

## Marketing Professional Services: Are Accounting Students Prepared?

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**ABSTRACT.** The marketing of professional services is different from marketing in other areas. Indeed, several "distinctive problems" of marketing professional services have been identified. In order to obtain evidence as to whether these "problems" apply to public accounting services and if current accounting graduates understand them, two surveys were conducted of chairpersons of accounting and marketing departments at AACSB accredited schools of business. The results indicate that respondents from both groups of chairs believe that the majority of the "problems" are concerns for the public accounting profession and that current accounting graduates should understand them. However, both groups appeared neutral as to whether current accounting graduates are exposed to many of these "distinctive problems." It is difficult for students to understand and be prepared to deal with the issues, if they have not been exposed to them. [Article copies available from The Haworth Document Delivery Service: 1-800-342-9678.]

### INTRODUCTION

The marketing of CPA services has changed significantly since *Bates vs. the State of Arizona*, a 1977 U.S. Supreme Court decision on advertising by attorneys. Prior to this ruling and the resulting changes to the AICPA's code of professional ethics, CPAs had been involved in "practice

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development,” or had become, as one writer (Bernstein, 1978) put it, “masters of the art of indirect solicitation” (p. 89). However, from a marketing perspective, CPAs were restricted to working with less than a full complement of marketing tools. The code changes have resulted in an expansion of accounting’s marketing tool kit. However, not all accountants have supported the drastic change of emphasis that has occurred. Indeed, a 1993 decision of the U.S. Supreme Court, *Edenfield v. Fane*, was necessary to uphold the right of a Florida CPA to use direct solicitation.

How important is marketing to CPA firms? In an interview conducted for *The CPA Journal* (1990), John D. Abernathy, III, then Chairman and Chief Executive Partner of BDO Seidman was asked about significant changes that impacted the accounting profession during his tenure as chair. In response Abernathy noted that (p. 36):

First would be the area of marketing. Belonging to a luncheon club, playing golf with the right people, participating in cultural and community-based organizations is no longer enough. Now a CPA firm needs a formal, focused marketing strategy.

If it is accepted that marketing has a place in professional accounting, is it the same type of marketing as in other organizations? Philip Kotler and Paul N. Bloom in their book, *Marketing Professional Services* (1984), noted that (p. 9):

The marketing of professional services is different, and what has worked to sell detergent, steel, or even banking services may not be transferable to the situations found in many professions.

A CPA, Edward A. Suarez (1989), then the national partner for marketing and business development at Laventhol & Horwath, expressed a similar sentiment when he noted (p. 54):

There’s no doubt about it, marketing professional services is different, often difficult, and frequently frustrating.

Further, in their book, Kotler and Bloom noted ten distinctive problems in the marketing of professional services. These ten items, in summary form, are presented below. (For the complete text of these issues see Kotler and Bloom pp. 9-14, also see Appendix A for the format in which these issues were presented to the respondents.)

- Professionals must exercise caution in producing “satisfied customers” when there is third party accountability.
- Due to client uncertainty about professional services, client education must play a large role in the marketing of professional services.

- The need to have prior experience with “similar situations” may make it difficult for professionals to diversify into new lines of work.
- In professional services, it is difficult to convince clients, who may be experiencing great uncertainty about their needs, to recognize any real differences between providers.
- The behavior of clients currently served may reflect on how a professional’s service quality is perceived.
- Professionals must have some personal characteristics that will make them good at selling.
- There is a need for professionals to be both doers and marketers, thereby creating time management problems.
- Professionals face constant demands on their time. To be proactive, while facing client time pressure, is difficult.
- The use of advertising in the professions has not accumulated enough information to effectively measure its effect.
- Professionals know very little about how or what to use in guiding them in making many marketing decisions.

These problems, if applicable to accounting services, raise some concerns for current CPAs and for students planning to enter the profession.

As the use of marketing in public accounting has expanded, has the educational experience of accounting students changed to accommodate these professional marketing concerns? Specifically, if the ten problems of marketing professional services identified by Kotler and Bloom apply to accounting services, have accounting students been exposed to and do they understand them? This article reports on the results of two surveys conducted to provide further clarification on these issues.

