

Matching Personality Skills with Marketing Careers

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ABSTRACT

The Marketing field can be divided into 26 main Marketing occupations. While each of these occupations requires similar strengths and personality traits for success, some require certain skills more than others. The purpose of this study is to research which strengths and personality skills stand out within each of the 26 Marketing occupations, and then to examine how the research findings correlate with the results of a survey. A survey was administered at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse to determine which of the 26 marketing occupations are most appealing to the respondents as potential future careers, along with which strengths and personality skills they believe best describe themselves as an individual.

INTRODUCTION

One of the biggest decisions an individual must face during college is choosing a major or a course of study. Some students enter into college knowing exactly what they want to study, without any hesitations, whereas others do not decide which major suits them best until their sophomore or junior years of college. Once a student declares their major, they need to decide which path they want to take within that field. While some majors may be straightforward, others are broad and offer many options within. Marketing is considered to be one of the broadest and most misunderstood fields of study (BLS, 2011). According to the American Marketing Association, "Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large."

Once a student declares a Marketing degree, there are many occupations within the Marketing degree that a student may take. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Marketing is the single largest employment category in the U.S. labor force and job growth within the field is only expected to accelerate. Marketing consists of a wide spectrum of activities that join production of goods and services with consumer or industrial use. So how exactly can a student decide which path within the broad field of Marketing suits them best?

It is important for individuals to understand themselves before choosing a career. An individual's skills, interests, personality, and values play an important role in choosing a career. Self-assessment is defined as a process by which one can learn more about themselves by taking an inventory of their likes, dislikes, values, wants, needs, and personal characteristics (Career Resource Network, 2008). Before an individual can decide what they want to do with their life, they must first discover who they are and what they're good at (Kaplan, 2008). Knowing these little things about oneself may help an individual determine which occupations and work situations best fit them. There are many different self-assessment or career assessment tools that one may take in order to better understand themselves. These tools can be found online, through the Academic Advising Center at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, or through a faculty member.

The human brain has two different hemispheres which each control two different modes of thinking. Most individuals have a distinct preference for one style of thinking over the other. However, some people are more whole-brained and can be equally adept at both modes. The left hemisphere of the brain deals with logic, details, facts, patterns, practicality, science, and math. Whereas the right hemisphere deals with feelings, intuition, symbols, images, risk taking, philosophy, and religion. Since the two sides of the brain have distinct preferences and capabilities, a person's strengths and weaknesses are frequently based upon which side of the brain is dominant. Some occupations within Marketing use mainly left-brain thinking, while others use mainly right-brain thinking. Sometimes it may be helpful for one to determine which side of their brain is dominant, as well as which side of the brain will be utilized the most within an occupation. So once students have figured themselves out, how will they know which of the many marketing careers require the strengths and personality skills that they possess?

It is important for students to explore all of their opportunities and what each one requires and entails. The need for information about careers is a continuing problem faced by students of marketing, for three main reasons (Rosenthal, 1984). Too few professors include career characteristics and opportunities as a part of their course work;

students often push off the responsibility of pursuing a career path until their graduating year; and the industry does a poor job of educating potential employees. So what future opportunities does an individual with a major in Marketing actually have?

BACKGROUND

This study is an issue of supply and demand. For the purpose of this study, a list of 26 Marketing occupations has been taken from the book *Careers in Marketing*, by David Rosenthal and Michael Powell. The authors have categorized 26 occupations into seven major categories: Marketing Research, Product Management, Advertising, Sales, Physical Distribution, Retailing, and Non-profit. Some of the careers have been generalized in order to keep the number of careers manageable. Within those seven categories, there are a total of 26 occupations distributed throughout. The 26 occupations are listed within the categories, including a short description of each (See Appendix A). These 26 occupations within the Marketing field represent the demand side. Behind each of the 26 occupations, there is a set of characteristics that every employer wants. Firing and re-hiring employees is a long and expensive process that managers want to avoid. Therefore, managers want to find the right person that suits the job on their first try. The people, or potential employees, represent the supply side of this study. Each person needs to possess certain personality traits in order to be successful and right within a position.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

There are 75 Marketing majors expected to graduate in May 2011 from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. These 75 students were chosen as the target population. Only graduating marketing majors were chosen because they are the students who are currently looking for a career path within the marketing field.

Instrument

A survey was created to determine which of the 26 Marketing occupations discussed in this report are most appealing to the respondents as potential future careers, along with which strengths and personality skills they believe best describe themselves as an individual (See Appendix B). The survey questions were created on the Qualtrics survey software and were distributed via the UW-La Crosse student email accounts to the 75 students graduating with a major in Marketing.

The survey started off with five background questions to better understand when the students declared their Marketing major, if they had any influence in their decision, why they like Marketing, and why they prefer Marketing over all the other majors offered at UW-La Crosse. From there, the survey asked the respondents to choose which five of the 26 listed Marketing occupations could potentially interest them as a future career, and then asked them to rank the five occupations they selected in order from one through five. The survey went through the same process by offering the respondents a list of 24 common strengths and 24 common personality skills. These lists were created by the principal researcher from conducting prior research. The strengths and skills that appeared the most within the research of Marketing occupations were provided to the respondents. The respondents were asked to choose the top five strengths and the top five personality skills that they felt best described themselves, and then rank those as one through five as well. Finally, general information regarding sex, major(s), and minor(s) was collected from each respondent to finish the survey.

