

# Who Gets the Job?

## A Study of How Personal Traits and Values Influence the Future Employment of Marketing and Communication Studies Majors

Jamie Teresinski

Faculty Sponsor: Stephen Brokaw, Department of Marketing

### ABSTRACT

University graduates with degrees in Marketing and Communication Studies often find themselves competing against each other for similar employment opportunities in the job market. This study, conducted at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, involved interviewing 22 graduating seniors with degrees strictly in either Marketing or Communication Studies. Through completing a series of four tasks, this study was able to uncover where the similarities and differences fell in regards to individuals in Marketing and Communication Studies. Marketing majors were found to be more task-oriented and goal-focused in nature, whereas Communication Studies majors were seen as more extroverted individuals who placed an emphasis on building and maintaining relationships. Marketing majors described companies using future-oriented and stability-reassurance terms, while Communication Studies majors focused more on present feelings and actions. It was found that both majors were interested in similar employment opportunities, as three companies appeared in both majors' top five companies of employment interest. As a general finding (only one true exception), the study showed that neither group's personal traits and values aligned with the company that they chose to be most interested in working for.

**Keywords:** marketing, communication, employment, careers, traits, values

### INTRODUCTION

As a fourth-year senior at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse (UW-L), I have spent many years searching for the answer to the question, "What are you going to do after graduation?" Upon entering college I had no one to point me down a particular career path or tell me exactly what I was going to do with the rest of my life. Although experiencing the freedom of true personal choice was essential to my personal growth, I spent over a year as an undeclared major before settling into the business field, eventually choosing Marketing as my intended degree. In the last semester of my third year, I added an Organizational and Professional Communication minor from the communication field to the mix. I hoped that this addition would not only impress future employers, but also add to my ever-growing knowledge base and complement my Marketing major in a unique way.

Although finally choosing a major was indeed a large step in the right direction, I still struggled greatly and was intimidated by the thought of how broad both the marketing and communication fields were. Individuals who choose to earn a degree in either Marketing or Communication Studies have a variety of future career options. UW-L's Career Services website lists the following areas of employment that most Marketing majors choose to pursue: Sales and Promotion, Brand/Product Management, Market Research, Retail, Purchasing/Procurement, Banking, Insurance, and Real Estate. Within these broad areas, the website additionally shows more specific career opportunities, such as E-commerce under the Sales and Promotion category. Also listed are types of potential employers (ex. profit, nonprofit, consulting firms, and outlets) and strategies on how to best obtain a position in each particular area of Marketing.

As my excitement began to grow with the countless opportunities presented with my Marketing major, my enjoyment for communication studies began to grow as well. The more classes I took for my minor in Organizational and Professional Communication opened my eyes to the possibility of pursuing a professional career in this field instead of my intended marketing field. Again, I explored UW-L's Career Services website, this time focusing on what areas I could explore in the communication field. The broad areas of employment listed included: Business, Public Relations/Advertising, Media, Non-Profit, Government, Law, and Education. This page, as the Marketing page did as well, showed more specific career opportunities within each area, as well as types of potential employers and strategies for success.

The more I looked at the job types, employer types, and recommended strategies for both Marketing and Communication Studies careers, the more I found in common between the two fields. Both were likely to pursue careers in business, media relations, promotions, management, and sales industries. Both recommended obtaining additional knowledge through internships, jobs, leadership roles, and through taking classes in the other's field. Both also advised the job seeker to have great written and oral communication skills, to be proficient working in teams, and be able to work in a fast-paced environment (among other qualities).

Through exploring UW-L-supplied career sources and through my personal job hunt, I have learned that marketing and communication career paths repeatedly overlap or at the very least complement each other significantly. As I look ahead to graduation, I now recognize that I will be competing closely with not only my fellow Marketing majors, but also with Communication Studies majors. Knowing this information sparked my interest in developing this study, as I looked to discover how similar Marketing and Communication Studies students at UW-L truly were. Understanding the similarities and differences between the two would better prepare me to compete in the job market in the near future.

