

**A STUDY OF MEDIA PRACTITIONERS:
DEFINING THE MARKET MIX AND EDUCATIONAL
NEEDS OF POTENTIAL STUDENTS FOR
OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY'S
MASS COMMUNICATION
GRADUATE PROGRAM**

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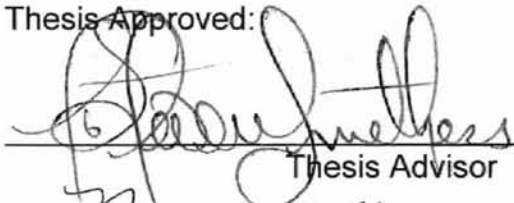
Stillwater, Oklahoma

1987

Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate College of
Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for
the Degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE
December 1998


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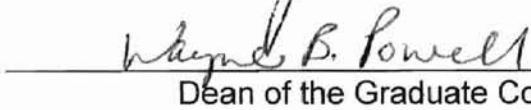
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PREFACE

This study of media practitioners was designed to help the faculty of the Mass Communication graduate program at Oklahoma State University identify the market and educational needs of potential graduate students. This research examines whether media professionals are interested in a graduate education, the specific courses they are interested in taking, and the preferred class schedule and location of those classes.

Many people deserve much more than a simple acknowledgement for their help and support. First, this thesis would not have been possible had it not been for the funding that I received from the Mass Communication Department. I am extremely grateful to Dr. Paul Smeyak and the department for generously financing the mailings and supplies used for this study.

A very special thank you goes to my advisor, Dr. Steve Smethers, for his endless guidance, support, patience, and encouragement throughout this study. His words of wisdom and constant understanding provided me the inner-strength I needed to complete this research. Thank you, my dear friend, for all the academic advice and extra laughs. As I advise my students for their senior projects, I will never forget the best role model I had, you!

Thank you Drs. Maureen Nemecek, Paul Smeyak and Barbara DeSanto for helping me construct the questionnaire and for insightful advice. I appreciate your time, and your suggestions are reflected in this study.

Thanks goes to my boss, Dr. David Chattin, Vice President of Academic Affairs at Saint Joseph's College, for graciously providing the statistical advice needed to sensibly organize the data.

I would also like to express my appreciation to my dear friends, Kimberly Ryan, Rhonda Bainum, Professor Fred Berger, and Dino Lalli for giving me the verbal support, encouragement and academic discipline I needed to *finally* finish my thesis.

Finally, my love and deepest thanks goes to my family. Thank you to my brother, Robert, for spending hours regurgitating data from the questionnaires as I entered it into the computer. Thank you to my brother, Karl, for proofreading and helping edit my drafts. Thanks to his wife and children, Rebeca, Sean and Kate, for their love and support. And my special thanks to Mom and Dad, for not only helping stuff envelopes, but for believing in me and teaching me that you get out of life what you put into it. Their unconditional love and support motivated me to see my goals become a reality.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Each year thousands of students earn undergraduate or graduate degrees in journalism and mass communication from U.S. colleges and universities, and thousands of those graduates are employed in the media annually. In 1995, nearly 71 percent of undergraduates and 73 percent of master's graduates in journalism and mass communication had at least one job offer upon graduation (Becker & Kosicki, 1995). This indicated a slight rise in the graduate employment rate from the previous year.

Traditionally, media practitioners have viewed the value of post-secondary education toward their professional development and advancement with varying degrees of merit. For example, either a baccalaureate or a master's degree has limited worth and rewards, depending on an individual's career objectives and the philosophies of employers at newspapers, broadcast stations, and advertising and public relations firms. Some media companies do prefer that employees have a baccalaureate degree, but a majority of firms rely almost solely upon an applicant's perceived talent and experience level as primary qualifications for employment. As Weaver and Wilhoit (1986) stated,

There is no single set of requirements for becoming a journalist—in fact it is not absolutely necessary for one to have graduated from college to

become a journalist, although that is more and more the basic requirement. There is no specific credential, license, or certificate necessary to enter the field of journalism, and there is still considerable disagreement among those currently in the field as to how one should go about becoming a journalist (p. 46).

Post-secondary education, and the concept of graduate degrees in particular, is thought to have more importance for practitioners with loftier career ambitions in mind. People who experience job “burnout” or reach a certain ceiling in their careers often find education to be a factor in their upward mobility or as they pursue alternative career paths into other media-related professions. For example, a 1994 study by Byrd found that radio sales people with an undergraduate or graduate degree are more satisfied with their current salary and their chances of promotion than those who have a high school diploma or some college education.

The framework of this research is based on Peter F. Drucker’s one and only “valid definition” to explain the purpose of a business: “to create a customer” (Drucker, 1954, p. 37). For the purpose of this study, the business is a higher education institution offering undergraduate and graduate degrees, and the customer is a potential student (media practitioner). According to Redmund (1994), when colleges and universities tailor graduate courses to the specific scheduling needs of mid-career professionals, an important customer base is formed for higher education. Marketing to, and recruiting, those customers is critical for any undergraduate and/or graduate program to survive, especially during times of declining enrollment.

The enrollments in journalism and mass communication graduate programs declined by four percent from fall 1995 (10,934) to fall 1996 (10,236), while the total number of graduate degrees granted during the same period dramatically increased by 31 percent (Becker & Kosicki, 1996). The decline in enrollment is a shift from the trend in the past, when enrollment in graduate programs has shown continued growth at the master's level (Ryan, 1980; Becker & Kosicki, 1995). However, the number of colleges and universities offering journalism and mass communication undergraduate and graduate programs has steadily increased since the turn of the century (*Journalism Bulletin*, 1927).

The result is an increased competition among degree-granting institutions for the available market share of potential graduate students. Colleges and universities are faced with the challenge of building and maintaining enrollments among the ranks of traditional markets for graduate students while identifying new groups of professional potential clients who would pursue post-baccalaureate degrees if higher education could first be more accommodating to their needs. Successful graduate programs must meet the challenge of making education more attainable and relevant to new consumers. Curricula must be re-tooled to better accommodate the professional expectations of such potential clientele. And, courses must be offered in such ways as to be more attractive to the lifestyles of this potential market.

A brief examination of the history of journalism and mass communication education and marketing theories follows in an effort to provide better

understanding of the trends and developments in graduate education and the strategy of a customer-driven business.

Background

Journalism and Mass Communication Education—A Historical View

From the 1860s to the 1920s, journalism education and instruction in higher education became more formal than in previous years (Weaver & Gray, 1980). It began with General Robert E. Lee, president of what is now Washington and Lee University, who began vocational training in printing when the Civil War ended. Similar programs were established at Kansas State College in 1873, the University of Missouri in 1878, and the University of Pennsylvania in 1908. Newspaperman Walter Williams became the head of the first school of journalism at the University of Missouri (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1980).

Journalism education at Oklahoma State University began about this time. In 1908, John A. Craig taught the first full-term journalism course (Heath, 1992). Six years later, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College (as the institution was then known) offered its first journalism curriculum. In this era, the majority of undergraduate journalism programs at national universities, including Oklahoma A & M, focused on writing and editing skills. One of the first master's programs in journalism began at Columbia University in 1912, concentrating on advanced writing and editing.

From the 1920s to the 1940s, journalism education had established a firmer foundation. Several universities followed the examples of Columbia and

the University of Missouri. Willard G. Bleyer began the first Ph.D. minor in journalism at the University of Wisconsin in 1927. Bleyer's doctoral program was anchored in the social sciences, emphasizing political science and sociology. Many journalism scholars such as Chilton Bush, Ralph Casey, Curtis MacDougall, and Ralph Nafziger graduated with the Ph.D. minor and used their social-science knowledge to establish major journalism programs at Stanford, Northwestern, and Minnesota (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1980). Journalism schools began to specifically examine the world and look at how to analyze and record those examinations systematically.

The final phase in journalism education in the U. S. extends from the 1940s to the present. The University of Minnesota began the first journalism research division in 1944. More universities soon established their own doctoral programs with emphasis on social-science perspectives and methods rather than humanistic ones (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1980).

After World War II, Oklahoma A & M established its first journalism graduate program in 1947. In the following years, four students were enrolled in "specialized journalism" courses at the graduate level (Heath, 1992). As at Oklahoma A & M, most early-day journalism programs focused on typical news-editorial courses, such as reporting, copy reading, feature writing, editorial writing, criticism, history, comparative journalism and ethics (Lindley, 1924). While modern programs offer many of the same courses, journalism education has also expanded to include public relations, advertising, radio and television, photojournalism, and magazines.

Peterson (1980) conducted an exhaustive study of 25,290 journalism students from 54 journalism schools to determine their career preferences and expectations. The author found that only 11 percent of all journalism majors were interested in newspaper positions when they completed college. However, Peterson found that 18 percent of the students wanted to work in public relations, and nearly 16 percent wanted to work in advertising.

The Marketing Concept & Student Consumerism

Before the mid-1950s, business marketing focused on products or services, not the customers (Webster, 1988). It was not until then that marketing objectives concentrated on products and prices tailored to customer needs. Profitability became based more on customer satisfaction rather than sales volume (Ansoff, 1965).

Peter Drucker was one of the first to develop a marketing theory in 1954. He argued that the business should create a customer.

It is business action that creates the customer. It is the customer who determines what a business is. What the customer thinks he is buying, what he considers 'value,' is decisive—it determines what a business is, what it produces and whether it will prosper (p. 37).

Drucker stated that marketing and innovation are the two entrepreneurial functions of a business, and if any organization markets a product or service, it is considered to be a business.

In the academic world, the marketing concept and business itself is usually defined to management students as "the business philosophy whereby

the organization is oriented to achieving its objectives through meeting the needs of its customers within its chosen markets” (Ryans and Shanklin, 1986, p. 22). Viewed in this light, the social and economic function of the business is to provide customers with the goods and services they want. Therefore, as Ryans and Shanklin argued, creating and maintaining customers is the foundation of management and strategic marketing.

Redmond (1994) stated that business and higher education both depend on customers. Seen in this way, colleges and universities must have a clientele to “stay in business,” but they also must make their services more accommodating to the customer base. For the purpose of this study, education is viewed as a business, and potential students are regarded as customers.

Ryans and Shanklin identified the following three factors to be effective strategic marketing inputs:

- 1) the choice of markets on which to concentrate
- 2) market research into the needs and decision-making processes of known and potential customers, and
- 3) the development of a product/market mix which is geared to meeting customers’ needs more effectively than those of competitors (p. 22).

This study attempts to identify these factors as they apply to graduate education in mass communication. In this application, the customers of education (students) are surveyed about the goods and services (courses) they perceive to be valuable to them.

In addition, for the purpose of this study, enrollment is considered to be the business goal of the academic institution. Just as in conventional business

settings, the marketing of educational programs and the continual fluctuations in enrollments are akin to consumer vacillations in the cycles of the traditional business environment.

Statement of the Problem

While student needs and expectations for graduate education are often mentioned in articles and research on graduate programs, few authors have offered explanations on how to determine those requirements and develop a marketing strategy to attract potential students.

A study that focused on the needs of practitioners found that the market for graduate programs in journalism and mass communication is underdeveloped (Redmond, 1994). Data from Redmond's survey, which was limited only to television news directors, revealed that 83.4 percent of the respondents desired some management training if they had the time in their busy schedule. Redmond's data also suggested that "core courses commonly required in journalism master's courses should be adjusted to fit practitioner needs, which may be considerably removed from those of continuing students fresh out of bachelor's programs" (p. 40).

One challenge for the Mass Communication graduate program at Oklahoma State University (OSU) is to specifically identify what courses and career options would attract and interest practitioners sufficiently so that they would either continue or advance their education objectives. Are media practitioners even interested in furthering their education? If so, how will OSU's

graduate faculty develop a curriculum and a realistic class schedule to accommodate those needs?

Another issue is whether OSU's graduate program should focus on theory vs. practice or, in other words, academic vs. professional. Moreover, would potential students prefer more applied courses as opposed to the more traditional theory and research-based classes? Academia has traditionally embraced the more conventional thesis option and theory-oriented class schedule, often de-emphasizing the more pragmatic courses and project options. For example, according to a survey by Singletary and Crook (1986), professional or creative projects receive less academic credit than theses, even though many master's programs offer the student the option of a project or a thesis. Whether this trend meets the approval of graduate education's new "customers" remains to be seen.

Purpose of the Study

This research attempts to expand Redmond's 1994 study to include all media practitioners employed in radio, television, print, public relations, and advertising. Drucker's marketing theory, which states that the business is consumer driven, is used here as a framework to determine preferences of potential student clientele for Oklahoma State University's Mass Communication graduate program.

Specifically, this study seeks to determine whether media practitioners would desire, and benefit from, graduate education designed to fit their career ambitions. This research also ascertains preferences on types of courses and/or

skills, class times and delivery systems convenient to potential students' schedules.

From the data derived here, the researcher intends to provide a foundation to help structure a curriculum for the Mass Communication graduate program at Oklahoma State University that is marketable and desirable to media practitioners within the population of this study.