Data Collection and Analysis

The questions were measured using a variety of scales. Standard multiple choice questions were used, offering the option of "Other" with a blank space to comment in if none of the original options were appropriate. Two open-ended questions were asked in order for the respondent to fully express their experience and opinions. Lastly, three "Pick, Group, and Rank" questions were utilized by providing the respondents with lists of 24-26 choices in which they could choose their personal top five choices and then rank them in order from one through five.

On April 7, 2011, the survey was delivered to the 75 students via their UW-La Crosse email accounts. The survey was active for two weeks and 61 students started the survey. Of those who started it, all but one completed it. The total number of completed surveys was 60 out of the possible 75 respondents. The study obtained a response rate of 81.33%. The data was collected and entered into excel spreadsheets to be further analyzed.

There was an inconsistency in the data due to several of the respondents skipping certain survey questions. Qualitative data was used in order to further analyze a specific sample, rather than using the entire sample size of 60. For the sample, results from eight of the 60 respondents were selected to analyze in depth. The eight respondents were chosen based off the amount of time that they took to complete the survey. Each of these eight students took

between 10 to 20 minutes to complete the survey. This sample was chosen because those are the respondents who put the most thought, effort, and concentration into completing the survey to the best of their ability, and they also all completed the survey in its entirety. Some of the other respondents rushed through the survey, taking only two or three minutes to complete it, skipping certain questions along the way. Others took almost an hour, implying that they possibly left their computers and/or were doing other things while taking it. Due to these discrepancies, these respondents will not be analyzed as thoroughly as the eight that were chosen as the sample size.

RESULTS

Question one of the survey (seen in Table 1) asked, “When you came to La Crosse, your major was _____?” Of the three options offered, 41% of the respondents chose “Marketing.” The rest of the respondents came to La Crosse without a declared degree in Marketing, whether they were undecided or had another major. The 17 respondents, who chose “Other,” stated what majors they came to La Crosse with. These varied anywhere from fields such as: Physical Therapy, Accounting, and Pre-Dentistry.

Table 1. “When you came to La Crosse, your major was _____?”

| # | Answer | Response | % |
|---|-----------|----------|------|
| 1 | Undecided | 19 | 31% |
| 2 | Marketing | 25 | 41% |
| 3 | Other | 17 | 28% |
| | Total | 61 | 100% |

Question two (seen in Table 2) asked, “When did you declare your Marketing major?” Of the five options offered, sophomore year of college was the year when the highest percentage (38%) of these respondents declared their Marketing major. Tied for the second highest year in which students declared their Marketing major was High School and junior year of college, with 22% each. Therefore, it can be said that 22% of the survey population came into College with a declared Marketing major and 78% of the population declared their major as Marketing after starting college.

Table 2. “When did you declare your Marketing major?”

| # | Answer | Response | % |
|---|----------------|----------|------|
| 1 | High School | 13 | 22% |
| 2 | Freshman Year | 11 | 18% |
| 3 | Sophomore Year | 23 | 38% |
| 4 | Junior Year | 13 | 22% |
| 5 | Senior Year | 0 | 0% |
| | Total | 60 | 100% |

Question three of the survey (seen in Table 3) asked, “Did you have an outside influence or any help in deciding your major? Mark any that apply.” Since students were able to choose any or all that apply, the percentage will be greater than 100%, so the number of responses will be recorded instead. While 29 respondents stated that they did not have any outside influence in choosing their major, the other 31 did. Of the students who did have an outside influence, 20 of them stated that they had an outside influence from a family member. Eight students stated to have help from a friend, six had help from the Academic Advising Center, and only four received help from a faculty advisor. Several of the respondents (11) had other influences that were not offered on the survey, including influence from a previous job, internship, high school teacher, DECA, etc.

Table 3. “Did you have an outside influence or any help in deciding your major? Mark any that apply.”

| # | Answer | Response | % |
|---|--|----------|-----|
| 1 | No | 29 | 48% |
| 2 | Yes, from the Academic Advising Center | 6 | 10% |
| 3 | Yes, from a faculty advisor | 4 | 7% |
| 4 | Yes, from a family member | 20 | 33% |
| 5 | Yes, from a friend | 8 | 13% |
| 6 | Other | 11 | 18% |

*Respondents were allowed to mark all answers that apply; total will be greater than 100%

Questions four and five asked open-ended questions, such as, “*Why did you choose to be a Marketing major?*” and “*What do you like about marketing in comparison to other business courses?*” There were an extremely wide variety of answers to these questions, considering all 60 respondents had different answers. However, a common answer that was found numerous times within the responses were the creativity aspect that marketing offers. It was also commonly found that students declared their Marketing major after taking several Math and Science courses; as well as other Business courses such as Finance and Accounting, which helped them realize that they did not work well with numbers or Science.

Question six asked the respondents, “*Below is a list of 26 marketing occupations. Please choose the top 5 that could potentially interest you as a future career and drag them under the "Top 5" list. Then rank them 1-5 within the list (1 being the career that interests you the most).*” Since each respondent was asked to select five occupations, the total is greater than the sample size. There was a tie, so the top six occupations will be analyzed within this study. The top careers that were chosen the most among all 60 of the respondents include - sales promotion manager, public relations manager, buyer, product manager-consumer goods, specialty advertising manager, and account executive. Table 4 below shows the results among all the respondents.