### *Research Questions*

This study is designed to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: How do Marketing majors see themselves, and what do they value most? What about Communication Studies majors?

RQ2: Is there a difference in the way each major views companies that is perhaps based on the unique information they learn in their respective classes?

RQ3: Are Marketing majors really interested in and want to work for the same type of companies as Communication Studies majors? Or is it just coincidence that they end up competing?

RQ4: Do either group's personal traits and values match the perceived traits and values of the companies they ideally want to work for?

### *Type of Research*

I did not discover any prior research so specific in comparing the two majors as I have done through this study. Therefore, the research conducted is an exploratory comparative analysis between Marketing and Communication Studies majors at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.

## **METHOD**

Prior to beginning the study, approval needed to be granted from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. In order to gain the approval of the IRB, one must submit all necessary documents as well as complete an online training course in "Protecting Human Research Participants" issued by the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) Office of Extramural Research. This process took approximately one month in total to complete and to gain the permission needed to begin conducting the personal interviews for this study.

### *Sample*

Twenty-two students were recruited from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse for participation in this study. In order to qualify, students had to be graduating in May of 2011, not continuing education after graduation, and actively seeking employment. Only Marketing majors and Communication Studies majors were approached for this study. Marketing majors could not have a minor in any communication field, and Communication Studies majors could not have a minor in any business-related field in order to be accepted.

Students were recruited through voluntarily signing their names to a list and were then contacted to arrange a time to meet for a one-on-one interview. Four faculty members in particular were extremely helpful in aiding in the recruitment of students and are thanked in the *Acknowledgements* section below. Fifteen Marketing majors (10 female, 5 male) and seven Communication Studies majors (4 female, 3 male) participated.

### *Procedure*

Each student was met on the UW-L campus at a time and location of their choosing. Interviews took approximately 30 minutes per student to complete, and each student accomplished four tasks during the meeting time. An informed consent statement was issued, read, signed, and dated prior to initiating the first task. Students did not have to bring anything to the interview as all materials were supplied for them. Students were allowed to ask questions at any point during the interview and were also allowed to withdraw from the process at any time.

The method and procedure of this study were loosely adapted from a study done by Lan Nguyen Chaplin and Deborah Roedder John in their 2005 publication of “The Development of Self-Brand Connections in Children and Adolescents.”

**Task 1.** The first task provided students with a back-to-back list of twenty character traits and twenty values. The participants were first asked to rank the character traits in order of how helpful they were in describing who they were as a person. Ranking the trait number 1 indicated that it would be the most helpful in describing who that student was as a person, while a ranking of 20 indicated being least helpful in describing that individual. Students were then asked to turn the paper over, where there was a provided list of twenty values. Students were asked to rank the given values in order of personal importance from 1 being most important, to 20 being least important to them. (See Figure 1 for paper provided to participants) Both of these numbered lists were used later in the interview process. The list of character traits was derived from an online list of 176 character traits by C. Kochan (2000), while the list of values was derived from an online list of 374 values by S. Pavlina (2010).

<u>Character Traits</u>	<u>Values</u>
<p>Please rank the following character traits in order of how best they would describe you with 1 being 'most helpful in describing who I am' and 20 being 'least helpful in describing who I am'.</p> <p>_____ Ambitious</p> <p>_____ Arrogant</p> <p>_____ Cautious</p> <p>_____ Confident</p> <p>_____ Curious</p> <p>_____ Daring</p> <p>_____ Dependable</p> <p>_____ Easygoing</p> <p>_____ Encouraging</p> <p>_____ Energetic</p> <p>_____ Fair</p> <p>_____ Humble</p> <p>_____ Imaginative</p> <p>_____ Impulsive</p> <p>_____ Independent</p> <p>_____ Intelligent</p> <p>_____ Logical</p> <p>_____ Loyal</p> <p>_____ Mischievous</p> <p>_____ Naive</p>	<p>Please rank the following values in order of personal importance with 1 being 'most important' and 20 being 'least important'.</p> <p>_____ Adaptability to change</p> <p>_____ Ambition</p> <p>_____ Commitment/Loyalty</p> <p>_____ Cooperation/Teamwork</p> <p>_____ Creativity/Originality/Uniqueness</p> <p>_____ Determination/Good work ethic</p> <p>_____ Education/Intelligence</p> <p>_____ Fairness</p> <p>_____ Faith/Spirituality</p> <p>_____ Happiness</p> <p>_____ Honesty</p> <p>_____ Independence</p> <p>_____ Leadership</p> <p>_____ Mindfulness/Awareness of Others</p> <p>_____ Money/Wealth</p> <p>_____ Personal Growth</p> <p>_____ Professionalism</p> <p>_____ Reliability/Dependability</p> <p>_____ Technology</p> <p>_____ Trustworthiness</p>

