

*I have come from the University of Montana, located in Missoula, Montana in the heart of the northern Rocky Mountains. My area of specialty is marketing of high-technology products and innovations, which focuses on how to adapt and modify traditional marketing strategies for the complicated environment in which high-tech products are developed and commercialized.*



*For example, high-tech companies tend to be run by technical people who are less well-versed in marketing tools such as branding and customer insights. High-tech customers tend to experience fear, uncertainty, and doubt about whether they will be able to successfully use all the technical features high-tech products offer, and even whether the products will perform as promised (or have glitches). Finally, high-tech industries have unique characteristics, such as the need for "plug-and-play" compatibility for related product components, which is a fancy way of*

*saying will the software work with the hardware, will charging stations be available for the electric vehicles, will content be available for my virtual reality headset, etc. Each of these considerations makes marketing strategies more complicated/difficult, and more important, than for traditional products.*

*While here at the University of Canterbury, I focused on one important high-tech category: big data/data analytics. The issues companies face in harnessing the power of data analytics is similar to the barriers in adopting and using any new technology. Yet, companies that are not ready to embrace big data run the risk of falling behind their peers in this important new technology that is key to competitive advantage across a wide range of industries such as logistics, health care, retail, government, and marketing to name just a few.*

*I became aware of the Erskine Programme through a colleague. It offers such a unique opportunity to engage with students and faculty in an environment that is both different, yet familiar, to what I experience in Montana. My host/sponsor, Pavel Castka, has overlapping interests in sustainability and supply chains, and the opportunity to collaborate on research really interested me as well.*

*I've been at UC for nearly a month now. I've been working with students in the UC Centre for Entrepreneurship (UCE) Summer Start-up program. I provided an overview during their first week on strategies for commercializing innovation, and will be doing a "speed mentoring" session with them too.*

*Also, I delivered an evening lecture in the MBA Thought Leadership Series, "Harnessing the Power of Big Data," to MBA graduates and industry leaders in Central Christchurch. Roughly 50 people attended the two-hour event, where the topics included challenges organizations face in harnessing the power of big data to add value. I received many follow-up emails from the event that highlighted the myriad ways kiwi companies are using data analytics.*

*I also gave a six-hour seminar on Big Data & Innovation that covered strategies to leverage data analytics to develop new sources of revenue, how to develop a data analytics strategy, and how to build a data-driven culture.*