Research Questions

During the 1997 spring semester, the researcher met with faculty and administration members of the School of Journalism and Broadcasting at Oklahoma State University to discuss the foundation, purpose, and possible questions for this study. From those meetings, the researcher developed the following five research questions:

- 1) Are media practitioners in the surveyed population interested in attending OSU to further their education? If so, who makes up the market mix for the mass communication graduate program?
- 2) What skills/courses would benefit media practitioners' needs?
- 3) Do media practitioners prefer courses offered on campus, off campus (by extension or distance education), or via Internet?
- 4) What class schedule fits their working schedule best?
- 5) What would influence a media professional to obtain an advanced degree?

Methodology

This study consisted of a mail questionnaire that was sent to 3,177 media practitioners in broadcasting, print, public relations, and advertising within an 80-mile radius of OSU's Stillwater, Oklahoma campus. The radio and television stations included in this research were selected from the 1997 Oklahoma Association of Broadcasters directory. Daily newspaper offices were selected from the 1997 Oklahoma Media Guide. Public relations employees were selected from a membership list for the Tulsa and Oklahoma City chapters of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA). Advertising agencies were members of the American Association of Advertising Agencies (AAAA). The survey instrument was a self-administered questionnaire.

Participants were requested to indicate the type of degree they would seek if they wanted to pursue a higher level of education. They were also asked to identify specific skills and/or courses that interest them, to rank specific times for classes that could best accommodate their work schedule, and to indicate a preference for on-campus or off-campus courses.

A more detailed explanation of the methodology is outlined in Chapter III.

Significance of the Research

Colleges and universities across the United States actively recruit students each year. In order to attract potential students, recruiters must know the market. More specifically, they must understand the demographics of the market and determine the potential clientele's desires and expectations. This

research intends to identify the market of professional potential customers and their needs and interests in advancing their education in the state of Oklahoma.

The Mass Communication graduate program at Oklahoma State University will benefit from the information media practitioners provide. Faculty, once better informed of potential student preferences, should be able to improve and tailor the curriculum to better meet the needs and expectations of potential students. Also, this research could reinforce the ties between journalism/mass communication educators and media practitioners in the central Oklahoma market.

Limitations

Perhaps the primary limitation in this study would be the method in which questionnaires were distributed to potential subjects targeted for this study. Absent of addresses and/or phone numbers of each respondent, questionnaires could only be distributed to employees at their business by a pre-established "contact" person. Obviously, the limitation of this methodology is two-fold:

- 1) the questionnaire might not have been delivered to all employees; and
- 2) since the researcher was unable to obtain a list of employees by name (except the PRSA members), a follow-up questionnaire was not administered. In other words, the researcher had no knowledge of exactly *who* received the questionnaires.

In addition, this study was restricted to only those media practitioners within 80 miles of the main Oklahoma State University campus in Stillwater. Thus, the results are not necessarily applicable to other journalism and mass

communication graduate programs or media practitioners outside the target population area.

Outline of the Research

In this study, Chapter II presents a literature review that focuses on graduate education in journalism and mass communication and marketing strategies and concepts. Chapter III details the research methodology used in this study.

Chapter IV presents the findings and analysis of the data. The discussion, summary and conclusion are presented in Chapter V, along with recommendations for curriculum in the Mass Communication graduate program at Oklahoma State University and recommendations for further research. The study's cover letter, the questionnaire, and the list of stations and companies in the population can be found in appendices A, B, and C, respectively.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter examines Drucker's marketing theory and applies it to higher education. It also discusses relevant studies on master's curricula in journalism and mass communication graduate programs, distance education, and practitioners' needs, desires and views of graduate education.

Drucker's Marketing Theory

Peter Drucker is one of the pioneers of, and has perhaps had the greatest influence on, the marketing and management concept since World War II. According to Drucker, "marketing is the distinguishing, the unique function of the business...there is only one valid definition of business purpose: *to create a customer*" (Drucker, 1954, p. 37). Since the customer is the foundation of any firm, Drucker argued that the business must provide customers with goods and services they need and want.

Managing a business takes knowledge and judgment of how to balance a variety of needs and goals. To do this, market-standing objectives must be set and identified:

A business must first find out what its market is—who the customer is, where he is, what he buys, what he considers value, what his unsatisfied wants are...the enterprise must analyze its products or services according to 'lines,' that is, according to the wants of the customers they satisfy (Drucker, 1954, p. 67).

Drucker outlined seven marketing goals that are necessary in most businesses:

- 1) the desired standing of existing products in their present market...measured against both direct and indirect competition;
- 2) the desired standing of existing products in new markets...measured against both direct and indirect competition;
- 3) the existing products that should be abandoned, for technological reasons, because of market trend, to improve product mix or as a result of what management believes the business should be;
- 4) the new products needed in existing markets;
- 5) the new markets that new products should develop;
- 6) the distributive organization needed to accomplish marketing goals; and
- 7) a service objective measuring how well the customer should be supplied with what he considers value by the company, its products, its sales and service organization (p. 67-68).

Drucker said that the service objective should be measured systematically, such as annual customer surveys in larger companies.

Innovation is the second main function of a business. According to Drucker, the business must provide better and more economic goods and services in order for the firm to continue to grow better, not necessarily bigger (Drucker, 1954). To obtain innovating objectives, managers must forecast short-term and long-term innovations that are needed to reach marketing goals.

Drucker outlined five innovation goals for the typical business:

- 1) new products or services needed to reach marketing objectives;
- 2) new products or services needed for technological changes;
- 3) product improvements needed to attain market objectives and to anticipate expected technological changes;
- 4) new processes and improvements in old processes that are needed to satisfy market goals; and
- 5) innovations and improvements in all major areas of activity in order to keep up with advances in knowledge and skill (p. 69).

Drucker also stressed that it is important for management to realize and understand that innovation is a slow process, and “many companies that are unknown to the public will be leaders in their industry tomorrow because of their innovations today” (p. 70).

Theodore Levitt’s marketing concept (1960) supports Drucker’s theory. Levitt implied that the central focus of the business is customer needs, and that successful businesses must discover and cater to customers’ characteristics and demands. Therefore, the product is only one variable that can satisfy customer needs; service is, perhaps, even more important.

Marketing Applied to Higher Education

In 1959, Gordon and Howell defined management as “making decisions about economic variables in an organization context and within a market and non-market environment that is continuously changing” (p. 68). Applying this definition to higher education, Ryans and Shanklin (1986) argued that the management priorities in a business “are directly applicable to universities”

(p. 37). They stated that the university appears parallel to business and that higher education is no different than the business world when affected by environmental changes such as national economical hardships, government policy, demand, employees wanting to be consulted, and vocal customers. Ryans and Shanklin added that the university operates through an organization—"basically getting things done through people" (p. 23).

To develop an effective and efficient marketing strategy to attain goals, Ryans and Shanklin suggested that university management re-orient priorities toward the market by focusing outward (i.e., researching customer needs and adapting to changing market demand) rather than using the traditional inward focus approach (i.e., costs-per-credit-hour; maximum classroom occupancy). Ryans and Shanklin's outward focus approach utilizes two basic objectives:

- 1) *Goal*: recognize and define the product/market mix.

Outward Focus: decisions are determined by external and internal factors. External factors include reaching into the market to obtain demographic data, enrollment data, career income profiles, definition of drawing area and plans of competing universities. Internal factors are faculty skills and money available to add new skills.

- 2) *Goal*: develop a differential advantage, such as quality teaching, quality research, quality faculty, courses offered, timing of the courses, flexible programs and costs.

Outward Focus: students have a choice whether to pursue a college education. To attract students, the university must implement an attractive plan to make the student prefer it to other universities (p. 25-26).

Clearly, Ryans and Shanklin (1986) view the university as a business and students are regarded as a university's market. This premise supports Drucker's

assertion that the sole purpose of a business is to develop a customer. This study uses Drucker's theory as the foundation to create a customer (the student) for the business (the university). More specifically, it attempts to investigate the market mix of potential graduate students for Oklahoma State University's Mass Communication graduate program. Once the market is defined and customer needs are identified, then and only then can the university attempt to restructure and build a better program that satisfies the student's needs.

Education and Training of American Journalists

As noted in Chapter I, most media employers prefer job applicants to have a college degree. Even though such an educational background is a preference, or, in some cases, a basic requirement, it is still possible for a person to be hired based on his/her media experience, rather than a college degree. Weaver and Wilhoit (1986) mention that it is not necessary for a person to graduate from college in order to get a job as a journalist. This section examines research conducted on the educational backgrounds and preferences of American journalists in newspapers, radio and television, and magazines.

In 1971, Johnstone and his colleagues conducted a national survey of U.S. journalists to explore their educational backgrounds. The findings revealed that nearly 60 percent of all journalists had graduated from college, and 34 percent had majored in journalism (Johnstone, 1976). More than ten years later, Weaver and Wilhoit (1986) updated Johnstone's study and made comparisons whenever possible.

Nearly 40 percent of U.S. journalists of all ages had an undergraduate degree in 1971, compared to slightly more than 50 percent in 1982-83 (Weaver and Wilhoit, 1986). However, only eight percent of journalists had a graduate degree in 1971. By 1982-83, that number had increased to 11 percent. The most significant increase of graduate degrees was among journalists between the ages of 35 and 44 (11 percent in 1971 to 18 percent in 1982-83).

Weaver and Wilhoit's study found a dramatic increase in the number of younger journalists who completed a four-year degree. Almost 70 percent of journalists age 25 and younger were college graduates, compared to only 41 percent in 1971 (Weaver and Wilhoit, 1986). This data clearly shows that most journalists do graduate from college, but only a small percentage of them hold a graduate degree.

The data on specific fields of study for journalists with a college degree reflect a somewhat different outlook. While Johnstone found that journalism was the most popular overall major in higher education, only 22.6 percent of working journalists had actually majored in journalism. And only seven percent completed graduate degrees in journalism (Johnstone, 1971). Weaver and Wilhoit's data showed a similar proportion in 1982-83, with 29.5 percent of journalists holding an undergraduate degree and 7.5 percent holding a graduate degree in journalism.

Do media practitioners desire additional education? Johnstone's 1971 study and Weaver and Wilhoit's 1986 study examined this question. More than

57 percent of the respondents in Johnstone's research said it would be helpful to have some kind of additional training in journalism or another area. Nearly 77 percent in Weaver and Wilhoit's study indicated more of a desire for additional training in journalism, business, news-analysis clinics and seminars than in areas such as political science, English, history, economics, law, photography, and shorthand.

Burgoons and Atkin, in their 1981 study of 83 national newspapers and television stations owned by Gannett, found that most young journalists want to move into management positions but lack the training necessary to develop the required management skills (Burgoons and Atkins, 1982).

The Master's Degree and Curriculum

Glazer (1986) described the master's degree as traditionally the first post-baccalaureate degree. The master's degree is usually earned after at least one year of graduate study, amounting to at least 30 credit hours, and is classified as academic, professional or experimental. Glazer stated that curricula are diverse, but generally include five common components:

- 1) core courses designed for the specific field of study, such as theory or research methods;
- 2) concentration in a sub-field of study, such as journalism administration;
- 3) elective courses—many of them outside the field of study;
- 4) an integrative experience synthesizing the program's content and translating theory into practice; and
- 5) a summative experience such as a thesis or research project and/or a comprehensive examination to measure student achievement and cognitive growth (p. 17).

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- 5) a summative experience such as a thesis or research project and/or a comprehensive examination to measure student achievement and cognitive growth (p. 17).

Several writers mention a common concern of master's programs, which Glazer identified as the dilemma of "theory vs. practice"—how to balance the need for practical knowledge and training with the theoretical framework of the field of study. Briggs and Fleming (1994) note there is no consensus between academics and media professionals whether graduate education is needed, and whether programs should be "theoretical or practical, broad or specialized, rigid or flexible" (p. 12).

More scholarly articles on graduate education trends in journalism and mass communication have emerged in recent years. The related articles that have been published focus on enrollment surveys, enrollment and admissions criteria, case studies of master's programs, and the "summative experiences required of master's students" (Senat and Grusin, 1994, p. 18).

Some articles discuss the curricula and structures of a master's program in journalism and mass communications. But even fewer articles pinpoint the subject of this thesis: what media practitioners (the customers) want, need and/or desire from a graduate education; how a university graduate program can determine the expectations of its potential students; and how such programs can better structure their curricula to satisfy customer needs.

In 1980, Ryan explored admission criteria and structure of graduate programs in journalism and mass communication. Ryan surveyed graduate program coordinators in 71 schools of journalism requesting information about courses, graduation requirements, data about objective and subjective problems and how they have been solved, and future program trends.

Ryan's research revealed that almost all of the master's programs surveyed offered options in the most popular specialties: news editorial/journalism, broadcasting, public relations and advertising. Most programs offered a teaching-research curriculum (with thesis) as well as a professional curriculum (without thesis). However, Ryan cited the following eight major weaknesses and problems with master's programs:

- 1) lack of adequate resources in graduate programs because of heavy undergraduate teaching loads;
- 2) lack of a reward system that gives faculty credit for advising theses and/or professional projects, or teaching graduate classes with a very small enrollment;
- 3) not enough students to fill courses, sometimes causing programs to "develop as they can, not as they should" (p. 34);
- 4) defining the "professional project" so that it is comparable to the thesis;
- 5) admissions standards;
- 6) the small number of minority students;
- 7) students lacking academic or professional training; and
- 8) the lack of substantial research into the problems of graduate education in journalism and mass communication as well as a "comprehensive and systematic profile of master's students" in this field (p. 35).

