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Empirical Study: Use of Online or Traditional Job Search: Which Do Graduating Sales Students Prefer When Searching for First Post-Graduation Careers

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ABSTRACT

The career search for students who studied/majored in professional sales to find their first post-graduation/entry-level positions can be challenging. As graduation approaches, what avenues are used to pursue these career opportunities? With the explosion of digital media and the millennial generation's prolific use of online media, this would appear to be the preferred choice for job hunting. This study investigates the use of online and traditional resources for sales student's career search before graduation.

With the explosion and proliferation of social media and the millennial generation's propensity to use online media, it would be easy to assume that sales students predominately use online sources to procure their first post-college graduation jobs. Additionally, many job-hunting services, such as Monster.com, Glassdoor.com, and others are primarily online services. Are sales students engaging social media and other online activities to land entry-level career positions or are they still using traditional methods (i.e. College/University Career Fairs, College/University Career Services, Internships, etc.) to find these positions? This paper looks at the avenues that millennial students who studied in professional sales classes use to land their first post-college graduation positions.

The results suggest that multiple methods are implemented by sales students during their first career search. Sales students engage in social media and other online activities to land entry-level career positions while still relying heavily upon traditional methods (i.e. College/University Career Fairs, College/University Career Services, Internships, etc.) to find these positions. The one area that seems to be waning is university career services, perhaps suggesting less of a need in investment in this area by schools.

To explore this issue, first is a study of the tools used by students who studied sales when searching for their first post-graduation career position. Second, hypotheses are developed and tested. Finally, conclusions are drawn.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Linda G. Mullen, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor of Marketing and Co-Executive Director: Center for Sales Excellence, Parker College of Business, Georgia Southern University.

Dr. Mullen joined the faculty Georgia Southern University in August 2004. Her teaching is in the areas of general marketing, sales, advanced sales and sales management. Research interests are in the area of pedagogical, sales and ethics. Her research has been published in Marketing Education Review, Journal of Marketing Education, The CPA Journal, Journal of Forensic Studies in Accounting and Business, and Journal of International Case Studies.

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She joined the Kennesaw State University faculty in August 1998 after a 25-year career in retail, wholesale sales and part-time teaching. Stuart worked in retail management for Walgreen Drug Stores and then in wholesale sales in the confectionary, women's clothing, and gift and souvenir industries.

Michael L. Thomas, Ph.D., Chair and Associate Professor Department of Marketing, College of Business, Georgia Southern University received his MBA and PhD from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. Previously, he earned his bachelor's degree from St. Norbert College. Dr. Thomas's teaching interests include marketing management, strategic management, retailing and advertising, and his research streams include marketing strategy, cause-related marketing and customer delight. Prior to his work in academia, Dr. Thomas spent 11 years in corporate insurance culminating with an appointment to vice president with a publicly traded firm in the northeast.