Careers in Marketing

Student Name

NorQuest College

ENGL 2510 A01

Instructor Name

Recommendation Report

Due Date
Letter of Transmittal

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June 2, 2017

Mr. Bob Bobby
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Subject: Recommendation report assignment

Dear Mr. Bobby:

Here is my analysis to determine the feasibility of a career in technical marketing for students graduating in 2017. In preparing this report, I have learned a great deal about the current job market in this field, and have researched job openings, placements, and have correlated this with numbers of students graduating this year. My summary states that this is an excellent field for students to be entering based on job availability and low graduation numbers. I recommend that students seek this type of employment after graduation, particularly during the summer months.

There were a few problems I encountered while doing this research. I found it hard to locate accurate data, especially about people who have only entered the field of technical marketing and are within the first 5 years of their careers. This may be due to difficulty researchers have in locating subjects new to the field. I also found it difficult to locate only Canadian statistics, and thus, incorporated data from the United States as well. Given that Canada’s population is so much smaller, incorporating data from the U.S. has an added benefit of providing me with more numbers to work with.

Technical marketing careers are competitive and demanding, but most subjects report finding them to be highly rewarding. These careers often lead to higher-level positions, such as upper management and executive positions. Because technical marketers must know the product(s) and the company very well, and because they have experience with sales techniques and interpersonal skills, this paves the way to top-level jobs.

If you have questions about this report and/or the information and conclusions found within it, do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

[Your signature]

Your name
Abstract
This report focuses on careers in technical marketing for students graduating in 2017. Technical occupations in environmentally-based industries will experience strong job prospects in the near future. Other technical fields, such as sales of electronic goods, household appliances, and large equipment hold good to fair prospects for careers in technical marketing. This report describes job prospects for students, the work done by technical marketers, and skills and requirements for a technical marketing career.
Recommendations

1. Any career in technical sales and marketing rests on thorough knowledge of the products and services of the company, so anyone looking to move into this career needs to have a technical or scientific degree or diploma.

2. Each entry position has advantages and disadvantages, so the job seeker needs to carefully research the position and company in order to match the job with their own career goals.

3. Students looking to move into this field are recommended to seek advice from people already in the field. Contacting professional organizations via their websites may be a good place to start.

Introduction

Technical occupations in environmental industries will experience strong job prospects for the near future, according to “Working in Canada” (2016). A variety of other technical fields, such as journalism and the entertainment industry, can expect fair to good job opportunities over the next five years, ending in 2021, according to “Working in Canada” (2016).

One of the fields with the most promising career prospects is as a sales engineer, which is a specially trained professional who markets and sells highly technical products and services. As an example, research found that sales in environmentally friendly products and industry, such as solar panels, privately-owned smaller wind turbines, and portable battery or solar powered generators, are such products that a sales engineer might market and sell. Recent and future graduates should consider this type of career, where they can combine their knowledge of technical products with their interpersonal skills (Nelson, Smith, & Taylor, 2015).

Specifically, technical marketers and sales specialists perform work that is vital to many
industries, particularly up-and-coming industries, such as environmental technologies. According to the *Ontario Job Futures* website,

They sell a range of technical goods and services, such as scientific and industrial products, electricity, solar, telecommunications services, new battery technology, and computer services. They usually specialize in a particular line of goods and services. Sales require constant interaction with clients. There is also a growing interdependence between product development and sales. This expands the specialist’s role in providing information to the developer about the needs of the consumer and contributes to the salesperson’s knowledge base about the product itself that they can convey to the customer. (2017)

Students looking to move into a technical marketing career should answer these two basic questions:

1. Is this the right career for me?
2. How do I enter the field?

To help answer these questions, this report analyzes information gathered from professionals as well as from the literature. After defining *technical marketing*, the following report examines the field’s employment outlook, required skills and personality qualities, career benefits and drawbacks, and various entry options.

**Literature Review**

Although much has been written on marketing and on sales, the literature available about technical marketing careers is limited. According to Nelson et al. (2015), technical marketing involves much more than sales work. The process includes “identifying, reaching, and selling to
customers in incredibly specific ways” (Nelson et al., 2015, p. 50). John Yen’s (2016) article “Working in Canada” describes six major activities involved in a technical marketing career:

1. Market research, which is gathering information about the target market
2. Product development and management, which means producing the goods to fill the market need
3. Cost determination and pricing, which entails measuring the cost of every expense in the production, distribution, advertising, and sales of the product to determine price
4. Advertising and promotion strategies
5. Product distribution, which requires the coordination of all elements of a technical product or service from conception to delivery
6. Sales and technical support, from creating customer accounts to servicing and upgrading products. (p. 2)

**Purpose**

The purpose and goal of this report is to outline the employment outlook for recent graduates of technical engineering, marketing, and sales programs.

**Methods**

For this topic, research was conducted through online databases accessed through a post-secondary library, government websites, and on an online library catalogue. Included in this report is one peer-reviewed, recently published journal article, one ebook, written and edited by experts in the field of technical communication, statistics from an online job bank, and one recently updated article on a government-hosted website. It was important, for the purposes of this study, to find sources that were published within the past 5 years, by experts in the field. Because the field is partially about education and the Canadian workforce, finding Canadian
sources was important. The culmination of the research inquiry for this project is four excellent sources that both study the problem and offer a range of solutions.

