Responding to the growing demands for retail talent, the David F. Miller Center for Retailing Education and Research created the forum on “Developing Tomorrow’s Retail Leaders” at the National Retail Federation’s 97th Annual Convention & Expo, January 13-16, 2008. The forum proceeded as panel discussions including: Lynne A. Bartusek, VP, Director of Associate Recruitment, JC Penney Corporation, Sheri Hollack, Divisional VP of Organization Development, Macy’s, Jeff Sullivan, VP, Executive Development, Brown Shoe Company, David Goods, Director of Retail Human Resources, Hess Corporation. Dr. Bart Weitz, Executive Director, moderated panel discussions. These experts in talent management openly shared their latest strategies and best practices to an audience of retailers with the insight on how to build HR programs that effectively attract, develop and maintain retail talent.

The forum started with Dr. Barton Weitz, who shared the findings of the Retail Talent Benchmark Study that was conducted by the Center with sponsorship from NRF Foundation and the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE). The study discussed the characteristics of effective retail talent development programs. Dr. Weitz compared what Generation Y thinks is important in the search for a career to what retailers use in selection processes. These studies were conducted with business students at the University of Florida. Generation Y, considered to have different work values, goals and behaviors than preceding generations considers salary after five years and clear career goals far more important than starting salaries. This indicates that students have a

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By: Dr. Hyunjoo Oh

Steve Kirn has recently joined the Miller Center staff as Executive Education Director. He is currently working with Bart Weitz and Betsy Trobaugh on the retailing management curricula the CRER is developing for the Indian Institute of Retail Training, as well as on other executive education offerings. Steve earned his M.A. and Ph.D. in clinical psychology at the University of Florida. Early in his career, he worked in various mental health settings and was a full-time faculty member at Bellarmine University in Louisville, KY. He subsequently served in a number of management and consulting roles for such organizations as William M. Mercer, BATUS (then parent of Saks Fifth Avenue, Marshall Field’s, Kohl’s), and Sears, where he was Vice President of Learning and Development from 1993 - 2001. Much of his career has focused on retailing, with special emphasis on training and development, executive education, succession planning and organizational change. He co-authored a Harvard Business Review article on the Employee-Customer-Profit chain that is still a much-requested HBR favorite. Steve is a former member of the CRER Board.
American Express/National Retail Federation Aspire 2 Retail Challenge

By: Samantha Weaver

Winning the American Express / National Retail Federation’s Aspire 2 Retail Challenge was an amazing experience. The challenge was similar to a case study where we had to make a home improvement store “green”. There where five parts of the challenge that had to be addressed such as “introduce, brand, market and advertise, place, and price a line of eco-friendly fertilizers, herbicides, and fungicides” all of which had to do with making our store more eco-friendly. The challenge required students to work in teams of six with each student coming from a different university. Each member of the team was assigned an area within the company. We had a conference call with our mentor and were given contact information so that we could get assistance during the course of the project. Our final presentation was given via web conference.

As a result of our hard work, my team won and we presented our solution at the National Retail Federation’s 97th Annual Convention and Expo in New York City. That trip in itself was an amazing experience. The convention was huge, apparently the biggest in the industry. We presented to about 150 people who all felt that we did a spectacular job. We were also invited to meet the National Retail Federation Foundation’s board members, all of which are CEOs of companies like Liz Claiborne and A.I. Freidman. In addition to presenting, I had the pleasure of listening to Dr. Weitz of our own David F. Miller Center for Retailing Education and Research speak about his research.

I learned a lot from this challenge. Since we were each assigned an area of the business, mine was advertising and sales, we got to learn about different career paths within the retail industry. I had never thought about the fact that retail industry contains jobs in something other than management and merchandising.

This experience really solidified retail as the industry I want to work for when I graduate and I know it changed the mind of one of my teammates as well. The National Retail Federation Foundation and the David F. Miller Center for Retailing and Research definitely accomplished their goal of educating students about the many different career paths that are available within the retail industry.
longer-term perspective than most employers think. Agreeing with students, Brown Shoe Company’s program is geared toward developing future leaders by educating and investing in talented college graduates. Jeff Sullivan shared Brown Shoe Company’s Accelerated Career Track (ACT) program, through which candidates receive education and experience built for company needs, an MBA program offered through the University of Florida, and a salary of $100,000 as a director upon completion of the program.

Lynne A. Bartusek from JCPenney emphasized the importance of strong involvement by leadership to develop future retail leaders. JCPenney has provided opportunities for interns and management trainees to interact with different executive board members to help them to connect to the overall big picture and envision their career paths.

Sheri Hollack from Macy’s underscored the role of ongoing training and commitment to leadership development programs promoting self-sufficiency as the core of Macy’s growth in competitive environments. She emphasized that having the best people and creating the best environment for them is key to everything because these employees will drive the best shopping experiences at stores and best financial results.

Finally, David Goods shared how Hess Corporation’s new 18-month professional development program is challenging the old idea of “HESS” as “Holidays, Evenings, Saturdays, and Sundays” and opened young college graduates to the lucrative possibilities of becoming marketing representatives and beyond.

All speakers agreed that attracting and developing future retail leaders starts with strong partnerships with universities because companies can better understand the needs of Generation Y and develop HR practices that adapt to the needs of this cohort. This forum was well received by attending retailers and was featured as the cover story in Stores newspaper circulated during the NRF Convention.

For more information on the Retail Talent Benchmark, please visit www.cba.ufl.edu/mkt/crer/research/hrstudy.asp or contact Hyunjoo Oh, Research Director at 352-392-7166 ext 1269 or email Hyunjoo.oh@cba.ufl.edu.

**Hess Corporation**

Continues Support of Miller Center

Hess Corporation visited UF in January to continue sponsorship of the Miller Center for Retailing. Mr. Gary Michniewicz, Regional Director of the West Florida Region presented to 200 students about convenience retailing and the career opportunities it provides. Along with his presentation, Hess provided each student with the 2007 Hess Monster Truck. Thank you again Hess Corporation!