### ***THE SURVEY INSTRUMENTS***

Two questionnaires were designed to solicit input from educational leaders. One for accounting chairs and a second for marketing chairs. The purpose of the questionnaires was first, to gather information on whether the ten previously discussed marketing problems are viable concerns for the accounting profession. Second, to determine whether current accounting graduates are exposed to the issues, and whether the graduates should understand them. The questionnaires presented each respondent with the ten issues and requested that they express their level of agreement or disagreement with three subsidiary statements on each issue. The subsidiary statements were that:

- The issue is a viable concern for the accounting profession.
- Their current accounting graduates are exposed to this marketing issue.
- Their current accounting graduates understand this marketing issue.

The questionnaires were mailed to the chairs at 282 accredited schools listed in the *1992-1993 Membership Directory* of the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business. The study was limited to accredited schools since this would assure at least a minimum level of marketing education would be required by all of the institutions. The questionnaires were mailed in late March, 1993, with a second mailing to non-respondents sent in April, 1993. Of the accounting chairs surveyed 117 returned usable responses, a rate of 41.5 percent (117/282), while 90 of the marketing surveys were returned, a rate of 31.9 percent (90/282).

Of the accounting respondents, 94 were CPAs, 38 had recent public accounting experience, 103 were male, 90 were 46 years of age or older, 49 came from programs with separate accounting accreditation, 54 were in states that have adopted 150 hour requirements, and 98 had either implemented (37) or were working to implement (61) 150 hour programs. The marketing respondents were predominately male (84 of 90), and more than 67 percent were 46 years of age or older (61/90).

## FINDINGS

The participants were asked to express the extent of their agreement or disagreement with the issues using a scale of strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree, which were coded for analysis as 1 to 5 respectively. The respondents were also given the option of selecting no opinion. The responses on the issues raised were then analyzed using a SPSS program for analysis of variance (ONE-WAY). The results of the analysis of the responses are presented below.

### *Viable Concerns*

The results of the analysis of the responses on the question of whether the ten marketing issues (see Appendix A for the full text of the issues) are "viable concerns for the accounting profession" are presented in Table 1. As is evident in the table, on eight of the issues the accountants expressed agreement that they are viable concerns. On two of the issues, "The effects of advertising are unknown" and "A limited marketing knowledge base," their responses indicate a neutral position. The responses of the marketing

chairs indicate agreement with all ten of the issues. Further, on all of the issues except one, the means of the marketing respondents showed overall stronger agreement than the accounting means (six of the differences were significant at the 95% level). These respondents believe that at least eight of these issues are "viable concerns" for the accounting profession.

### *Exposure to Marketing*

Table 2 contains the results of the analysis on the question of whether "current accounting graduates are exposed" to the ten marketing issues. The accounting chairs responses, although supportive that the issues are viable concerns, indicate less agreement with the statement that their graduates are "exposed" to these issues. The marketers responses show even less agreement with the statement regarding "exposure" than the accountants (two of the differences were significant at the 95% level). Therefore, while the two groups of chairs appear to agree that the majority of the issues are viable, they are not as sure that accounting students are exposed

TABLE 1. Analysis of the Responses on Ten Marketing Issues on Whether They Are Viable Concerns for the Accounting Profession

MARKETING ISSUE*	ACCOUNTING RESPONDENTS MEAN**	MARKETING RESPONDENT MEAN**	F RATIO	F PROB
1. Third-party accountability	1.8661	1.5357	7.1627	0.0081
2. Client uncertainty	1.9735	1.7303	7.9052	0.0054
3. Experience is essential	2.5495	1.9294	21.7590	0.0000
4. Limited differentiability	2.4234	2.0795	5.4054	0.0211
5. Maintaining quality control	2.1681	2.0575	0.6677	0.4148
6. Making doers into sellers	1.8230	2.0000	2.1456	0.1446
7. Allocating professionals' time to marketing	1.9474	1.7159	4.9463	0.0273
8. Pressure to react rather than proact	2.2130	2.1379	0.3347	0.5636
9. The effects of advertising are unknown	2.8198	2.5349	2.9759	0.0861
10. A limited marketing knowledge base	2.6981	1.9146	32.0424	0.0000

\* For a complete discussion of the issues posed to the respondents see the questionnaire in Appendix A. For complete discussion of the marketing issues see Kotler & Bloom, 1984, ch. 1.

\*\* When responding, the participants were asked to indicate the extent of their agreement on the issues by checking strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree. Their responses were coded 1 to 5 respectively for analysis.

to the issues. Perhaps further evidence of the uncertainty of the marketers in this area can be found in the number expressing no opinion. On average, 30 percent (27/90) of the marketers declined to express an opinion on the "exposure" of accountants to the ten marketing issues. By comparison, on the statement of these issues being of "viable concern" to the accounting profession the average was four expressing no opinion and on the statement of the students "understanding" the issues the average was eight. Apparently the marketers were less certain on the question of whether accounting students were exposed to these issues. The evidence seems to indicate that accounting students are not gaining the knowledge of marketing professional services in the principles of marketing class.

TABLE 2. Analysis of the Responses on Ten Marketing Issues on Whether Current Accounting Graduates Are Exposed to Them

MARKETING ISSUE*	ACCOUNTING RESPONDENTS MEAN**	MARKETING RESPONDENT MEAN**	F RATIO	F PROB
1. Third-party accountability	2.1524	2.9298	27.6358	0.0000
2. Client uncertainty	2.667	2.8571	1.3993	0.2386
3. Experience is essential	3.0303	3.3385	3.4799	0.0639
4. Limited differentiability	2.9091	2.9538	0.0688	0.7934
5. Maintaining quality control	2.8000	3.0323	1.9212	0.1677
6. Making doers into sellers	2.4404	3.1212	18.1242	0.0000
7. Allocating professionals' time to marketing	2.5810	2.9104	3.7552	0.0543
8. Pressure to react rather than proact	2.9490	3.1875	2.1958	0.1404
9. The effects of advertising are unknown	3.2143	3.2222	0.0026	0.9594
10. A limited marketing knowledge base	3.0412	3.1333	0.3785	0.5393

\* For a complete discussion of the issues posed to the respondents see the questionnaire in Appendix A. For complete discussion of the marketing issues see Kotler & Bloom, 1984, ch. 1.

\*\* When responding, the participants were asked to indicate the extent of their agreement on the issues by checking strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree. Their responses were coded 1 to 5 respectively for analysis.

@ On the issues of whether accounting graduates are exposed to the marketing issue, a number of the marketing respondents expressed no opinion. The number of these averaged 27 for the ten issues and ranged from a high of 33 on issue one to a low of 23 on issue seven.

### Understanding of Marketing

Should current accounting graduates "understand" these marketing issues? The results of the analysis of the responses on these questions are presented in Table 3. While the accounting responses showed agreement on every issue, the agreement was the strongest on the issue of "Third-party accountability" and weakest on "The effects of advertising are unknown." The marketers showed stronger agreement on every issue than the accountants, with seven of the differences being significant at the 95% level. Both of these groups expressed agreement that current accounting graduates "should understand" these issues.

### A Marketing Information Gap?

The questionnaire sent to the accountants asked whether their departments required any additional marketing coursework beyond the principles of marketing course. The analysis of the responses indicated that

TABLE 3. Analysis of the Responses on Ten Marketing Issues on Whether Current Accounting Graduates Should Understand Them

MARKETING ISSUE*	ACCOUNTING RESPONDENTS MEAN**	MARKETING RESPONDENT MEAN**	F RATIO	F PROB
1. Third-party accountability	1.8762	1.6463	7.4833	0.0068
2. Client uncertainty	2.2477	1.7831	25.2887	0.0000
3. Experience is essential	2.6542	2.0357	24.4589	0.0000
4. Limited differentiability	2.4952	1.9884	15.3826	0.0001
5. Maintaining quality control	2.3333	2.1519	2.1345	0.1457
6. Making doers into sellers	2.1250	1.9880	1.4493	0.2301
7. Allocating professionals' time to marketing	2.2455	1.8353	12.1564	0.0006
8. Pressure to react rather than proact	2.5577	2.3375	2.5987	0.1087
9. The effects of advertising are unknown	2.8333	2.1905	23.1790	0.0000
10. A limited marketing knowledge base	2.7059	1.8831	47.3100	0.0000

\* For a complete discussion of the issues posed to the respondents see the questionnaire in Appendix A. For complete discussion of the marketing issues see Kotler & Bloom, 1984, ch. 1.