**Figure 1.** “Character Traits” and “Values” ranking papers used to complete Task 1

**Task 2.** In the second task, students received a piece of paper with twenty company names listed alphabetically. The company logos were also provided under the name as an additional way of recognizing the company (see Figure 2). Students were asked to narrow down the list of companies from twenty to a maximum of ten by crossing out the names of the companies that they were either completely unfamiliar with, or knew very little about (beyond what products or services they provided). The twenty companies originally listed were as follows: Apple, Inc., Cisco, Disney, ESPN, FedEx, General Mills, Google, Harley Davidson, IBM, Intel, Mayo Clinic, McDonalds, Microsoft, Nike, Nordstrom, Southwest Airlines, Starbucks, Wal-Mart, Whole Foods, and Zappos.com.



Figure 2. Company list received to complete Task 2

Once the students had narrowed down the list, they transferred the names of the remaining companies onto a chart, which was provided for them. On this chart were three columns and ten rows. The columns were titled “Company Name”, “5 Character Traits that Describe the Company” and “5 Values that the Company Holds in High Regard”. The rows were filled in with the companies they had not crossed out on their previous paper. (See Figure 3 for chart provided to participants.) There were ten spaces available for company names, but some students had as few as five companies remaining after eliminating the ones they knew little about.

COMPANY NAME	5 CHARACTER TRAITS THAT DESCRIBE THE COMPANY (MOST TO LEAST SIGNIFICANT)	5 VALUES THAT THE COMPANY HOLDS IN HIGH REGARD (MOST TO LEAST SIGNIFICANT)		
	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

Figure 3. Company Name/Trait/Value chart received to complete Task 2

The participants were then handed a back-to-back piece of paper with the identical lists of both character traits and values that they had used in the first task. This sheet, however, was not the exact one they had personally filled out in the first task, but instead was an unmarked copy. The students were asked to consider each company they had transferred into the chart. For the column “5 Character Traits that Describe the Company”, the students were asked to “think of the company as if it were a person and choose the top five character traits from the list provided that would best describe him/her.” For the column “5 Values that the Company Holds in High Regard”, students were asked to choose the top five values from the list provided that he/she thinks think the company truly does hold in high regard. This task was the longest of the four and took approximately 20 minutes to complete. While participants were filling out this chart, the “Character Traits” and “Values” ranking papers from Task 1 were taken and their top five personal character traits and top five personal values were highlighted. This paper was used again in Task 4.

**Task 3.** The third task consisted of having the participants look closely at each company on the chart they had just filled in. They were then asked to rank those companies in terms of employment interest from the company they would most like to work for (represented by number 1), to the company they would least like to work for. Participants were told that they should assume that they were qualified for any position within the company and that “working at McDonalds (for example) does not mean just ‘flipping burgers’, but could be working at the corporate headquarters.” A half-sheet of paper was provided to participants for this ranking task (See Figure 4).

