

STUDENT PLACEMENT: THE CHALLENGE OF HELPING OUR UNDERGRADUATE
MARKETING STUDENTS PREPARE FOR AND FIND SUITABLE EMPLOYMENT

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The desired culminating experience for most of our marketing graduates is career placement. The successful attainment of this goal requires more than an understanding of business and marketing; it requires that students become fully aware of the tasks and methods involved in locating and securing desirable employment. It is essential that students know which attributes are desired by different types and sizes of employers, how employers locate employment candidates, and if a portfolio, a collection of work that a job seeker can show to a job interviewer to substantiate claims of competence, would help to motivate placement decisions. This research was conducted in an effort to assist marketing students in gaining entrance to the business market and marketing instructors in advising our students.

In total, 280 surveys were mailed to 50 leading financial institutions and a range of manufacturing firms, retail companies, telecommunication companies, electronics and computer firms, and the top 30 marketing research firms in the San Francisco Bay Area.

The 87 usable questionnaires can be classified as follows: Financial Institutions, 23%; Manufacturing Firms, 24.1%; Retail Firms, 17.2%; Telecommunication Companies, 16.1%; Electronics/Computer Companies, 16.1%; and Market Research Firms, 3.3%.

The results showed a significant variance in the sources employers use to locate prospective em-

ployees. Large companies rely more on campus recruitment while smaller companies rely more on newspapers and walk-ins. A great majority (82%) of the companies sampled identified job applicants through newspaper advertisements placed in local newspapers and unsolicited resumés. Referrals and walk-ins were used by 80% and 71% of the companies, respectively. Unfortunately for students, only 56% of the companies sampled recruited on college campuses.

An overwhelming number of companies (95%) rated verbal skills as either "very important" or "important" in the attainment of employment. Appearance was rated second with a combined total score of 84%. Writing and analytical skills were rated either "very important" or "important" by 83% and 76% of the companies, respectively. Previous marketing experience was rated by 70% of the companies as being either "very important" or "important." Grade point average was ranked eighth in importance with 62% of the companies rating it as "very important" or "important." Only 33% of the companies surveyed would "absolutely" or "probably" examine portfolios during on-campus interviews. However, 61% of the companies sampled would review portfolios during off-campus interviews.

Companies that hire marketing graduates are hiring them primarily for sales and management trainee positions. Jobs in advertising, public relations and product development are not as readily available to marketing graduates.