

A SURVEY OF SELECTED DEPARTMENT STORES IN TEXAS
TO DETERMINE EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS
REQUIRED OF BEGINNING BUYERS AND SALESPERSONS

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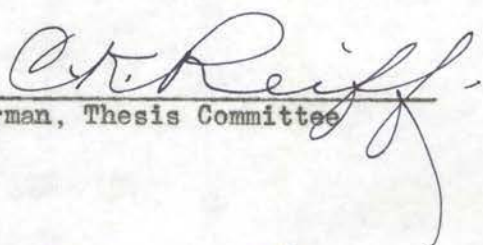
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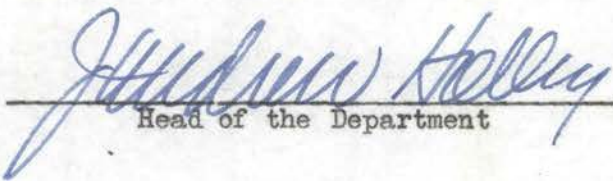
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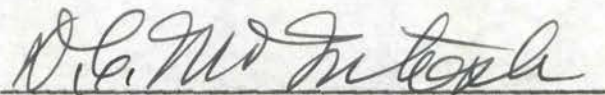
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Both business men and school administrators have recognized for several years that the difference between what business education courses are offering in high schools and junior colleges and what the business man feels he must demand of beginning employees is far too wide.

In discussing this condition, Gordon F. Culver says:

Awareness of such differences has, generally, brought about a desire on the part of school administrators and business men to cooperate with one another, and, through mutual efforts, to ascertain how these differences might be reconciled. In the past a method frequently used in attempting to remedy such problems has been first, to determine what business required of its beginning employees, and second, to adjust the school curriculum so that graduates would more nearly meet those requirements. From following such a procedure, much progress has been made in drawing business and the school into closer cooperation. In many instances, this cooperation has resulted in the setting up of rational standards--standards which were acceptable to both school and business. In all instances, however, it has indicated that the two were endeavoring to settle their differences.¹

Since this difference does exist, it poses a problem which demands a solution.

The present study endeavors to find what differences exist between school standards and employment standards for two special groups of students--those who are training to become salespersons and those who are training to become buyers for department stores.

More specifically, the study seeks to determine how the high schools and junior colleges may, through their Distributive Education Classes, and

¹ Gordon F. Culver, A Survey of Selected Oil Companies in Oklahoma to Determine Minimum Employment Standards Required of Beginning Secretaries and Stenographers, Unpublished Master's Thesis, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, Stillwater, Oklahoma, 1949.

similar classes, most effectively train students to meet employment standards required by department stores, both chain and independent.

Statement of Problem. The purpose of this study is to gather data pertaining to the minimum employment standards required of beginning salespersons and buyers for department stores, and to interpret these data in such a manner that the conclusions may be helpful to instructors of junior college and high school classes of distributive education. Specifically, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. Does the instruction and training given by junior colleges and high schools adequately prepare students to enter employment with department stores as salespersons or buyers? If not, in what area is the training inadequate?

2. What special training, if any, that is peculiar only to department stores should be given to prospective salespersons and buyers by high schools and junior colleges?

3. Do department stores employ a sufficient number of new salespersons and buyers each year to justify special instructions being included in the business courses of junior colleges and high schools?

4. What are minimum education qualifications required of new salespersons and buyers?

5. What experience qualifications, if any, are required of new salespersons and buyers?

6. What duties are performed by beginning salespersons and buyer employees?

7. Are salespersons and buyer vacancies filled by new employees or are they filled from other store personnel on a promotion basis?

8. What methods are followed in hiring new salespersons and buyers?

9. What is the employer's reaction to distributive education courses if he has had experience with them?

Scope and Limitations. The data used in this study were obtained through personal interviews with personnel directors of twenty department stores, of which eleven were chain department stores and nine were independent department stores located in Dallas, Texas, and Corsicana, Texas. The stores are considered by the investigator to be a representative cross section of typical department stores in which beginning employees would be likely to find employment.

Geographic locations of the department stores in this survey are as follows:

<u>Number of Stores Surveyed</u>	<u>Location</u>
16	Corsicana
<u>4</u>	Dallas
Total 20	

Information obtained from the personnel managers during the interviews pertained only to salespersons and buyers. This limitation in the scope of the study was decided upon after a number of discussions with personnel managers who affirmed that the securing of suitable salespersons and buyers was by far their most difficult personnel problem. This conclusion was also substantiated by surveying Nystrom's "Retail Store Operation"; Reichert's "Retailing Principles and Practices"; and Walters, Wingate and Rouse, "Retail Merchandising." In surveying this literature it was found that the securing of salespersons and buyers was given more consideration than the securing of personnel for other positions in the department store for which a beginner might qualify. Since these two groups, salespersons and buyers, are sufficiently distinctive to be considered by personnel

managers as a separate problem, other groups were eliminated. The study was then confined to the employment standards required of beginning salespersons and buyers.

Data obtained in the study are limited to the opinions of the personnel directors interviewed. Since the personal interview was used for gathering the data, no attempt was made to ascertain from the salespersons and buyers what they considered to be shortcomings in their own pre-employment training. It was recognized that the opinions of these people are valuable; however, the time which would have been required to conduct personal interviews with a representative number of employees was considered to be so great as to make such an undertaking impracticable. Too, the employee's viewpoint would be very likely to change if he were ever put in the place of personnel manager.

No attempt was made in this study to set up or define any particular methods for teaching sales work or marketing, since the needs of different communities will vary greatly and teachers can secure best results by using the many materials already available and by adapting them to his or her everyday needs.

Definitions. The definitions for salesperson and buyer given in the Dictionary of Occupational Titles were found to be all-inclusive and, therefore, were used verbatim in this study to identify the two job classifications.

Salesperson. One who displays, explains and sells merchandise to customer on sales floor. First, ascertains make, type, size, or design and quantity of merchandise ordered by customer and the approximate price customer is willing to pay; second, displays merchandise and assists customer in making a selection by suggestions and explanations, may emphasize the chief selling point of the article, be it quality, style, durability, popularity, utility, taste, appearance, freshness or price, may tell or show the customer how to use the article. Third, writes out sales slip or fills out sales contract for the customer's signature, if such

is used. Fourth, receives payment or secures credit authorization, and gives wrapped article to customer or arranges for its delivery. Fifth, cares for stock on the sales floor; places new merchandise on shelves, racks, or stands; keeps stock orderly and dusted during the day; requisitions replacements from the stockroom as necessary or informs buyer or department head of shortages as they occur. Covers stock or removes it from the counter at night. Sixth, writes out accommodation slips when customer returns merchandise for alteration or repair, indicates disposition of the merchandise. Seventh, takes periodic inventories of stock.²

Buyer. One who purchases merchandise within budgetary limitations in sufficient quantities and with sufficient appeal to warrant its rapid and profitable sale. Second, assigns selling price to merchandise; third, initiates procedure, such as price reductions and special sales, to promote the sale of surplus or slow-moving goods. He is specifically designated according to type of merchandise bought. Merchandise purchased is resold and is not processed, consumed or used in the organization.³

Department Store. Department stores are retail organizations which carry several lines of merchandise such as women's wear and accessories, men's and boys' clothing, piece goods, small wares, and home furnishings, and which are organized into separate departments for the purpose of promotion, service, accounting and control. Departmental organization distinguishes them from the general store. Additional distinction is their common emphasis upon shopping lines.⁴

New Salesperson. A new salesperson is considered as any addition to present sales force and would include both replacements and added.

Beginning Worker. The beginning worker is considered to be a person who is employed in a particular store for the first time.

Importance of the Study. It is evident that large numbers of people are employed as buyers and salespersons in department stores. It then follows that a study of employment requirements is of great importance. As support of this importance, the United States Department of Labor

² Dictionary of Occupational Titles, Division of Standards and Research, United States Government, June, 1939, p. 778.