Senat (1993) updated Ryan's study and also found a wide diversity in curricula and structures to satisfy students' educational needs in journalism and mass communication master's programs. One of Senat's main findings: 127 of the 135 graduate programs require core courses. The most common subject was research methods, followed by theory, law, introduction to graduate studies, ethics, media and society, reporting, administration and management. According to Redmond (1994), master's programs in journalism and mass communication expect to provide an educational benefit to practitioners who continue their

education, and “It is that market which may provide the greatest potential for new customers” (p. 40).

Senat also compared and analyzed curricula and structure of the 135 master’s programs through three curriculum paradigms used by Williford (1991). *Perennial analytic* looks at education as a process of changing how people think, feel and act. *Practical inquiry* stresses understanding, which is based on interaction of the subject, students, and teachers rather than detached study and the handing down of generalized, published knowledge. This paradigm asks what are we doing here and now, and how can it affect the future. *Critical Praxis* challenges students to develop their own world views through reading and exploring (Senat, 1991).

According to Senat, master’s programs can be divided into three categories: teaching/research, professional training, and both.

- 1) those focused on preparing students for doctoral study (perennial analytic), integrating journalism and mass communication with other disciplines;
- 2) those emphasizing professional training (practical inquiry), emphasizing departmentalized, subject-based knowledge and skills; and
- 3) those offering both academic and professional tracks (perennial analytic and practical inquiry) (pp. 60-61).

Senat concluded that 81 (60 percent) of the 135 master’s programs in journalism and mass communication offer a dual focus program; 28 percent offer a professional program; and 12 percent offer a teaching/research program. A comprehensive exam and a thesis are usually required in the academic and dual focus programs. A research methods course is most frequently required in all

programs, followed by a course in mass communication theory. Senat also found that most programs allow students to choose at least half of their courses.

Senat's study suggested that educators should critically evaluate their graduate programs. Because the number of journalism graduate programs doubled since Ryan's (1980) study, Senat questioned whether educators thought about "the strategies and goals of their curricula" (p.27). Senat speculated that graduate programs grew as educators tried to find a market niche when undergraduate enrollment was declining.

Briggs and Fleming conducted a study similar to Senat's in 1994. They analyzed course and graduation admissions requirements of 120 schools offering graduate education in journalism and mass communication. The data, compared to Stempel's (1971) and Ryan's (1980) study, highlight changes in these areas. Those changes include an 18 percent rise in the Graduate Record Exam requirement and a decrease in professional experience requirement. With only 10 percent of programs requiring the latter criteria, Briggs and Fleming suggested this trend could reflect that fewer media practitioners are master's students. As did Ryan and Senat, Briggs and Fleming also found diversity among master's programs, "meeting different interests and needs" (p. 17).

The 1996 Graduate Program Guide lists 150 master's programs, an increase of 15 programs since Senat's 1994 study. With the emergence of new programs, who decides what courses students will take? Senat asked this question as more graduate programs in journalism and mass communication continue to emerge.

The perennial analytic paradigm would limit student choices. The practical inquiry viewpoint could be expected to call for interdisciplinary study. The critical praxis paradigm would allow students much freedom to choose their courses (Senat, 1991). Interestingly, Senat found that 72 percent of the programs' core course requirements are less than one-half of the total coursework hours, meaning students choose most of their courses.

Distance Education and On-Line Graduate Programs

As a new millenium approaches, computer technology is becoming more and more sophisticated and widely used, especially in higher education. Colleges and universities have exploited the technological advances by offering courses on-line. Distance education is becoming increasingly popular, especially among the more technically experienced students and with the declining presence of older professors, some of whom may lack motivation, interest, and ability to learn the technology.

Distance learning takes place when the instructor and student are separated in space and often in time; when volitional control is shifted from the teacher to the students; and when the electronic media is used to interactively communicate between teachers and students (Sherry, 1994). The delivery tool can be a computer, telephone, television, satellite, and/or the mail. Distance education is used in numerous settings and for a variety of purposes. Universities use this method of delivery to increase enrollment; businesses use it to provide advanced training for employees; individuals use it to enhance

professional development and career opportunities; governments use distance education to provide on-the-job training to teachers and deliver instruction to remote areas (Potashnik and Capper, 1998). Distance learning provides several advantages to prospective students, such as convenience and cost. In other words, it allows “customers” to pursue an undergraduate or graduate degree closer to home while maintaining their full-time professional job (Laughlin, 1997).

According to InterEd, an academic quality consulting firm in Phoenix, Arizona, 1,218 higher education institutions offered distance learning courses in 1996, and 1.3 million students were enrolled in one or more distance learning courses. InterEd predicts that more than 11.6 million students will enroll in distance education courses by the year 2000 (Goldberg, 1998).

More and more literature on distance learning has emerged in the last few years. Much of the material concentrates on the enrollment surge made possible by this technology, how to develop and teach on-line courses, and the advantages of using distance education technology. Only a handful of authors have focused on graduate programs offered through distance education. Even fewer articles debate the advantages and disadvantages of using this medium that is dramatically changing higher education. This section examines literature specifically focusing on graduate programs offered through distance learning.

Laughlin (1997) evaluated a distance education program leading to a Master of Science degree in Interdepartmental Human Resources and Family Sciences at the University of Nebraska. Laughlin surveyed 118 graduate students (99 percent of them women) during the 1994/1995 academic year.

Results indicated that students praised the program and were committed to complete the program. Students voiced concerns for the time required in courses, costs, and balancing school, work, family, and community activities.

Strong and Harmon (1998) examined and compared three master's programs, two in Management and one in Library and Information Science, offered via the Internet and the World Wide Web (WWW). The institutions evaluated were The University of Phoenix (Arizona), The Graduate School of America (TGSA), and The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC).

Strong and Harmon found obvious differences in the goals, the quality of information provided, and the potential benefits of the programs. They also stated that students may encounter and should consider some potential problems when considering enrolling in such a program—problems such as “cost, accreditation, residency requirements, and synchronicity of coursework” (p. 69). Strong and Harmon's study is the first of its kind to inform the educational “consumer” (the student) about graduate programs offered on-line.

Leonard (1996) discussed how to build a distance learning graduate program in technical communication utilizing the World Wide Web as the medium for learning. His study was based on Mercer University's approach for its Master of Science degree in technical communication management. Students interact and communicate with each other and with teachers through a course home page, which includes the course syllabus, lectures, assignments, requirements, a LISTSERV, and technical support. Students post their assignments to the course home page on the Internet. Below are a few of Leonard's observations:

- 1) distance learning will not replace the classroom learning experience;
- 2) the instructor will be more involved with facilitating and coaching the learning process rather than disseminating information;
- 3) two instructors are better than one in distance education;
- 4) there will always be technical glitches;
- 5) timely e-mail communication is essential;
- 6) a dedicated support team is necessary; and
- 7) administrative support is essential for a successful program (p. 399).

Reaction from the academic arena has been mixed. The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) has criticized distance education, especially at the undergraduate level, by asking its members to oppose it unless it maintains a high standard of quality teaching and learning (Blumenstyk, 1996). The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) has formed a committee to review the concerns and possible consequences of distance learning initiatives for faculty.

Rahm and Reed (1997) surveyed directors of public administration and affairs graduate programs on major policy and organizational issues surrounding distance education technology. The findings indicated that the number of distance learning programs in public affairs and administration is growing. However, "it remains unclear whether the pedagogical and learning approaches that are required to make such programs effective are keeping pace with the ability to deliver such programs to outlying locations" (Rahm and Reed, p. 472). The researchers also concluded that even though many faculty members are interested in distance learning, and support the use of this technology, they demonstrate less enthusiasm about the overall approach than administrators and university governing bodies.

There is no question that acceptance and use of the Internet has soared beyond its original expectations, particularly within higher education. Time and distance barriers are ebbing, which opens the door to more courses and degrees being offered to a new market of customers. However, as Rahm and Reed stated, researchers should continue to address quality, mission, pedagogy, and content of distance education as it expands and grows into the next century.

Media Practitioners' Needs/Views on Graduate Education

Most of the research conducted on graduate education in journalism and mass communication has focused on curricula and structure. Most of those articles discuss the diversity of programs that fits the "needs" of students. Some studies focus on job satisfaction among media professionals and their desire to receive additional education and/or training. But only a few studies have asked the practitioners to explain and define their "needs."

Among studies examining education as a factor relating to job satisfaction, Byrd (1994) surveyed radio sales people at 34 commercial radio stations in Tulsa and Oklahoma City. Byrd found that radio sales people are most satisfied with their job in general, yet they are most dissatisfied with their opportunity for promotion and present pay. On the contrary, those with a more formal education (such as an undergraduate or graduate degree) seem to be more satisfied with their chances of promotion and present pay than those who have some high school education, a high school degree, or some college experience (Byrd, 1994).

Otherwise, little research about job satisfaction among broadcasters and journalists exists that includes education, or the demand for education, as a variable. In 1991, Drushel examined whether gender, age, race, and background are related to a person's job satisfaction. McDowell (1991) studied the relationship between hiring, training, management and salary to radio sales employee turnover. These studies, along with Byrd's research, failed to identify and consider factors that lead an employee to obtain a graduate/professional degree. Do media professionals seek an advanced degree for purposes of job satisfaction? This thesis attempts to identify the specific needs among media professionals and the reasons that would make them want to pursue an advanced degree.

Gifford and Maggard (1974) surveyed more than 500 advertising agencies to find out attitudes toward academic preparation for advertising careers. Nearly half of the population returned questionnaires. Of the respondents, 56 percent recommended a graduate degree in business or marketing or an M.B.A. About eight percent recommended a graduate degree in communications or journalism. And less than two percent recommended a graduate degree in advertising. Practitioners apparently believed mass communication graduate programs did not provide the necessary skills needed for their field.

Redmond (1994) surveyed 573 news directors at owned and operated network affiliate television stations (ABC, NBC, CBS) to find out whether news directors would desire and/or benefit from a graduate program designed to fit their management needs. Most of the respondents (84.4 percent) said they

learned how to do their job by watching others. One news director said, "It is a profession of on-the-job training" (p. 36). More than 83 percent of the respondents indicated they would like some formal management training. Redmond also found that most of the news directors have a college education. Nearly 70 percent had completed a bachelor's degree, 12.6 percent had completed a graduate degree, while 17.5 percent had less than a bachelor's degree.

Redmond's study also showed that exposure to college courses has "a greater negative effect on desire for more formal training than involvement in management seminars" (p. 37). Redmond noted that a news director might not have time for semester-long courses. He concluded that 83.4 percent of the respondents would like some formal management training if they had the time. However, Redmond argued:

The skills needed by news directors to perform their jobs do not mirror our traditional core journalism courses. They need to know more about personnel issues, budgeting, leading, and managing concepts in a dynamic and high stress world. A model 'executive journalism masters' should include heavy emphasis on practically applied skills... Research core courses for mid-careerists should emphasize methods used in the daily grind of the business world accenting marketing, focus groups, and survey research (p. 41).

Gentry's 1996 study closely focused on the educational needs of 546 media professionals in Oklahoma. However, one limitation is that the study concentrated only on extension curriculum at Oklahoma State University (OSU). Subjects received a questionnaire asking how the OSU School of Journalism and

Broadcasting could better meet the needs of Oklahoma media professionals and what courses/skills the school's extension courses should emphasize.

Most of the respondents in Gentry's study were not familiar with Oklahoma State University's extension curricula and what it offers. However, 43 percent of the 220 respondents indicated that professionals in the advertising business would most likely benefit from taking courses offered through some sort of extension program. More than half of the respondents said that desktop publishing was the most important class that should be included in extension offerings. A graphics course was second most preferred (43 percent), and 41 percent indicated a need for research. Media ethics, multicultural awareness and public speaking were rated as classes not important enough to be part of extension curriculum. Overall, 61 percent indicated they would not be interested in off-campus workshops or seminars offered for college credit.

Summary

Many articles and master's theses discuss undergraduate curricula in journalism and mass communication, but only a handful have paid attention to graduate education. Of those works focusing on master's programs, most only study curriculum, structure and various program requirements from a provider's perspective.

The researcher can only speculate that educators design their own curricula, possibly according to the skills and knowledge they believe students should develop. Several writers mention that graduate programs are diverse and

fit the "needs" of current and potential students; however, there is no explanation of how to determine those needs. This study, therefore, raises some important questions such as "What are the *real* needs of the customers?" and "How do educators know the needs of their customers?" These questions do not seem to be answered in the available literature.

As Soloski (1994) stated, curriculum should not be structured solely for the convenience of the faculty. "At the graduate level, our curriculum must take into consideration the needs of students...our curriculum must be flexible" (p. 6).

