

PERSPECTIVES ON A SUCCESSFUL MARKETING CAREER: LEARNING FROM THE EXPERTS

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Marketing educators are well aware of the enormous change that marketing education has undergone in the past ten years, including, increased enrollments; digital-savvy students with changing learning styles; a global marketplace (students attending U.S. universities, the exporting of U.S. students and the exporting and importing of faculty from all over the world); a shortage of PhD-qualified faculty to teach marketing; and increased pressure from industry and from within academe (AACSB and other accrediting bodies) for accountability. As profound as these more recent changes have been, change has always been a part of higher education and the most successful faculty are those who have embraced and adapted to change, increased their flexibility in career planning, and remained committed to fostering learning and development. How do faculty members learn to develop these characteristics of success? From mentors in PhD programs? From colleagues?

There is surprisingly little information about: (a) the characteristics of faculty success, and (b) sources of guidance in building a successful career in marketing education. For example, in the more than 200 articles published in the *Journal of Marketing Education* in the past ten years, only two focus on a broad view of the content and process of managing marketing academics' careers (Polansky, Juric, & Mankelov, 2003; Rapert, Kurtz, & Smith, 2002). During this same time period, six *Journal of Marketing Education* articles have provided us with various views, strategies and tactics, and philosophies about teaching (Chonko, 2007; Sautter, Gagnon, & Mohr, 2007; Tomkovick, 2004; Faranda & Clarke, III, 2004; Smart, Kelley, & Conant, 2001; and Desai, Damewood, & Jones, 2001). This Special Session taps into another rich source of career guidance – the past winners of the MEA's Marketing Educator of the Year Award.

PURPOSE

In addition to providing perspective and guidance to all marketing educators, this Special Session provoked, challenged, and generated discussion through a panel discussion and question-and-answer session. Through the sharing of ideas, perspectives, and strategies for career success, the panel members of this session advanced the material and emotional dimensions of the careers of marketing academics within MEA and within the discipline more broadly.

METHOD

Learning from experts has long been a major way to gain insight on every conceivable topic, from personal relationships, to finance, to health and fitness, to higher education. This Special Session is grounded in the concept of learning from experts. The co-chairs invited the past ten winners of the MEA Marketing Educator of the Year Award to participate in the session by preparing comments to a short list of questions that cover a range of marketing educator career dimensions, including the triad of teaching, service, and research as well as other career challenges that go beyond the triad. While the criteria for selection of the Marketing Educator of the Year Award are primarily grounded in teaching, advising students, publication, and general advancement of marketing education, the acceptance speeches of past winners have typically embraced a range of career topics. This session captures this range of comment and perspective in a more permanent way.

The co-chairs (previous winners of the MEA Marketing Educator of the Year Award) opened the session with a few, brief comments, and introduced the panelists: *John Schibrowsky*, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, 2008; *Charles Patti*, University of Denver, 2007; *Stuart Van Auken*, Florida Gulf Coast University, 2006; *Nancy Frontczak*, Metropolitan State College of Denver, 2005; *Doug Lincoln*, Boise State University, 2004; *Katrin Harich*,

California State University, Fullerton, 2003; *Bruce Lammers*, California State University, Northridge, 2002; *Gary Karns*, Seattle Pacific University, 2001; and *George Belch*, San Diego State University, 2000.

Each panelist summarized their responses to four topic areas: (1) overall career profile; (2) the balance of professor responsibilities and key satisfaction points; (3) giving professional advice to new professors; and (4) five most important teaching ideas. Panelists provided detailed, thought-provoking comments to the above four sections of questions. A few brief findings are presented here. In response to the most important points of satisfaction for the experts, several themes arise: (1) satisfaction from hearing from past students and the impact the expert has made on their careers, (2) satisfaction from the collegial relationships developed with others at their school and conferences such as MEA, (3) positive interaction with students and seeing their enthusiasm in learning marketing, and (4) opportunity to have a career that allows flexibility and freedom.

Another question area asked the experts to provide ideas to a new faculty member who has just received a PhD and now seeks advice on building a successful career. Several common themes were found: (1) collaborate with colleagues and find a mentor, (2) learn from successful "teachers" what has worked for them and take advantage of any teaching workshops, (3) build a successful stream of research, (4) attend professional conferences to learn from and interact with other successful educators. These are just a few examples of the insightful comments offered by the panel of experts.

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