³ Ibid., p. 122.

⁴ Harold H. Maynard and Theodore N. Beckman, Principles of Marketing, Prentice-Hall, New York, 1939, p. 146.

Bulletin 940 states:

Retail and wholesale trade have more than eight million employees and, in addition, provide a living to well over a million proprietors. Salesmen and saleswomen constitute the largest group of employees.⁵

The United States Government estimated the 1948 working population as sixty million people, which would give sixteen per cent engaged in the Retail and Wholesale sales field. "One out of every eight retail employees works in a department store."⁶

Since salesmen and saleswomen constitute the largest group of wholesale and retail employees, it may be advisable for many high schools and junior colleges to provide training in their curriculum for this field. With such a large number of employees represented, a thorough study is indicated.

Since employment opportunities in different communities vary, some provisions should be made for such differences. B. F. Kyker writes of the necessity for a close relation between the number of trained and the kinds of training and the employment opportunities in the community:

If graduates of vocational business programs are to secure employment, the kinds of vocational business training offered in any school should be determined by the kinds of business occupations in the school service areas that are open to graduates of the age and educational levels of those being trained. In other words, it is necessary that there be a close relation between the number of trained and the kinds of training and the employment opportunities in the community. Moreover, the subject matter should be continuously adjusted, through job analyses, to the particular occupations for which training is being given. If vocational business graduates are to render satisfactory service in the initial job, the training standards in terms of knowledges, skills, attitudes and

⁵ Occupational Outlook Handbook, Bulletin 940. United States Department of Labor, 1949, U. S. Printing Office, Washington, D. C., p. 23.

⁶ Harold H. Maynard and Theodore N. Beckman, Principles of Marketing, Prentice-Hall, New York, 1939, p. 147.

personal qualifications should be based on satisfactory employment requirements in government and in business.⁷

In view of the fact that many of the graduates from the high schools and junior colleges secure employment with department stores, the problems of determining employment standards required of beginning salespersons and of buyers and the opportunities available for such employment are considered of sufficient importance to warrant making this study. McKee Fisk stresses the need for close cooperation between schools and business if training objectives are to be achieved:

Business education must accept the viewpoint of business. The abstract objectives of book learning must be superseded by actual business practice in the training program. The curriculum must be modified and adjusted to meet the actual situations in which preparing for initial employment is the chief objective of vocational training. Keeping in touch with business, cooperating with employment managers, discovering marketable standards of achievement are measures which business education must follow leading toward the accomplishment of their objectives.⁸

Sources of Data. The interview method of normative-survey research was utilized in gathering data pertaining to employment standards required by department stores of beginning salespersons and buyers.

An interview schedule, in the form of a questionnaire, was prepared for use in the personal interviews. In each instance, the interview was conducted with the personnel director of the Department store.

Other data were obtained from literature and research studies in the field of business education.

⁷ B. Frank Kyker, "Factors That Contribute to the Achievement of Standards in Vocational Business Training," The National Business Education Quarterly, XII (March 1944), p. 6.

⁸ McKee Fisk, The National Business Education Outlook, Ninth Year Book, 1943, p. 223.

Method of Research. The interview method of normative-survey research was selected as being the most appropriate for gathering data necessary for the study.

Carter V. Good, A. S. Barr, and Douglas E. Scates say: "Normative-survey research is designed to secure information on conditions of practices as they exist."⁹ Of the interview procedure for gathering data, they say:

By means of the interview it is possible to secure many data that cannot be obtained through the less personal procedures of distributing a reply blank....Again, the interview permits the interviewer to gain an impression of the person who is giving the facts, to form some judgment of the truth in the facts, and to 'read between the lines,' things that are not said.¹⁰

Leonard V. Koos in his book, The Questionnaire in Education, gives as one of his recommendations for using the questionnaire in research:

"Wherever possible, it is preferable to use the oral questionnaire, that is, the interview, to the written questionnaire."¹¹

Tact and good judgment must be used when approaching and interviewing business men. In commenting on this point, Cecil C. DeHaven writes:

In general, most business people are interested in business education and are willing to help out, in fact, are a little flattered to be interviewed if one goes at it in the right way and at the right time.¹²

Procedure. The purpose for which this study was made was to learn of the employment standards required for beginning salespersons and buyers by

⁹ Carter V. Good, A. S. Barr, and Douglas E. Scates, The Methodology of Educational Research, p. 373.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 378.

¹¹ Leonard V. Koos, The Questionnaire in Education, p. 161.

¹² Cecil C. DeHaven, "Commercial Surveys--Are They Worth While?" Review of Commercial Education, Volume 37 (July 1940), p. 13.

a cross section of department stores, and, in the light of such findings, to determine whether or not special training should be included in junior colleges and high schools to prepare students for these specific jobs.

After the questions to be answered by the study had been specifically outlined, related theses and other pertinent literature were studied, and, with assistance from these materials, an interview schedule was drafted. An interview schedule used by Gordon F. Culver¹³ was found to be of particular help, and liberal use was made of many parts of his questionnaire, since the study by him is very similar.

A tentative interview schedule was prepared. The schedule was discussed with several personnel directors of the larger stores as to coverage and as to thoroughness of details. After this had been done, the revised form of the schedule was submitted to the chairman of the thesis committee for criticism. The interview schedule was approved. A copy of this schedule is included in the Appendix.

Since this study wished to consider a cross-section of department stores, three small department stores, six medium to large department stores, and eleven chain department stores were chosen for the study as most nearly typical.

The writer conducted all interviews. In each company, the writer asked to see the personnel director, and that title will be used throughout the study. In most cases, the interview was granted at once. However, if the personnel director was not available during the initial visit, an appointment was made to see him at a later date. The interviews were

¹³ Gordon F. Culver, A Survey of Selected Oil Companies in Oklahoma to Determine Minimum Employment Standards Required of Beginning Secretaries and Stenographers, Unpublished Master's Thesis, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, Stillwater, Oklahoma, 1949.

conducted at various dates in the months of July and August, 1949. Each interview was approximately forty minutes in length.

After all the information had been secured, the interview schedules were sorted and the data treated through various categories in an attempt to find answers or partial answers to the questions presented in the interview schedule.

CHAPTER II

SURVEY OF RELATED LITERATURE

In an effort to find information that would help to answer some of the questions raised in Chapter I, related literature was surveyed, including related information appearing in textbooks, articles in business education magazines, state courses of study in Distributive Education, and completed research studies. Since merchandising courses demand modern and current information, no books published earlier than 1928 were considered. All magazines containing merchandising information were limited to 1937 or later editions. The Oklahoma and Texas State Course of Study for Distributive Education, 1946, 1947, and 1948, were examined. The following materials consider the importance, placement in the curriculum, and content of courses for training in department store employment as salespersons and buyers.

Grade Placement of Courses in the Curriculum. A merchandising course, regardless of where it is offered in school, is a direct effort to prepare the student for vocational efficiency. It may be offered in high school, college, or business college; but it is intended for vocational preparation and is therefore offered immediately before the student enters the business world.

Determination of Course Content. From job analyses and occupational surveys come data about jobs which may be of much help in assisting students to choose vocations. In this way a student may see how his qualifications to perform a job compare with the qualifications required in business, thus indicating what should be included in vocational courses.

So far as business is concerned, the selection procedures used in finding and hiring new salespersons and buyers are designed primarily to

provide business with effective employees.

