

INTEGRATING CAREER DEVELOPMENT SKILLS INTO THE MARKETING CURRICULUM

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ABSTRACT

The pace of transformation of the modern workplace has put an emphasis on today's graduates having interpersonal, listening, writing, speaking and etiquette skills (*HR Focus* 1999). Businesses are forgoing the expenditure of hundreds of thousands of dollars each year to teach soft skills such as assertiveness, empathy and leadership expecting college graduates to possess these skills as a condition of employment. In addition, business schools have been criticized for failing to adequately prepare graduates with important skills such as managing diverse workplaces, and teamwork and leadership skills (Eberhardt and Moser 1997; Hahs 1999).

Business and marketing programs across the U. S. have begun to respond to the call to develop students' skills. For example, the marketing faculty at Florida International University developed and implemented a course in how students can market themselves in a competitive marketplace (Taylor 2003). The purpose of this study is to examine the relative preparedness of today's marketing graduate for entry into the business world and assess the viability and content of a course that emphasizes the development of various managerial skills.

A systematic random sample of 500 marketing practitioners dispersed throughout the United States was selected from the 2002 AMA International Membership Directory. The overall response rate based on the number of surveys delivered was 35.7%.

A systematic random sample of 300 marketing educators dispersed throughout the United States was selected from Prentice Hall's Marketing Faculty Directory (Hasselback 2001). The overall response rate based on the number of surveys delivered was 39.3%.

A majority of the marketing practitioners (50.3%) indicated graduates today were better prepared and 29.9% indicated the preparation of graduates had

stayed the same. Only 24.5% of the marketing educators indicated marketing graduates were better prepared today, while 50% indicated they were about the same.

When asked if they believed a course that taught essential managerial and career development skills should become a part of the marketing curriculum, a large number of practitioners (80.4%) indicated it should compared to 49.1% of the educators ($\chi^2 = 32.326$; $df = 2$; $p \leq 0.000$).

Practitioners noted the main problems with the course would be that it would overlap with existing courses and it would require more units to graduate. Educators felt the curriculum already has enough units and students do not have enough time to take given AACSB requirements, and that the course may not get approved because it may be viewed as nonacademic.

Marketing practitioners and educators supported the need to teach marketing graduates managerial and career development skills. Practically speaking it makes the most sense to provide marketing students with multiple exposures to the skills suggested in this study.

REFERENCES

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