

WORKING CONDITIONS OF MARKETING PROFESSORS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

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ABSTRACT

There has been a good deal of debate over the notion of how working conditions, such as office design, affect employee productivity and job satisfaction. This study explores the working conditions of marketing professors and serves as an initial step toward determining the role of the marketing professor in this longstanding debate.

Research in recent years has shown that working conditions are nearly as important as salary (Grumeberg 1977). Working conditions are often looked upon as nonfinancial incentives or rewards (LeBoeuf 1985)(Robbins 1982). Nonfinancial rewards, such as office design, serve as recognition and can, in some instances, be even more powerful than monetary rewards (LeBoeuf 1985).

Physical surroundings as discussed in this context are in the form of office design. Office design has characteristically been divided into two broad categories: office layout and office decor. In addition, closely related to both layout and decor in terms of working conditions are the support services the marketing professor receives.

A systematic sample of universities, and a random sample of marketing professors within those universities, was selected from the AMA Directory. Survey questions were administered to 140 marketing professors and focused on a variety of aspects of the respondent's office and support environment.

FINDINGS

Office Layout

The type of office arrangement was measured in terms of office size (in square feet) and office occupancy. The majority of respondents had rather large (over 150 square feet), private offices.

Office Decor

Decorative objects. The most common decorative items in faculty offices were framed artwork, plaques, calendars, unframed posters, and diplomas. Also clocks

served as both functional and decorative items as respondents reported having at least one either on their desk, wall, or bookshelf.

Furniture. At the time of this study, the majority of respondents reported having metal desks. Filing cabinets and bookshelves were also standard office furnishings. For the most part, marketing faculty were satisfied with the number of both filing cabinets and bookshelves in their offices.

Support Services

Closely related to office layout and design in terms of the general working conditions of a marketing professor are support services. Telephones perform an important support service as the majority of respondents have exclusive telephone numbers and at least one outside telephone line. Both secretaries and students provided support services to the marketing professors by answering telephones with the majority of students filling this role through assistantships.

CONCLUSION

Physical surroundings and support services are an important consideration within any work environment. The work environment of a marketing professor is no exception. The above findings offer a view of the working conditions of marketing professors and serve as an initial step for future studies to determine if a linkage does truly exist between physical surroundings and productivity and job satisfaction.