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THE BENTON COUNTY
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Hot-topic talk

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BENTONVILLE — Local business students got marketing tips from a local business leader as part of a lecture series hosted by Students in Free Enterprise on Monday night at Northwest Arkansas Community College.

Mark Goodman, executive vice president of marketing, membership and e-commerce at Sam's Club, talked to students, faculty and members of the community about building effective brand awareness. The speech was part of the Spring 2006 Business Leaders Lecture Series.

NWACC students Jason Shelby and John Stanberry attended the lecture at the request of a professor and were impressed with Goodman's presentation.

From Starbucks to Nike, Goodman pointed out which companies are doing a good job of building brand awareness and pointed out the reasons for their success. "It was interesting," Stanberry said. "I came to it thinking it was going to be kind of dull, but it really wasn't. I'm glad I came." Stanberry wants to one day open a small business, and the information he gained at the lecture could come in handy one day, he said.

Most of Goodman's talk focused around companies other than Wal-Mart and Sam's Club that have created successful marketing strategies. It wasn't until the question-and-answer session that Goodman discussed branding at Sam's Club at the request of

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Goodman discussed branding at Sam's Club at the request of people who wanted to hear some local examples.

The thrust of his lecture was that good marketing should strike a strong balance between the wants and the needs of customers. Currently, Goodman said, Sam's Club does a fine job of marketing toward customers' needs. It is his goal to expand marketing to customers' wants. "I think some of our opportunity is continuing now to create some of the want for personal needs and luxury items," he said. Goodman was not ready to spell out the future marketing plan for Sam's Club but hinted that the company will continue to try to separate itself from its wholesale competitors.

The lecture series is hosted twice a year by the NWACC SIFE organization, Phi Theta Kappa, the Student Ambassadors and Activities Board, the Business and Computer Information Division and the Corporate and Continuing Education Division.

SIFE is a nonprofit organization that seeks to give students the tools to learn the free enterprise system in a real working situation. Guided by faculty members who are named Sam M. Walton Free Enterprise Fellows, SIFE teams establish a variety of community-outreach programs that teach free enterprise.

FEEDBACK:

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