Table 4. Most commonly chose occupations

| Marketing Occupations | Votes |
|---------------------------------|-------|
| Sales Promotion Manager | 30 |
| Public Relations Manager | 21 |
| Buyer | 19 |
| Product Manager, Consumer Goods | 19 |
| Specialty Advertising Manager | 17 |
| Account Executive | 17 |

*Respondents were allowed to mark multiple answers; total will be greater than sample size of 60

Question seven asked the respondents, “*Below is a list of personal strengths. Please choose the top 5 that best describe your personal strengths and drag them under the "Top 5" list. Then rank them 1-5 within the list (1 being your strongest strength).*” Since each respondent was asked to select five, the total is greater than the sample size. The five strengths that were chosen the most among the 60 respondents include: leadership, communication skills, problem solving, people skills, and customer service. These results can be seen below in Table 5.

Table 5. Strengths

| Strengths | Votes |
|----------------------|-------|
| Leadership | 26 |
| Communication Skills | 23 |
| Problem Solving | 22 |
| People Skills | 21 |
| Customer Service | 21 |

*Respondents were allowed to mark multiple answers; total will be greater than sample size of 60

Question eight asked the respondents, “*Below is a list of personality traits. Please choose the top 5 that best describe your personality and drag them under the "Top 5" list. Then rank them 1-5 within the list (1 being the trait that best describes you).*” Since each respondent was asked to select five, the total is greater than the sample size. The five personality skills that were chosen the most among all 60 of the respondents include: sense of humor, responsible, creative, competitive, and independent. These results can be seen below in Table 6.

Table 6. Personality Skills

| Personality Skills | Votes |
|--------------------|-------|
| Sense of Humor | 25 |
| Responsible | 23 |
| Creative | 22 |
| Competitive | 22 |
| Independent | 19 |

*Respondents were allowed to mark multiple answers; total will be greater than sample size of 60

There was an inconsistency found in the data regarding survey questions 6, 7, and 8. If each of the 60 respondents chose five answers for each of these questions as they were asked, there should have been a total number of 300 responses for each question. Question number 6 only had 279 responses, question 7 had 280 responses, and question 8 had 266 responses. Some of the respondents either skipped one, or all, of these questions in total or may have selected less than five answers for one or more of these questions. Due to this, the data collected among all 60 respondents is not as accurate.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Research

Common skills that were found to be most regularly needed for each of the 26 Marketing occupations through the research of books such as *Now, Discover your Strengths* and *Careers in Marketing*, as well as various career development websites provided by the UW-La Crosse Academic Advising Center including WisCareers and DISCOVER, have been compiled into lists shown in Tables 7-12. They are organized into charts based off the seven career field categories and then the common skills are listed for each of the individual 26 occupations.

Table 7 below represents the four careers categorized under Marketing Research. The first two occupations - project manager and account executive- relate to the suppliers. The third occupation -project director, in-house- relates to the position found among users and the fourth and last occupation -marketing research specialist- relates to the advertising agencies. Some of the most common skills among all four of these occupations include the knowledge of computers and statistics, analytical skills, and problem solving. Communication and writing skills are also needed in Marketing Research due to the fact that a large part of the researcher’s product is reports, and the reports must be written accurately and concisely. Good organizational skills are also needed since the research study goes through so many different stages. Many of these careers utilize left-brain thinking. Therefore, if a person is interested in the way people behave, or in statistics and computers, these careers within marketing research might be the right fit.

Table 7. Careers with matching skills – Marketing Research

| Marketing Research | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|--|--|
| Project Manager, Supplier | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to express oneself • Ability to look at the big picture • Computer skills • Deal with stress • Effective time management • Interpersonal skills • Knowledge of statistics • Logical thinking • Organization • Patience • Problem solving | Project Director, In-house | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aggressive • Analytical skills • Assertive • Communication skills • Experience • Good judgment • Honest • Objective • Understand logic and science • Understanding the problem |
| Account Executive, Supplier | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication skills • Competitive • Drive and determination • Enjoy travel • Independent • Knowledge of computer programming • Multi-task • People person – interaction • Problem solving • Writing skills | Marketing Research Specialist, Adv. Agency | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advising • Analyzing • Communication skills • Computer skills • Deal with pressure • Deal with variety of people • Decision making • Disciplined way of analyzing • Evaluating • Fast paced • Honest • Independent – freedom • Measuring • Problem solving • Questioning • Strategic thinking |

Table 8 represents the eight careers categorized under Product Management and Physical Distribution. Product Management is common to both consumer and industrial businesses, with many of the same duties and responsibilities for both settings. The first occupation listed - product manager, consumer goods - is the only one in this list that is considered a consumer goods, Product Management position. The remaining seven are considered industrial businesses, or part of Physical Distribution. The Physical Distribution field has few common characteristics that are consistent throughout the field. Job titles vary widely from one firm to the next and career paths and requisite skills are not standard. The skills listed within these eight careers vary accordingly. Many of the occupations under this category contain the word “Manager.” Managers have a lot of responsibility and are required to be people persons with excellent leadership, communication, and customer service skills. Several of the occupations also require problem solving, mathematical skills, and decision-making.