Student needs must be defined. Educators should find out who makes up their market and how education can better be tailored to fit the students' needs. This study seeks to accomplish these previously ignored objectives, with a specific focus on the Mass Communication graduate program at Oklahoma State University.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Overview

This chapter describes the research design used for this study. It also explains the selection of subjects, research methodology, the data collection plan, and the limitations of the research instrument.

Selection of Subjects

The subject population for the study was defined as media practitioners in broadcasting, print, public relations, and advertising within an 80-mile radius of Oklahoma State University's main campus in Stillwater. This territorial boundary was established by the School of Journalism/Broadcasting faculty, who considered the defined region to be OSU's practical market area for recruiting potential students. "Media practitioner" is defined as a full-time or part-time employee whose primary job responsibility requires media-related skills, such as on-air announcing, reporting, producing, writing, production, advertising, sales, upper management, public relations, programming, promotion, traffic, engineering, and graphic design.

The population consisted of media practitioners at 60 AM and FM commercial and noncommercial radio stations, 18 commercial and noncommercial television stations, and 21 daily newspapers. Additionally, 205 individual members of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) chapters in Oklahoma City and Tulsa and employees of 10 advertising agencies that are members of the American Association of Advertising Agencies (AAAA) were also subjects for this study. Radio and television stations within the 80-mile radius were selected from the 1997 Oklahoma Association of Broadcasters directory. Daily newspapers in the population were selected from the 1997 Oklahoma Media Guide. Secretaries, administrative assistants, receptionists, accountants, interns, and custodians were not included in the population since the duties associated with each of these positions typically do not require media-related skills as defined above or the educational goals pertinent to this study. College/university stations and newspapers were eliminated from the population because most of the "employees" are current undergraduate students, a group of subjects not targeted for this particular study. Rather, this study focuses on the professional media practitioner who might be interested in going "back" to school to obtain an advanced degree.

Several companies and PRSA members in the population were either eliminated or received fewer questionnaires than originally sent for the following reasons:

- 1) *The Daily Oklahoman* respectfully declined to fully participate. Rather, the researcher was allowed to send only 20 questionnaires, which were distributed to managers;
- 2) *The Tulsa World* respectfully declined to participate in this study;

- 3) *Larken, Meeder & Schweidel, Inc.*, an advertising agency on the AAAA membership list, had two telephone numbers that were both disconnected. No contact was established and therefore, the company was eliminated from the study;
- 4) the general manager at *KTOW/KTFX* radio stations in Sand Springs, Oklahoma did not take or return the researcher's calls and therefore, the company was eliminated from the study;
- 5) the general manager at *KMOD/KAKC* radio stations in Tulsa, Oklahoma did not take or return the researcher's calls and therefore, the company was eliminated from the study; and
- 6) two *PRSA* members, who are current faculty members in the School of Journalism and Broadcasting at Oklahoma State University, were eliminated from the study to avoid bias.

A complete list of each company and the number of questionnaires mailed and returned can be found in Appendix C.

Research Methodology and Design

This study used a descriptive survey method, which, in general, is designed to document current conditions or attitudes. Wimmer and Dominick (1994) stated that questionnaires have several advantages. This method allows researchers to investigate problems in realistic settings rather than in laboratories or in screening rooms. The cost of mail questionnaires is reasonable, the researcher can collect large amounts of data and variables, and questionnaires are not limited by geographic boundaries. According to Dillman (1978), mail questionnaires appear to "perform most adequately with respect to obtaining accurate answers" (p. 73). In addition, when a population is too large for the researcher to observe directly, a mail questionnaire provides a way to quickly and economically ascertain attitudes and opinions (Babbie, 1992).

The first phase of this study involved administering a pre-test to two sample populations in order to make the questionnaire as detailed, yet as explanatory, as possible. One population surveyed in August 1997 was a small sample including working professionals employed in advertising, public relations, a daily newspaper, a radio station, and a television station. The researcher selected the trial sample based on her personal contacts at each media firm. A total of 13 test questionnaires were mailed. Seven were returned. To further test the questionnaire, a revised instrument was administered to graduate students enrolled in the Mass Communication Introduction to Graduate Studies course at Oklahoma State University during the fall semester of 1997. A total of 12 questionnaires were tested and returned during this phase. Data from the two test rounds helped the researcher frame the questionnaire more specifically for the actual mailing to the target population.

The revised questionnaire and cover letter was mailed to 3,177 media practitioners in the defined population during May and June 1998. A stamped, self-addressed return envelope accompanied each cover letter and questionnaire. Before the questionnaire was mailed, the researcher personally telephoned the general managers of targeted radio and television stations, the publishers or general managers at each daily newspaper, and the presidents of the specified advertising agencies. The purpose of the telephone calls was to ascertain the count of employees matching the research objectives of the study at each station, paper, and agency, as well as to establish an on-site contact to distribute the questionnaire to each employee defined in the population. PRSA

members were not contacted by phone, since the researcher obtained a membership list for both the Tulsa and Oklahoma City PRSA chapters.

Questionnaire

The final draft of the questionnaire began with a definition of the Master of Science Degree in Mass Communication in order for each respondent to understand the purpose of the degree and the questionnaire (see Appendix B).

The questionnaire contained three sections:

- 1) **Personal & Career Information**, in which each media practitioner was asked to identify his/her current job title, list all related media experience, check the highest level of education completed, and indicate whether he/she was currently enrolled in college;
- 2) **Educational Options**, in which the respondent was requested to indicate the type of degree he/she would seek if pursuing a higher level of education. Section two also asked the respondent to specifically identify the skills and/or courses of interest, to rank specific times for classes that best suits his/her work schedule, and to indicate a preference for taking courses on campus in Stillwater or at branch campuses in other Oklahoma cities; and
- 3) **Factors/Influences**, in which the respondent was asked to identify and list factors and/or influences that would make him/her interested in advancing or continuing his/her education.

Data Collection Plan

Because the population sample was very large, the final version of the questionnaire and cover letter was mailed in four separate waves. The first was mailed May 1 with a May 15 response deadline. The second wave was mailed May 25. The response deadline was June 12. The third mailing went out June 22 with a July 3 response deadline. And the final packet was mailed June 29, asking for a July 10 deadline. A self-addressed, stamped return envelope was

attached to each questionnaire. Each envelope contained a code in the bottom left-hand corner that allowed the researcher to track from which media company a response was submitted.

The number of questionnaires sent to each company depended on the number of employees at that company. Since the researcher could not obtain a list of individual employees from each company, the correct number of questionnaires were placed in manila envelopes that were addressed to the researcher's contact at each company. Once the contact received the packet, the surveys were distributed to each employee.

Limitations

No research effort is flawless. Limitations always exist, especially when administering a large mail survey, such as the one utilized here. Because this study was restricted to media practitioners within 80 miles of Oklahoma State University's Stillwater campus, the results would not necessarily be representative of other journalism and mass communication graduate programs or other media practitioners outside the selected population area.

The researcher identified the following limitations that may exist in this research:

- 1) The questionnaire was four pages (two pages front and back) in length. Some respondents might have hesitated to complete or even fill out what they perceived to be a lengthy questionnaire.
- 2) Media practitioners are very busy meeting deadlines and concentrating on clients. The researcher speculates that many respondents did not want to take the time to fill out a questionnaire.

- 3) A chance exists that the "contact" person failed to distribute the questionnaires to each employee.
- 4) The researcher could not make follow-up phone calls since no employee lists were provided.
- 5) Too much power was invested in the contact persons and the management of media companies included in this study. Managers with some firms flatly refused to participate in the study, which meant that the researcher was unable to achieve 100 percent saturation of the questionnaire among members of the target audience.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Overview

The population for this study included 3,177 media practitioners at radio and television stations, newspapers, advertising agencies (AAAA members only), and PRSA members within 80 miles of Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma. The faculty of the School of Journalism/Broadcasting established this 80-mile boundary because the defined area is considered to be the most practical market region for recruiting potential students to OSU's Stillwater campus and its three branches in Tulsa, Oklahoma City and Okmulgee.

Since the plan for distribution of the questionnaires did not allow for subsequent mailings to persons who did not initially respond to the survey, the response rate for this study is admittedly low. Only 483 questionnaires were returned, which yielded a response rate of 15.2 percent. More specifically, the rate of return for the radio profession was 13.07 percent (N=108), 15.78 percent (N=173) among television professionals, 16.33 percent (N=113) for the newspaper industry, and 4.19 percent (N=15) of the questionnaires distributed to advertising agencies were returned. The largest response in this study was from public relations practitioners, with a 36.58 percent (N=75) rate of return. A list of

the stations, newspapers, and advertising agencies in the population that received questionnaires can be found in Appendix C. The names of public relations participants are not included in Appendix C in order to guarantee their anonymity. The list also includes the number of questionnaires sent to each company and the number of questionnaires returned from each company.

Categorical frequency tests were performed on all but two of the analyses that follow. A Friedman two-way analysis of variance test was used to rank the results in Tables XVI and XVII. The findings identify (by profession, gender, title, level of education) those media practitioners in the population who are interested in a graduate education, the types and schedule of courses preferred, and the location most and least convenient (on campus, off campus, and/or via the Internet). Finally, the results reveal which factors would influence a media practitioner to obtain an advanced degree.

While this study was focused on the graduate level, the researcher discovered a major finding in the data. A surprisingly large number of respondents have not completed a bachelor's degree, and those respondents might be in the market for undergraduate education. Because this finding could be valuable for undergraduate curriculum development and scheduling, the results from those subjects with less than a four-year degree are included (where applicable) in the data.

Results

As Table I indicates, 53 percent (N=259) of the respondents were male. A majority of those males, 22 percent (N=108), work in the television industry. The overall female population totaled 47 percent (N=224), with most of those females, 14 percent (N=67), working in the newspaper industry.

TABLE I
Gender Among Media Professionals

GENDER	MEDIA PROFESSION					TOTAL
	Advertising	Newspaper	PR	Radio	TV	N
Male	1% 7	10% 46	5% 23	15% 75	22% 108	53% 259
Female	2% 8	14% 67	11% 51	7% 33	13% 65	47% 224
TOTAL	3%	24%	16%	22%	35%	100%
N	15	113	74	108	173	483

In the questionnaire, respondents were asked to indicate the highest level of education they had completed. The data indicate that 62 percent of the respondents have earned a bachelor's degree, most of which are employed in the television profession. Seven percent have completed a master's degree, and 19 percent listed high school as the highest level of education completed (see Table II). Interestingly, the four respondents who have earned a doctorate

degree work in public relations (two hold Ed.D. degrees, while the other two have J.D. degrees).

Even though this study concentrated mostly on the graduate level, the results in Table II surprisingly reveal that 31 percent (N=147) of the responding media practitioners have not completed a four-year degree. More than half of the newspaper practitioners (51%, N=57) and 41 percent (N=44) of radio professionals have less than a four-year degree.

TABLE II

**Highest Level of Education Completed
Among Media Professionals**

LEVEL OF EDUCATION	MEDIA PROFESSION					TOTAL N
	Advertising	Newspaper	PR	Radio	TV	
High School	0% 0	9% 41	0% 0	6% 30	4% 21	19% 92
Associate	1 5	3 14	0 0	3 14	4 20	11% 53
Bachelor's	2 8	10 50	12 57	12 58	26 122	62% 295
Master's	1 2	1 4	2 11	1 6	2 8	7% 31
Doctorate	0 0	0 0	1 4	0 0	0 0	1% 4
<i>Other</i>						
GED	0 0	0 1	0 0	0 0	0 0	0% 1
Vo-Tech	0 0	0 1	0 0	0 0	0 0	0% 1
TOTAL	4% N 15	23% 111	15% 72	22% 108	36% 171	100% 477 ^a

a = six questionnaires were left blank and were unusable in this table.

Respondents were asked, in general, whether they would be interested in attending Oklahoma State University. All but 11 subjects answered the question (see Table III). Overall, 35 percent (N=168) of the subjects indicated an interest in attending OSU, with most of those respondents (11%, N=53) working in the newspaper profession. Interestingly, of the 67 public relations practitioners who answered the question, 35 (52%) indicated an interest in attending OSU.

TABLE III

**Media Professionals Interested in Attending
Oklahoma State University**

ATTEND OSU?	MEDIA PROFESSION					TOTAL N
	Advertising	Newspaper	PR	Radio	TV	
No	2% 11	13% 60	7% 32	15% 71	28% 130	65% 304
Yes	1 4	11 53	7 35	8 36	8 40	35% 168
TOTAL	3%	24%	14%	23%	36%	100%
N	15	113	67	107	170	472 ^a

a = 11 questionnaires were left blank and were unusable in this table.

Table IV compares the highest level of education completed among those who are interested in attending Oklahoma State University. The data indicate that 20 percent (N=93) of the respondents who have completed a bachelor's degree are interested in taking graduate courses at OSU.

