

# MARKETING YOURSELF ASSIGNMENT

## PLANNING PHASE

### Situation Analysis

- Internal Assessment – What are your strengths and weaknesses? What can you do to enhance your strengths, minimize your weaknesses? What type of competitive advantage do YOU have? If you don't have one, can you develop one? How are you differentiated?
- External Analysis – What are the trends in the environmental factors that could have an impact on your job and career development? Technological, Regulatory/Ethics & Social Responsibility, Economic, Social
- Competitive Analysis – What type of background, experiences, strengths and weaknesses do your competitors have?
- Market Analysis – What market segments have you identified as having the best potential? How do you fit into these markets? (This means doing some research!)

### Focus and Goal Setting

- What are your objectives? Make them specific and measurable! What is your target market? Examples might be large public accounting firms, business to business sales, marketing researcher for a consulting firm in Chicago?

### Marketing Program

- Product – Understand how it can meet the needs of your target marketing. What are your key attributes/benefits? How are you differentiated?
- Pricing - What salary and compensation package do you want; are you willing to settle for? What's the competitive price for your target market?
- Place – What channels have you developed to access your target market? Associations, personal contacts, professors, etc. Do some careful research on these. Don't assume that intensive distribution is necessarily the way to go. Focus your channel to the target marketing you are seeking.
- Promotion – Think about the buying process. How will you create awareness? What can you do to 'break through the clutter' and get the opportunity for an interview? What is your "positioning" strategy? Your personal selling skills will be important for telephone contacts and that face-to-face interview. Probe to find out about the needs of the organization before that "sales call" and during the interview. Have questions prepared.

## MARKETING YOURSELF EXERCISE

### Introduction

Planning for a career and obtaining a job entails the process of marketing yourself. It involves thoughtful planning, implementation and control. You may have terrific assets including several extracurricular activities, relevant work experience, an impressive grade point average, solid communications skills and admirable leadership qualities. However, you still need to market yourself systematically and aggressively. Even the best products can remain unsold unless marketed effectively (Berkowitz et al 1997).

Random House believed it had a “bestseller coming”, (*Wall Street Journal*, Jan. 15, 1996) in A Civil Action (1995) by Jonathan Harr. The nonfiction story was so gripping that Robert Redford bought the film rights for more than \$1 million and planned to play the leading role himself. Talk show hosts lined up to schedule author Jonathan Harr and as glowing reviews streamed in Random House printed 200,000 copies...

A Civil Action did not make *The New York Times* best seller list and barely sold 57,000 copies. The book bombed.

However, Random House did the unusual: it started all over again and republished the book. This time it used marketing where the entire package is as important as the product itself. The publisher replaced the original bland book packet with eye-catching type and image. It repositioned the book’s central theme in the book packet text and began to advertise.

The result? A Civil Action (same exact book contents) was in the nonfiction hardcover best seller list followed by years on the soft cover bestseller list. It is also being made into a movie and has won numerous awards.

The process of obtaining employment involves the same activities that marketing managers use to develop and introduce products into the marketplace. The distinction is that you are marketing yourself instead of a product. You need to engage in marketing research by analyzing your personal qualities (i.e., performing self-audit) and by identifying career opportunities. Based on the findings of your research, you then select a target market. This comprises those job opportunities that are compatible with your interests, goals, skills and abilities. You then design a marketing mix around the target market. The "product" is you: you must decide how to "position" yourself in the job market. The "price" component of the market mix represents the salary range and job benefits (such as health and life insurance, vacation time and retirement benefits) that you hope to receive. "Promotion" involves communicating with prospective employers through written correspondence (advertising) and job interviews (personal selling.) The "placement focuses" on how to reach prospective employers - at the campus placement center, job fairs, network, etc.

References:

Berkowitz, Eric, Roger Kerin, Steven Hartley and William Rudelius, Marketing, 1997, Irwin/McGraw Hill. Boston, MA.

## **THE JOB SEARCH PROCESS**

Activities you should consider during your job search process include assessing yourself, identifying job opportunities, preparing your resume and related correspondence, and going on job interviews.

### **Assessing Yourself**

You must know your product - you - so that you can market yourself effectively to prospective employers. Consequently, a critical first step in your job search is conducting a self-analysis, which involves critically examining yourself on the following dimensions: interests, abilities, education, experience, personality, desired job environment, and personal goals. The importance of performing this assessment was stressed by a management consultant:

Many graduates enter the world of work without even understanding the fact that they are specific somebodies, much less knowing the kinds of competencies and motivations with which they have been endowed....The tragedy of not knowing is awesome. Ignorant of who they are, most graduates are doomed to spend too much of their lives in work for which they are poorly suited....Self-knowledge is critical to effectively managing your career.

### **Questions to Ask in Your Self-analysis**

#### ***Personality***

What are my good and bad traits?  
Am I competitive?  
Do I work well with others?  
Am I outspoken?  
Am I a leader or a follower?  
Do I work well under pressure?  
Do I work quickly, or am I methodical?  
Do I get along well with others?  
Am I ambitious?  
Do I work well independently of others?

#### ***Desired Job Environment***

Am I willing to relocate? Why?  
Do I have a geographical preference? Why?  
Would I mind traveling in my job?  
Do I have to work for a large, nationally known firm to be satisfied?  
Must the job I assume offer rapid promotion opportunities?  
If I could design my own job, what characteristics would it have?  
How important is high initial salary to me?

### ***Personal Goals***

What are my short-term and long-term goals? Why?  
Am I career oriented, or do I have broader interests?  
What are my career goals?  
What jobs are likely to help me achieve my goals?  
What do I hope to be doing in 5 years? In 10 years?  
What do I want out of life?

**Asking key questions** A self-analysis, in part, entails asking yourself some very important and difficult questions (Figure C-4). It is critical that you respond to the questions honestly, because your answers ultimately will be used as a guide in your job selection. A less-than-candid appraisal of yourself might result in a job mismatch.

**Identifying strengths and weaknesses** After you have addressed the questions posed in Figure C-4, you are ready to identify your strengths and weaknesses. To do so, draw a vertical line down the middle of a sheet of paper and label one side of the paper "strengths" and the other side "weaknesses." Based on your answers to the questions, record your strong and weak points in their respective column. Ideally this cataloging should be done over a few days to give you adequate time to reflect on your attributes. In addition, you might seek input from others who know you well (such as parents, close relatives, friends, professors, or employers) and can offer more objective views. They might even evaluate you on the questions in Figure C-4, and you can compare the results with your own evaluation. A hypothetical list of strengths and weaknesses is shown in Figure C-5.

### **Hypothetical list of job candidate's strengths and weaknesses**

#### **STRENGTHS**

Enjoy being with people  
Am an avid reader  
Have good communication skills  
Am involved in many extracurricular activities  
Work well with others  
Work well independently  
Am honest and dependable  
Am willing to travel in the job  
Am a good problem solver  
Have a good sense of humor  
Am a self-starter, have drive

#### **WEAKNESSES**

Am not adept at working with computers  
Have minimal work experience  
Have a mediocre GPA  
Am sometimes impatient  
Resent close supervision  
Work methodically (slowly)  
Will not relocate  
Anger easily sometimes  
Lack of customer orientation

Additional information about yourself can be obtained by developing a list of the five experiences or activities you most enjoy and analyzing what they have in common. Don't be surprised if the common characteristics are related to your strengths and weaknesses!

**Taking job-related tests** Personality and vocational interest tests, provided by many colleges and universities, can give you other ideas about yourself. After tests have been administered and scored, test takers meet with testing service counselors to discuss the results. Test results generally suggest jobs for which students have an inclination. The most common tests at the college level are the Strong Interest Inventory and the Campbell Interest and Skill Survey. Some counseling centers also administer the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator - a personality measure that helps identify professions you may enjoy. If you have not already done so, you may wish to see whether your school offers such testing services.

## **Identifying Your Job Opportunities**

To identify and analyze the job market, you must conduct some marketing research to determine what industries *and* companies offer promising job opportunities that relate to the results of your self-analysis. Several sources that can help in your search are discussed below.