Table 8. Careers with matching skills – Product Management

| Product Management | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|---|
| Product Manager, Consumer Goods | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aggressive • Ambitious • Analytical skills • Big picture • Communication skills • Confident • Creative • High level of responsibility • Leadership • Multi-task • Organized • People person • Persuasion skills • Risk taker • Strategic thinking | Traffic and Transportation Manager | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication skills • Computer knowledge • Control, motivate, organize • Customer service • Inventory control • Knowledge in transportation and production scheduling • Planning |
| | | Inventory Control Manager | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to deal with numbers • Computer skills • Management skills • Patience • People person • Speaking and writing skills |
| Administrative Manager | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Service • Enjoy travel • Financial background • Human relations skills • Knowledge in computer area • Knowledge of transportation • Leadership • Management skills • Problem solving skills • Routine – same daily tasks | Administrative Analyst and Planner | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to sell your ideas • Computer skills • Creative • Financial background • Logical thinking • Mathematical skills • Problem solving • Verbal and written skills |
| Operations Manager | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budgeting • Communication skills • Decision making • Directing • Financial background • Handling people well • Interpersonal skills • Planning • Problem solving | Customer Service Manager | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication skills • Customer service • Deal with problems • Expressing yourself • Have to be able to say no • Knowledge of traffic • Listening skills • People person |
| | | Physical Distribution Consultant | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Command different levels • Ability to conceptualize • Communication skills • Strong leadership |

Table 9 represents the seven careers categorized under Advertising. There is an extremely high level of interest in the field of Advertising, so it is known as the “darling” of Marketing (Rosenthal, 1984). Everyone wants to teach it, learn it, and do it better than it’s done now. Unfortunately, the level of interest exceeds job opportunities, and it is extremely difficult to get into the Advertising field. These occupations are on the more creative side of Marketing, utilizing the right hemisphere of the brain. Almost all of them require creativity as a key skill in order to succeed within the position. Some other common skills found within these occupations include thinking on your feet, communication skills, working under pressure, and a sense of humor or experience with art. Someone who is creative and attracted to the glamour of advertisements will most likely be attracted to a career within the field of Advertising.

Table 9. Careers with matching skills – Advertising

| Advertising | | | |
|---------------------|---|-------------------------------|---|
| Account Executive | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analytical skills • Attention to detail • Budgeting • Challenging • Communication skills • Complex • Creative • Decision making • Fast-paced • Interpersonal skill • Motivated • Organized • Patience • People person • Perseverance • Persuading • Planning • Stressful, pressure | Art Director | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication skills • Creative • Decision making • Directing • Diverse tasks • Evaluating • Experience in art and design • Good taste • Have tough skin • Wide imagination • Sense of humor • Team work • Working under pressure |
| Media Buyer/Analyst | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate yourself • Communication skills • Flexible • Good listening skills • Negotiation • People person • Perceptive • Time constraints • Well rounded | Sales Promotion Manager | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication skills • Creative • Diplomatic • Experience • Hectic environment • Persuasive • Pressure • Problem-solving • Think and speak on your feet • Travel |
| Copywriter | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aggressive • Communication skills • Conceptualization • Creative • Goal oriented • Listening skills • Organization • Prioritizing • Think on your feet • Typing • Writing | Public Relations Manager | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background in journalism • Decision making • Directing • Diverse tasks • Flexible • Language • People person • Persuading • Planning • Understanding of media • Work well with other people • Writing and oral skills |
| | | Specialty Advertising Manager | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competitive • Communication skills • Creative • Deal with distribution • Must know people in the business |

– hard to get into

Table 10 represents the four careers categorized under Sales. Typically every individual salesperson can be categorized into his or her own category. Even salespeople at the same company have different techniques and interpretations that they apply to the execution of their position. However, almost all Sales positions are extremely competitive and stressful occupations. It takes dealing with rejection and pushing yourself to the limit. Since it is common for salespeople to be paid by commission, the job requires ambition, motivation, and determination to succeed. Some of the other common skills found within all four Sales positions include communication skills, the ability to be competitive, persuasive, flexible, outgoing and independent, and having the ability to negotiate. Also, for the industrial/semi-technical and complex/professional positions, analytical skills and problem solving are key elements required.

Table 10. Careers with matching skills – Sales

| Sales | | | |
|---------------|---|--|--|
| Direct Sales | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advising • Arithmetic • Competitive • Deal with rejection • Determination • Entrepreneur • Explaining • Flexible • Independent • Language • Leadership qualities • Outgoing • Patient • Persuasive • Responsible • Stressful • Talk to people | Industrial/ Semi-technical Sales | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analytical skills • Challenging • Communication • Competitive • Computer skills • Diverse tasks • Flexible • Freedom • Independent • Initiator • Maturity • Organized • Outgoing • Public speaking • Responsible • Self confident • Self-start • Tenacity |
| Channel Sales | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belief in oneself • Good impression • Honest • Listening skills • Patience • Positive attitude • Stressful • Think quickly and verbalize | Complex/ Professional Sales | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision maker • Desire to help others • Energetic • Freedom • High level of expertise • Honest • Imagination • Interpersonal skills • Negotiating • Outgoing • Problem solving • Quick thinker • Tough/thick-skinned |

Table 11 represents the two occupations categorized under Retailing. Retailers operate in very fast-paced, constantly changing environments. Therefore, it is helpful to have great organizational and communication skills. Both of these positions are very aggressive and require the employee to be assertive and fast on their feet. Retail

positions are also required to deal with people on a regular basis, so it is important to have tact and patience to deal with difficult customers. Making many decisions, and the right decision, are required for both of the retail positions, which therefore creates pressure and stress in the workplace.

Table 11. Careers with matching skills – Retailing

| Retailing | | | |
|------------------|---|----------------------|--|
| Buyer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountable • Aggressive • Analytical skills • Assertive • Communication skills • Decision making • Discipline and control • Estimating • Evaluating • Fast-paced • Leadership • Negotiation • Organization • People skills • Planning • Questioning • Self-confident | Store Manager | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aggressive • Analytical skill • Assertive • Fast on their feet • Logical thinking • Organization skills • Patience • People skills • Problem-solving • Self-assurance • Tact • Team development • Work with people |

Table 12 represents the one occupation categorized as Non-profit, marketing director performing arts. This category of Non-Profit Marketing is growing, due to increasing costs in operation, and expanding competition for audiences, funds, and other resources. This non-profit sector of Marketing is not for people who are money driven. This particular position in performing arts is similar to those in the Advertising category, in which it requires creativity, knowledge of art, and communication skills. Non-profit positions also require a desire to help others and excellent communication skills.

Table 12. Careers with matching skills – Non-Profit

| Non-Profit | |
|--|--|
| Marketing Director, Performing Arts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background in advertising • Communication skills • Creativity • Desire to help others • Fiscal planning • Knowledge of legal matter • Knowledge of the arts form • Supervisory capability • Writing skills |

Correlation Between Survey Results and Research

As previously mentioned, eight of the 60 survey respondents have been analyzed in depth, in order to compare their responses with Tables 7-12. The top five occupations that each of these eight respondents selected as potential

careers were compared with the top five strengths and personality skills that they selected to best describe themselves. These results from the survey were then compared with the research charts displayed in Tables 7-12 to find correlations between the two forms of data. These eight respondents are referred to as respondents 1-8, and each of their survey results are individually analyzed in the following section.

Respondent number one is female who first declared her Marketing major during her junior year of college. She stated that she chose a degree in Marketing because it kept her options open and she also liked the creative aspect that Marketing offers over other fields of Business. The top five occupations, strengths, and personality skills that she selected during the survey to best describe herself are shown in the order in which they were ranked in Table 13. The answers do not necessarily match up in the rows across the table, but there are some correlations between the occupations and the skills that were chosen in the survey, in comparison with the research in Tables 7-12. This respondent chose three occupations from within the Advertising category, having art director as the occupation that interests her most as a potential future career within Marketing. Imagination and creativity were chosen as two of her strongest strengths and skills, which according to table 9 are also two of the key elements needed to be an art director. The other two occupations that she selected from the Advertising category include sales promotion manager and public relations manager. Problem solving and communication skills were also listed as two of her strongest strengths, which happen to be two of the most important elements for a sales promotion manager position. Also, having great interpersonal skills and being comfortable working with other people are both relevant for a position within public relations. The selected leadership trait can be correlated with the other managerial positions that were chosen, such as customer service manager.

Table 13. Survey Respondent #1

| Top 5 Occupations | Top 5 Strengths | Top 5 Personality Skills |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Art Director | Communication skills | Creative |
| Sales Promotion Manager | Imagination | People person |
| Project Director, In-house | People skills | Determined |
| Public Relations Manager | Leadership | Flexible |
| Customer Service Manager | Problem solving | Competitive |

Respondent number 2 is a male who decided during High School that a degree in Marketing suited him best. He stated that he chose Marketing after doing some research and discovering the flexibility and many possible options that a degree in Marketing offers. His survey results are shown in Table 14. His selected top five occupations come from four different categories, including Marketing Research, Advertising, Product Management, and Non-Profit Marketing. Market research specialist was chosen as the career that interests him the most. According to Table 7, problem solving, strategic thinking, computer skills, and working independently are all crucial skills needed to be a marketing research specialist. He also selected two positions within Advertising – specialty advertising manager and sales promotion manager – which both require the selected creativity and designing skills. Strategic thinking along with multi-tasking is found to be important skills in being a product manager, which was another occupation that he is interested in. According to my previous research, although this respondent chose careers from various fields within Marketing, many of the strengths and skills that best describe his personality still correlate with the occupations that he selected. One of the main reasons he chose to study Marketing is because of the many possible options that Marketing offers, and ironically he chose five occupations that vary across four of the different fields of Marketing, all requiring different skills.

Table 14. Survey Respondent #2

| Top 5 Occupations | Top 5 Strengths | Top 5 Personality Skills |
|---|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Market Research Specialist | Problem solving | Creative |
| Specialty Advertising Manager | Strategic thinking | Independent |
| Product Manager, Consumer Goods | Multi-tasking | Patient |
| Sales Promotion Manager | Designing | Attention to detail |
| Marketing Manager, Performing Arts | Computer skills | Planner |

Respondent number 3 is a female who had an influence from a High School teacher and also decided during High School that she wanted to study Marketing. She realized she wanted to study Marketing after writing a paper during her senior year of High School on the influences of media in society. Through her research, she discovered that most of the findings were negative effects on society, especially the way women are portrayed through media as objects, and she wanted to help change that. Her results from the survey are shown in Table 15. Her top two selected occupations are from the Marketing Research category, requiring skills such as effective time management and attention to detail. However, many of the skills that she selected to describe her personality indicate that the right side of her brain is the dominant side and her skills better relate to her other occupation choices, such as specialty advertising manager and copywriter. These are both Advertising occupations, which require creativity, imagination, and attention to detail, which are three of the skills that she believes best describe her. Even though she voted that she is most interested in a position in Marketing Research, according to Tables 7 and 9, she would actually be a better fit for a career within one of the Advertising occupations. Her choice of occupations explains her motives for entering into the field of Marketing in the first place – to change the way that media portrays society, which can be done through either Marketing Research or Advertising.

