving an internship with J.J. Keller, where he received a better idea of what the sales field was all about. Larie said it is likely “both his ambition and highly developed interpersonal skills” contributed to his selection for the internship.

“Throughout his placement, Brent stayed in touch with me. It has been a pleasure to see how self assured he has become,” she said. “He has a natural sales ability by virtue of his interpersonal skills. Through this experience Brent has further developed his sales and people skills. The confidence he has developed in his ability is clearly apparent.”

Persch said he also has a competitive edge that has developed over 12 years as a student athlete. He played defensive tackle on the UW Oshkosh Titans football team and held a coaching position last fall during the Titans historic 2012 season.

That competitive edge fit with his position at Kimberly Clark, he said.

“It put me in a position too where the limits are kind of endless... the harder I work, the better I’m going to do, the more I’m going to get noticed and climb up the ladder, which is pretty much how football is,” Persch said. “Sports in general, the more you put into it, the more you get out of it.”

Persch said he had considered offers from other companies but in the end, Kimberly Clark was the right fit.

“Ultimately my work is actually going to mean something when it comes down to making decision about different strategies for sales,” he said. “I just wanted to be in that kind of position where I can really make a difference.”

Larie said the human services leadership program at UW Oshkosh is broad in scope and offers many career paths. She said students are encouraged to explore multiple career options, and invited Persch to speak to future classes about his own path to life after graduation.

“He graciously accepted,” she said. “Perhaps in the future, Brent will be that class speaker, and inspire human service leadership students to explore a broad range of career paths.”

Until then, Persch shared a piece of simple advice for those students approaching the beginning of their careers—“Go out there and get it.”

Learn more:

- [UW Oshkosh College of Education and Human Services](#)