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Enhancing Innovation Through Cross-Disciplinary Projects: The 'Drink-Guard' Case

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Abstract

This case highlights an educational initiative in a business school's New Product Marketing course, designed to foster collaboration between business students and those from other disciplines, such as engineering. A team of female engineering students designed the "Drink-Guard," an innovative product aimed at detecting spiked beverages.

Drink spiking is a prevalent issue that disproportionately affects young women. Being odorless, colorless and tasteless, the presence of date rape drugs often goes undetected by victims and can lead to severe consequences such as sexual harassment and human trafficking. The solution, Drink-Guard, provides a reliable and effective mechanism to detect the presence of common date-rape drugs in beverages, thereby reducing the risk of drink spiking incidences. Drink-Guard aims to help women and other vulnerable populations feel safer in social settings and alleviate gender and minority-based violence.

The collaboration underscores the importance of business students gaining a deeper understanding of engineering processes during innovation, particularly the role of marketing in the commercialization phase. For example, the engineering students shared how they used 3D modeling techniques and engineering design principles to produce prototypes of the new product. Business students were tasked with developing commercialization and promotional strategies to launch the "Drink-Guard." Both business and engineering students engaged in stimulating discussions on financing and bringing the new product to market.

Key word: Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration, New Product Development, Innovation

Conference Track

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