TABLE IV

**Highest Level of Education Completed Among Respondents
Interested in Attending Oklahoma State University**

LEVEL OF EDUCATION	ATTEND OSU?		TOTAL N
	Yes	No	
High School	7% 32	12% 59	19% 91
Associate	6 26	6 26	12% 52
Bachelor's	20 93	42 197	62% 290
Master's	2 12	4 18	6% 30
Doctorate	0 1	1 2	1% 3
<i>Other</i>			
GED	0 1	0 0	0% 1
Vo-Tech	0 1	0 0	0% 1
TOTAL	35% 166	65% 302	100% 468 ^a

a = 15 questionnaires were unusable in this table.

As Tables III and IV indicate, 35 percent of the respondents are interested in attending OSU. A closer analysis of Table IV reveals that of those media practitioners desiring to take courses at OSU (N=166), 64 percent (N=106) have completed a bachelor's, master's, or doctorate degree. Interestingly, 36 percent (N=60) of those respondents desiring to attend OSU have less than a four-year degree (GED, high school, vo-tech, or associate). This major finding suggests that a market exists for both the undergraduate and graduate program in the

Mass Communication Department at Oklahoma State University, regardless of the highest degree a respondent has earned.

Respondents were asked to list the type of degree they would seek if they had the opportunity to further their education (see Table V). The results in Table V suggest that more than half of the respondents (55%) would potentially be in the market to pursue a master's degree.

TABLE V

Type of Degree Sought Among Respondents Desiring To Attend Oklahoma State University

TYPE OF DEGREE	ATTEND OSU?		TOTAL N
	Yes	No	
Bachelor's in Mass Communication ^a	1% 3	1% 6	2% 9
Bachelor's ^b	10 39	13 47	23% 86
Master's in Mass Communication ^a	9 35	10 37	19% 72
Master's ^b	16 60	20 78	36% 138
Doctorate	2 6	6 25	8% 31
Graduate School Certificate Program	2 7	5 20	7% 27
Other ^c	1 2	4 17	5% 19
TOTAL N	40% 152	60% 230	100% 382

a = includes an interest in all media-related degrees (journalism, broadcast journalism, public relations, advertising).

b = includes an interest in degrees in areas such as business, fine arts, education, social science, etc.

c = includes an interest in vo-tech and certified engineering programs, "none" and "no interest" responses, and vague descriptions of general courses.

More specifically, 19 percent would seek a master's degree in Mass Communication, with nine percent interested in attending Oklahoma State University and 10 percent preferring to attend another institution. Only two percent of the respondents who desire to attend OSU would be interested in obtaining a certificate degree in the Mass Communication graduate program, rather than completing a full two-year master's degree.

Respondents were asked whether they would be interested in taking courses at Oklahoma State University on the Stillwater campus. The frequency data revealed that 40 percent would take courses on campus, while 60 percent do not prefer on campus courses (see Table VI).

TABLE VI

Media Professionals Interested in Attending OSU On Campus

ON CAMPUS	MEDIA PROFESSION					TOTAL N
	Advertising	Newspaper	PR	Radio	TV	
Yes	1% 1	14% 39	7% 19	9% 26	9% 25	40% 110
No	2 7	13 37	12 33	10 27	23 63	60% 167
TOTAL N	3% 8	27% 76	19% 52	19% 53	32% 88	100% 277 ^a

a = 205 questionnaires were left blank and were unusable in this table.

Among the 110 media practitioners interested in taking classes on campus, the majority (N=39) work in the newspaper profession.

Subjects were asked whether they would be interested in taking classes off campus. If they responded "yes," they were then asked to indicate which off-campus location they preferred (OSU at Tulsa, OSU at Oklahoma City or OSU at Okmulgee). Of the 483 returned questionnaires, 209 subjects indicated an interest in taking courses at an off-campus branch (see Table VII), 108 respondents would take courses offered via the Internet (see Table VIII), and 166 respondents did not answer the question.

Overall, the data shows that more subjects (49%, N=102) would prefer taking courses at the Oklahoma City location. Forty-four percent (N=92) of the respondents indicated an interest in courses offered at the Tulsa branch (referred to as The University Center at Tulsa, or UCAT).

TABLE VII

**Media Professionals Interested in Attending OSU
At Off-Campus Locations**

OFF-CAMPUS LOCATION	MEDIA PROFESSION					TOTAL N
	Advertising	Newspaper	PR	Radio	TV	
UCAT	3% 6	5% 12	11% 23	8% 16	17% 35	44% 92
OKC	0 1	6 12	11 22	8 17	24 50	49% 102
Okmulgee	0 0	6 12	0 0	0 1	1 2	7% 15
TOTAL N	3% 7	17% 36	22% 45	16% 34	42% 87	100% 209 ^a

a = 166 questionnaires were left blank and were unusable in this table. The remaining 108 questionnaires included those respondents interested in taking courses offered via Internet (see Table VIII).

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TOTAL N	3% 7	17% 36	22% 45	16% 34	42% 87	100% 209 ^a

a = 166 questionnaires were left blank and were unusable in this table. The remaining 108 questionnaires included those respondents interested in taking courses offered via Internet (see Table VIII).

The Internet was another option listed among the off-campus choices in this section of the survey. Data in Table VIII compares the total number of subjects interested in taking courses at all three off-campus branches (combined) to courses offered via Internet. Of the 317 respondents, 34 percent (N=108) indicated an interest in taking courses offered via the Internet, while the remaining 66 percent (N=209) would attend OSU at one of the three off-campus locations.

TABLE VIII

**Media Professionals Interested in Attending OSU
At Off-Campus Locations vs. Via Internet**

<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>TOTAL N</u>
Off-Campus Sites	66% 209
Internet	34% 108
TOTAL	100%
N	317^a

a = 166 questionnaires were left blank and were unusable in this table.

Though the data is not reflected in Table VIII, 57 (18%) respondents indicated an interest in both off-campus *and* Internet courses.

Table IX provides a list of only those media professionals, identified by job title, who indicated an interest in attending Oklahoma State University (N=168). The frequency data indicate that more newspaper editors, reporters, and sales executives, more radio sales executives, more television engineers and sales executives, and more public relations communication specialists are interested in attending OSU than any other respondent (by job title) in each respective media profession.

With all job titles combined, more sales executives, 17 percent (N=28), indicated a desire to attend OSU than any other "like" title among all media practitioners.

TABLE IX

**Specific Job Titles of Media Professionals
Interested in Attending Oklahoma State University**

TITLE	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	TITLE	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
<i>Advertising</i>		<i>Public Relations</i>	
Account Planner	1	Business Manager	1
Art Director	1	Communication Specialist	8
Copy Writer	1	Marketing Director	5
Trade Show Director	1	Membership Representative	1
	<u>4</u>	PR Director	6
<i>Newspaper</i>		Public Information Director	5
Advertising Representative	4	Records Clerk	1
Art Editor	1	Retired	1
Bookkeeper	3	Sales Exec.	4
Business Manager	3	Special Projects Director	2
Circulation Manager	4	Yearbook Consultant	1
Classified Ads Representative	1		<u>35</u>
Creative Services	1	<i>Radio</i>	
Composer	2	Assign. Editor/News Anchor	1
Data Input Specialist	1	DJ	5
Editors (all types)	6	Engineer	1
Employment Specialist	1	General Manager	3
Engineer	1	Part-time worker	1
Marketing Director	3	Producer	2
Reporter	5	Program & Music Directors	4
Paginator/Layout Designer	4	Recruiter	1
Production Manager	3	Reporter	1
Sales Exec.	5	Sales Exec.	13
Writer	1	Sports Director	1
No title	4	Traffic	2
	<u>53</u>	No Title	1
<i>Television</i>			<u>36</u>
Art Director/Graphics	3		
Assignment Editor	4		
Audio Operator	1		
Director	2		
Engineer	6		
News Photographer	2		
News Producer	2		
Production Director	3		
Program Director/Assistant	1		
Promotion/Marketing Director	5		
Public Affairs Director	2		
Reporter/Anchor	2		
Sales Executive	6		
Traffic	1		
	<u>40</u>		

N=168

Respondents were asked to indicate what they expect or hope to do in the future that a degree or course would help them obtain. Three choices were offered: 1) a job advancement; 2) a career change; and 3) to develop a specialization in the mass communication field. Most subjects checked only one of the choices, while many of the respondents checked two or more. Questionnaires with all three choices marked were categorized as "All 3 of the above" (see Table X). The data was tabulated according to the frequency count for each choice, rather than the total number of questionnaires completed. Thus, the total in Table X (N=485) does not equal the total number of questionnaires returned (N=483).

TABLE X

**Future Ambitions Media Professionals Expect
To Obtain with a Degree or Course**

FUTURE AMBITIONS	MEDIA PROFESSION					TOTAL N
	Adv.	Newspaper	PR	Radio	TV	
Job Advancement	2% 8	11% 51	7% 33	9% 46	15% 75	44% 213
Career Change	1 7	9 43	4 19	7 33	14 66	35% 168
Specialize in Mass Communication	1 2	2 10	3 16	4 22	6 30	15% 80
All 3 of the above	0 1	1 6	1 5	1 4	2 8	5% 24
TOTAL N	4% 18	23% 110	15% 73	21% 105	37% 179	100% 485

The results reveal that 44 percent (N=213) of the respondents hope to receive a job advancement from a degree or course, while 35 percent (N=168) expect to change their careers, and 15 percent (N=80) would like to develop a specialization in the mass communication field. Five percent of the subjects (N=24) expect to fulfill all three factors from a degree or a course.

Respondents were asked to list specific types of courses that they would be interested in taking to further their education. Of the 483 questionnaires, 174 respondents left the answer blank, or wrote "no opinion" or "no interest" in the space provided for that question. The results were categorized by educational departments and separated according to media profession (see Tables XI-XV). Each table provides two separate lists of courses mentioned by those with at least a bachelor's degree and by those with less than a four-year degree. This division was necessary to clearly define the specific courses that could be offered at the graduate and undergraduate level. In addition, the N value that is reported in the text for Tables XI-XV represents how often a course was mentioned, rather than the total number of questionnaires.

Media-related courses are listed individually, while other courses are grouped by general disciplines. Some of the most frequently mentioned business courses include finance, economics, marketing, accounting, budgeting, and general business. Courses in the computer science category include computer science and technology, art design, animation, etc. The science and social science department consists of psychology, theology, chemistry, counseling, etc. The other departments listed in each table are self-explanatory.

Among the advertising practitioners with at least a bachelor's degree, slightly more media-related courses were preferred than any other type of course (see Table XI). Interestingly, Internet production technology was the most preferred course (N=4) among all advertising respondents.

TABLE XI

**Specific Types of Courses Advertising Practitioners
Would Take to Further Their Education**

COURSES	# OF MENTIONS
<i>Respondents with bachelor's degree or higher</i>	
<i>Mass Communication</i>	
Advertising	1
Communications/Speech	2
Internet Production Technology	2
Journalism	1
Media Management	1
Research	1
	<hr/>
	8
<i>Business</i>	4
<i>Computer Science/Graphics & Design</i>	3
	<hr/>
	7
<i>Respondents with less than bachelor's degree</i>	
<i>Mass Communication</i>	
Broadcasting	1
Internet Production Technology	2
	<hr/>
	3
<i>Business</i>	1
<i>Computer Science/Graphics & Design</i>	2
<i>Liberal Arts</i>	2
	<hr/>
	5

two advertising practitioners did not answer.

Media-related courses were mentioned 24 times among newspaper practitioners who hold at least a bachelor's degree. Of that total, media management (N=6) and Internet production technology (N=4) were mentioned more times than any other mass communication course. A media management course was also the most frequently mentioned class (N=9) among those who have less than a bachelor's degree. However, business courses are clearly the most preferred (N=44) among both groups in the newspaper industry.

TABLE XII

**Specific Types of Courses Newspaper Practitioners
Would Take to Further Their Education**

COURSES	# OF MENTIONS
Respondents with bachelor's degree or higher	
<i>Mass Communication</i>	
Advertising	4
Broadcasting	1
Desk Top Publication	2
Ethics	2
Internet Production Technology	4
Interviewing	1
Journalism	2
Media Law	1
Media Management	6
Media Technology	1
	24
<i>Business</i>	25
<i>Computer Science/Graphics & Design</i>	6
<i>Education/Teaching</i>	2
<i>English</i>	4
<i>History</i>	1
	38
Respondents with less than bachelor's degree	
<i>Mass Communication</i>	
Advertising	2
Broadcasting	1
Ethics	1
Media Law	2
Media Management	9
Media Sales	3
Print Photography	1
Public Relations	1
Research Statistics	1
Writing	3
	24
<i>Business</i>	19
<i>Computer Science/Graphics & Design</i>	19
<i>Education</i>	3
<i>Electronics Technology</i>	1
<i>English</i>	2
<i>Law Enforcement</i>	1
<i>History & Social Science</i>	2
<i>Medicine</i>	2
	49

35 newspaper practitioners did not answer.

All public relations subjects have earned either a bachelor's, master's or doctoral degree. As Table XIII indicates, a media-related course was mentioned 53 times (58%). The most frequently mentioned class was research and statistics (N=9), followed by media management (N=8) and theory (N=5). However, like newspaper professionals, business courses were the most preferred among public relations practitioners (N=32).