Table 15. Survey Respondent #3

| Top 5 Occupations | Top 5 Strengths | Top 5 Personality Skills |
|---|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Project Director, In-house | Imagination | Creative |
| Project Manager, Supplier | Time management | Attention to detail |
| Marketing Manager, Performing Arts | Multi-tasking | Ambitious |
| Specialty Advertising Manager | People skills | Independent |
| Copywriter | Leadership | Fast-paced |

Respondent number 4 is a male with a minor in Economics, who declared his Marketing major during his sophomore year of college. He chose to study Marketing because it is involved in every aspect of Business. Table 16 shows his survey results. The top two occupations, sales promotion manager and public relations manager are categorized under Advertising. According to table 9, he selected several skills that correlate with these Advertising occupations, such as the ability to think on his feet, problem-solving, people skills, and directing. There were not many correlations found within the other selected occupations and skills. However, four of the top five personality skills that he selected – outgoing, motivated, ambitious, and competitive - are all some of the most important, almost crucial skills needed for the Sales positions listed in Table 10. Yet he did not select any of the occupations from the Sales category as potential career options.

Table 16. Survey Respondent #4

| Top 5 Occupations | Top 5 Strengths | Top 5 Personality Skills |
|---|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Sales Promotion Manager | Problem-solving | Outgoing |
| Public Relations Manager | People skills | Motivated |
| Project Manager, Supplier | Leadership | Ambitious |
| Marketing Manager, Performing Arts | Directing | Responsible |
| Customer Service Manager | Think on your feet | Competitive |

Respondent number 5 is a male with a double major in Marketing and Spanish. He declared his degree in Marketing during his junior year of college and chose it because it is a general degree that opens many doors for a position in the Business world, and also offers many opportunities to move around. He also stated that Marketing allows him to be creative and think outside of the box. Table 17 represents his answers, which also vary across the chart from careers in Marketing Research, Advertising, and Product Management. According to Table 7, a marketing research specialist and a product manager-supplier are both Marketing Research positions that require skills such as the ones he selected, including strategic thinking, writing, and being objective. He also selected many of the strengths and skills that commonly correlate with a position as a product manager or customer service manager, such as leadership, strategic thinking, communication skills, people skills, and creativity. According to Tables 7 and 8, this person seems to have many of the skills necessary to succeed in either a Marketing Research or Product Management position as desired.

Table 17. Survey Respondent #5

| Top 5 Occupations | Top 5 Strengths | Top 5 Personality Skills |
|--|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Marketing Research Specialist, Advertising Agency | Leadership | Motivated |
| Public Relations Manager | Writing skills | People person |
| Product Manager, Consumer Goods | Communication skills | Objective |
| Project Manager, Supplier | People skills | Creative |
| Customer Service Manager | Strategic thinking | Enjoy travel |

Respondent number 6 is a male with a minor in Graphic Design. He had some influence from a family member and decided during High School that he wanted to study Marketing in college. He has an interest in art and therefore the Advertising side of Marketing strongly appeals to him. The results from his survey are shown in Table 18. He is most interested in a position in complex/professional sales as a future career. According to Table 10, a position in Sales requires the employee to think on their feet and be ambitious, competitive, and outgoing, which are all skills that he chose to best describe his personality. On the other hand, he is also creative with a large imagination, sense of humor, and experience in graphic design, which may be the reason as to why he is also interested in a career as a marketing manager, public relations manager, or a sales promotion manager. The last occupation that he chose was product manager, consumer goods, which according to Table 8 correlates with leadership, strategic thinking, creativity and ambition. For each of the five occupations that he selected, he also selected at least three or more skills that correlate to at least one or more of those said occupations.

Table 18. Survey Respondent #6

| Top 5 Occupations | Top 5 Strengths | Top 5 Personality Skills |
|---|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Complex/Professional Sales | Customer service | Competitive |
| Marketing Manager, Performing Arts | Leadership | Outgoing |
| Public Relations Manager | Strategic thinking | Creative |
| Sales Promotion Manager | Think on your feet | Ambitious |
| Product Manager, Consumer Goods | Imagination | Sense of humor |

Respondent number 7 is a male with a minor in Recreation Management. He came to college with a Sports Management major, but quickly changed to Marketing during his freshman year of college. The recession and lack of jobs led him to want a degree in Marketing, because he believes it to be a fairly versatile degree. He chose Marketing because it is more interesting to him than other Business degrees due to the fact that it involves a significant amount of right and left-brain thinking. It involves logical, concrete thinking, as well as creative, abstract thinking, in order to better serve the customers with products or services, while also helping the company make a profit. Table 19 displays the results from his survey. He selected one occupation from Marketing Research, two from Advertising, one from Product Management, and one from Sales. Imagination, creativity, the ability to think on one's feet, and sense of humor can all be correlated to the two Advertising occupations – sales promotion and public relations manager. The direct sales position requires patience, flexibility, and working independently. Being a marketing research specialist also requires working independently, while also requiring analytical skills and decision-making. This respondent chose a variety of different occupations, but still supported his choices with personality skills that can correlate to each.

Table 19. Survey Respondent #7

| Top 5 Occupations | Top 5 Strengths | Top 5 Personality Skills |
|--|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Marketing Research Specialist, Advertising Agency | Analytical skills | Independent |
| Sales Promotion Manager | Decision making | Patient |
| Public Relations Manager | Think on your feet | Sense of humor |
| Operations Manager | Multi-tasking | Creative |
| Direct Sales | Imagination | Flexible |

Respondent number 8 is a female with a minor in Organizational and Professional Communications. She declared her degree as Marketing her sophomore year of college. She chose to study Marketing because she likes that it allows for more interpretation and knowledge building, rather than just memorization. Her results are shown in Table 20. She is the only respondent from my sample size of eight that selected a career in Retailing. The career that interests her the most is a position as a buyer. According to Table 11, a buyer must have excellent communication and people skills, and also must be a planner with good organizational skills. She is also the first to select administrative manager, from the Product Management category. An administrative manager requires knowledge of customer service. Another career she selected was account executive from the Advertising category. It is important for account executives to have great communication, planning, and people skills, while also requiring attention to detail and motivation.