\*\* When responding, the participants were asked to indicate the extent of their agreement on the issues by checking strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree. Their responses were coded 1 to 5 respectively for analysis.

only two of 117 had such a requirement. The accountants responding "no" were then asked to indicate the reason(s). The reasons cited most frequently were:

- Insufficient room in program of study, other courses are more important (59.1 percent).
- Additional courses are not needed, principles of marketing course provides adequate coverage (26.1 percent).
- Course(s) containing the necessary content is unavailable from the marketing department (19.7 percent).

The number one reason cited was the tightness of the accounting program of study and a belief that other courses were more important. Perhaps support for this position can be found in the AICPA's *Model Accountancy Bill's* (1981) sample 150 hour program. In this program only three semester hours of marketing are suggested (p. 44). Further, in the AICPA's *Education Requirements for Entry Into the Accounting Profession* (1988), the only reference in the discussion of the knowledge of marketing required by CPAs that relates to marketing professional services states that "CPAs should know enough about marketing to educate the public about the professional services accountants provide" (p. 16).

The reason selected the second most frequently indicated that the principles of marketing course provided adequate coverage. In order to verify the amount of textbook coverage of professional services marketing, the authors reviewed four principles of marketing texts (Evans & Berman, 1992; Kotler & Armstrong, 1993; Schoell & Guiltman, 1992; Zikmund & d'Amico, 1993). These texts each contained a chapter or a portion of a chapter dealing with "services" marketing. Typically the chapters dealt with a variety of services marketing issues, therefore the space devoted to marketing "professional" services, including accounting, was not large.

Perhaps this limited potential for information about marketing for professional services accounts, at least in part, for the difference in the intensity of the agreement on the "exposure" of accounting students to these issues. Textbook coverage in the principles of marketing course alone may not be sufficient to cover these issues in the necessary depth for accounting students.

The third reason cited by the accountants was that higher level courses with the necessary marketing content were not available. The questionnaires completed by the marketing respondents asked whether their department offered a marketing course dedicated to "Services Marketing." Their responses indicated that 45.6 percent (41/90) offered such a course. It is quite possible that while a course on "services" was available, the



issues that the accounting chairs deemed important might not be covered in sufficient detail.

Perhaps as important as the reasons cited was the one receiving very little support. Of the 115 accounting chairs that indicated no additional marketing courses were required only two indicated that "Additional courses are not needed, marketing is not important for public accounting firms." The accounting chairs are not saying that marketing is unimportant for accountants.

### SUMMARY

The individuals participating in this study have indicated, by their responses, that they believe the majority of the issues raised by Kotler and Bloom on marketing professional services are viable concerns for the accounting profession. While there are concerns, the respondents were basically neutral on the question of whether current accounting graduates were exposed to the marketing implications of these ten issues. The respondents were not, however, neutral on the questions of the need for accounting students to understand the concepts.

The results of this study suggest a need for accounting departments to reevaluate their marketing requirement (over 98 percent of the respondents indicated that their department requires only the principles course). The results of the evaluation may be to change their marketing requirement or, at least, to interact with the marketing department. At a minimum, the accounting chairs should assure that their program requirement provides sufficient exposure to these issues so that their graduates will understand them.

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### APPENDIX ACCOUNTING CHAIRS QUESTIONNAIRE

Filling out this questionnaire will only take a few minutes. Most of your responses can be made by placing a check mark in the space provided. Please note that all responses are strictly confidential. Thank you very much for your assistance.

1. Are you a CPA?  Yes  No  
 If yes, do you have public accounting experience (within the last ten years) with a:  
 Big Six Firm  Regional Firm  Local Firm  No
  
  2. Does your accounting program have separate accounting accreditation?  
 Yes  No
  
  3. Has your state passed a law requiring 150 hours of college education to qualify to write the CPA examination?  
 Yes, Effective date (year) \_\_\_  Currently being considered  No
  
  4. What is the status of the 150 hour program in your department?  
 Fully implemented  Working to implement  No current plans to implement
- | <u>Fully Implemented Using</u><br>(Check all that apply)                       | <u>Working to Implement Using</u><br>(Check all that apply)                    |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> MS in Accounting                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> MS in Accounting                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> MBA degree  | <input type="checkbox"/> MBA degree  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> MBA with Acct concentration                           | <input type="checkbox"/> MBA with Acct concentration                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 150 hour BS degree                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> 150 hour BS degree                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BS degree plus courses sufficient to attain 150 hours | <input type="checkbox"/> BS degree plus courses sufficient to attain 150 hours |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please indicate)                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please indicate)                               |

- 5. Does your department require that your students take additional marketing courses (beyond the principles of marketing class) for students planning to work in public accounting?