TABLE XIII

**Specific Types of Courses Public Relations Practitioners
Would Take to Further Their Education**

COURSES	# OF MENTIONS
<i>Respondents with bachelor's degree or higher</i>	
<i>Mass Communication</i>	
Advertising	1
Broadcasting	1
Broadcast Journalism	1
Case Studies	1
Communication & Political Consulting	2
Crisis Communication Management	4
Ethics	3
International Communication	1
Internet Production Technology	3
Media Law	4
Media Management	8
Media Technology	2
PR Issues	3
Radio/TV/Film	1
Research & Statistics	9
Technical/Proposal Writing	3
Telecommunications	1
Theory	<u>5</u>
	53
<i>Business</i>	32
<i>Computer Science/Graphics & Design</i>	3
<i>Foreign Languages</i>	1
<i>Science & Social Science</i>	<u>2</u>
	38

28 public relations practitioners did not answer.

Table XIV reveals the types of courses radio practitioners would take to further their education. Those who hold a bachelor's (or higher) degree were more interested in taking a media management course (N=8) among the mass communication list (N=19). A higher interest exists, however, for business classes (N=16), followed by courses in computer science and technology (N=8).

A business course was also mentioned more times than any other course (N=10) among respondents who have not obtained a four-year degree. A course in the computer science department was the next preferred type of course (N=5), followed by a course in public speaking (N=4).

TABLE XIV

**Specific Types of Courses Radio Practitioners
Would Take to Further Their Education**

COURSES	# OF MENTIONS
<i>Respondents with bachelor's degree or higher</i>	
<i>Mass Communication</i>	
Advertising/Sales	1
Broadcast Journalism	1
International Communication	1
Media Law	1
Media Effects on Society	1
Media History	1
Media Management	8
Media Sales	2
Public Speaking	2
Writing	<u>1</u>
	19
<i>Business</i>	16
<i>Computer Science/Graphics & Design</i>	8
<i>Education/Teaching</i>	5
<i>English</i>	1
<i>Foreign Languages</i>	5
<i>Science</i>	1
<i>Medicine</i>	<u>1</u>
	37
<i>Respondents with less than bachelor's degree</i>	
<i>Mass Communication</i>	
Broadcast Journalism	1
Media Sales	2
Public Speaking	4
Radio/TV Editing	2
Research	1
Writing	<u>2</u>
	12
<i>Business</i>	10
<i>Computer Science/Graphics & Design</i>	5
<i>Music</i>	1
<i>Science & Social Science</i>	<u>3</u>
	19

53 radio practitioners did not answer.

The results in Table XV reveal the types of courses television practitioners would take to further their education. The mass communication course that was mentioned more times than any other media-related course among respondents with at least a four-year degree was media law (N=13). A media management course was second most preferred (N=10), followed by a course in digital technology and editing (N=9). The data in Table XV seems to mirror the data in the four previous tables. More respondents mentioned an interest in business courses (N=17), followed by a course in computer science and technology (N=16).

TABLE XV

**Specific Types of Courses Television Practitioners
Would Take to Further Their Education**

COURSES	# OF MENTIONS
Respondents with bachelor's degree or higher	
<i>Mass Communication</i>	
Advanced Journalism	1
Advanced TV Production	4
Advertising	3
Digital Technology & Editing	9
Directing	1
Ethics	2
Filmmaking	4
Film Scriptwriting	3
Media Law	13
Media Management	10
Performance/Public Speaking	5
Photography	3
Public Relations	2
Reporting	2
Research & Statistics	4
Teaching Journalism	1
Theory	3
Writing	5
	75
<i>Business</i>	17
<i>Computer Science/Graphics & Design</i>	16
<i>Education/Teaching</i>	5
<i>Foreign Languages</i>	7
<i>History & Political Science</i>	6
	51
Respondents with less than bachelor's degree	
<i>Mass Communication</i>	
Advertising	3
Audio Engineering	1
Broadcasting	3
Digital Technology & Editing	3
Directing	1
Ethics	1
Media Law	1
Media Management	5
Multi Media	1
Promotions	1
Public Relations	1
	21
<i>Business</i>	6
<i>Computer Science/Graphics & Design</i>	10
<i>Education</i>	1
<i>Engineering</i>	2
<i>Foreign Languages</i>	1
<i>Science</i>	1
	21

56 television practitioners did not answer.

Respondents were asked to rank on a scale from 1 to 6 (with 1=best, 2-next best, etc. and 6-worst) the class schedule that works best for their schedule if they were to enroll in courses at OSU during the spring and fall semesters. A Friedman two-way analysis of variance test was used to compute the rank sums for Tables XVI and XVII.

The data indicates that the schedule most preferred among media practitioners was weekend seminars/workshops offered each weekend all day on Saturday and half a day on Sunday. Evening courses offered one or two days a week is the second most preferred schedule, with classes offered between noon and 5pm, two or three days a week, being the least preferred schedule for media practitioners.

TABLE XVI

Preferred Spring and Fall Class Schedule

VARIABLE	RANK SUM	RANK ORDER
Weekend seminars/workshops (Sat. 8am-5pm, Sundays 8am-Noon)	1880.00	1
5pm-9pm (1-2 days/week)	2008.00	2
Weekend seminars/workshops (once/month)	2090.00	3
8am-5pm (2-3 days/week)	2091.00	4
8am-Noon (2-3 days/week)	2471.00	5
Noon-5pm (2-3 days/week)	2501.00	6
Friedman test statistic = 1230.083		
N = 483		

A Friedman two-way analysis of variance test was also used to rank the most preferred summer class schedule on a scale from 1 to 8, with 1=best, 2-second best, etc. and 8=worst (see Table XVII). The results indicate that any time between 8am and 5pm three days a week would be the best time to offer summer classes at Oklahoma State University. The second best summer schedule for media practitioners would be to offer a course during the Intersession (a 3-week course offered in late May or early June). The least preferred time to offer summer courses would be between 8am and 5pm, Monday through Friday.

TABLE XVII

Preferred Summer Class Schedule

VARIABLE	RANK SUM	RANK ORDER
8am-5pm (3 days/week)	1441.50	1
Intersessions (3-week course, late May, early June)	1610.00	2
Weekend seminars/workshops (Fri. 5-9pm, Sat. 8am-5pm, Sun. 1-4pm)	1953.00	3
8am-Noon (3 days/week)	1979.00	4
Noon-5pm (3 days/week)	2157.00	5
Noon-5pm (5 days/week)	2536.00	6
8am-Noon (5 days/week)	2610.00	7
8am-5pm (5 days/week)	3101.00	8
Friedman test statistic = 732.257		
N = 483		

The final question on the questionnaire asked subjects to list, in their own words, the factors or influences that would make them interested in continuing their education. Respondents were given the opportunity to list as many factors as they wanted. In addition, many individuals openly expressed their perception

of the media business and the relevance of an advanced degree. Specific comments are included in chapter five. The results show how frequent a specific factor was mentioned (see Table XVIII), and those factors were grouped into 12 different categories. The 113 questionnaires left blank were not included.

TABLE XVIII

Factors Influencing Media Professionals To Continue Their Education

FACTORS	# OF MENTIONS	PERCENT
Job advancement/higher salary	163	33%
Desire to learn/gain more knowledge	87	18
Career change	86	18
Industry changes/trends (technology)	44	9
Scheduling of courses (times offered)	28	6
Enhance current job skills	22	4
Need a degree (bachelor's)	18	4
Types of courses being offered	13	2
Need/desire an advanced degree (master's or higher)	10	2
Location of school (courses offered nearby)	8	2
More time available in daily schedule	4	1
Quality of school's program (updated facilities)	3	1
TOTAL	486	100%

113 questionnaires were left blank.

A job advancement and higher salary was mentioned 163 times (33%), which is more times than any other factor listed among all respondents for continuing an education. A desire to learn and gain more knowledge was mentioned 87 times (17%), and a career change was mentioned 86 times (18%). Fourteen respondents expressed an interest in continuing their education if they could afford tuition costs, and 13 participants expressed no interest in attending any college or university.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General

This study of media practitioners was designed to help the faculty of the Mass Communication graduate program at Oklahoma State University identify the market of potential graduate students and whether there exists an interest in graduate education at OSU. This research also sought to discover what types of courses and class schedules are preferred and whether there is an interest in attending OSU at its main campus in Stillwater, at the three off-campus branches in Tulsa, Oklahoma City and Okmulgee, and/or via Internet.

In addition, this research attempted to expand Redmond's 1994 study by including a variety of practitioners from five media professions: radio, television, newspaper, advertising, and public relations. A mail questionnaire was sent to 3,177 participants who work within 80 miles of the Stillwater campus. Media practitioners included full-time and part-time employees who utilize media-related skills such as writing, reporting, on-air announcing, production, sales, advertising, marketing, public relations, promotion, programming, engineering, graphics, and upper-management. A pre-established contact person at each participating station and firm agreed to distribute the questionnaires to each media

practitioner. Because this particular method did not allow the researcher to obtain a list of those practitioners who received the questionnaire, a follow-up letter was not administered. Even though the response rate was 15.2 percent (N=483), an admittedly low return, the findings were meaningful and valuable to this study.

Summary

Peter Drucker's marketing theory, which suggests that a business is consumer driven, was used as a foundation for this research to determine what product the Mass Communication graduate program at OSU (the business) should offer to attract professional potential students (the customers). According to Drucker (1954), a business is responsible for providing its customers the products and services they need and want. To attain this, Drucker suggests that marketing and innovation goals must be identified and established. The business should systematically measure, through customer surveys, the desired products among the existing products, the existing products that should be abandoned, and the new products desired and needed. In order to reach these marketing objectives, a business should forecast innovation goals such as new products and improvements needed for changing technologies, new improvements needed in old processes, and improvements in all areas to keep current in knowledge and skill.

Ryans and Shanklin (1986) concur with Drucker, suggesting that management must define the market mix (demographic data of potential

customers), identify the products of interest and demand, then build and implement an attractive and better plan that satisfies the customer's needs.

This study sought to identify possible marketing and innovation objectives, as defined by Drucker, Ryans and Shanklin, for the Mass Communication graduate program at OSU by focusing on the market to research customer needs and demands. As a result, this study obtained the following answers to five research questions:

Research Question #1: *Are media practitioners in the surveyed population interested in attending OSU to further their education? If so, who makes up the market mix for the mass communication graduate program?*

According to the data reflected in Table III (on p. 45), 35 percent (N=168) of the media practitioners in the population indicated an interest in attending OSU, with the majority of those subjects working in the newspaper profession (N=53, 32%). Forty (24%) television respondents are interested in attending OSU, along with 36 (21%) radio practitioners, 35 (21%) members of the Public Relations Society of America, and four (1%) advertising professionals.¹

One of the major findings in this study reveals that 147 (31%) respondents have not completed a bachelor's degree. Fifty-seven (51%) of the 111 newspaper practitioners, 44 (41%) of the 108 radio professionals, 41 (24%) of the 171 respondents from the television industry have not completed a bachelor's degree. Only one subject in advertising has not earned a bachelor's degree, while all public relations respondents (N=72) have at least a four-year degree.² This finding clearly suggests there is an interest in pursuing or completing a four-year degree, rather than a graduate education, among these respondents.

In retrospect, the data in Table IV (on p. 46) reflect that 106 (64%) of the 166 subjects interested in attending OSU have received a bachelor's degree (or higher). More specifically, the findings in Table V (on p. 47) indicated that 35 (23%) respondents showing an interest in attending OSU may potentially pursue a master's degree in mass communication. Sixty (39%) subjects interested in attending OSU would be interested in seeking a master's degree in another field. Only two respondents (5%) interested in attending OSU indicated a desire in working toward a certificate degree in the mass communication graduate program.³

Furthermore, data from Table IX (on p. 52) suggests that most of the 168 respondents interested in attending OSU would be sales executives (N=32, 19%), followed by news personnel (editors, assignment editors, writers, producers, reporters/anchors, and photographers, N=23, 14%), and marketing/promotion/creative services subjects (N=14, 8%).⁴

Research Question #2: *What skills/courses would benefit media practitioners' needs?*

While a majority of the respondents answered this question, 174 of the 483 subjects left this question blank. Business courses (i.e., general business, marketing, accounting, finance, and economics) were mentioned more times (130) than any other course from all subjects, followed by computer science/graphics and design classes (72).

Among the mass communication courses, a media management course received the most mention (47) from all respondents. For Tables XI-XV (on p.53-

62), media professionals were divided into two groups: those with at least a bachelor's degree, and those with less than a bachelor's degree. The mass communication courses that were most preferred among subjects with a bachelor's degree (or higher) in each profession are listed as follows:

- *Advertising*: Internet production technology and communications/speech.
- *Newspaper*: media management, Internet production technology, and advertising.
- *Public Relations*: research and statistics, media management, and theory.
- *Radio*: media management, media sales, and public speaking.
- *Television*: media law, media management, and digital technology/editing.

Respondents in this group also indicated a very high interest in taking business courses (i.e., general business, accounting, marketing, finance, economics) and computer science/graphics and design classes.