**College placement office** Your college placement office is an excellent source of job information. Personnel in that office can (1) inform you about which companies will be recruiting on campus, (2) alert you to unexpected job openings, (3) advise you about short-term and long-term career prospects, (4) offer advice on resume construction, (5) assess your interviewing strengths and weaknesses, and (6) help you evaluate a job offer. In addition, the office usually contains a variety of written materials focusing on different industries and companies and tips on job hunting. One major publication available in most campus placement offices is the National Association of Colleges and Employers publication *Job Choices*, which contains a list of employers, kinds of job openings for college graduates, and whom to contact about jobs in those firms.

**On-line career and employment services** Many companies no longer make frequent on-campus visits. Instead, they may use the many on-line services available to advertise an employment opportunity or to search for candidate information. The National Association of Colleges and Employers, for example, maintains a site on the World Wide Web call JobWeb (<http://www.jobweb.org>). Similarly, the online Career Center (<http://www.occ.com>) is a database of employment ads, candidate resumes, and other career-related information. Some of the information resources include career guidance, a cover letter library, occupational profiles, and resume templates. Employers may contact students directly when the candidate's qualifications meet their specific job requirements. The advantage of this system for students is that regardless of the size or location of the campus they are attending, many companies have access to their resume. Your school's career center may also have a "home page" that offers on-line job search information and links to other World Wide Web sites.

**Library** The public or college library can provide you with reference material that, among other things, describes successful firms and their operations, defines the content of various jobs, and forecasts job opportunities. For example, *Fortune* publishes lists of the 1,000 largest U.S. and global companies and their respective sales and profits; Dun & Bradstreet publishes directories of all companies in the United States with a net worth of at least \$500,000. *Careers in Marketing*, a publication of the American Marketing Association presents career opportunities in marketing. The *Occupational Outlook Handbook* is an annual publication on the U.S. Department of Labor that provides projections for specific job prospects, as well as information pertaining to those jobs. A librarian can indicate reference materials that will be most pertinent to *your* job search.

**Advertisements** Help-wanted advertisements provide an overview of what is happening in the job market. Local (particularly Sunday editions) and college newspapers, trade press (such as *Marketing News* or *Advertising Age*), and business magazines (such as *Sales and Marketing Management*) contain classified advertisement sections that generally have job opening announcements, often for entry-level positions. Reviewing the want ads can help you identify what kinds of positions are available and their requirements and job titles, which firms offer certain kinds of jobs, and levels of compensation.

**Employment agencies** An employment agency can make you aware of several job opportunities very quickly because of its large number of job listings available through computer databases. Many agencies specialize in a particular field (such as sales and marketing). The advantages of using an agency include that it (1) reduces the cost of a job search by bringing applicants and employers together, (2) often has exclusive job listings available only by working through the agency, (3) performs much of the job search for you, and (4) tries to find a job that is compatible with your qualifications and interests. Employment agencies are much maligned because some engage in questionable business practices, so check with the Better Business Bureau or your business contacts to determine the quality of the various agencies.

**Personal contacts** An important source of job information that students often overlook is their personal contacts. People you know often may know of job opportunities, so you should advise them that you're looking for a job. Relatives and friends might aid your job search. Instructors you know well and business contacts can provide a wealth of information about potential jobs and even help arrange an interview with a prospective employer. They may also help arrange "informational interviews" with employers who do not have immediate openings. These interviews allow you to collect information about an industry or an employer and give you an advantage if a position does become available. It is a good idea to leave your resume with all your personal contacts so they can pass it along to those who might be in need of your services. Student organizations (such as the student chapter of the American Marketing Association and Pi Sigma Epsilon, the professional sales fraternity) may be sources of job opportunities, particularly if they are involved with the business community. Local chapters of professional business organizations (such as the American Marketing Association and Sales and Marketing Executives International) also can provide job information;

contacting their chapter president is a first step in seeking assistance from these organizations. In the past decade, small employers have provided the greatest growth in employment, and their most common source of new employees is through personal referrals.