**Rank Companies in Terms of Employment Interest**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

**Figure 4.** Half-sheet provided for ranking employment interest to complete Task 3

**Task 4.** The final task allowed students to revisit their “Character Traits” and “Values” ranking papers used to complete Task 1. Participants were informed that their top five personal character traits and top five personal values were highlighted while they were filling in the chart from Task 2. Students were then asked to go through their chart from Task 2, highlighting anywhere their top five personal character traits and their top five personal values appeared across all companies. When they were finished highlighting, participants were asked to add up the highlighted terms (grouped by company across both traits and values) and write the number by the company’s name. The highest number represented the company (or companies if there were a tie) that best aligned the personal traits and values of the participant to the perceived traits and values of the company. The company with the highest number was highlighted on the half sheet of paper from Task 3. If there was a tie, all companies with the highest number were highlighted.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results were analyzed according to their research question in the following order: RQ1, RQ3, RQ2, RQ4.

*RQ1: How do Marketing majors see themselves, and what do they value most? What about Communication Studies majors?*

The “Character Traits” and “Values” ranking papers were used to explore the answer to this research question. Beginning with “Character Traits”, results were imputed into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, keeping Marketing majors’ results separate from Communication Studies majors’ results. Overall ranking of character traits by major were determined by averaging the numerical sum of the responses (for each trait) by the overall respective number of participants from that major. The top five character traits found for each major are listed in Figure 5 below. “Values” were found in the same way and are shown in Figure 6.

<b>Marketing Majors: Top 5 Character Traits</b>	<b>Communication Studies Majors: Top 5 Character Traits</b>
1. Dependable	1. Dependable
2. Ambitious	2. Confident (TIE)
3. Logical	Loyal (TIE)
4. Intelligent	4. Encouraging
5. Independent	5. Easygoing

**Figure 5.** Top 5 Character Traits Found for Marketing Majors and Communication Studies Majors

<b>Marketing Majors: Top 5 Values</b>	<b>Communication Studies Majors: Top 5 Values</b>
1. Happiness	1. Happiness
2. Determination/Good Work Ethic	2. Commitment/Loyalty
3. Honesty	3. Determination/Good Work Ethic
4. Education/Intelligence	4. Trustworthiness
5. Personal Growth	5. Cooperation/Teamwork (TIE) Mindfulness/Awareness of Others (TIE)

**Figure 6.** Top 5 Values Found for Marketing Majors and Communication Studies Majors

The results from the first research question show that Marketing majors and Communication Studies majors do indeed see themselves in different lights. Although both majors foremost saw themselves as “dependable”, none of the other top five character traits were similar. Marketing majors appear to be more task-focused and goal-oriented as they described themselves additionally as being ambitious, logical, intelligent, and independent. Character traits like this seem to be essential to all business majors as they are taught to think for themselves, set and reach goals, and constantly work to expand their knowledge base. These traits also seem like the key roots to an innovative entrepreneur. One must be intelligent and ambitious in order to reach a goal that others may not be able to see. Logical decision-making and the ability to depend on (and trust) your personal skills are vital traits for success.

Communication Studies majors tell a slightly different story according to how they describe themselves through character traits. These participants seem to be more focused on forming relationships and interacting with others. The character traits listed, following “dependable” are confident, loyal, encouraging, and easygoing. Strong relationships are based on supporting others. Character traits such as being dependable, loyal, and encouraging would be vital in forming and maintaining relationships. Communication Studies majors also show that they are confident and easygoing. This likely means that they are extroverted and enjoy putting themselves “out there” for others to see. Being easygoing might also indicate that they form friendships easily and are adaptable to change.

The top five values found between Marketing and Communication Studies majors show that there are more similarities within values than within the top five character traits. Both majors are shown to similarly first value “happiness”, then see “determination/good work ethic” as number two (Marketing) and number three (Communication Studies). Marketing majors also show that they most value honesty, education/intelligence, and

personal growth. This again shows the ambitious business leader who is intelligent and wants to grow as an individual. Honesty is ranked third on the Marketing majors' list, which could indicate that these businesspeople need to receive honest and open feedback in order to learn, grow, and work harder to achieve goals.