The mass communication courses mentioned most among those with less than a bachelor's degree in each profession include:

- *Advertising*: Internet production technology.
- *Newspaper*: media management and media sales.
- *Radio*: public speaking.
- *Television*: media management and digital technology/editing.

Research Question #3: *Do media practitioners prefer courses offered on campus, off campus (by extension or distance education), or via Internet?*

A large number of respondents did not answer this section of the questionnaire mainly as a result of either not being interested in continuing an education or in attending OSU specifically. However, the data in Tables VI, VII and VIII (on p. 48-50) indicates that many media professionals would prefer to take courses off campus and via Internet. Forty percent of the respondents (N=110) said they would take classes on campus, with most of those subjects working in the newspaper profession. Comparing the three off-campus branches, nearly half of the subjects (49%, N=102) said they would attend OSU at Oklahoma City, with television and public relations practitioners showing the highest interest in the Oklahoma City branch. Forty four percent (N=92) indicated an interest in attending OSU at Tulsa (UCAT), with the majority of those respondents also working in the television and public relations industries. Only seven percent (N=15), mostly newspaper professionals, indicated an interest in attending OSU at Okmulgee.

Overall, the majority of media professionals indicating an interest in attending OSU would prefer taking classes off campus (66%, N=209), as reflected in Table VIII (on p. 50). A large number of respondents (34%, N=108) also indicated an interest in taking courses via Internet. Although not reflected in Table VIII, 57 respondents who desire off-campus courses also indicated an interest in taking Internet classes.

Research Question #4: *What class schedule is more convenient?*

This question was divided into two parts on the questionnaire: 1) a spring and fall class schedule, and 2) a summer class schedule. The schedule most preferred during the fall and spring semesters was a weekend seminar/workshop that would meet each Saturday from 8am to 5pm and half a day on Sunday. The second most preferred course schedule was an evening class offered one to two times each week. Day classes were the least convenient for media practitioners in the population (see Table XVI on p. 63).

The summer schedule most preferred among the respondents was a class offered any time between 8am and 5pm, three times each week, followed by intersession courses. The least preferred schedule for media practitioners was a class offered any time between 8am and 5pm every day of the week (see Table XVII on p. 64).

Research Question #5: *What would influence a media professional to obtain an advanced degree?*

This open-ended question on the questionnaire gave respondents an opportunity to list all factors that would motivate them to continue their education. In addition, several subjects voluntarily expressed their views regarding the relevance of an advanced degree for a media practitioner. The data in Table XVIII (on p. 65) suggests that more media professionals may decide to continue their education because of their desire for a job advancement and a higher salary. To learn and gain more knowledge was the second most influential factor to continue an education, followed by a desire to change careers.

Interestingly, these results were similar to the results from a previous question (reflected in Table X on p. 53) asking the respondents to indicate (from three pre-selected choices) what they expect a degree or course would help them to achieve in the future. More media professionals (44%) expected a job advancement and a career change (35%) as a result of completing continuing education.

Conclusions

Overall, the data suggests that a market, although small, does indeed exist for graduate education in the Mass Communication department at Oklahoma State University. The possible target market mix (clientele) for a graduate degree in mass communication includes mid-management persons such as sales executives, marketing/promotions/creative services directors, and some news personnel working in the television, radio, and public relations professions. These potential customers are more likely to attend OSU at the Oklahoma City and Tulsa branch campuses and/or via Internet.

Most of the respondents who have completed a bachelor's degree indicated a desire to take a media management course than any other mass communication class. This finding supports Redmond's 1994 study, where he found that most of the news directors surveyed desired some type of management training (i.e., personnel, budgeting, strategic planning). Other media-related classes of high interest among potential graduate students include media law, research and statistics, Internet production technology, digital

technology/editing, theory, and ethics. Business and computer graphics courses were the most preferred outside of the mass communication discipline.

Newspaper professionals indicated the most interest in attending OSU on campus than any other media profession. However, most of those newspaper practitioners have less than a bachelor's degree. Because 31 percent of the subjects who returned a questionnaire do not have a four-year degree, which was a surprising finding to the researcher, a market could exist for undergraduate education among media practitioners. The data suggests this potential market may consist of newspaper and radio professionals mostly interested in media management, media sales, and public speaking courses. Business and computer science/graphics (i.e., graphic art, animation, computer science and technology) classes were the most desired non-media courses among newspaper and radio practitioners.

This potential market, however, can only exist in the classroom if the program schedules its classes at convenient times and at convenient locations. The schedule that media practitioners preferred most during the fall and spring semesters was a weekend seminar or workshop, followed by an evening class (5pm-9pm) during the week. The most convenient time a summer class could be offered is between 8am and 5pm, three times a week. The least preferred schedule was a day class each day of the week.

More participants indicated they would be motivated to go back to school in hopes of receiving a job advancement or promotion and to possibly earn more money.

Limitations

Distributing a high volume of questionnaires by mail can open the door to a number of unforeseeable challenges. The method in which the questionnaires reached (or did not reach) the subjects in the population may have had a direct impact on the return rate. Of the 3,177 questionnaires mailed, only 483 (15.2%) were returned. The distribution method did not allow for re-mailing questionnaires to subjects who did not initially respond, a common tactic for increasing the response rate in survey-based research. Had it been possible to do repeat mailings, the response rate for this study could likely have been improved.

Another limitation could be the length of the questionnaire, which consisted of four pages (two pages front and back). It is possible that potential respondents could have been intimidated by the length of the survey instrument or that the problem of "fatigue factor" may have inhibited respondents from finishing the questionnaire. Thus, media practitioners might not have had the time and/or had the interest to complete the questionnaire, therefore leaving some questions blank.

Or, perhaps, the possibility exists that some media practitioners may not have understood the value of the research. Briggs and Fleming (1994) noted that there appears to be no general understanding between academia and media professionals whether graduate education is needed. Based on comments from several respondents, it is very likely that such a knowledge gap might indeed exist in OSU's market of potential students.

- *A television News Producer*: "I'm satisfied with the education I received in college and don't see how any additional degrees can help me in my current position or in the future" (Questionnaire #357).
- *A newspaper Account Executive*: "I don't feel it's [continuing education] necessary. Hard work, a good attitude, and common sense need to be the foundation. It's way too easy to just say 'I've got a degree'" (Questionnaire #469).
- *A radio Sales Executive*: "College is not relevant to the sales industry. I have a 4-year degree in Marketing and would love to get my money back. My degree didn't teach me anything about how the business really works" (Questionnaire #42).
- *A Media Relations Director (PR)*: "I have yet to meet someone with a master's who knew the market as well as those of us with practical experience in this field. A degree enhances skills, not creates them. Too many people feel that an advanced degree makes them worth more, when it is actually the person, not the degree, that counts!" (Questionnaire #163).
- *A Public Relations Manager*: "I see no value in spending more bucks to obtain some big degree beyond what I have now to advance. Nothing...is more important than experience and a proven record of success. I am disillusioned with this field and might wish to pursue another course of study entirely, not tack on additional degrees to the one I already have" (Questionnaire #180).

Potential respondents with loyalties to other institutions in the region could have been intimidated by the questionnaire's obvious affiliation with Oklahoma State University, and they may have avoided filling out the questionnaire for that reason.

The researcher realizes that the questionnaire should have been more generic and less specific toward Oklahoma State University. The rate of return may have been much higher and the responses more accurate, perhaps, had the questionnaire not specifically mentioned the OSU affiliation. Nonetheless, the

findings in this study are meaningful and beneficial for curriculum development in the Mass Communication graduate program at Oklahoma State University.

Finally, the researcher acknowledges that distance learning, although addressed briefly and generically, was not specifically mentioned on the questionnaire. At the time the questionnaire was being constructed, the focus was mainly toward on-campus, off-campus, and computer-mediated classes. This study could have also explored the knowledge and interest of distance education among media practitioners.

Recommendations for Implementation

This study has identified and established specific marketing objectives and innovations worth considering for recruiting potential graduate students for the Mass Communication program at Oklahoma State University. Therefore, it is recommended that the faculty consider adjusting the current program to fit practitioner needs. One way of doing this is to offer a curriculum that requires a course in media management. Internet production technology and media law are two courses high in demand and would be worth adding as recommended electives. Ethics, research and statistics, and theory were three other subjects in which media practitioners were most interested. Because these courses currently make up the required core curriculum for a master's degree in mass communication at OSU and at many other universities (Senat 1993), it is recommended these courses remain as such.

Although the questionnaire did not specifically ask respondents whether they prefer a thesis-track or a professional-track program, data obtained in the two open-ended questions suggests that media practitioners are interested in skills and courses they could apply in their current job or use to advance in the industry. Therefore, the researcher suggests that the faculty consider offering two different areas of concentration in the mass communication master's program: 1) the academia/research option (with thesis) designed for those pursuing doctoral study and/or teaching, and 2) the "executive" option, requiring a "practical/creative project" (no thesis) tailored for the returning media professional.

One challenge, as stated by Ryan (1980), would be defining the professional project to make it comparable to the thesis. The two programs, however, could possibly satisfy the different needs and interests of those media practitioners interested in continuing education in mass communication at OSU.

In addition, the researcher suggests that the mass communication department schedule its graduate classes at a time and place that is convenient and realistic for the working media professional. This includes developing weekend workshops and seminars during the spring and fall semesters, offering more night classes, and scheduling summer intersession courses. It is also suggested the faculty seriously considers developing and offering courses at the recommended times via Internet as well as at the Tulsa and Oklahoma City branches.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study has opened the door to further research. Even though the questionnaire included two open-ended questions, future research should employ qualitative methods such as focus groups and interviews to find out the types of skills and studies media professionals use on a daily basis. The research could also explore what an ethics, research, or management class should emphasize to better satisfy the needs of the working media practitioner.

Furthermore, research should be conducted beyond the state of Oklahoma. More specifically, further studies should focus on the direction that any graduate program should take, and the research should be conducted to help target the program's consumers and what they want from an advanced education. Even though distance learning was briefly covered here, future research could focus on this subject to find out whether interest, awareness and acceptance for this type of education exists among media professionals. More specifically, what does distance learning mean to the media professional?

Perhaps future research could also address the overall image of the Mass Communication graduate program at OSU, and the institution itself, to understand what specific kinds of promotional efforts are needed to actively recruit students and enhance the graduate program's image.

The researcher acknowledges that the method in which this study was conducted resulted in several flaws that were not forecast from the beginning. One of the problems was the researcher's inability to obtain a list of individual employees, which did not allow for any follow-up mailings and possibly

contributed to the low response rate. Instead of attempting to survey every media practitioner at every company in the defined population, a better research method for a study similar to this one would be to randomly select the companies then conduct thorough research using focus groups with employees at each station.

Finally, because the media industry changes so rapidly, through technology advancements and employee turnover, the researcher recommends that OSU's Mass Communication graduate department conduct this type of study on a regular basis. Faculty would then be able to stay current with customer needs within OSU's market.

In conclusion, findings from this study of media practitioners should provide faculty of the Mass Communication graduate program at Oklahoma State University the foundation needed to construct and implement an attractive curriculum tailored to better meet the needs and expectations of potential graduate students. Such a graduate program, complete with classes of interest offered at convenient times and at a location within the customer's proximity, could possibly establish an important consumer base, increase enrollment, and strengthen the business's (university's) service to its public.

ENDNOTES

¹The percentages were calculated according to the N value for each media profession in the “yes” column in Table III, rather than the N value for the entire population in this table. These individual percentages are not reflected in Table III.

²The percentages were calculated according to the sum of N values for each media profession with less than a bachelor's degree (high school, associate, GED, Vo-Tech) and with at least a bachelor's degree (bachelor's, master's, doctorate) in Table II. These individual percentages are not reflected in Table II.

³The percentages were calculated according to the N value for each degree in the corresponding “yes” column in Table V. These individual percentages are not reflected in Table V.

⁴The N values represent the sum of respondents with like or similar titles among all media professions in Table IX. The percentages were calculated according to the N value sums. These numbers are not reflected in Table IX.

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APPENDIX A

COVER LETTER

Monday, April 27, 1998

Dear Media Professional,

I need *your* help! Please don't place this in file #13! Your knowledge and information is very important to future mass communication students.

My name is Sally Nesselrode. I am a mass communication instructor at Northern Oklahoma College, a graduate student at Oklahoma State University, and a former news producer at television stations in Oklahoma City and Tulsa. The purpose of this survey is to find out what *you* want out of an education, specifically at the graduate level, and what skills and knowledge you believe future media professionals should have. The information you provide will help shape curriculum to meet the needs of practicing media professionals rather than ivory tower recluses. Plus, I will finally earn my masters degree!

It should take you only a few minutes to complete the survey. All media professionals within an 80-mile radius of Stillwater, Oklahoma were selected as respondents. I guarantee your answers and remarks will remain **ANONYMOUS!** The hand-written number on the return envelope is merely for record-keeping purposes. The envelope will be thrown away once the survey is returned.