Naturally business will select the best qualified persons available. Therefore, it is up to the schools to provide adequate occupational training which will enable the students to secure initial positions."¹

This can be done only by finding what business needs, because businesses can ill afford to have a continual turnover of employees. John J. W. Neuner and Benjamin R. Haynes in commenting say:

When all factors are considered, the cost of employing a new worker may be quite considerable. If this worker does not fit into the job for which he was selected and must be transferred or eliminated, much of this money is lost, along with the costly delays resulting from mistakes or from insufficient number of workers. It, therefore, becomes an important problem of management to select correctly the best qualified persons. So the schools must help in this preparation.²

In its 1947 Course of Study for Distributive Education, the coordinators of Oklahoma say:

The units of this course of study are the outgrowth of the combined thinking of the Distributive Education Teacher-Coordinators, after an analysis of the specific job duties and responsibilities of part-time students in a cooperative program.³

Qualities Common Among Salespersons. In the Oklahoma State Course of Study for Distributive Education for 1947, the following qualities were found to be common among salespersons:⁴

¹ Gordon F. Culver, A Survey of Selected Oil Companies in Oklahoma to Determine Minimum Employment Standards Required of Beginning Secretaries and Stenographers. Unpublished Master's Thesis, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, Stillwater, Oklahoma, 1949.

² John J. W. Neuner and Benjamin R. Haynes, Office Management and Practices, 1947.

³ Oklahoma Distributive Education Department Course of Study, Stillwater, Oklahoma, 1947, foreword.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 14-29.

- (1) Proper personal appearance
 - (a) clothing
 - (b) grooming
 - (c) health
 - (d) mannerisms
- (2) Mental and moral attitudes
 - (a) dependability
 - (b) honesty
 - (c) loyalty
 - (d) ability to meet customers
 - (e) customer approach
 - (f) tact in finding customer needs
 - (g) truthfulness
- (3) Rules and regulations
 - (a) smoking
 - (b) attitude toward friends
 - (c) use of telephone
 - (d) use and care of equipment
 - (e) handling funds and money
 - (f) store services
 - (g) voice and speech
 - (h) enthusiasm
- (4) Job intelligence
- (5) Alertness
- (6) Initiative
- (7) Courtesy
- (8) Co-operation
- (9) Industriousness
- (10) Professionalism
- (11) Knowledge of Merchandise
- (12) Learning your customers
- (13) Knowing sales procedure
- (14) Knowing types of customers and recommended ways of handling them
- (15) Resourcefulness

Common Duties Performed by Salespersons. The most frequently performed duties of salespersons were found to be:⁵

- (1) Stocking
- (2) Selling
- (3) Building customer list
- (4) Study of current literature
- (5) Building good will
- (6) Store housekeeping
- (7) Demonstrating

Training Found to be Most Helpful. The training found to be most helpful included:⁶

⁵ Ibid., pp. 14-29.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 14-29.

- (1) A sound educational background
- (2) A study of salesmanship, marketing, advertising, fashion trends.

The larger stores require at least a high school education for a salesperson, and many prefer college graduates for inexperienced beginning salespersons.

Traits Found to be Most Helpful and Necessary. The traits most helpful and necessary in department store sales and buying were found to be:⁷

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------|
| (1) Accuracy | (12) Cheerfulness |
| (2) Dependability | (13) Honesty |
| (3) Initiative | (14) Thoroughness |
| (4) Intelligence | (15) Memory |
| (5) Courtesy | (16) Willingness |
| (6) Adaptability | (17) Promptness |
| (7) Industriousness | (18) Interest in work |
| (8) Judgment | (19) Organization ability |
| (9) Aggressiveness | (20) Ambition |
| (10) Neatness | (21) Quick Thinking |
| (11) Loyalty | (22) Poise |

Abilities Needed by Salespersons. Some needed abilities are:⁸

- (1) Good judgment, average intelligence
- (2) Good penmanship
- (3) To be able to work under pressure
- (4) Accuracy in the fundamental arithmetical processes
- (5) Good speech ability
- (6) Ability to think fast
- (7) Good spelling ability

As an incentive to do good work, the salesperson can expect to be promoted to Assistant Buyer or Junior Executive

Buyer Qualifications as to Training, Responsibilities, and Duties. A study was made of a number of published texts in order to determine buyer qualifications as to training, responsibilities, and duties.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 14-29.

⁸ Ibid., pp. 14-29.

Technical Qualifications of Buyers. Paul H. Nystrom, in his "Retail Store Operations," Roland Press, 1947, briefly summarizes technical qualifications needed:

A buyer's technical qualities are: First, he must be an expert on the technical qualities as well as on the uses of the merchandise he buys. Second, he must be thoroughly familiar with the plant operations, its opportunities and its limitations. Third, he must be sure in his observations and sound in his interpretations of the trends of consumer demands. Fourth, he must understand and keep informed on economic trends likely to affect the supply and demand and the price changes in his lines of goods. He must be particularly alert to all changes likely to affect the purchasing power of his prospective customer.⁹

Responsibilities of Buyers. Buyers, in addition, have very heavy responsibilities. It naturally follows, then, that great care should be utilized in determining buyers to be certain that they can assume responsibilities with dependability. Discussing buyers' responsibilities, Nystrom says:

The buyer handles goods valued at large sums of money. It is his responsibility to handle these assets as a banker would funds for safe keeping and investments. A buyer must make his investments in merchandise stocks in such a way as to conserve capital, produce sales, build good will and make a satisfactory net profit for the employer.

It is the duty of the buyer to fully maintain the purchasing and merchandising policies of his employer.

Good buying regardless of the type of merchandise requires careful planning. It is the function of good buying to plan thoroughly. ...and then thoroughly work the plans.

The buyer must constantly keep informed on what the market affords in his lines. He must keep in touch both with what is new and coming into use as well as with lines passing out. He must know market values of the goods he is to buy. He must buy as cheaply as his circumstances will permit. He must, of course, know what his buying limits are, not only as to total purchased, but also as to details. There is sound reason for confining purchases to few resources but there is every reason for knowing what is available elsewhere.

⁹ P. H. Nystrom, Retail Store Operations, 1948, p. 108.

Obtaining prices and other conditions of purchase favorable to the plant is a part of the trading functions. Even under conditions of standardized prices, which prevail in many lines of goods, a good trader can usually gain special advantages, such as selling helps, improvements in delivery of what-not which have values equivalent to price differentials. Good trading has always characterized good buying and probably always will.

One of the necessary functions of good retail buying is to find and to work with those resources that not only offer the best prices, but also the best condition of supply and service for the store.

The retail buyer who knows definitely what his customers want, can, and should, aid and encourage his resources in making improvements in the design, quality and usefulness of the goods he is buying....

The buyer will find it advantageous to accord fair treatment to all sellers whether he buys from them or not. In the interests of possible future purchases, he should see as many lines, representing as many different resources, as possible. On the other hand, in order that his purchases may be interesting and worth-while to the seller, he should concentrate them, so far as practicable, among a few resources....

The buyer functions vary from store to store, and even from buyer to buyer within stores, depending upon the stores, and its policies of operation. In some stores, and particularly in chain stores and other group organizations having central buying offices, the functions of the buyer are almost entirely centered around the selection and purchase of goods with very little direct responsibility for their sale or other store operations.¹⁰

Duties of Buyers. The buyer also has duties to perform in addition to his knowledge of merchandise, and the above-named responsibilities.

Nystrom enumerates these duties in detail as follows:

A. General Duties

1. To plan the activities of his department with good judgment.
2. To observe and maintain the merchandising policies of the store.
3. To be responsible for all stock investments in his department or departments.
4. To increase sales, build goodwill and make a satisfactory net profit.

¹⁰ P. H. Nystrom, Retail Store Operations, pp. 87-90.

5. To be responsible for the direction, supervision, training, and efficiency of the sales and stock people employed in his department.
6. To keep informed on all conditions and trends pertaining to success of department by constant use of such sources of information as:
 - Store records and reports.
 - Shopping reports.
 - Want slips.
 - Fashion reports.
 - Resident office reports.
 - Trade papers.
 - Style publications.
 - Salesmen.
 - Competitors.
 - General business conditions.
 - Visits to retail stores.