Yes                       No

If yes, what is the title of the course(s)?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If no, please indicate the reason. (Please check all that apply.)

Additional courses are not needed, marketing is not important for public accounting firms.

Additional courses are not needed, principles of marketing course provides adequate coverage.

Insufficient room in program of study, other courses are more important.

Course(s) containing the necessary content is unavailable from the marketing department.

Other (please list) \_\_\_\_\_

- 6. The marketing of professional services is different from marketing of goods and what has worked well with marketing goods may not work with services. Accountants currently working in public accounting may have received marketing education in their college courses, however, that exposure may not have addressed the various unique attributes associated with the marketing of accounting services. We ask you to read the introduction to each of the following areas and respond to each section's statements. Please indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement with each statement by checking the appropriate response as follows: SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; N = Neutral; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree; NO = No Opinion.

A. THIRD-PARTY ACCOUNTABILITY

Professional accountants must exercise caution in producing satisfied "customers" when there is third-party accountability. To overemphasize serving one type of client (for example, the audited company) could lead to a loss of trust of the auditor's independence by an important third party (the user of the audit).

SA   A   N   D   SD   NO

- 1. I see this as a viable concern for the accounting profession.

\_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX (continued)

- |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2. Our current accounting graduates:       | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| a. Are exposed to this marketing issue.    | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| b. Should understand this marketing issue. | — | — | — | — | — | — |

## B. CLIENT UNCERTAINTY

Buyers of professional services face the common problem of having difficulty evaluating the performance characteristics of the professional service both prior to purchase and use, and *after* purchase and use. There is a complexity associated with professional accounting services that clients often do not comprehend. Client *education* must play a large role in the marketing of accounting services. In fact, many accounting clients must be educated about the need for professional services.

- |  | SA | A | N | D | SD | NO |
|--|----|---|---|---|----|----|
| 1. I see this as a viable concern for the accounting profession. | —  | — | — | — | —  | —  |
| 2. Our current accounting graduates:                             | —  | — | — | — | —  | —  |
| a. Are exposed to this marketing issue.                          | —  | — | — | — | —  | —  |
| b. Should understand this marketing issue.                       | —  | — | — | — | —  | —  |

## C. EXPERIENCE IS ESSENTIAL

One criterion that buyers of services use in selecting a professional is that provider's prior experience with similar situations. The need to have past experience makes it difficult for accountants to diversify into new lines of work. This dilemma makes it especially important for accounting professionals to understand the value of marketing research regarding new services.

- |  | SA | A | N | D | SD | NO |
|--|----|---|---|---|----|----|
| 1. I see this as a viable concern for the accounting profession. | —  | — | — | — | —  | —  |
| 2. Our current accounting graduates:                             | —  | — | — | — | —  | —  |
| a. Are exposed to this marketing issue.                          | —  | — | — | — | —  | —  |
| b. Should understand this marketing issue.                       | —  | — | — | — | —  | —  |

## D. LIMITED DIFFERENTIABILITY

Marketers typically attempt to differentiate their offerings from those of their competitors. They desire to have the targeted market perceive their offerings as unique or superior to their competition. In accounting, it is difficult to convince clients, who may be experiencing great uncertainty about their needs, to recognize any real differences between providers.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	NO
1. I see this as a viable concern for the accounting profession.	—	—	—	—	—	—
2. Our current accounting graduates:	—	—	—	—	—	—
a. Are exposed to this marketing issue.	—	—	—	—	—	—
b. Should understand this marketing issue.	—	—	—	—	—	—