Commitment/loyalty, trustworthiness, cooperation/teamwork, and mindfulness/awareness of others round out the top values for Communication Studies majors. This too, further indicates their potential want or need to build relationships with others. In order for a group to function effectively, there needs to be a sense of commitment, trust, and cooperation, which are values that the Communication Studies majors hold in their top five. Mindfulness is a term commonly heard in communication classes at UW-L, but very seldom (if ever) heard in business courses at the same institution. Being aware of others is crucial to building and maintaining relationships. It is also an important skill to have as these soon-to-be graduates enter the workforce.

*RQ3: Are Marketing majors really interested in and want to work for the same type of companies as Communication Studies majors? Or is it just coincidence that they end up competing?*

Through mathematically analyzing the half-sheets from Task 3, it was possible to rank the companies in terms of employment interest for both Marketing and Communication Studies majors. The top ten companies that Marketing majors and Communication Studies majors would like to work for are pictured below in Figure 7.

<b>Marketing Majors: Top 10 Companies to Work For</b>	<b>Communication Studies Majors: Top 10 Companies to Work For</b>
1. Apple	1. Google
2. Zappos.com	2. Disney
3. Google	3. Apple
4. Disney	4. Microsoft
5. Nike	5. ESPN
6. Southwest Airlines	6. Nike (TIE)
7. ESPN	6. Starbucks (TIE)
8. Starbucks	8. Mayo Clinic
9. Microsoft	9. McDonalds
10. Wal-Mart	10. Harley Davidson

**Figure 7.** Top 10 Companies of Employment Interest for Marketing and Communication Studies Majors

From this information, we can draw the conclusion that Marketing majors and Communication Studies majors have similar interests in companies when it comes to employment. Apple, Inc., Google, and Disney are all in the top five companies that both majors would like to work for, and seven of the top ten companies overlap between majors.

When returning back to the results from RQ1, we can see that Marketing majors tend to be more task-focused while Communication Studies majors tend to be more people-focused. Marketing majors viewed a majority of their top companies as intelligent, ambitious, and logical, which are the same character traits that they used to describe themselves. Similarly, Communication Studies majors viewed a majority of their top companies as being energetic, loyal, dependable, and confident. These traits also align with the way Communication Studies majors described themselves in Task 1. This shows that although there is similarity in which companies both majors want to work for, there is a discrepancy, or difference, in how Marketing majors and Communication Studies majors actually view the company.

*RQ2: Is there a difference in the way each major views companies that is perhaps based on the unique information they learn in their respective classes?*

As discovered through analyzing RQ3, it is clear that there is some difference in the way each major views the companies selected for this study. As a student of both marketing and communication, I have been exposed to a variety of case studies depicting a majority of these organizations in one way or another. In communications courses, the focus was generally on the way the hierarchy is constructed, how employees interact within the workplace, or how management is either aiding or damaging the company. In business courses, the discussion is more focused on the history of companies and how what they are currently doing will impact the business and industry in the future. Because I was aware of these differences prior to conducting this study, I chose to analyze how each major viewed the companies on the paper from Task 2. When determining the collective view of

companies by major, I only analyzed those companies that were discussed by a majority of students (at least 50%). This meant that in order to analyze the company, at least eight of the 15 Marketing majors and at least four of the seven Communication Studies majors needed to respond.

When looking at the comparison between character traits describing companies for Marketing and Communication Studies majors, there was a fairly noticeable difference. When Marketing majors were discussing a company, they used future-oriented character traits such as “imaginative”, “ambitious”, and “daring”, while also using words indicating stability such as “logical”, “dependable”, and “loyal”. This may be seen as a correlation between the information Marketing majors learned in class as they typically discuss the future of companies when reading case studies.

In contrast, it seems as though Communication Studies majors focused more in the present by using character traits such as “energetic”, “curious”, “impulsive”, and “easygoing”. Communication studies courses typically focus on understanding the internal function of an organization and the organization’s relationships with other companies, its customers, and its employees. Words like “energetic” and “easygoing” seem to describe a company’s atmosphere more so than its plans for the future as we saw with Marketing majors.