**State employment office** State employment offices have listings of job opportunities in their state and counselors to help arrange a job interview for you. Although state employment offices perform functions similar to employment agencies, they differ in listing only job opportunities in their state and providing their services free.

**Direct contact** Another means of obtaining job information is direct contact - personally communicating to prospective employers (either by mail or in person) that you would be interested in pursuing job opportunities with them. Often you may not even know whether jobs are available in these firms. If you correspond with the companies in writing, a letter of introduction and an attached resume should serve as your initial form of communication. Your major goal in direct contact is ultimately to arrange a job interview.

## **SELECTED SOURCES OF MARKETING CAREER INFORMATION**

The following is a selected list of marketing information sources that you should find useful during your academic studies and professional career.

### **Business and Marketing Reference Publications**

Peter, D. Bennett, ed., *Dictionary of Marketing Terms*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Chicago: NTC Business Books, 1995). This dictionary contains definitions of more than 3,000 marketing terms.

Victor P. Buell, ed., *Handbook of Modern Marketing*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1986). This handbook was designed to provide a single authoritative source of information on marketing and marketing-related subjects. Sections and chapters contain conceptual background material to aid the reader in overall understanding, followed by "how-to" information.

*Business Periodicals Index (BPI)* (New York: H.W. Wilson Company). This is a monthly (except July) index of almost 300 periodicals from all fields of business and management.

Chase Cochrane and Kenneth L. Barasch, *Marketing Problem Solver*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Radnor, Penn.: Chilton Book Company, 1989). A good reference for "how-to" problems, this handbook contains chapters on marketing research, marketing planning, product planning, pricing, advertising, trade shows, sales promotion, legal aspects of marketing, and other topics.

Jill Cousins and Lesley Robinson, eds., *The Online Manual*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 1993). This manual is a practical tool to help both the experienced and inexperienced information user select from the thousands of databases now available online.



- Lorna M. Daniells, *Business Information Sources*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1993). This comprehensive guide to selected business books and reference sources is useful for business students, as well as the practicing businessperson.
- Jeffrey Heilbrunn, ed., *Marketing Encyclopedia* (Chicago: NTC Business Books, 1995). This book provides a collection of essays by professional and academic marketing experts on issues and trends shaping the future of marketing.
- Jerry M. Rosenberg, *Dictionary of Business and Management*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1992). This dictionary contains more than 10,000 concise definitions of business and management terms.
- Jean L. Sears and Marilyn K. Moody, *Using Government Publications*, rev. ed. (Phoenix: Oryx Press, 1993). An easy-to-use manual arranged by topics such as consumer expenditures, business and industry statistics, economic indicators, and projections. Each chapter contains a search strategy, a checklist of sources, and a narrative description of the sources. Volume 1: Searching by Subjects and Agencies; Volume 2: Finding Statistics and Using Special Techniques.

### **Career Planning Publications**

- Richard N. Bolles, *What Color Is Your Parachute? A Practical Manual for Job Hunters and Career Changers* (Berkeley, Calif.: Ten Speed Press, 1995).
- Karmen Crowther, *Researching Your Way to a Good Job* (New York: John Wiley, 1993).
- Ronald W. Fry, ed., *Advertising Career Directory* (Detroit, Mich.: Visible Ink Press, 1992).
- Fred E. Jarde and Mary B. Nemnich, *Using the Internet in Your Job Search* (Indianapolis, Ind.: JIST Works, 1995).
- Joyce Lain Kennedy and Thomas J. Morrow, *Electronic Job Search Revolution* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1994).
- Bradley J. Morgan, ed., *Marketing and Sales Career Directory*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Detroit, Mich.: Visible Ink Press, 1993).
- Tom Jackson, *The Perfect Resume* (New York: Doubleday, 1990).
- Ronald L. Krannich and Caryl R. Krannich, *The Complete Guide to International Jobs and Careers*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Woodbridge, Va.: Impact Publications, 1992).
- Dorothy Leeds, *Marketing Yourself* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991).
- Adele Lewis, *How to Write Better Resumes*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Hauppauge, N.Y.: Barron's Educational Services, 1993).
- David W. Rosenthal and Michael A. Powell, *Careers in Marketing* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1984).