**E. MAINTAINING QUALITY CONTROL**

Keeping high quality control levels is a challenging task for professional service marketers. The type of clients currently served may reflect how an accountant's quality is perceived. As a result, professional accountants may be judged by the behavior of their clients.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	NO
1. I see this as a viable concern for the accounting profession.	—	—	—	—	—	—
2. Our current accounting graduates:	—	—	—	—	—	—
a. Are exposed to this marketing issue.	—	—	—	—	—	—
b. Should understand this marketing issue.	—	—	—	—	—	—

**F. MAKING DOERS INTO SELLERS**

The accounting professionals who will be the "doers" of certain kinds of work need to know that one way to reduce client uncertainty is to meet and become acquainted with the client. Accountants must have some personal characteristics that will make them good at selling.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	NO
1. I see this as a viable concern for the accounting profession.	—	—	—	—	—	—
2. Our current accounting graduates:	—	—	—	—	—	—
a. Are exposed to this marketing issue.	—	—	—	—	—	—
b. Should understand this marketing issue.	—	—	—	—	—	—

**G. ALLOCATING PROFESSIONALS' TIME TO MARKETING**

There is a need for accountants to be both doers and marketers, thereby creating many time management problems. Accountants must realize that marketing is an ongoing activity.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	NO
1. I see this as a viable concern for the accounting profession.	—	—	—	—	—	—

## APPENDIX (continued)

2. Our current accounting graduates:   —   —   —   —   —   —  
 a. Are exposed to this marketing issue.   —   —   —   —   —   —  
 b. Should understand this marketing issue.   —   —   —   —   —   —

## H. PRESSURE TO REACT RATHER THAN PROACT

A concern related to the time allocation challenge has to do with the constant demands many accounting professionals face to provide services on short notice. Clients tend to want their work done "yesterday," and this can frequently cut into time that has been set aside for marketing planning. Being proactive while clients are applying time pressures can be difficult.

- |  | SA | A | N | D | SD | NO |
|--|----|---|---|---|----|----|
| 1. I see this as a viable concern for the accounting profession. | —  | — | — | — | —  | —  |
| 2. Our current accounting graduates:                             | —  | — | — | — | —  | —  |
| a. Are exposed to this marketing issue.                          | —  | — | — | — | —  | —  |
| b. Should understand this marketing issue.                       | —  | — | — | — | —  | —  |

## I. THE EFFECTS OF ADVERTISING ARE UNKNOWN

The use of advertising in the professions has not accumulated enough information to effectively measure its effect. Advertising could be beneficial or it could "backfire." "Backfiring" could occur because many people could interpret some messages (advertising) as suggesting that the accountant lacks competence or s/he would not have to advertise.

- |  | SA | A | N | D | SD | NO |
|--|----|---|---|---|----|----|
| 1. I see this as a viable concern for the accounting profession. | —  | — | — | — | —  | —  |
| 2. Our current accounting graduates:                             | —  | — | — | — | —  | —  |
| a. Are exposed to this marketing issue.                          | —  | — | — | — | —  | —  |
| b. Should understand this marketing issue.                       | —  | — | — | — | —  | —  |

## J. A LIMITED MARKETING KNOWLEDGE BASE

Professionals know very little about how or what to use in guiding them in making *all* marketing decisions.

- |  | SA | A | N | D | SD | NO |
|--|----|---|---|---|----|----|
| 1. I see this as a viable concern for the accounting profession. | —  | — | — | — | —  | —  |

2. Our current accounting graduates:    \_\_\_    \_\_\_    \_\_\_    \_\_\_    \_\_\_
- a. Are exposed to this marketing issue. \_\_\_    \_\_\_    \_\_\_    \_\_\_    \_\_\_
- b. Should understand this marketing issue. \_\_\_    \_\_\_    \_\_\_    \_\_\_    \_\_\_

7. What is your age?

\_\_\_ Under 25    \_\_\_ 25-35    \_\_\_ 36-45    \_\_\_ 46-55    \_\_\_ Over 55

8. Are you:

\_\_\_ Female    \_\_\_ Male

### MARKETING/ACCOUNTING PROFESSIONAL SERVICES COURSE

Filling out this form will only take a few minutes. Most of your answers can be made by placing a check mark in the space provided. Your input will help our current curriculum revision projects. Please note that all responses are strictly confidential. Thank you very much for your help.

