

**SALES RESEARCH AND CURRICULUM ISSUES: ANNOUNCING *JOURNAL OF MARKETING EDUCATION* SPECIAL ISSUE ON SALES EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

Donald Bacon, University of Denver

Andrea Dixon, Baylor University

Robert Erffmeyer, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

Terry Loe, Kennesaw State University

James Peltier, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater

Joel Whalen, DePaul University

**Rationale**

Few marketing academics would be surprised to learn that “sales” is the most common career entry point for marketing graduates. In fact, the seminal 2011 study by Georgetown University (2010) entitled “What’s it Worth: The Economic Value of College Majors,” showed that the greatest portion of marketing majors pursue a sales career after graduation. What might be more surprising is that sales as a first career was ranked second for business students majoring in general business, economics, international business, and management; and ranked third for students majoring in finance, operations management, human resources and management information systems. Across campus, sales as a first career was ranked second or third for students majoring the social sciences, natural sciences, physical sciences, liberal arts, communication and journalism.

While sales as a career choice has broad reach across campus, the fact remains that there is an ongoing and widespread talent shortage of sales people in the U.S. and around the world (ManpowerGroup, 2012). As evidence, the ManpowerGroup’s Annual Survey for 2006-2012 shows that sales has been a top five shortage area each of the past seven years. Moreover, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects considerable yearly job growth for sales positions through 2020 in such diverse areas as insurance, business to business, and technical sales (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012).

Universities across the U.S. have been quick to respond to the demand-supply gap for well-trained sales professionals. According to DePaul’s bi-yearly Universities and Colleges Sales Education Landscape Survey, sales education curriculum growth grew from 44 U.S. universities and colleges in 2007, to 67 in 2009, to 101 in 2011. For 2011, 32 of these institutions offered a major, minor, or degree concentration; the remaining 69 offered sales courses without a specific transcript designation (DePaul University Center for Sales Leadership, 2011-2012). Coinciding

with this growth in sales curricula is the increase in the number of universities establishing sales centers and institutes. Launched in 2002, the University Sales Center Alliance (USCA) was formed to “increase the professionalism of the sales field, improve the status of sales as an academic discipline, and assist other universities in this mission,” (USCA, 2012). Since 2002, the USAC has grown from nine to 33 universities across the U.S.

Despite the fact that college graduates have long entered into sales careers and the number of universities offering sales curricula, sales programs, and sales centers has grown dramatically, the marketing education literature has been relatively slow in responding to the needs of students and employers (Deeter-Schmelz & Kennedy, 2011). Specific to the *Journal of Marketing Education*, of the over 800 articles published since its inception (Gray et al., 2012), only 27 have focused on sales education, a dearth that has been noted across the marketing education literature (Anderson et al., 2005; McIntyre & Tanner, 2004). In response, the *Journal of Marketing Education* will be publishing a Special Issue on Sales Education and Training in spring, 2014. This special issue is in partnership with the University Sales Center Alliance, which is offering a \$1,000 Best Paper Award. The purpose of this SPECIAL SESSION is three-fold:

- Outline the needs of the sales curriculum.
- Offer insights into the importance of Sales Centers and Institutes.
- To present a quick review of the sales education literature and to offer insights for the Special JME Issue on Sales Education and Training.

Given the importance of effective sales training for those entering the workforce (Lassk et al., 2012), we will encourage MEA attendees to consider submitting a manuscript for the 2014 Special Issue on Sales Education and Training.

### **Format**

- Introduce the panel and outline his perspectives of the importance of sales education;
- Discussion of trends in terms of Sales Centers and Institutes and providing information; regarding the University Sales Centers Alliance;
- Linking sales education to the sales profession needs;
- Review of sales education literature;
- Importance of topics for Special JME Issue on Sales Education and Training.

References available upon request