

Industry **White Goods (Bedding, Home Apparel)**
Business **Manufacturer**

Title **Marketing Assistant**
Interviewee **Becky D.**

Following her graduation from a major mid-western university with a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations and Swedish, Becky accepted a position as Marketing Assistant and she has held this position for six months. Becky's primary responsibilities include working on product development and package design (where she spends most of her time), competitive shopping for the firm, and developing and organizing pamphlets and promotional materials for trade shows, company brochures, and catalogs.

If Becky were to advance in the company she would take one of two paths. First, she could move vertically in the organization from Marketing Coordinator to Marketing Manager to Marketing Director to Vice President of Marketing. The other option would be to move laterally within the firm, across departments to Sales/Inside Sales and then into Sales Management.

Entering the Profession

Becky "came on board" at this white goods company following a job search through an employment agency. Taking a proactive approach to the interviewing effort, Becky sent a series of follow-up letters after both her first and second interviews. In their candidate search, the company was seeking a number of qualities including previous professional experience. Fortunately, Becky had taken an internship the previous summer where her responsibilities had included working on trade shows. For these shows she had been active in organizing materials for the shows and in other show preparation activities. In addition to this professional experience,

the company was also keenly interested in someone possessing superior writing and organizational skills.

During the interviews it was also clear that her resume had been carefully reviewed and in the second interview Becky was asked to elaborate on some of the comments that had been made in her letters of recommendation. With a good academic record, related professional experience, and solid communication and organizational skills, Becky had the crucial combination of skills and background to gain the position.

My qualifications were an indicator to the firm that I had the potential to learn the skills that would be needed in the position

Training

While having good qualifications had helped land the job, it seemed like everyone, including the Marketing Coordinator and the Marketing Manager, assumed that with my prior experience and credentials that there was no need to provide much training. This led to a lot of uncertainty, particularly since there were hardly any specific expectations laid out in the first few months.

As a form of on-the-job training, there was a period when I was told to shadow the person who had formerly held the Marketing Assistant position

This shadowing helped ease the transition into the company and shortly thereafter Becky found a mentor in the VP of Sales/Marketing. This support helped a great deal.

Still, there was a time when I felt a bit overwhelmed with the lack of clear direction and thorough training

Performance Determinants & Compensation

As Marketing Assistant, good performance is determined on the basis of efficiency and creativity. In particular, brochures and pamphlets must be designed in such a way as to make them appealing to potential buyers. The creativity required in this facet of the job is exciting and it requires focused energy.

Then there is the challenge to prepare creative presentations. Following the presentations, rapid follow-ups are needed to assure that everyone is on-track.

Timeliness is also crucial – failing in this means that all of the time and effort that was put into creativity would be for naught

Becky's compensation is entirely salary, though if she were to advance in the company she would also be part of a bonus program. Becky has a six month performance review coming up in a month and this will be coordinated with a promised raise in salary. However, Becky says that even with this review almost here, she is still in the dark as to what criteria she will be evaluated on. Similarly, no one has said anything about the amount of the pending raise. This is disappointing and it affects her ability to know how to focus to perform well. Becky is particularly concerned about the failure of the personnel manager to provide employees with enough information and support regarding evaluation and compensation. This sorely affects her job satisfaction.

In truth, the rewards that make me feel the best are when my superiors take the time to praise me for good work

Greatest challenges

Becky feels that the greatest challenges that she faces are due to the ineffectiveness of the personnel manager and her newness in the organization. She foresees a great challenge in being able to work and be productive without what she feels would be the necessary training or explicit expectations as to how her duties should be carried out. Another challenge that has been and will be in the future is trying to understand and learn more about the functioning and politics of the organization without any past experience in this type of professional setting. Rebecca feels challenged to try to fit into an unfamiliar organization and feels that when she was interviewed and hired there were no attempts made to make sure that there was a good person-organization fit between her and the firm.

With the duties of a Marketing Assistant ranging from product development to developing customer focused promotional materials to competitive shopping, and the need for creativity and speed ever-present, this is a challenging position.

With a leadership focused intently on winning in its served markets, the company is simply unprepared to find the time to adequately train and direct new personnel in the firm. Therefore, a Marketing Assistant must be prepared to be self-motivated, creative, and quick thinking to be successful.