1. Are you currently a Marketing chairperson? (Please check appropriate category)
- \_\_\_ Currently the chair
- \_\_\_ Have had recent chair position
- \_\_\_ Am not involved in administration
- \_\_\_ Am chair of a joint department, i.e., Marketing/Management
- If so, please specify type \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ Other, please identify \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many years of marketing teaching experience do you have?
- \_\_\_ 1-3    \_\_\_ 7-10    \_\_\_ 16-20    \_\_\_ 26-30
- \_\_\_ 4-6    \_\_\_ 11-15    \_\_\_ 21-25    \_\_\_ 30 or more
3. Does your department currently offer a specialty marketing course dedicated to Services Marketing?
- \_\_\_ Yes If yes, title \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ No If no, how do you cover services marketing? Please describe.
4. The marketing of professional services is different from marketing of goods and what has worked well with marketing goods may not work with services. Accountants currently working in public accounting may have received marketing education in their college courses, however, that exposure may not have addressed the various unique attributes

## APPENDIX (continued)

associated with the marketing of accounting services. We ask you to read the introduction to each of the following areas and respond to each section's statements. Please indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement with each statement by checking the appropriate response as follows: SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; N = Neutral; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree; NO = No Opinion.

## A. THIRD-PARTY ACCOUNTABILITY

Professional accountants must exercise caution in producing satisfied "customers" when there is third-party accountability. To overemphasize serving one type of client (for example, the audited company) could lead to a loss of trust of the auditor's independence by an important third party (the user of the audit).

	SA	A	N	D	SD	NO
1. I see this as a viable concern for the accounting profession.	—	—	—	—	—	—
2. Our current accounting graduates:	—	—	—	—	—	—
a. Are exposed to this marketing issue.	—	—	—	—	—	—
b. Should understand this marketing issue.	—	—	—	—	—	—

## B. CLIENT UNCERTAINTY

Buyers of professional services face the common problem of having difficulty evaluating the performance characteristics of the professional service both prior to purchase and use, and *after* purchase and use. There is a complexity associated with professional accounting services that clients often do not comprehend. Client *education* must play a large role in the marketing of accounting services. In fact, many accounting clients must be educated about the need for professional services.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	NO
1. I see this as a viable concern for the accounting profession.	—	—	—	—	—	—
2. Our current accounting graduates:	—	—	—	—	—	—
a. Are exposed to this marketing issue.	—	—	—	—	—	—
b. Should understand this marketing issue.	—	—	—	—	—	—

## C. EXPERIENCE IS ESSENTIAL

One criterion that buyers of services use in selecting a professional is that provider's prior experience with similar situations. The need to



have past experience makes it difficult for accountants to diversify into new lines of work. This dilemma makes it especially important for accounting professionals to understand the value of marketing research regarding new services.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	NO
1. I see this as a viable concern for the accounting profession.	—	—	—	—	—	—
2. Our current accounting graduates:	—	—	—	—	—	—
a. Are exposed to this marketing issue.	—	—	—	—	—	—
b. Should understand this marketing issue.	—	—	—	—	—	—

**D. LIMITED DIFFERENTIABILITY**

Marketers typically attempt to differentiate their offerings from those of their competitors. They desire to have the targeted market perceive their offerings as unique or superior to their competition. In accounting, it is difficult to convince clients, who may be experiencing great uncertainty about their needs, to recognize any real differences between providers.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	NO
1. I see this as a viable concern for the accounting profession.	—	—	—	—	—	—
2. Our current accounting graduates:	—	—	—	—	—	—
a. Are exposed to this marketing issue.	—	—	—	—	—	—
b. Should understand this marketing issue.	—	—	—	—	—	—

**E. MAINTAINING QUALITY CONTROL**

Keeping high quality control levels is a challenging task for professional service marketers. The type of clients currently served may reflect how an accountant's quality is perceived. As a result, professional accountants may be judged by the behavior of their clients.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	NO
1. I see this as a viable concern for the accounting profession.	—	—	—	—	—	—
2. Our current accounting graduates:	—	—	—	—	—	—
a. Are exposed to this marketing issue.	—	—	—	—	—	—
b. Should understand this marketing issue.	—	—	—	—	—	—

**F. MAKING DOERS INTO SELLERS**

The accounting professionals who will be the "doers" of certain kinds of work need to know that one way to reduce client uncertainty is to



