

BY DON E. SCHULTZ

## NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY

**THE TITLE IN** the Yahoo! Education column of Feb. 21, 2008, caught my eye: “10 Six-Figure Jobs Without a Professional Degree.” Just what I’d been looking for as I head off into my golden years—making big bucks in areas that require no special knowledge or experience. I had immediate dreams of new and exciting endeavors in strange and exotic locations. Maybe tracking the nocturnal habits of Hobbits or forecasting the number of delays at O’Hare Airport, or maybe even speculating on the location of the 2032 World Cup football matches. All would need to be done at some point, and I’m likely as qualified by inexperience as anyone.

The first “big bucks” job on the list? You probably guessed it: marketing manager. It seems all you need to have to get a six-figure

six figures in some years, but not all. So it seems my time was generally wasted, along with that of other marketing practitioners and educators. All that is really needed to earn “serious money” is “a combination of hard work, career training and personal experience,” all of which one can get while “continuing to build experience at your current job,” the Yahoo! article says.

Somewhere along the line, I guess I missed the real skills to “pursue a career with megabucks potential.” Oh, the declining value of the Ph.D.!

The thing that concerns me so much about this Yahoo! breakthrough is it likely confirms what many CEOs, CFOs and boards think about marketing. Marketing is not something that is based on “science” and rigorous analysis and evaluation. It’s an

managers, financial managers, human resources managers, computer application development managers and nursing supervisors. I don’t know about you, but I hope if I end up in a hospital, the nursing supervisor has more than the “persistence in leadership” that the Yahoo! Education column suggests is the primary requirement. **m**



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“job” in marketing is the ability to do some “trend spotting.” From the Yahoo! story, that seems to come from “... having a nose for the financial news.” That, apparently, enables you to be the first to spot a market trend. Having that “financial nose” and “best practices learned in an online marketing degree program” can help any novice “understand the constantly shifting landscape of sales and marketing.” And thus prepare them for a career filled with big income, little work and high prestige. It sounds ready-made for lots of people, doesn’t it?

So, now we know what it really takes to drive a marketing career: noses, trend spotting and some best-practice studies. So long Harvard, Wharton and Northwestern graduate degrees. No need for intern programs or executive training seminars. No need to call McKinsey or Boston Consulting or Accenture to display their models and methodologies. Forget about the American Marketing Association and others like it around the world. If you simply scan *The Wall Street Journal*, track the daily gossip columns, Web sites and blogs, and follow what Nike, Samsung, Toyota and Virgin have done over the past few years, you too can become rich and famous in the “marketing biz.”

This is somewhat of a disappointment. I’ve spent a good 30 years trying to find out how marketing works, what principles exist, what marketplace models are most effective and the like. And, I’ve then tried to transfer that knowledge to others. I’ve made

“art” that is internally developed by each marketing practitioner. Marketing is not something for the future, that is, innovation and new concepts. Instead, it’s backward-looking, relying on best-practice reports of what happened in the past, that is, case histories of “successful” companies.

Maybe it’s this view of marketing and marketing management that has created the 23-month life span of the CMO that’s so widely reported. Maybe it’s this view of marketing that is encouraging CEOs to continue to look for the next greatest CMO among the “nose newsies” and “trend spotters.” Maybe these are the skills and talents HR people are seeking in new recruits to which they hand out those widely available “six figure” plum jobs. And it may be why marketing people are viewed by the general public as being just above used car salespeople on believability scales.

Or maybe this Yahoo! Education column is just another marketing ploy to get presently non-qualified people enrolled in online marketing degree programs, since they seemingly teach the cited skills.

Whatever it is, one would have hoped that marketing and marketing management would have progressed beyond this type of hype and hope. Progress in marketing is slow, but hopefully, not this slow. Or maybe it is, and I’ve missed the boat.

Incidentally, other “six-figure jobs” from Yahoo! Education that require no professional degree are information systems