Please place the completed survey in the provided envelope and return it by **Friday, May 15th**. Feel free to copy the questionnaire and give it to someone you think would be a good respondent. Thank you for helping me and Oklahoma State University complete a very important research project that will be geared toward you and future graduate students.

Sincerely,

Sally Nesselrode
Candidate for Master of Science Degree, OSU
e-mail: snesselr@nocaxp.north-ok.edu

P.S. If you would like a FREE copy of the survey results, please check the box below and write your name and address. Then place this letter in the return envelope with your completed survey.

Name

Address

City

State

Zip

3. Please check the highest level of education completed.
- | | | |
|-------------------|-----------|------------------------------|
| High school _____ | MS _____ | Law _____ |
| Associate _____ | MA _____ | Ph.D. _____ |
| BS _____ | MBA _____ | other (please explain) _____ |
| BA _____ | MFA _____ | _____ |
- Major(s)/Minor _____
- Institution(s)/Year _____
4. Are you currently enrolled in college? Yes _____ No _____
- If yes, what is your major? _____
- Graduate student _____ Undergraduate student _____ Other _____
- What institution? _____

SECTION II: Educational Options

1. If you had the opportunity to further your education, what degree would you seek?
- Bachelor's of _____
- Master's of _____
- Doctorate of _____
- MBA _____
- Certificate Program* _____
- (Completion of 4 courses, such as Media Management, Research and 2 courses in your area of study. *This is **not** a master's degree.)
- Other (please explain) _____
- _____
- _____
2. What do you expect or hope to do in the future that a degree or course will help you obtain?
- _____ Job Advancement
- _____ Career Change (i.e., move to another profession within the mass media, move into teaching, etc.)
- _____ Develop a specialization in the mass communication field
3. What specific types of classes would you like to take to further your education?
- _____
- _____
4. Do you have access to the Internet? Check one:
- Yes, at home and work _____ Yes, at home only _____
- Yes, at work only _____ No _____

5. If yes, what type of computer do you have?
 PC _____ Macintosh _____
6. If you were to enroll in courses at OSU during the **spring and fall** semesters, what class schedule works best for you? Please rank on a scale from 1 to 6, with 1=best, 2=next best, etc. and 6=worst.
- _____ 8am-5pm (offered 2-3 days/week)
 _____ 8am-Noon (offered 2-3 days/week)
 _____ Noon-5pm (offered 2-3 days/week)
 _____ 5pm-9pm (offered 1-2 days/week)
 _____ Weekend seminars/workshops
 (Saturdays 8am-5pm, Sundays 8am-Noon)
 _____ Weekend seminars/workshops (offered once/month)
 (Fridays 5-9pm, Saturday 8am-5pm, Sundays 1-4pm)
 _____ Other (please list) _____

7. If you were to enroll in courses at OSU during the **summer**, what class schedule works best for you? Please rank on a scale from 1 to 8, with 1=best, 2=second best, etc. and 8=worst.
- _____ 8am-5pm (3 days/week)
 _____ 8am-5pm (5 days/week)
 _____ 8am-Noon (3 days/week)
 _____ 8am-Noon (5 days/week)
 _____ Noon-5pm (3 days/week)
 _____ Noon-5pm (5 days/week)
 _____ Intersessions (3 week classes offered late May-early June)
 _____ Weekend seminars/workshops
 (Fridays 5-9pm, Saturdays 8am-5pm & Sundays 1-4pm)
8. Are you interested in attending Oklahoma State University? Yes _____ No _____
- *If no, briefly explain why, then SKIP to Section III.**
- _____
- _____
- *If yes, how far would you drive?**
- 0-20 miles _____ 41-60 miles _____
 21-40 miles _____ 61-80 miles _____ more than 80 miles _____
9. How often would you drive to attend classes?
- Once/week _____ 3 times/week _____ Weekends only _____
 2 times/week _____ every day M-F _____ Other _____
10. Would you be interested in taking courses on campus in Stillwater? Yes _____ No _____

11. Would you be interested in taking courses off campus? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, check one:

- OSU at the University Center in Tulsa _____
- OSU at Oklahoma City _____
- OSU at Okmulgee _____
- On line via Internet _____

SECTION III

1. What factors or influences make you interested in continuing your education?

Thank you! Now I can celebrate!



Questions?

Call Sally Nesselrode:
office: (580) 628-6446
home: (580) 628-4437
e-mail: snesselr@nocaxp.north-ok.edu



APPENDIX C

PARTICIPATING STATIONS AND COMPANIES

RADIO

Code #	Station(s)	City	# Sent	# Returned
R1	KWON/KYFM	Bartlesville	19	
R2	KOKB/KPNC	Blackwell/Ponca City	9	3
R3	KREK	Bristow	5	
R4	KUSH	Cushing	5	
R5	KCRC/KNID/KXLS	Enid	29	4
R6	KGWA/KOFM	Enid	12	3
R7	WWLS/KNOR	Norman	23	3
R8	KQVC	Oklahoma City	13	4
R9	KATT/KYIS/KTNT/KNTL	Oklahoma City	102	4
R10	KBYE	Oklahoma City	6	
R11	KEBC/KXXY/KJYO/KQSR/ KTOK/KTST/WKY	Oklahoma City	173	11
R12	KMGL	Oklahoma City	29	4
R13	KOKF	Okla. City/Edmond	9	
R14	KOMA/KRXO	Oklahoma City	45	
R15	KTLV	Oklahoma City	3	
R16	KOKL	Okmulgee	8	3
R17	KVCS	Perry	4	3
R18	KIXR	Ponca City	7	2
R19	KLOR	Ponca City	7	3
R20	KLVV	Ponca City	3	3
R21	WBBZ	Ponca City	10	4
R22	KTOW/KTFX	Sand Springs	<u>ELIMIN</u>	<u>ATED</u>
R23	KXOJ	Tulsa	6	
R24	KIRC	Seminole/Shawnee	8	
R25	KGFF	Shawnee	10	7
R26	KGFY/KXPX	Stillwater	11	2
R27	KSPI AM/FM	Stillwater	14	1
R28	KBEZ	Tulsa	15	7
R29	KCFO/KQSY	Tulsa	4	2
R30	KIMY	Watonga	4	3
R31	KCKI/KVOO	Tulsa	63	
R32	KGTO/KRAV/KRMG/ KWEN/KJSR	Tulsa	109	19
R33	KHTT	Tulsa	20	9
R34	KMOD/KAKC	Tulsa	<u>ELIMIN</u>	<u>ATED</u>
R35	KCFM/KMYZ FM	Tulsa	23	2
R36	KJMM	Tulsa	10	
R37	KWSH	Wewoka	8	2

Total Radio: 826 108

== 13.07% return

TELEVISION

Code #	Station(s)	City	# Sent	# Returned
TV3	KOPX	Oklahoma City	10	
TV4	KFOR	Oklahoma City	140	27
TV5	KOCO	Oklahoma City	125	33
TV9	KWTV	Oklahoma City	150	13
TV13	KETA	Oklahoma City	45	5
TV14	KTBO	Oklahoma City	13	2
TV25	KOKH	Oklahoma City	73	21
TV34	KOCB	Oklahoma City	38	7
TV52	KSBI	Oklahoma City	14	
TV2	KJRH	Tulsa	115	23
TV6	KOTV	Tulsa	135	4
TV8	KTUL	Tulsa	112	23
TV23	KOKI/KTFO	Tulsa	69	7
TV44	KTPX	Tulsa	9	4
TV47	KWHB	Tulsa	38	2
TV53	KWMJ	Tulsa	1	
TV17	KDOR	Broken Arrow	5	2
TV27	KPOC	Ponca City	4	

Total TV: 1,096 173

== 15.78% return

DAILY NEWSPAPERS

Code #	Paper	City	# Sent	# Returned
N1	Bartlesville Examiner-Enterprise	Bartlesville	45	7
N2	Blackwell Journal-Tribune	Blackwell	14	4
N3	Claremore Progress	Claremore	30	4
N4	Cushing Daily Citizen	Cushing	15	2
N5	Edmond Evening Sun	Edmond	20	3
N6	Enid News & Eagle	Enid	100	10
N7	Guthrie News Leader	Guthrie	20	2
N8	Henryetta Daily Free-Lance	Henryetta	11	2
N9	Holdenville Daily News	Holdenville	8	
N10	Muskogee Phoenix	Muskogee	100	16
N11	Norman Transcript	Norman	50	11
N12	Associated Press	Oklahoma City	15	3
N13	Daily Oklahoman	Oklahoma City	20	7
N14	Journal Record	Oklahoma City	50	
N15	Okmulgee Daily Times	Okmulgee	24	8
N16	Perry Daily Journal	Perry	16	7
N18	Ponca City News	Ponca City	40	11
N19	Sapulpa Daily Herald	Sapulpa	26	
N20	Seminole Producer	Seminole	16	
N21	NewsPress	Stillwater	72	16
N22	Tulsa World	Tulsa	ELIMIN	ATED

Total Newspaper: **692** **113**

== 16.33% return

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF ADVERTISING AGENCIES

Code #	Agency	City	# Sent	# Returned
A1	Stan Stoner, Inc.	Enid	2	
A2	Ackerman McQueen, Inc.	Oklahoma City	120	
A3	Beals Cunningham Advertising Agency, Inc.	Oklahoma City	14	3
A4	Fellers & Company	Oklahoma City	24	
A5	Holderby Associates, Inc.	Oklahoma City	7	
A6	Jordan Associates, Inc.	Oklahoma City	80	
A7	Ackerman McQueen, Inc.	Tulsa	75	
A8	J. Walter Thompson U.S.A., Inc.	Tulsa	2	1
A9	Larkin, Meeder & Schweidel, Inc.	**OUT	OF	BUSINESS**
A10	Lee & Associates Advertising and Marketing	Tulsa	9	3
A11	Littlefield Marketing & Advertising, Inc.	Tulsa	25	8

Total Advertising: 358 15

== 4.19% return

PUBLIC RELATIONS SOCIETY OF AMERICA

Code #	Chapter	# Sent	# Returned
1-85	Oklahoma City	85	30
86-205	Tulsa	120	45

Total PRSA: 205 75

== 36.58% return

Total Surveys Sent: 3,177

Total Surveys Returned: 483

Total Return Rate: 15.2%

APPENDIX D

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW

Date: 11-25-97

IRB#: AS-98-032

Proposal Title: THE NEED FOR GRADUATE STUDY IN MASS COMMUNICATION AT
OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

Principal Investigator(s): J. Steven Smethers, Sally Nesselrode

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

ALL APPROVALS MAY BE SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY FULL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD AT
NEXT MEETING, AS WELL AS ARE SUBJECT TO MONITORING AT ANY TIME DURING THE
APPROVAL PERIOD.

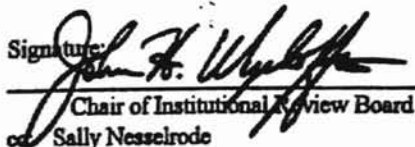
APPROVAL STATUS PERIOD VALID FOR DATA COLLECTION FOR A ONE CALENDAR YEAR
PERIOD AFTER WHICH A CONTINUATION OR RENEWAL REQUEST IS REQUIRED TO BE
SUBMITTED FOR BOARD APPROVAL.

ANY MODIFICATIONS TO APPROVED PROJECT MUST ALSO BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL.

Comments, Modifications/Conditions for Approval or Disapproval are as follows:

It is suggested that the researchers code the envelopes rather than the survey instruments. This would still allow for tracking, but would remove any identifiers from the survey instrument itself. It would also provide some relief to respondents that anonymity would be maintained. Otherwise, you should develop an informed consent form and have it signed and returned.

Signature:


Chair of Institutional Review Board
cc: Sally Nesselrode

Date: November 26, 1997

VITA

Sally Ann Nesselrode
Candidate for the Degree of
Master of Science

- Thesis: A STUDY OF MEDIA PRACTITIONERS: DEFINING THE MARKET MIX AND EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF POTENTIAL STUDENTS FOR OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY'S MASS COMMUNICATION GRADUATE PROGRAM
- Major Field: Mass Communication
- Personal Data: Born in Ponca City, Oklahoma, July 25, 1965, the daughter of Robert G. and Doris N. Nesselrode.
- Education: Graduated from Ponca City High School, Ponca City, Oklahoma in May 1983; received Bachelor of Science degree in radio/television/film, emphasizing in news and public affairs, from Oklahoma State University in December 1987. Completed requirements for the Master of Science degree in Mass Communications, with an emphasis in higher education, at Oklahoma State University in December 1998.
- Professional: News producer at *KJRH-TV* in Tulsa, Oklahoma, January 1988 to March 1990; News producer at *KFOR-TV* in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, March 1990 to October 1992; Director of Broadcasting/Mass Communication Instructor at Northern Oklahoma College in Tonkawa, Oklahoma, October 1992 to May 1998; Assistant Professor of Communication at Saint Joseph's College in Rensselaer, Indiana, August 1998 to present.
- Organizations: Broadcast Education Association member; Oklahoma Broadcast Education Association member, Oklahoma Association of Broadcasters member, Indiana Broadcasters Association member.