## APPENDIX (continued)

meet and become acquainted with the client. Accountants must have some personal characteristics that will make them good at selling.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	NO
1. I see this as a viable concern for the accounting profession.	—	—	—	—	—	—
2. Our current accounting graduates:	—	—	—	—	—	—
a. Are exposed to this marketing issue.	—	—	—	—	—	—
b. Should understand this marketing issue.	—	—	—	—	—	—

## G. ALLOCATING PROFESSIONALS' TIME TO MARKETING

There is a need for accountants to be both doers and marketers, thereby creating many time management problems. Accountants must realize that marketing is an ongoing activity.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	NO
1. I see this as a viable concern for the accounting profession.	—	—	—	—	—	—
2. Our current accounting graduates:	—	—	—	—	—	—
a. Are exposed to this marketing issue.	—	—	—	—	—	—
b. Should understand this marketing issue.	—	—	—	—	—	—

## H. PRESSURE TO REACT RATHER THAN PROACT

A concern related to the time allocation challenge has to do with the constant demands many accounting professionals face to provide services on short notice. Clients tend to want their work done "yesterday," and this can frequently cut into time that has been set aside for marketing planning. Being proactive while clients are applying time pressures can be difficult.

	SA	A	N	D	SD	NO
1. I see this as a viable concern for the accounting profession.	—	—	—	—	—	—
2. Our current accounting graduates:	—	—	—	—	—	—
a. Are exposed to this marketing issue.	—	—	—	—	—	—
b. Should understand this marketing issue.	—	—	—	—	—	—

## I. THE EFFECTS OF ADVERTISING ARE UNKNOWN

The use of advertising in the professions has not accumulated enough information to effectively measure its effect. Advertising could be beneficial or it could "backfire." "Backfiring" could occur because many people could interpret some messages (advertising) as suggesting that the accountant lacks competence or s/he would not have to advertise.

- |  | SA | A | N | D | SD | NO   |
|--|----|---|---|---|----|--|
| 1. I see this as a viable concern for the accounting profession.   | —  | — | — | — | —  | —  |
| 2. Our current accounting graduates:   | —  | — | — | — | —  | —  |
| a. Are exposed to this marketing issue.  | —  | — | — | — | —  | —  |
| b. Should understand this marketing issue.   | —  | — | — | — | —  | —  |
| <b>J. A LIMITED MARKETING KNOWLEDGE BASE</b>   |    |   |   |   |    |  |
| Professionals know very little about how or what to use in guiding them in making <i>all</i> marketing decisions.  |    |   |   |   |    |  |
|  | SA | A | N | D | SD | NO   |
| 1. I see this as a viable concern for the accounting profession.   | —  | — | — | — | —  | —  |
| 2. Our current accounting graduates:   | —  | — | — | — | —  | —  |
| a. Are exposed to this marketing issue.  | —  | — | — | — | —  | —  |
| b. Should understand this marketing issue.   | —  | — | — | — | —  | —  |
| 5. Many accounting programs are planning for the requirements of the anticipated 150 credit hour accounting curriculum. How much contact have you had with the accounting department in regard to this change?<br>—Extensive communication—Little communication]<br>—Adequate communication—No communication]<br>—Some communication |    |   |   |   |    |  |
| 6. A Professional Services Marketing course should be provided for:<br>(Please check all that apply)   |    |   |   |   |    |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marketing majors only   |    |   |   |   |    | <input type="checkbox"/> All professional service majors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accounting majors only  |    |   |   |   |    | <input type="checkbox"/> Others, please specify          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Course for all business majors  |    |   |   |   |    |  |
| 7. What is your age? <input type="checkbox"/> Under 25 <input type="checkbox"/> 25-35 <input type="checkbox"/> 36-45 <input type="checkbox"/> 46-55 <input type="checkbox"/> Over 55   |    |   |   |   |    |  |
| 8. Are you: <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male  |    |   |   |   |    |  |
| 9. If the accounting department at your institution wanted to require all of its majors to take a professional service marketing course, would the marketing department currently have the resources to provide it?<br><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Maybe                       |    |   |   |   |    |  |
| 10. What challenges and/or opportunities do you see for marketing and accounting departments as they prepare for the 150-hour curriculum?  |    |   |   |   |    |  |