Table 20. Survey Respondent #8

| Top 5 Occupations | Top 5 Strengths | Top 5 Personality Skills |
|---|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Buyer | Communication skills | Attention to detail |
| Marketing Manager, Performing Arts | Writing skills | Responsible |
| Account Executive | Multi-tasking | Planner |
| Public Relations Manager | People skills | Ambitious |
| Administrative Manager | Customer service | Motivated |


Although certain skills were pinpointed that stand out within each individual occupation, certainly not every single trait that an employee may possess within each of these occupations was included, nor was every relationship that can be found within these categories analyzed. All of the respondents that were analyzed have different backgrounds, interests, and personalities, yet they all possess some type of skill that will help them become successful in the field of Marketing in their future. All eight of the analyzed students do indeed describe themselves as having at least some of the necessary strengths and skills required for the occupations that appeal to them as potential future careers.

These personality skills may also be used interchangeably amongst a majority of the occupations. For example, all 26 of the occupations require excellent communication and interpersonal skills. However, the strengths and personality skills vary more among the seven main categories, rather than throughout all 26 of the Marketing occupations. Every occupation within each of the seven categories requires many of the same skills. However, each category requires quite different skills than the other six categories. For example, all of the occupations within Marketing Research require similar skills such as analytical/strategic thinking and computer skills which mainly use left-brain thinking, whereas many of the occupations within the Advertising field require skills such as creativity and the ability to think on your feet, which use right-brain thinking. Therefore, the skills typically required for an occupation in Marketing Research are much different than the skills typically required for an occupation in Advertising. In a nutshell, the requirements of an occupation typically depend on and may vary by the company, the work environment, and the job description. It is almost impossible to flat out list every single skill that is needed or not needed for a position without knowing the background and the details of the position.

In general, the field of Marketing typically requires certain skills. When looking through all of the data -the research and the survey- the most important skill a person can have in the world of marketing, no matter what the occupation, is the ability to communicate clearly. Whether it is written, verbal, a presentation, one-on-one, in large groups, or just the staff workers with the rest of the staff, communication is crucial in nearly every marketing occupation. The second most important skill for success in marketing is the ability to think analytically and to make decisions. Even though one may have excellent communication skills, they will get nowhere if the content of their communication is not worth anything. Creativity is also a key skill found in many of the occupations, and was also noted to be one of the most common reasons that the respondents chose a degree in Marketing here at UW-La Crosse. Many of the students stated in their surveys that they like the creativity aspect and hands on experience that marketing offers, over some of the other business degrees that require sitting in a desk and dealing with numbers all day. When analyzing the data of the survey given to the graduating Marketing majors of La Crosse, four of the top six occupations that were voted for the most among all 60 respondents fall under the category of Advertising, being the occupations that generally require creativity. This list of the top six occupations is seen below in Table 21 with the four Advertising occupations highlighted in yellow.

Table 21. Four of top six occupations – Advertising

| Top Occupations | Votes |
|---------------------------------|-------|
| Sales Promotion Manager | 30 |
| Public Relations Manager | 21 |
| Buyer | 19 |
| Product Manager, Consumer Goods | 19 |
| Specialty Advertising Manager | 17 |
| Account Executive | 17 |

 Advertising Occupations

A Marketing major that possesses a majority of these strengths and personality skills is headed down the right path to success. However, if a person is interested in Marketing and does not fall into a lot of these categories, that does not mean they cannot be successful in one of these occupations as well. According to the article, *Reaching Your Potential* from the *Harvard Business Review*, it may not necessarily be important to enter into an occupation in which a person thinks they possess the most valuable skills, but rather to enter into a career that interests them and then work on building their skills needed to be the best within that position. Even though someone may have all the skills needed to do something and are good at doing it, it does not necessarily mean that they will enjoy working in that position for the rest of their life. Although a person is born with some of the required skills, some of these skills may also be learned within a career, making it more possible to do anything they set their mind to.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

There was a limitation in analyzing all of the survey data as a whole due to several students skipping one or all of questions 7, 8, and 9. These questions were the most important questions on the survey and provided the results that were intended to be analyzed the most. It ended up being more beneficial to personally analyze eight of the respondents in depth rather than try to look at all 60 as a whole.

It would have been beneficial and interesting to include questions on the survey asking whether or not the respondents had jobs lined up for after graduation, and if so, for what type of position. Then the results could be compared to whether those matched up with the careers that they claimed interested them as potential careers.

It also turned out that many of the 26 careers required a lot of the same personality skills. Every company and assignment requires different skills. It is hard to make the statement that a certain skill is needed for a career when it may depend on the company in which that career is.

