

Teaching case examines 'average is beautiful' doll as an entrepreneurial opportunity

April 11 2017

Could an "average is beautiful" doll appeal to children and represent a potential business opportunity? A new teaching case appearing in the *North American Case Research Journal* follows the path of a young designer and entrepreneur as he explores whether to turn a visual prototype of a realistically proportioned fashion doll into an actual doll.

The teaching case features Nickolay Lamm, who used data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), a 3-D printer, and Adobe Photoshop to create a speculative illustration of Barbie with the proportions of an average 19-year-old American woman. The image went viral online and garnered attention from numerous media outlets. Mr. Lamm also received feedback from many parents wishing to purchase an "average is beautiful doll" for their child.

Since demand for such a doll appeared to exist, Mr. Lamm reflected upon his entrepreneurial motivation and abilities, researched the toy industry and its major players, and analyzed the competition among fashion doll makers. Mr. Lamm then reached an inflection point: If he wished to see this opportunity through, he had to decide whether to launch his own venture or to partner with an existing company. Otherwise, he could also ignore the initial market interest and continue to pursue his freelance design and consulting work.

This teaching case is meant to introduce students to the qualities of effective entrepreneurs and to the decision-making process involved in pursuing a business prospect. Dr. Heidi Bertels, of College of Staten

Island at the City University of New York (CUNY), coauthored the [teaching](#) case and points out that the case asks students, whose comparative lack of experience mirrors Mr. Lamm's, to evaluate whether and how to pursue an unexpected entrepreneurial opportunity.

The City University of New York is the nation's leading urban public university. Founded in New York City in 1847, the University comprises 24 institutions: 11 senior colleges, seven community colleges, and additional professional schools. The University serves nearly 275,000 degree-credit students and 218,083 adult, continuing, and professional education students.

Provided by The City University of New York

Citation: Teaching case examines 'average is beautiful' doll as an entrepreneurial opportunity (2017, April 11) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2017-04-case-average-beautiful-doll-entrepreneurial.html>

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