*RQ4: Do either group’s personal traits and values match the perceived traits and values of the companies they ideally want to work for?*

In order to analyze this research question, the employment interest half-sheet from Task 3 was used. This sheet was highlighted with the company that best aligned with the individuals’ personal character traits and values (Task 4). Where the highlighted company appeared on the ranked list of employment interest gave light to whether or not the participant was interested in working for the company that most aligned with his/her personal traits and values.

As a general conclusion, the study showed that neither Marketing nor Communication Studies majors ideally wanted to work for the company that most aligned with the participant’s personal traits and values. There were only five of twenty-two participants who saw any sort of alignment. Of these five participants, four had their number one employment choice as a part of a tie of up to five other companies (As seen in Figure 8). This means that the company they were most interested in working for had the same number of highlighted terms as other companies further down the list. Only one participant, a Communication Studies major, demonstrated perfect alignment between the company most interested in working for and the company that most aligns with personal traits and values.

This participant (CST3) indicated in Task 3 that the company he/she would be most interested in working for was Starbucks. When highlighting where his/her top five personal traits and values appeared in the chart (Task 4), the participant found that Starbucks had the highest number as well. Thus, Starbucks aligned best with the individual’s personal traits and values, and was the company that the individual would most like to work for.

	<b>Company Most Interested in Working For</b>	<b>Company That Most Aligns With Personal Traits and Values</b>
<b>MKT 1</b>	Disney	Disney (1), Cisco (3), FedEx (4), Apple (7), Starbucks (8)
<b>MKT 3</b>	Google	Google (1), Disney (4), Apple (5), Wal-Mart (8)
<b>MKT 7</b>	Apple	Apple (1), Nike (3), Whole Foods (4), Google (6)
<b>MKT 14</b>	Whole Foods	Whole Foods (1), Zappos.com (7)
<b>CST 3</b>	Starbucks	Starbucks (1)

(#) Indicates the rank on participant’s list of companies most interested in working for

**Figure 8.** Employment Interest and Alignment of Personal Traits and Values

*Summary of Conclusions*

In conclusion, it can be seen that Marketing and Communication Studies majors at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse are both similar and different. Marketing majors see themselves as ambitious and task-oriented, while Communication Studies majors are typically more extroverted and focused on developing and maintaining relationships. Marketing majors value their independence and personal ability, while Communication Studies majors seek out cooperation and teamwork while being mindful of others.

It was shown that, in a sense, Marketing majors and Communication Studies majors often do seek out similar companies for employment. It is also true, however, that each major sees the company in different ways. This is likely to be a direct impact of how the companies were presented in their respective classes and reading materials.



This shows that although employment interest at companies such as Apple, Inc., Disney, and Google are high amongst both majors, the individuals seek employment at these particular companies for different reasons. Perhaps the Marketing majors are particularly interested in the future success and strong values of the company, whereas the Communication Studies majors are more intrigued by the unique atmosphere and sense of community within the organization.

## LIMITATIONS

Limitations to this exploratory comparative analysis exist. A small sample size and time constraints were the most significant limitations experienced in this study.

### *Small Sample Size*

It was originally proposed to interview 15 Marketing students and 15 Communication Studies students from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. However, recruiting participants was a much more difficult task than anticipated. According to the UW-L Career Services Undergraduate Report from the 2009-2010 academic year, there were 134 graduates with a degree in Marketing and 84 graduates with a degree in Communication Studies. The current numbers for the 2010-2011 Undergraduate Report are not yet posted, but if there is a similar comparison between the two majors, it is likely that there are still significantly fewer Communication Studies majors than Marketing majors. These numbers also do not take into account double majors (such as an individual majoring in both Marketing and Communication Studies), or a Marketing major with a communication minor (or vice versa). These constraints decreased the qualified students available for this study. Only being able to interview seven Communication Studies students also put this study at a disadvantage.

