

## Friday symposium offers real world experience, advice

Written by Andrew Steckling, Daily Vidette News Editor  
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Mike Veeck was stuck.



His father, Bill, then owner of the Chicago White Sox, had just given him an ultimatum – find a marketing pitch to sell out the July 12, 1979 White Sox vs. Detroit Tigers doubleheader at Comiskey Park or lose his job.

Walking down Michigan Avenue later that day, he heard KC and the Sunshine Band playing on the radio. A short time later, radio deejay Steve Dahl blew up a disco record live on air.

The rest is history.

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At the Sport Management Symposium on Feb. 11, Veeck explained the short aftermath of “Disco Demolition Night,” including the immediate termination of his job on a unanimous 12 to zero vote from the board and provided nine tips to the anticipated 180 students, faculty and staff from a five-state area – Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Wisconsin and Missouri – in attendance.

An attendance to which Chris Mallen, graduate assistant for the marketing department of ISU Athletics and co-organizer of the event, was not expecting.

“I was getting phone calls, e-mails, people were dropping by my office asking, ‘how can I get into this event,’ and it’s been more than I thought...some professors have said this has reached the point where we have to do this every year...people have been very surprised in a good way, in a positive way, that they didn’t think it was going to be this thorough or that it was going to have this amount of attention for [the] event,” Mallen said.

Veeck entertained the packed Alumni Center room for an hour and a half, providing anecdotes and keen observations about his career in sports marketing.

“I’ve made my living for 35 years doing what I love...and it’s the fans that keep us [being able] to do what we do,” Veeck said.

The day provided sport management and marketing majors the chance to hear from several individuals in the business through a set of two panels, the keynote address from Veeck and an internship fair including minor and major baseball organizations and local, regional and state sporting organizations.

The first panel, which included Lee Dicklitch, associate director of Division I Men’s Basketball Championship, Aaron Leetch, senior associate Athletics director of external affairs for ISU, Kate Peters, executive director of the LPGA State Farm Classic, and Dana Brenner, associate Athletics director for the University of Illinois, fielded questions from those in attendance relating

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to getting into a sports organization career, day-to-day life, the reasoning behind housing the NCAA headquarters in Indiana and separating personal from work life.

The latter, separating personal life and work, was a topic all four voiced their opinions on.

“All phone calls stop once I enter my house. Regardless of the caller, I finish the call in the garage and then walk into the house,” Brenner said.

Some of the tips Veeck included in his speech related to customer service, giving back to the community, knowing the media and finding an organization one loves and attaching themselves to it.

“Follow your passion. It sounds so simple. Do what you love. It’s the best feeling to work at something that you continually are a fan of,” he said.