B. Buying

1. Subject to the instruction of the Merchandise Manager and Controller to prepare a semi-annual merchandising budget for the department.
2. To plan all specific buying in advance, submit such plans to the Merchandise Manager for approval and then execute accordingly.
3. To make out a detailed buying plan for every trip to market and work in accordance therewith.
4. Subject to the policies of the store to:
 - Select resources.
 - Select merchandise in line with store standards on quality, style, price and markup. Make out and place the necessary orders or contracts for such purchases.
5. To discover and develop new and better resources such as:
 - Wholesalers, jobbers, brokers.
 - Producers--open, exclusive agency.
 - Specialty.
 - Job lot.
 - Cooperatives.
 - Other retailers.
 - Trading.
6. To create and develop new merchandising possibilities.
7. To maintain an open and friendly attitude toward all sellers.
 - To accord fair treatment to all salesmen.
 - To see as many lines of samples as possible.
 - To maintain absolutely independent relations with all sellers.
 - To accept no personal favors, presents, or other attentions that might lead to favoritism.

8. To use resident buying office services provided by the store and cooperate with the activities of such offices so far as possible and profitable for the employer.
9. Methods of buying:
 - C. O. D., Open account.
 - Consignment, Drop Shipment.
10. Planned buying:
 - Careful preparation of trip buying plans.
 - Coordination of buying with a budget.
11. Buying for special sales.
 - Plan in advance.
 - Include only wanted merchandise.
 - Use of regular lines with care.
 - Time and timeliness.
 - Secure concessions, but only on regular terms.
 - Advertise honestly.
12. Technical information buyer should have.
 - What his customer wants now.
 - What they will probably want.
 - What he has in stock.
 - Competition.
 - Customers' complaints.
 - Merchandise qualities, uses, defects, etc.
 - Merchandise sources.
 - Market conditions and prices.
 - How much can be spent.
13. Common errors in merchandising to be checked and corrected.
 - Reductions delayed or taken reluctantly.
 - Failure to reorder promptly and enough.
 - Orders not issued from house promptly.
 - Slow deliveries.
 - Assortments too broad--duplications.
 - Consolidations of stock.
 - Buying without reference to experience and facts.
 - Advice from salesmen taken too freely.
 - Too much emphasis on what is not.
 - Selling and not enough on sellers.
 - Danger in timing.
 - Not trying to find out what customers think.

C. Stockroom Duties

1. To inspect all goods received.
2. To set the retail prices.
3. To approve the invoices for payment and for marking the prices on the goods.
4. To inspect stockroom daily and see that merchandise is kept in good order and clean condition.

5. To check the handling of stock so as to insure the department against loss.
6. To work with the receiving and marking department closely, so as to permit the prompt movement of goods in stock.

D. Supervise Stock Control, Inventory, Turnover and Margins.

E. Selling Duties

1. To be responsible for the sale of the goods purchased.
2. As a part of the semi-annual budget, to prepare a sales budget and selling calendar to be submitted for approval to the Merchandise Manager, to serve as a guide in the selling activities of the department.
3. To produce the planned sales with satisfactory results.
To see that the goods obtain the necessary display, selling pressure, and advertising.
4. To train sales people on the merchandising side of their activities.
To inspire salespeople with confidence in their goods and work.
To be a leader of the salespeople by being a salesperson himself.
To know and to be able to use salespeople knowledge of goods in selling.
To acquaint salespeople with new goods.
To show salespeople how to sell.
To inspire spirit of helpfulness to all customers.
5. To suggest and plan sales promotion methods and work in cooperation with the Publicity Division on:
Window and store displays.
Newspaper advertising.
Direct efforts.
Special events. ¹¹

With these heavy responsibilities and duties, it is understandable why most stores require in-service experience to become a buyer.

¹¹ P. H. Nystrom, Retail Store Operations, pp. 90-94.

CHAPTER III

EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS OF DEPARTMENT STORES

Chapter III summarizes data gathered by the investigator in his interviews with personnel directors of twenty department stores. The data pertain to the status and requirements of salesperson and buyer positions in the department stores.

Distribution of Employees in Department Stores Surveyed. The twenty department stores included in the study employ a total of 3,267 salespersons and buyers. Of that number, 3,096 are salespersons and 171 are buyers. Of the 3,096 salespersons, 868 are men; 87 of the 171 buyers are men. Of the 3,096 salespersons, 2,228 are women; 84 of the 171 buyers are women.

Table I shows the number of buyers and salespersons in each city surveyed.

The four stores contacted in Dallas employ 2,867 salespersons and 106 buyers; the sixteen stores contacted in Corsicana employ 229 salespersons and 64 buyers. According to statements made by the chain store personnel managers interviewed by the writer, the general employment standards used by chain store personnel directors of this study also apply to several thousand other chain stores.

Minimum Age at which Employees will be Hired. Of the twenty personnel directors interviewed, nineteen indicate they do not use new employees for buyers; four say new-employee buyers have been tried and found unsatisfactory; nine report all buyers are hired from store employees. Sixteen also report no age limit for buyers, and one store indicates a minimum age of 28. Primarily, buyer vacancies are filled by present employees and, in general, age is not an important factor in employing buyers.

TABLE I
GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF
SALESPERSON AND BUYER EMPLOYEES
IN 20 DEPARTMENT STORES IN
DALLAS AND CORSICANA, TEXAS

<u>Location</u>	<u>Number of Stores Surveyed</u>	<u>Number of Employees</u>					
		<u>Buyers</u>		<u>Salespersons</u>		<u>Total</u>	
		<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>		
Dallas	4	44	63	800	2,067	2,974	
Corsicana	<u>16</u>	<u>43</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>68</u>	<u>161</u>	<u>293</u>	
Total	20	87	84	868	2,228	3,267	

This table should be read as follows: Four department stores in Dallas employ a total of 2,974 salespersons and buyers. Of this total, 44 men and 63 women are buyers; 800 men and 2,067 women are salespersons.

All personnel directors also indicate that sex is not considered in employing or promoting to buyers.

As will be shown later, these data would seem to indicate that the graduate of neither high school nor junior college can expect to be a buyer at graduation, or until he has acquired broad experience.

Eighteen personnel directors say the minimum age requirement for beginning salespersons in their organization is sixteen, the Texas state minimum age limit; two personnel directors indicate a minimum age limit of eighteen. The average minimum age for beginning salespersons is 17 years.

These data would seem to indicate that, as far as age is concerned, high school graduates would be eligible for salespersons.

Table II summarizes the minimum age requirement data.

Previous experience Requirement. Experience is required of all buyers by all twenty personnel directors interviewed, as is shown in Table III. Only one personnel director indicates a willingness to consider experience outside their own organization as sufficient to qualify a buyer. Nineteen personnel directors require in-service experienced buyers.

Fourteen of the twenty personnel directors express a willingness to hire inexperienced salespersons outside their own organization.

Fourteen personnel directors also indicate a willingness to promote to salesperson an employee who has had no sales experience if the employee seemingly has good sales possibilities.

Nine personnel directors prefer hiring inexperienced salespersons from Distributive Education trainees, where possible. One personnel director does not want Distributive Education trainees.

From these data, it would appear that previous sales and buyer experience are required of buyers for department stores. Therefore, it may be

TABLE II

MINIMUM EMPLOYMENT AGE REQUIRED
OF SALESPERSONS AND BUYERS
AS REPORTED BY PERSONNEL DIRECTORS
OF 20 DEPARTMENT STORES

	Men (Age in Years)								Women (Age in Years)									
	16	17	18	19	20	25	28	No Require- ments	Average Age	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	No Require- ments	Average Age
Buyers							1	19	Indefinite								20	Indefinite
Salespersons	18		2						17	18	2							17

This table should be read as follows: All of the twenty department stores will employ women buyers. One store requires a minimum age of 28. Nineteen stores do not consider minimum age as a buyer requirement. Average minimum age is indefinite.