**Results**

The results found by this study emphasize how diverse a career in technical marketing can be. Those considering this career need to assess whether it fits into their interests, abilities, and aspirations. Statistics say that technical marketing is much more than just sales. In fact, according to statistics, technical marketing entails “six major activities” (Yen, 2016, p. 2). These six are

1. Market research (30-40% of the job)
2. Product development and management (15-20% of the job)
3. Cost determination and pricing (10-15% of the job)
4. Advertising and promotion (20-25% of the job)
5. Product distribution (10-20% of the job)
6. Sales and technical support (15-25% of the job). (Yen, 2016, p. 2)

Fully engaged in all of these aspects of the job, the technical marketer gains a well-rounded understanding of the industry, product, and customers’ needs, as seen in Figure 1 (page 8).

**Technical Skills**

Comfort with computers and online media, multimedia, and social networking is vital for today’s technical marketer. Many offices are moving towards a virtual office where workers use laptops and smartphones from various locations in order to make contact with clients and their colleagues. Technical marketers entering the field need to be comfortable with this kind of workplace.
Employment Outlook

The employment outlook for technical marketing appears excellent for graduates with the right combination of technical and personal qualifications. In 2017, *Ontario Job Futures* predicted “many opportunities for workers with advanced computer skills, knowledge of import and export regulations, and the ability to speak a second language” (para. 6). This is likely accurate, as in mid-2017, randstadcanada.ca posted over 100 jobs in technical marketing and labelled them as “hot jobs in Canada” (para. 1). In the Toronto and Vancouver areas, there were
20 such jobs posted in March 2017 alone (www.randstadcanada.ca). Most of these jobs indicated that speaking a second language would be an asset.

Specifically, careers in environmental technical sales and marketing continue to be promising. Manufacturers of environmental products, such as solar panels, water purifiers, personal wind turbines, and green generators all require knowledgeable sales specialists, and in these emerging fields, companies need technical marketers.

The Human Factor

Technical marketers must, of course, be comfortable working with customers, on a face-to-face level, as well as through social media. Not even the most sophisticated online system can make up for a personal encounter, so technical marketers need to have experience and confidence working with clients from all backgrounds. Direct customer contact is as important as a strong technical background for a technical marketer. These traits are summarized in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Requirements for a technical marketing career

- Motivation
  - energy
  - creativity
  - efficiency
  - leadership potential

- Communication skills
  - clear writing
  - effective speaking
  - convincing presentation

- Interpersonal skills
  - extroversion
  - friendliness
  - persuasiveness
  - diplomacy
As indicated in Figure 2, motivation is essential for work in technical marketing. Professionals must be energetic and motivated to work with technology and people with minimal supervision. *Ontario Job Futures* (2017) describes the ideal candidates as people who can plan and program their own tasks, who can manage their time, and who have no fear of hard work. Leadership potential is vital in these candidates.

Motivation alone is not enough. As indicated in Figure 2, excellent communication skills are necessary for this career, both in written and verbal forms. Documents written for readers outside the organization include letters, sales proposals, product descriptions, advertising copy, user studies, progress reports, memos, and email correspondence. Increasingly, digital communication skills have become more important and technical marketers are expected to be comfortable incorporating digital images and video into their work (*Ontario Job Futures*, 2017). Skilled verbal presentation is vital to any career in sales, and marketing professionals need to speak confidently and persuasively to represent their products and services in the best possible way. Sales often involves speaking in public and to crowds, at conventions and trade shows.

The third element in Figure 2, focuses on interpersonal skills, which is an essential requirement for success in marketing. Consumers are more likely to purchase a product or service when they like the person selling it. Technical marketers need to be friendly, yet diplomatic, and they need to be able to motivate people without alienating them.

**Job Outcome Comparisons**

Table 1 compares the four entry options on the basis of three criteria: immediate income, rate of advancement, and long term potential.
Table 1: Relative advantages among four technical-marketing entry options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Early, immediate income</th>
<th>Greatest advancement in marketing</th>
<th>Long-term potential</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entry level, no experience</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training program</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical experience</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate program</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion

Summary of Findings

Technical marketing and sales involves identifying, reaching, and selling the customer a product or service. Besides a solid technical background, the field requires motivation, excellent communication skills, and interpersonal skills.

Interpretation of Findings

For recent graduates in marketing and technical communication, technical marketing offers attractive career prospects. Anyone contemplating this field needs to be able to enjoy customer contact and thrive in a highly competitive environment.

Recommendations

Those whose interests and abilities match the requirements should consider these ideas:

1. Seek advice from those in the field. Contact professionals through professional organizations.

2. A scientific or technical diploma or degree is essential.

3. Each entry option has advantages and disadvantages, so each person needs to match the entry option to their chosen career goals.
Conclusion

A technical marketing career offers job diversity and excellent income potential, balanced against hard work and relentless pressure to perform. Options for graduates are direct entry, a formal training program, prior experience in an adjacent field, and graduate programs. Each option has benefits and drawbacks.

- For hands-on experience, choose direct entry.
- For sophisticated sales training, formal training followed by employment is the best option.
- For sharpening technical skills, previous work in an adjacent field is valuable.
- For executive career advancement goals, graduate school is an option.
References


This example assignment has been adapted from:
