OVERVIEW

Three years ago, top technology leaders in Columbus, Ohio, including Cardinal Health and Nationwide, discussed growing needs in big data analytics and expressed the need for the region to take a serious look at bringing an analytics center here. These companies partnered with Columbus 2020 (the regional economic development organization), The Ohio State University, and others to find a partner that can build a world-class facility in Columbus.

BUSINESS SITUATION

As part of the recruitment of IBM to build the Client Center for Advanced Analytics, IBM needed to make sure there was appropriate talent in the region to build out 500 planned jobs in data science-related positions. There was simply not enough talent that could eventually come in from other sources; the talent must be created and developing from within the region.

SOLUTION

The Ohio State University, as part of the initial recruitment of IBM, began a year-long effort to design and build an undergraduate analytics curriculum in multiple disciplines, including Business, Engineering, and Math/Statistics. This effort included stakeholders across the university devoting time and energy in multiple sessions to work on a comprehensive curriculum, and not one that is singularly focused on one discipline. Working together, the stakeholders mapped out the necessary pieces that will make up this new curriculum, and perhaps the most important aspect was the need for faculty talent delivering the coursework.

On the cusp of a new curriculum, new ideas and strategies were taken into account in creating an environment with more clinical faculty who can bring existing, real-world problems to the classroom. Only this type of faculty would be able to start preparing students for the “hit the ground running” expectations that nation-wide data analytics companies need today. To accomplish this task, the university realized that strong partnerships with two types of companies were imperative to the success of this curriculum.

The first type of company is those heavily invested in data analytics, like IBM, SAS, and Google. These types of companies are the ones looking for research opportunities with the university, as well as academic instruction/design and a pipeline to talent. They have the ability to design a curriculum, telling the university their needs for the graduates that they could hire in the future. They also have the resident knowledge to come to campus and instruct a collection of coursework that ties in the company’s core competencies.
The other type of company that the university looked at as a partner, were those that were leaders in their own right, who had growing data analytics needs in their enterprise, and were starting to think about their long-term needs. These companies come from many different industries, including banking and insurance. Their main focus was a pipeline to talent in order to fill positions, as well as focused coursework in their industry. For example, tying risk assessment into the curriculum was a highlight for many insurance partners of the university.

As the initial partner companies began to come into the fold in this initiative, the university started to see more data analytics companies relocating and/or building in Columbus, as news spread of IBM and Ohio State’s partnership. This has led to the university participating in many recruitment and expansion efforts, as they worked closely with Columbus 2020. This has already led the successful establishment of a few companies who will be bring hundreds of additional jobs to the region in the next few years. And as the university begins offering its first data analytics courses in the Fall of 2013, we think this past year is just the beginning for a technology that may end up defining the region.

**BENEFITS**

Aside from the increase of jobs, corporate partnerships, and the new curriculum, the university gained the trust & respect of the region and a top 20 company in the Fortune 500. This is ultimately what universities are meant to do; they heed the call of building infrastructure to support big initiatives, and also provide leadership in bringing multiple parties together to solve the world’s problems. We feel that this past year has allowed the university to gain more trust in its role in economic engagement, as it is now looking for new partners in data analytics, as well as many other disciplines.

In 2011, McKinsey Global Institute released a study that predicts a shortage of talent necessary for organizations to take advantage of big data. “By 2018, the United States alone could face a shortage of 140,000 to 190,000 people with deep analytical skills as well as 1.5 million managers and analysts with the know-how to use the analysis of big data to make effective decisions.” It is for this reason that The Ohio State University is “all-in” in helping provide the next generation of data-driven mindsets who will be leading the world for the next decade and beyond.

**Ron Lovell, Vice President, IBM Client Center for Advanced Analytics:** “The collaboration also represents a renewed commitment to the community by IBM, Cardinal Health, Huntington Bank, Nationwide, Limited Brands, Battelle, Information Control Center (ICC) and The Ohio State University. Not only will the IBM Client Center bring 500 new jobs to the Columbus Region over the next three years, it also will help identify Columbus as the nation’s hub for big data analysis.”

**Kenny McDonald, Chief Economic Officer, Columbus 2020:** “IBM has made analytics a priority, which aligns with the Region’s strong technology offerings. The new center will allow IBM to use its full complement of software and services to attack this issue for clients, and it will also allow the Region to become a major hub for analytics, attracting companies from all over the country—and even globally—to Central Ohio.”
Christine A. Poon, Dean of The Fisher College of Business, The Ohio State University: “The future will be claimed by those able to see critical patterns among this overwhelming complexity—and the partnership between IBM and Ohio State will ensure that immersive, action-based learning experiences prepare the next generation of leaders to thrive in this environment. “

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