TABLE III
PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR
BEGINNING SALESPERSONS AND BUYERS

<u>Type of Employee</u>	<u>Number of Personnel Directors Reporting Experience Requirement</u>		
	<u>Required</u>	<u>Preferred</u>	<u>Immaterial</u>
Buyers	20		0
Salespersons	6	20	0

This table should be read as follows: Twenty personnel directors report that experience is required for buyers.

assumed that this area offers slight employment opportunity for high school or junior college graduates without experience.

However, sales positions do appear to offer an area of employment for high school or junior college graduates, especially so if they have worked at this type of work part-time while in school. Part-time work while in school satisfies a portion of the experience requirement for salespersons.

Marital Status Preferred. In Table IV all data concerning marital status are shown. One department store personnel director indicates that married men are preferred as salespersons and buyers; however, he states it is not a requirement. All others indicate marital status is immaterial.

Minimum Education Requirements. Information concerning minimum education requirements is summarized in Table V. Seventeen personnel directors interviewed say that no minimum education requirements are set as a prerequisite to employment. However, all of them indicate that high school graduates are preferred. Two personnel directors state that employees could not meet other salesperson requirements, such as personal hygiene, good English, and manners, unless they have at least completed high school. Three stores require that inexperienced salespersons be at least high school graduates. Also, no minimum educational requirements as such are set up, for buyers can be met only by a college education or years of training under competent buyers, or both.

While no minimum education requirements are found, any one with less than a high school education would be unable to meet the department store's general employment requirements.

Distribution of New Salespersons and Buyers Employed During a Normal Business Year. The twenty department stores hire approximately 1,278 new salespersons and buyers during a normal business year. Of that number, 29

TABLE IV
MARITAL STATUS PREFERRED
FOR BEGINNING SALESPERSONS AND BUYERS

	Number of Personnel Directors Reporting	Men			Women			*
		S	M	I	S	M	I	
Buyers	20	0	1	19	0	1	19	
Salespersons	20	0	1	19	0	1	19	

*Abbreviations: S-Single; M-Married; I-Immateral

This table should be read as follows: One Personnel Director indicated he preferred married men or married women for buyers.

TABLE V
MINIMUM EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR EMPLOYMENT

<u>Position</u>	<u>Number of Personnel Directors Reporting</u>	<u>Number of Personnel Directors Requiring</u>		
		<u>Less Than High School Graduate</u>	<u>High School Graduate</u>	<u>College Graduate</u>
Buyers	20	20		
Salesperson	20	17	3	

This table should be read as follows: Twenty personnel directors expressed a willingness to hire buyers with less than a high school education.

are buyers and the other 1,249 are salespersons.

Six personnel directors indicate they will need no new buyers in the next five years, while ten personnel directors in Corsicana expect to need six buyers per year in the next five years.

The geographical distribution of new salespersons and buyers employed by the twenty department stores is shown in Table VI.

During the next five years the sixteen Corsicana department stores expect to use 32 new buyers and 339 new salespersons.

The four department stores in Dallas expect to use 230 new buyers and 5,710 new regular salespersons for the same period. See Table VII for these data.

Two reasons were given for the expected increase. Any department store of modern size has a normal loss over a five-year period which will require replacements. The second reason is expected expansion, which is particularly true of the chain stores. In the case of chain stores, even if the local situation remains static, expansion of the system might well cause a promotion in some local personnel.

How Vacancies are Filled. Five of the stores included in this study maintain fully established personnel offices. One of the duties of these offices is to recruit salespersons and buyers and determine their qualifications, and to assign them to the place they are to occupy in the organization. In one store included in the study, the assistant manager assumes the duties of the personnel director along with other duties. In the other fourteen stores, the manager or owner assumes the personnel duties along with the other duties. It appears that the manager-personnel type of director is perhaps better qualified to judge performance and needs of buyers and salespersons than any other because he not only determines job

TABLE VI
GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF
APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF NEW BUYERS AND SALESPERSONS
EMPLOYED DURING A NORMAL BUSINESS YEAR

<u>Location</u>	<u>Number of Stores Reporting</u>	<u>Approximate Number of Newly Employed</u>		
		<u>Buyers</u>	<u>Salespersons</u>	<u>Total</u>
Dallas	4	23	1,181	1,204
Corsicana	<u>16</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>68</u>	<u>74</u>
Total	20	29	1,249	1,278

This table should be read as follows: During a normal business year four department stores located in Dallas employ approximately 23 new buyers and 1,181 salespersons.

TABLE VII
 EXPECTED STATUS OF SALESPERSON AND BUYER POSITIONS
 DURING THE NEXT FIVE YEARS
 AS REPORTED BY PERSONNEL DIRECTORS
 OF TWENTY DEPARTMENT STORES

Location	Number of Stores Surveyed	Number of Newly Employed Each Year			
		Buyers		Salespersons	
		No Changes Expected	Increase Expected	No Changes Expected	Increase Expected
Dallas	4	0	4	0	4
Corsicana	<u>16</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>16</u>
Total	20	6	14	0	20

This table should be read as follows: Of the four personnel directors interviewed in Dallas, none indicate they expect any changes in buyers and four report they expect increases. Four also expect an increase in salespersons.

needs but is also responsible for coordinating these duties with the whole system's needs. The personnel directors of all the stores studied depend on the friends and relatives of satisfactory employees as their first source of supply for store personnel needs.

Four of the stores use private employment agencies as a second source of supplying their needs. Six depend on United States Employment Service as a second source of supply. Sixteen stores actually notify school bureaus of vacancies, and if the schools have anyone to recommend, the store will consider him as far as possible.

Ten of the stores report they use newspaper advertising, if needed, to secure suitable personnel. However, the methods used to secure employees vary to such a degree that no single classification of methods would apply.

None of the stores studied depends on tests of any kind to select salespersons or buyers. Two personnel directors state testing has been tried and has proven unsatisfactory.

One personnel director asks for recommendations on tests. She also states she has unsuccessfully tried to use the Kuder Preference Tests.

Another personnel director reports they have tried having applicants tested by two commercial testing firms and that the recommendations of both firms are contrary to the performance of the applicants on the job.

Personnel managers of the twenty department stores were asked to indicate whether vacancies are filled by new employees, present employees on a promotional basis, or by both. The personnel directors were also asked to indicate the order of procedure for filling the vacancies.

Where possible, all stores fill buyer vacancies by promotion from either assistant buyers or salespersons. Two stores in Dallas and two in Corsicana indicate that if no one of the organization can be found to fill

the buyer need, each of several other buyers are asked to accept a portion of the load until the store can train someone already within the organization.

One personnel director of a Corsicana independent store prefers buyers trained outside his own store, provided the prospective buyer has been trained in and has had experience with a larger independent store.

Salesperson vacancies are filled by both new employees and by promotion in all stores. All personnel directors interviewed state that the percentage of people suitable for salespersons is so low in positions other than sales that hiring new salespersons is a necessity.

Summarization of data showing how salespersons and buyers are hired is given in Table VIII.

Promotional Possibilities. Table IX is used to show from which store position buyers are promoted. The sales force is the only source of supply the twenty personnel directors consider for buying personnel, although heads of stock with sales experience may be considered. A salesperson is usually required to be an assistant buyer before becoming a fully responsible buyer.

Salespersons are recruited from various positions in the store, the personnel directors of the stores indicate. Data on this topic are summarized in Table X.

The data pertaining to the possibilities of promoting salespersons and buyers to other positions in the independent store are summarized in Table XI and Table XII, based on information furnished by personnel directors of the twenty department stores.

Ten of the twenty stores offer promotional possibilities to buyers. Of these, four stores promote a buyer to Merchandise Manager; two promote

TABLE VIII
WAYS IN WHICH TWENTY DEPARTMENT STORES FILL
BUYER AND SALESPERSON VACANCIES

<u>Vacancy</u>	<u>First Preference</u>		<u>Second Preference</u>	
	<u>Present</u> <u>Employees</u>	<u>New</u> <u>Employees</u>	<u>Special Training</u> <u>of Present</u> <u>Employees</u>	<u>New</u> <u>Employees</u>
Buyers	19	1	19	1
Salespersons	20			20

This table should be read as follows: When filling buyer vacancies, nineteen of the twenty department stores give first preference to present employees. One of the twenty department stores prefers an experienced buyer from another organization; also, nineteen department stores prefer giving special training and then promoting present employee to hiring new employees for buyers. One department store prefers a new employee.

