

Riding the Urban Buckeroo

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The bull is called Killer, but the way Mary Beth Koenig rode it yesterday, its name could have been Algernon.

"Of course," she said after conquering the critter at Texas Rockin' Rodeo, Route 70 and Racetrack Circle, Cherry Hill, "the bull's only in low gear now, but this evening, when the customers come in, it'll be going at full power."

When Mary Beth Koenig said "customers," you could almost see the dollar marks in her eyes. This is a young capitalist, see, 21 years old and a junior at Temple University. Since the semester started two months ago, she and 43 other young capitalists, many of whom are her classmates, have been involved in a promotion that was about to become a winner.

Yesterday afternoon they were making a last-minute check on their investment.

Last night was Big Five Night at Texas Rockin' Rodeo. It was an evening of divertissement for \$3.50

(drinks extra), featuring rock music, a bull-riding contest aboard Killer the mechanical bull and contests for best-dressed cowboy and cowgirl, all presented by the Marketing class at Temple and all for fun, profit and, above all, a testing of theory in the real world.

Before the doors opened, more than 500 tickets had been sold, many of them at the other Big Five schools -Penn, Villanova, St. Joseph's and La Salle

- and there were hard-headed realists in the class' sales department who were predicting that "walk-ins" would account for several hundred more sales. "But even if we don't sell another ticket, we've turned a good profit," said

The project was the idea of Lloyd Bashkin, president of Lloyd Scott & Company, Marketing & Management Consultants, of Cherry Hill, who is a part-time teacher of marketing at Temple. "Marketing basically brings together all of the business courses," Bashkin said, "but too often it is looked on as something theoretical that has to be endured for the sake of earning credits. I thought we'd try to make it come alive."

Bashkin sold the Marketing class on setting up a company with real money, making a profit on that money, if possible - and involving everyone in the process. The first step was to issue stock at \$1 a share, with the stipulation that each class member had to buy at least one share. Almost overnight the issue of 500 shares was sold out.

Next, as the group considered what sort of venture to undertake, it was necessary to open a "stock market" for trading in the shares, which had risen speculatively to a bid price of \$2.25 on rumors of good fiscal prospects. "There was little information on what the business would be, but the stock was strong," Bashkin said, "and it remained strong after the class decided to promote a Western-style event with rock music."

Once that decision was made, the class became a "matrix-management" type company, meaning that it consisted of numerous project teams working in conjunction with each other. For example, the "site team" chose the Cherry Hill location for the event because the legal drinking age in New Jersey is 19 but 21 in Pennsylvania, and that difference broadens the base of potential customers at a party where beer and liquor are on sale.

The market research team also conducted surveys on the campuses of the other Big Five schools and determined that the sales team would find markets for tickets at all of them.

"It was a busy time for all of us," said Mark Sherman, 21, of Lakewood, N.J., a junior majoring in accounting. "What has impressed me most is the way everybody has pulled together."

Amy Jordan, 21, a junior journalism major from Glendora, N.J., a member of the public-relations team, said there were times in the early stages when she

"wasn't quite sure" about the project. "At first," she said, "I thought that maybe we had taken on more than we could handle, but it worked out just fine."

Invited to take a test ride on Killer the mechanical bull, Miss Jordan smiled and shook her head. "I've done a lot of different things for this project," she said. "But I draw the line here."

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