



Preparing tomorrow's leaders to change their world as students learn and practice skills in creativity, innovation & entrepreneurship.



Center for Innovation & Growth
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THE GROWTH PRACTICE

The Growth Practice—one of the signature programs of the Center for Innovation & Growth (CIG) at Baldwin Wallace University—is a professionally-led, student supported consultancy, designed to give more experienced students the opportunity to help start, grow and reinvent real businesses and nonprofits. Students help to solve an organization's most challenging issues, often with global implications, while learning to function successfully as a team.

Team

The Growth Practice is staffed by 10 paid undergraduate students who exercise their entrepreneurial mindsets and skillsets by serving as consultants on project teams for real-world clients. Representing a diverse array of backgrounds and majors, CIG interns offer valuable insights and opportunities for collaboration.

Under the leadership of experienced project leaders, CIG interns develop project management skills, conduct primary and secondary market research and receive professional presentation coaching. At the conclusion of each project, CIG interns deliver presentations for clients, often outlining research findings and strategic options to Executive Leadership Teams.

Services and Solutions

The CIG team works with clients to address challenges, foster collaboration and ignite innovative thinking. To support clients on their path to growth, we answer key questions:

- What new offerings might best serve the needs of existing customers?
- Which new markets are fertile ground for existing products and services?
- How real is the opportunity?
- Is there a market and customer base for a new value proposition?
- How to structure the organization to achieve sustainable growth?
- Who will fill the talent pipeline to lead the organization in the future?
- Is programming effective and meeting its objectives?

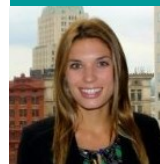
Supported By

The Growth Practice is supported by the investment of corporate partners:



"A CIG project is truly a "win-win" proposition. The student interns perform cost-effective research for a CIG partner's business or for a non-profit client with a real need. In turn, our interns gain valuable exposure to various industries, organizational cultures and management teams; learn to work in a collaborative team setting; and gain practical knowledge beyond their classroom experiences."

—P. Kelly Tompkins
 Executive Vice President &
 Chief Financial Officer
 Cliffs Natural Resources Inc.



"CIG lends a unique opportunity for students to receive real-world project experience by conducting hands-on, collaborative research and presenting applicable strategic findings to well-known regional companies. Direct exposure to these management teams accelerates the development of a professional skillset, while providing unmatched networking opportunities in the business community."

—Brooke Hradisky
 Analyst
 Carleton McKenna and Company, LLC
 CIG Student Intern
 B.A. '14 in Political Science & Sociology

Growth Projects are led by experienced project managers—faculty members and industry experts with real world experience—who provide guidance and training to our teams of undergraduate student interns as they conduct primary and secondary research for our clients.



Approach

Secondary research includes a deep dive of business and industry databases, trade journals and other resources to evaluate the potential range of opportunities in terms of market share, size and structure.

Primary market research is conducted as a follow-up for projects involving a second phase. Our methodology focuses on “Voice of the Customer” (VoC) interviews in which in-depth, face-to-face “Day-in-the-Life” interviews are conducted with the people who matter most—target customers. These free-flowing, purposeful discussions provide invaluable insight into the pain points, competing alternatives and unmet needs of current and potential target markets.

Clients

Since the inception of the Growth Practice in 2008, 40 projects have been completed for a total of 17 different for-profit and non-profit clients, including:

- Berea Children’s Home & Family Services (now Guidestone)
- Cliffs Natural Resources Inc.
- GOJO Industries, Inc.
- Habitat for Humanity of Ohio
- Lakewood City Schools
- The Lubrizol Corporation
- Minds Matter of Cleveland
- OEConnection LLC
- PNC Bank
- Parker Hannifin Corporation
- Rebuilding Together Greater Cuyahoga Valley
- RPM International Inc.
- St. Martin de Porres High School
- United Way of Greater Cleveland
- Westfield Insurance

For-profit projects often focus on market research.

To support OEConnection, the automotive industry’s largest original equipment parts marketplace, in exploring new market segments to expand its customer base, our team conducted in-depth market research on the “powersports” industry. The team used business databases, annual reports and trade associations to determine market structure, size, key players, market share and dealership information. To build upon the secondary research, the team conducted 15 VoCs with parts managers and dealership owners across four states to obtain insights on pain points and service opportunities. The team presented their key learnings and strategic options to executive leadership. As a result of their research, the team demonstrated that powersports was not a viable potential market, allowing OEConnection to allocate its resources elsewhere.

Non-profit projects tend to focus on the evaluation and validation of a specific program or mission.

For Habitat for Humanity of Ohio (Habitat), the team evaluated the impact of homeownership on Habitat partner families, specifically looking at the benefits of homeownership on job stability, access to healthcare and education, and community involvement. The team conducted secondary research, which was augmented by 15 interviews with Habitat homeowners. Based on their primary and secondary research, the team summarized key learnings and developed strategic recommendations which were presented to top-level leaders of Habitat. Because of the impact of the project, Habitat invited the team to present the project at the 7th Annual Habitat for Humanity State Conference in October 2015.

To arrange a meeting and learn how CIG can help your organization, contact:

Center for Innovation & Growth at Baldwin Wallace University

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