TABLE IX
DEPARTMENT STORE POSITIONS
FROM WHICH BUYERS ARE PROMOTED
AS REPORTED BY TWENTY PERSONNEL DIRECTORS

Store Positions	Number of Stores Reporting
Assistant Buyers	7
Salespersons	13
Head of Stock	4

This table should be read as follows: Seven personnel directors report that assistant buyers in their organization are promoted to buyers.

Note: Some stores reported promotions from several different positions. A store is counted once for each possible promotion.

TABLE X
STORE POSITIONS FROM WHICH SALESPERSONS ARE PROMOTED
AS REPORTED BY TEN PERSONNEL DIRECTORS

Store Positions	Number of Stores Reporting
Stock Clerks	6
Elevator Operator	3
Cashiers	4
Delivery Boy	6
Receptionist	3
Wrapper	4
Bookkeeper	8
Secretaries or Stenographers	8

This table should be read as follows: Ten stores promote present employees to salespersons. Personnel directors of six of these stores report stock clerks are promoted to salespersons.

Note: Some stores reported promotions from several different positions. A store is counted once for each possible promotion.

TABLE XI
STORE POSITIONS
TO WHICH BUYERS MAY BE PROMOTED
AS REPORTED BY TEN PERSONNEL DIRECTORS

Store Position	Number of Stores Reporting
Assistant Manager	2
Merchandise Manager	4
Floor Manager	3
Junior Executive	2

This table should be read as follows: Personnel directors of ten department stores report buyers are promoted. Two stores report buyers are promoted to Assistant Managers.

Note: Two stores promote to more than one position.

TABLE XII
 STORE POSITIONS
 TO WHICH SALESPERSONS MAY BE PROMOTED
 AS REPORTED BY FOURTEEN PERSONNEL DIRECTORS

Store Position	Number of Stores Reporting
Head of Stock	4
Assistant Buyers	8
Buyers	2
Junior Executive	4
Supervisor	5
None	6

This table should be read as follows: Personnel directors of fourteen department stores report salespersons are promoted to other store positions. Four stores report promoting to Head of Stock.

Note: A store is counted each time a different position is listed.

buyers to Assistant Managers, and three promote buyers to Floor Managers.

One chain store personnel director indicates no promotional possibilities for buyers, and two stores promote buyers to Junior Executives. Two stores use more than one type of promotion.

Media Used in Locating New Employees. Seven methods of locating prospective employees are listed on the questionnaire used in interviewing personnel directors, who were invited to indicate the means used most frequently by them for locating new employees.

Sixteen stores indicate their first means of locating salespersons and buyers is through friends and relatives of present employees. These stores also indicate they may use varying media as second choice.

Six indicate U. S. Employment Agencies as second choice, while four indicate private employment agencies as second choice.

All indicate a willingness to co-operate with high school and college employment programs, but indicate this is not considered a dependable source of supply because employees are frequently not available, and in many cases hours of employability did not fit store's needs.

One personnel director of a large Dallas store states she depends solely on the applications-on-file and the Distributive Education Program for employees. This personnel director states the applications-for-employment file has always been sufficient to furnish any employees needed.

The personnel director of one of the larger independent stores in Corsicana reports he tries to keep tab on good salespersons in the other stores and when he needs salespersons he first invites any desirable person he knows to apply. If this means does not succeed, he then uses the means which seems next best and which varies according to the type of person needed. See Table XIII for a summary of these data.

TABLE XIII

MEDIA USED IN LOCATING PROSPECTIVE BUYERS AND SALESPERSONS
AS INDICATED BY PERSONNEL DIRECTORS
OF TWENTY DEPARTMENT STORES

Media	First Medium	Second Medium
Personal Acquaintances, Friends or Relatives of Employees	16	
College and/or High School Employment Bureau	0	10
Private Employment Agencies	3	4
Application on File	1	
United States Employment Agencies	—	<u>6</u>
Total	20	20

This table should be read as follows: Sixteen personnel directors report the first medium used by each of them to locate prospective store employees is through acquaintances, friends or relatives of present employees.

In light of these data, it would seem that persons desiring employment as salespersons and/or buyers will do well to file applications for the desired positions in the personnel office of the stores of his choice; also, that college and/or high school employment bureaus can be of material assistance in placing persons in department store sales jobs. An acquaintance with department store personnel can be helpful in many cases.

Status and Nature of Employment Tests. None of the department-store personnel directors has a definite testing program for possible sales and buyer employees. One personnel director indicates that her store has made some use of tests for filling sales positions but that the effort is not satisfactory nor indicative of sales ability to any appreciable degree.

Training Requirements for Beginning Salespersons and Buyers. All personnel directors agree on a sale having several principal parts and agree that the seven following titles and divisions are acceptable: (1) Pre-approach; (2) Approach; (3) Opening the sale; (4) Determining the customer's wants; (5) Presentation of the goods; (6) Answering objections; (7) Closing the sale. This information is summarized in Table XIV.

All of the personnel directors indicate an experienced and trained supervisor is given the responsibility of checking on beginning employees to determine if the salesperson is efficient in the administration of these parts of a sale. Salesmanship courses are especially valuable for training in these areas. They also expect a salesperson to be familiar with the leading trade journals of his particular line, and four personnel directors indicate familiarity with some of the recognized books on selling is noted and appreciated.

Nine of the personnel directors indicate Distributive Education trainees are their most progressive employees. Six personnel directors

TABLE XIV
SEVEN QUALIFICATIONS
OF BEGINNING SALESPERSONS
ACCEPTABLE TO PERSONNEL DIRECTORS
OF TWENTY DEPARTMENT STORES

<u>Title of Sale Part</u>	<u>Stores Reporting</u>	<u>Term Acceptable to Personnel Directors</u>	
		<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Pre-approach	20	19	1
Approach	20	20	
Opening the Sale	20	20	
Determining the Customer's Wants	20	20	
Presentation of the Goods	20	20	
Answering Objections	20	20	
Closing the Sale	20	20	

This table should be read as follows: Of the twenty personnel directors reporting for department stores, Pre-approach is acceptable to nineteen as preparation for sale; unacceptable to one.

require an employee to take a pre-sales training course before he is permitted to sell on the floor, while two personnel directors require a salesperson to understudy a designated salesperson from one to five days before attempting to sell.

All stores require familiarity with the particular lines or brands handled, and fourteen of the stores use visual aids in preparing employees for sales work.

All stores encourage salespersons to take all possible sales courses offered by the State Department of Vocational Education in conjunction with the Texas University's Distributive Education Program.

Buyers are required to meet technical requirements of buyers. The personnel directors of this study set up standards for a buyer as indicated in the following paragraphs.

All directors say a buyer must be an expert on the technical qualities as well as on the uses of merchandise he buys. He must be able to make logical decisions quickly and must be able to think clearly under stress. He must be sure in his observations and sound in his judgments and interpretations of the demands of the times. He must be alert to all changes likely to affect the purchasing power of his prospective customer.

The buyer is required to keep constantly informed on what the market affords in his line. He must know what is new and what is coming in. He must be a good trader. Buyers are expected to be on friendly terms with all sellers, although eighteen stores indicate they expect a buyer in general to concentrate on a few sources of supply. These data are shown in Table XV.

General Responsibilities of a Buyer. Data pertaining to general responsibilities of buyers are shown in Table XVI.