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APPENDIX A

The 26 Marketing Occupations

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Product Management</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Product Manager, Consumer Goods.</i> Develops new products that can cost millions of dollars, with advice and consent of management. A job with great responsibility 2. <i>Administrative Manager.</i> Oversees the organization within a company that transports products to consumers and handles customer service. 3. <i>Operations Manager.</i> Supervises warehousing and other physical distribution functions; often directly involved in moving goods on the warehouse floor. 4. <i>Traffic and Transportation Manager.</i> Evaluates the costs and benefits of different types of transportation. 5. <i>Inventory Control Manager.</i> Forecasts demand for stockpiled goods, coordinates production with plant managers; keeps track of current levels of shipments to keep customers supplied. 6. <i>Administrative Analyst Planner.</i> Performs cost analyses of physical distribution systems. 7. <i>Customer Service Manager.</i> Maintains good relations with customers by coordinating sales staffs, marketing management, and physical distribution management. 8. <i>Physical Distribution Consultant.</i> Expert in the transportation and distribution of goods. <p>Advertising</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. <i>Account Executive.</i> Maintains contact with clients while coordinating the creative work among artists and copywriters. In full-service ad agencies, account executives are considered partners with the client in promoting the product and aiding in marketing strategy. 10. <i>Media Buyer Analyst.</i> Deals with media sales representatives in selecting advertising media; analyzes the value of media being purchased. 11. <i>Copywriter.</i> Works with art director in conceptualizing advertisements; writes the text of print or radio ads or the storyboards of television ads. 12. <i>Art Director.</i> Handles the visual component of advertisements. 13. <i>Sales Promotion Manager.</i> Designs promotions for consumer products; works at an ad agency or a sales promotion agency. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 14. <i>Public Relations Manager.</i> Develops written or filmed messages for the public; handles contacts with the press. 15. <i>Specialty Advertising Manager.</i> Develops advertising for the sales staff and customers or distributors. <p>Retailing</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 16. <i>Buyer.</i> Selects products a store sells; surveys consumer trends and evaluates the past performance of products and suppliers. 17. <i>Store Manager.</i> Oversees the staff and services at a store. <p>Sales</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 18. <i>Direct.</i> Door-to-door or other personal selling. Compensation is based mostly on a commission. 19. <i>Sales to Channel.</i> Sells to another step in the distribution channel (between the manufacturer and the store or customer). Salesperson's compensation includes salary plus bonus. 20. <i>Industrial/Semi-technical.</i> Sells supplies and services to businesses. Compensation is salary plus bonus. 21. <i>Complex/Professional.</i> Sells complicated or custom-designed products to business. Requires understanding of the technology of a product. Compensation is salary plus bonus. <p>Marketing Research</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 22. <i>Project Manager, Supplier.</i> Coordinates and oversees the conducting of market studies for a client. 23. <i>Account Executive, Supplier.</i> Serves as liaison between client and market research firm; similar to an advertising agency account executive. 24. <i>Project Director, In-house.</i> Acts as project manager (see 22) for the market studies conducted by the firm for which one works. 25. <i>Marketing Research Specialist, Advertising Agency.</i> Performs or contracts for market studies for agency clients. <p>Non-Profit</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 26. <i>Marketing Manager, Performing Arts.</i> Develops and directs mail campaigns, fundraising, and public relations for arts organizations. <p>(Adapted from <i>Careers in Marketing</i> by David Rosenthal and Michael Powell to be published by Prentice-Hall Inc., 1984, for the Prentice-Hall American Management Assn. series in marketing.)</p> |
|---|--|

APPENDIX B

Survey: Matching Personality Skills with Marketing Careers

Principle Researcher: Kimberly Holat

1. When you came to La Crosse, your major was _____?
 - Undecided
 - Marketing
 - Other _____
2. When did you declare your Marketing major?
 - High School
 - Freshman Year
 - Sophomore Year
 - Junior Year
 - Senior Year
3. Did you have an outside influence or any help in deciding your major? Mark any that apply.
 - No
 - Yes, from the Academic Advising Center
 - Yes, from a faculty advisor
 - Yes, from a family member
 - Yes, from a friend
 - Other _____
4. Why did you choose to be a Marketing major?
5. What do you like about marketing in comparison to other business courses?
6. Below is a list of 26 marketing occupations. Please choose the top 5 that could potentially interest you as a future career and drag them under the "Top 5" list. Then rank them 1-5 within the list (1 being the career that interests you the most).

| Items | Top 5 |
|--|--------------|
| Product Manager, Consumer Goods Administrative Manager Operations Manager Traffic and Transportation Manager Inventory Control Manager Administrative Analyst Planner Customer Service Manager Physical Distribution Consultant Account Executive Media Buyer Analyst Copywriter Art Director Sales Promotion Manager Public Relations Manager Specialty Advertising Manager Buyer Store Manager Direct Sales Channel Sales Industrial/Semi-technical Sales Complex/Professional Sales Project Manager, Supplier Account Executive, Supplier Project Director, In-house Marketing Research Specialist, Advertising Agency Marketing Manager, Performing Arts | |

7. Below is a list of personal strengths. Please choose the top 5 that best describe your personal strengths and drag them under the "Top 5" list. Then rank them 1-5 within the list (1 being your strongest strength).

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Items</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Communication SkillsProblem SolvingTime ManagementWriting SkillsAnalytical SkillsLeadershipCustomer ServiceComputer SkillsDeal with Pressure/StressAbility to NegotiateStrategic ThinkingDecision MakingPublic SpeakingImaginationThink On Your FeetPeople SkillsEvaluatingDeal with RejectionDiverse TasksMulti-taskingDirectingDesigningBudgetingResearch | <p style="text-align: center;">Top 5</p> |
|--|---|

8. Below is a list of personality traits. Please choose the top 5 that best describe your personality and drag them under the "Top 5" list. Then rank them 1-5 within the list (1 being the trait that best describes you).

| Items | Top 5 |
|--|--------------|
| Aggressive Creative Independent Ambitious Patient Flexible Attention to Detail Responsible Enjoy Travel Sense of Humor Motivated Assertive Thick Skinned Competitive Initiator Outgoing Persuasive Fast Paced Determined Planner Routine Risk Taker Objective People Person | |

9. Gender:

- Male
- Female

10. Major(s)? (other than Marketing - if applicable) _____

11. Minor(s)? (if applicable) _____