### *Time Constraints*

Apart from a small sample size is a limitation due to time constraints for both the participants and myself as the researcher. I knew from the beginning that the more individuals I had the opportunity to interview, the better and more accurate my results would be. I settled on proposing to interview 30 people because 15 hours of one-on-one interviewing seemed to be more than enough while still balancing my classes and workload. In addition to these 15 hours would be the time taken to input all the data by hand into the computer and to analyze the information to conclude results. As other important happenings in my life pulled me away from directly focusing on this study I found myself needing to work more hours per day than originally planned in order to successfully complete the research.

Time constraints were also apparent in the eyes of the participants. They too had pulls from their lives both inside and outside of the classroom, including their own research projects. I was fortunate to be able to spend time talking to the 22 students who agreed to participate in this study, but more (at least 30) would have been ideal. During the personal interviews, there were also time constraints. Some participants scheduled an interview before an event or class they needed to attend, therefore rushing to finish the four tasks. This may have led to more broad results than if each participant took a great deal of time to truly analyze each company and reflect on how their personal and classroom experiences have impacted their views.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Because of the condensed nature and environment of this research setting, there are many ways in which a study like this could be improved for the future. First, it is imperative to have a larger sample size. A sample size of 15 was decent for concluding basic information about the population, but results could have been much more accurate if a larger sample of both Marketing and Communication Studies majors were represented.

This research made a distinct line separating Marketing majors from Communication Studies majors. There are, however, many individuals like me (and vice versa) who have a degree in one field and a minor in the other. This would be an interesting segment to research along with the two separate majors. Perhaps the findings could create a bridge between strictly one major and the other.

It would also be interesting to compare character traits, values, perceptions, and employment interest across different colleges. At UW-L this would include The College of Business, The College of Liberal Arts, and the College of Science and Health. I would expect all three colleges to yield very unique and contrasting results if this study was redone over this particular population.

Seeing the difference in character traits and values (and company views of each) in traditional students versus nontraditional students may yield unique results. Nontraditional students are typically older and have had more life

experience before returning to either earn a degree or finish a degree. This different view of the world may significantly impact the way they view themselves, their values, and their opinions toward particular companies.

Future research could also be conducted with professors as participants, in place of their students. Would Marketing and Communication Studies professors view companies in similar ways as their students?

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Stephen Brokaw (Department of Marketing at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse) for his guidance and supervision throughout this research experience, and also for his help in recruiting Marketing majors for this study. I would also like to thank Dr. Dan Modaff (Department of Communication Studies), Dr. Linda Dickmeyer (Department of Communication Studies), and Dr. Michael Tollefson (Department of Communication Studies) for their assistance in recruiting Communication Studies majors for this study. Lastly, I would like to thank the 22 students who I had the opportunity to interview for this study. I appreciate your help and could not have done this without you all!

## REFERENCES

### *Scholarly Resources*

Chaplin, L., & John, D. (2005). The Development of Self-Brand Connections in Children and Adolescents. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 32(1), 119-129. Retrieved on January 18, 2011 from EBSCOhost.

### *University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Student Resources*

“2009-2010 Undergraduate Report”. Career Services, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. Retrieved on May 1, 2011 from [http://www.uwlax.edu/CareerServices/Annual\\_Report/2009-2010\\_Undergraduate\\_Report.pdf](http://www.uwlax.edu/CareerServices/Annual_Report/2009-2010_Undergraduate_Report.pdf)

“Communication Studies/Speech Communication: What Can I Do With This Major?” Career Services, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. Retrieved from

<http://www.uwlax.edu/CareerServices/WCIDWTM/majors/html/communicationstudies.html>

“Marketing: What Can I Do With This Major?” Career Services, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. Retrieved on May 1, 2011 from <http://www.uwlax.edu/CareerServices/WCIDWTM/majors/html/marketing.html>

### *Online References*

Kochan, C. (2000). Character Traits. Retrieved on February 12, 2011 from <http://cte.jhu.edu/techacademy/web/2000/kochan/charactertraits.html>

Pavlina, S. (2010). List of Values. Retrieved on February 12, 2011 from <http://www.stevpavlina.com/articles/list-of-values.htm>