TABLE XV
 TRAINING DATA
 AS REQUIRED BY PERSONNEL DIRECTORS
 OF TWENTY DEPARTMENT STORES

<u>Type of Training Required</u>	<u>Number of Stores Using This Training</u>	<u>Number Who Do Not Use</u>
Supervision of beginners by trained personnel	20	
Familiarity of trade journals by salesperson	16	
Knowledge of line and brand	20	
Familiarity of recognized books on selling desired	4	16
Pre-sale training course required	6	14
Store uses visual aids in training	14	6
Adult Distributive Education courses recommended by store	20	

This table should be read as follows: Twenty stores have a trained or experienced supervisor to help beginning salespersons.

TABLE XVI
GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF A BUYER
AS REPORTED BY PERSONNEL DIRECTORS
OF TWENTY DEPARTMENT STORES

<u>Title of Responsibility</u>	<u>Distribution of Duties of Buyers by Number of Stores</u>	
	<u>Buyer</u>	<u>Joint-- Merchandise Manager and Buyer</u>
Sales Volume	17	3
Direct Sales	18	2
Select Resources	18	2
Selection of Merchandise	20	
Selection of Quality	20	
Price and Markup	18	2
Receive Goods	20	
Stock Control	17	3
Display	12	
Submit Semi-annual Budget	12	

This table should be read as follows: Seventeen stores expect the buyer to be responsible for sales volume. Three stores expect buyer and merchandise manager to be jointly responsible for sales volume.

All personnel directors indicate a buyer is expected to be responsible for planned activities of his department and that all actions be in line with store policies.

Seventeen personnel directors hold the buyer responsible for sales volume. Eighteen personnel directors interviewed expect a buyer to direct and to supervise sales, to see that all pertinent information be available to sales people. Two stores expect the buyer and merchandise manager to be jointly responsible for these duties.

All personnel directors expect the buyers, subject to the store policy, to select resources and merchandise in line with the standards on quality, style, price, and mark-up, and to buy in line with movable volume. Also, the buyer is expected to develop, if possible, new and better sources of supply. All stores require the buyer to receive and inspect all goods for his department, set the retail price, and approve the invoice for payment or reject the invoice by detailing reasons for non-acceptance.

Buyers are also held responsible for stock control, inventory, turnover, and margins. Buyers are required by twelve of the twenty stores studied to submit a semi-annual budget and selling calendar to serve as a guide in the sales of the department. These same stores also expect the buyer to see that the goods receive the necessary display, selling pressure, and advertising.

Duties Performed by Salespersons and Buyers. All personnel directors agree that the definitions of salesperson given on page 1 of the Interview Schedule and reproduced in Chapter I are all-inclusive. All indicate the definition given of a buyer can be expanded but that for a general statement of duties the definition is sufficient.

Special Training. Seven of the twenty personnel directors interviewed are of the opinion that there is special training peculiar only to department stores that should be included in classes preparing students for merchandising. This information is summarized in Table XVII.

Four of the seven personnel directors suggest graduates coming to them need more training in personality, and three personnel directors indicate a need in human relations.

All twenty personnel directors want more training in salesmanship, and two suggest a study of actual selling situations and how to make a successful sale in each situation.

The personnel directors in two of the large independent department stores suggest college graduates should be given training in elements of job opportunities. These two personnel directors comment that very few college graduates know what it takes to succeed on a job; neither can they think through on a proposition. They depend too much on theory and not enough on practical solutions to business problems.

Twelve of the twenty personnel directors indicate that no new training courses are needed in the high school or colleges for merchandising students. One personnel director states that he has been impressed with how much faster younger people learn new facts and new sales points when compared with his older salespersons.

Personnel directors of all the twenty stores indicate they depend more on experience than on training to insure successful salespersons. All express the opinion that training cannot replace experience as training for selling.

Training is not considered by any of the personnel directors as sufficient for a buyer. A buyer, all of them indicate, must have broad experience and heavy technical knowledge to be successful.

TABLE XVII
SPECIAL TRAINING
WHICH PERSONNEL DIRECTORS BELIEVE SHOULD BE GIVEN
IN MERCHANDISING COURSES

Special Training Suggested	Number of Personnel Directors Who Believe This Training Should Be Given
More Salesmanship	20
Case Study Selling	2
Elements of Job Opportunities	2
Personality Courses	4
Human Relations	20
Package Wrapping	8
Simple Lettering	11

This table should be read as follows: Twenty personnel directors believe that students in merchandising courses should have more courses in salesmanship.

TABLE XVIII
 NUMBER OF STORES WILLING TO USE
 DISTRIBUTIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM AS A TRAINING DEVICE
 AND THEIR RATING OF THE PROGRAM AS TO ITS VALUE

Number of Stores Reporting	Number of Stores Willing to Use the Program	Number of Stores Rating the Program as		
		Excellent	Good	Poor
20	19	9	5	0

This table should be read as follows: Of twenty stores reporting on Distributive Education Programs, nineteen stores are willing to use the program.

In eight stores where salespersons are required to wrap packages, additional training in package wrapping is suggested.

Eleven stores indicate salespersons need training in some form of simple, fast and effective lettering so as to be able to make counter cards and signs for their own department. Personnel directors for two large stores suggest the case method of teaching selling, to be based on typical selling situations in department stores.

Personnel directors in all twenty stores report some form of a training set-up for new salespersons. In thirteen stores they indicate a trained salesperson or department manager is appointed to supervise a beginning salesperson. Four personnel directors report pre-sales course of up to two weeks. Sixteen stores require salespersons to keep posted on sales trends and hints by reading all accessible current literature, such as store trade journals and hints and information furnished by the manufacturer. Eighteen personnel directors report their stores cooperate in either a high school and/or a college and/or both training programs in an effort to secure better employees. Also, twelve stores use visual aids in their training programs for salespersons.

Four stores indicate they have no replacement requirements established for buyers because the buying is done by the owner or a member of the firm and no increase is contemplated; therefore, no requirements have been established.

Personnel managers of the other sixteen stores all agree the buyer must first of all be an outstanding salesperson; he must have good judgment; be an expert on technical qualities; understand economic trends; and be well informed at all times. He must be able to understand and to analyze store reports; he must know suppliers; he must be able to train salespersons

on the merchandising side of their activities; he must be able to suggest and plan sales promotion, window and store displays, newspaper advertising, and special events.

Ten personnel directors say no one is promoted to buyer except from assistant buyer, and nine of these ten do not hire buyers from outside their organization.

Personnel directors of all twenty stores indicate they employ the conference as an initial correction of careless work, followed by probation if necessary, and discharge as a last resort. Seven of the twenty indicate careless work is a minor factor, while five say they have to consider it seriously; and eight say it is important in their organization. The same numerical distribution is found on bad manners, employee differences, and tardiness. Eight personnel directors report no trouble with careless personal appearance, and twelve report a conference is generally all that is necessary when any measures are needed. For dishonesty, nineteen of the twenty personnel directors indicate discharge is the only action considered in most cases, while one small chain store system indicates an attempt is made to find the cause of the dishonesty and at least one attempt is made to get the employee again on dependable status. A summary is given in Table XIX.

Nineteen personnel directors indicate the interview sheet thoroughly covers all phases of selecting and judging salesperson employees, but each personnel director states buyer's qualifications are so broad and his duties so flexible that no definition would be satisfactory.

While the twenty personnel directors believe an education is an asset in merchandising, they unanimously agree it cannot replace experience; however, they do agree that a salesperson who also has at least a high school education is preferred to one with experience only.

TABLE XIX
MEASURES USED TO CORRECT STORE ATTITUDES

Attitude Considered	Number Directors Reporting	Action Taken*			
		C	T	P	D
Careless work	20	20		14	6
Bad Manners	20	20		14	6
Employee Difference	20	16	2		4
Tardiness	20	18		2	
Careless Personal Appearance	14	14			
Bad Attitude	20	16			4
Dishonesty	20	1			19

* C-Conference T-Transfer P-Probation D-Discharge

This table should be read as follows: Twenty personnel directors report the first action for careless work is a conference. For second offense, fourteen directors place employee on probation and six discharge.

