

# THE CURRICULUM IN INDUSTRIAL MARKETING

*some basic questions  
about the need for reform  
in academic programs*

For many years I have been much concerned about the trend in industrial marketing education. As a background for this concern, my working life has been spent approximately 80 percent in industry and in technical marketing consulting and 20 percent in business education. The former has covered the span from market analyst-sales engineer to manager. The latter includes lecturer in marketing to professor of management science.

Since much of my work in industry had been in industrial/defense marketing I was hoping to see that the college marketing curriculum would be closely related to industrial marketing as it is practiced. How great was my disappointment when I entered full-time college teaching.

## PROFESSIONALS NEEDED

The greatest defect in the curriculum in industrial marketing is that the members of the Business Curriculum Committee are academic individuals from other departments and virtually always the marketing department members are consumer marketing oriented. In a committee that is considering the content of an academic training program for a professional group should there not be a considerable number of representatives from the profession? While it is true that the academic group is well informed on marketing principles, to what degree are they equally well informed concerning the day-to-day practice of industrial/defense marketing? Lacking an intimate knowledge of applied industrial marketing, how can any group develop a study program to train industrial marketers in the practice of a profession without the aid of professional industrial marketers.

## COURSE CONTENT

Some Business Curriculum Committees have recommended a four to five-year undergraduate program. Rather than suggest additions to the normal four-year program, would it not be more economical of the students' time to remove from the course of study some of the duplication of business courses.

How may the credits be reduced? Frequently, all students, regardless of major, take the same Accounting I and II, and the same Chemistry I and II.

Why? Is elementary accounting necessary? Why not an accounting course in managerial accounting with emphasis on distribution cost accounting? Is chemistry laboratory necessary? Why not a chemistry course fitted to the need of the nonchemist?

Much the same applies to marketing. Sales management and advertising are all repeated in marketing management and/or marketing problems courses. Why? Is it not possible to drop these subjects from the industrial marketing program and lightly treat them in industrial and defense marketing or in technical marketing and sales engineering to which they apply?

Mathematics faculties are interested in theory, not application. Industrial marketers and sales engineers in practice are interested in application. Why not have calculus taught by the quantitative methods department in the College of Business Administration as applied business calculus.

## EXCHANGE PROGRAM

It may be that these thoughts are too radical to be accepted. Education is supposed to be progressive but my observation is that much of education is a slave to tradition. The best training possible and the most effective use of the student's time are of paramount importance, not the accustomed practice of the faculty.

It is an unfortunate circumstance that a great number of business faculties, especially in liberal arts colleges and teacher training institutions, are not well acquainted with industrial or technical marketing. What does the industrial marketer do in practice? A very small percentage are in product development and but a few of all industrial marketing graduates are in marketing research in the pure sense. It is desirable that a greater number of marketing faculty members become better acquainted with industrial marketing practice through a leave of absence or in an exchange program with industry.

If what has been written seems to be too radical and out of step with present marketing education, my apologies. Frequently I wonder if the existing shortage of technical trained marketing students may not be due to the trend in business administration education.

DONALD R. HERZOG  
Consulting Management Engineer  
Torrance, California