CHAPTER IV

EVALUATION OF THE TRAINING OF
BEGINNING SALESPERSONS AND BUYERS

In order to determine whether or not the merchandising training provided in high schools and junior colleges in the past has satisfactorily prepared students for employment with department stores as salespersons and buyers, personnel directors were asked to indicate whether, in their opinion, the training of these beginning salespeople and buyers has been adequate or inadequate in: machines common to salespersons and buyers; subject matter; store duties; and personal traits. Since only fourteen stores were willing to hire inexperienced salespersons, only the data secured from these fourteen stores were analyzed.

When answering this section of the interview schedule, personnel directors were asked to consider the quality of work done by the majority of beginning salespersons and buyers in their stores in the past. The questions were to be answered in relation to these considerations.

Personnel Directors' Opinions Regarding Machines Common to Work of Salespersons and Buyers of Department Stores. Of the two stores employing new buyers, personnel directors report that beginning buyers are not required to use any of the machines listed in Table XX; but these same stores also indicate that the ability to use machines would likely make the buyer more valuable. The two personnel directors report that new buyers are adequately trained in using this equipment.

The personnel directors of seven stores indicate that neither buyers nor salespersons are expected to use any of the machines. Seven stores want additional training in the use of the cash registers, adding machines,

TABLE XX

STORE MACHINES USED
AND OPINIONS AS TO ADEQUACY OF MACHINE TRAINING
OF BEGINNING BUYERS AND SALESPERSONS
AS REPORTED BY TWENTY PERSONNEL DIRECTORS

	Buyers Do Not Use Machines	Number of Personnel Directors Reporting That				
		Training in Operation of Machine is:		Salespersons Do Not	Training in Operation of Machine is:	
		<u>Adequate</u>	<u>Immaterial</u>	<u>Use Machines</u>	<u>Adequate</u> <u>Inadequate</u>	
<u>Store Machines</u>						
Marking Machines	8	2	10	5	2	7
Adding Machines	8	2	10	5	2	7
Calculating Machines	8	2	10	12	2	
Duplicating Machines	8	2	10	10	4	
Cash Registers		2	18	11	2	7

This table should be read as follows: In the twenty stores, eight buyers do not use a marking machine; two personnel directors rate buyers as adequate in the operation of this machine, and ten stores do not require buyers to operate this machine.

Out of fourteen personnel directors reporting on salespersons, five do not use a marking machine; two personnel directors report training adequate; seven personnel directors report training in marking machine inadequate.

and marking machines. In general, the larger, more select stores expect no machine work while the chain and smaller stores expect some machine operation practice.

Personnel Directors' Opinions Regarding Subject Matter Attainments Common to Work of Salespersons and Buyers of Department Stores. Table XXI presents data pertaining to subject matter in which personnel directors indicate beginning salespersons are adequate or inadequate.

Eight of the personnel directors willing to hire inexperienced salespersons say employees' knowledge of grammar is adequate, while six say beginning salespersons are inadequate in grammatical ability.

Of the fourteen personnel directors willing to hire inexperienced salespersons, all fourteen agree that beginning salespersons are very, very inadequately trained in spelling as well as in word distinction.

One personnel director reports knowledge of arithmetic is adequate, while thirteen say it is very inadequate.

Two of the fourteen personnel directors indicate penmanship is adequate for beginning salespersons, and twelve report it is inadequate, especially in figures. In voice control and speech training, two personnel directors report training adequate and twelve indicate training is inadequate. Only one of the fourteen personnel directors believes training in personality is adequate, while thirteen report that it is inadequate.

All fourteen personnel directors feel that training in human relations is inadequate.

Eight of the fourteen personnel directors have no package wrapping done by salespersons. The other six indicate a desire for a course in package wrapping.

Six of the fourteen personnel directors indicate training in lettering

TABLE XXI

SUBJECT MATTER
IN WHICH FOURTEEN PERSONNEL DIRECTORS INDICATE
BEGINNING SALESPERSONS ARE ADEQUATE OR INADEQUATE

<u>Item of Training</u>	<u>Number of Personnel Directors Reporting Training as:</u>		
	<u>Not Used</u>	<u>Adequate</u>	<u>Inadequate</u>
Grammar		8	6
Spelling			14
Arithmetic		1	13
Penmanship		2	12
Voice		2	12
Speech		2	12
Human Relations			14
Package Wrapping	8		6
Lettering	8		6

Note: Since only one of fourteen stores hires new buyers, the data are omitted.

is inadequate. Eight personnel directors do not have salespersons do lettering.

Training of Beginning Salespersons and Buyers in the Performance of Store Duties. Table XXII presents data pertaining to training in the performance of store duties of beginning salespersons that is regarded by fourteen personnel directors as adequate or inadequate.

Three of the fourteen personnel directors authorized to hire new salespersons believe that the training of beginning salespersons is adequate in building a customer list, and eleven believe that the training is inadequate in respect to this duty. Four of the fourteen personnel directors report training in respect to store policy is adequate, and ten report training in this area is inadequate.

Two of the fourteen personnel managers report the training in stocking for beginning salespersons is adequate, and twelve indicate it is inadequate.

Five of fourteen personnel directors report that training for beginning salespersons in filing is adequate; nine report that such training is inadequate.

All fourteen personnel directors report that willingness to take training is adequate.

One personnel director reports beginning salespersons are inadequately trained in how to study new selling materials and suggestions, while thirteen personnel directors state training of beginning salespersons in this phase of work is adequate.

Two personnel directors report training in how to study merchandise trends is inadequate, and twelve personnel directors report training in study of merchandise trends is adequate.

TABLE XXII
 TRAINING IN THE PERFORMANCE OF
 STORE DUTIES OF BEGINNING SALESPERSONS
 THAT IS REGARDED BY FOURTEEN PERSONNEL DIRECTORS
 AS ADEQUATE OR INADEQUATE

Store Duties	Number of Personnel Directors Reporting Training as:	
	Adequate	Inadequate
Ways of building a customer list	3	11
Respect for store policy	4	10
Stocking	2	12
Willingness to take training	14	
Filing (simple)	5	9
Study of new selling materials and suggestions	1	13
Merchandise Trends - Study	2	12
Composing routine business letters	6	8
Remembering customers and customers' names	10	4
Good social judgment (outside)	12	2
Willingness to adopt good store habits	14	
Freedom from personal mannerisms	2	12
Checking	1	13

This table should be read as follows: Three of the fourteen personnel directors employing beginning salespersons report beginning salespersons are adequately trained in building a customer list. Eleven of the stores employing beginning salespersons find training in this area inadequate.

Six of the fourteen personnel directors indicate beginning salespersons are adequately trained in composing business letters of a routine nature, while eight indicate beginning salespersons are inadequately trained in composing business letters of a routine nature.

Four personnel directors state beginning salespersons are inadequately trained in the importance of remembering customers and customers' names, while ten personnel directors report beginning salespersons are adequately trained in the importance of remembering customers and customers' names.

Only two personnel directors report inadequate training in good social judgments as affecting working habits, while eighteen report training adequate in social judgments as relates to social contacts and habits outside business hours.

All twenty personnel directors interviewed agree that beginning salespersons are willing to adopt good store habits.

Of the fourteen personnel directors who are willing to employ beginning salespersons, two indicate training in avoiding personal mannerisms is adequate and twelve indicate that training is inadequate in this area. Biting nails, facial contortions, extending tongue when exerting unusual efforts, or other visible signs of nervousness should be avoided.

One personnel director states training in checking by beginning salespersons is inadequate; however, thirteen personnel directors state training in checking by beginning salespersons is adequate.

All personnel directors state that buyers are adequately trained in all these store duties or they would never have been promoted to a buyer. It is clearly indicated by this unanimous opinion that any salesperson who aspires to become a buyer must be adequately trained in all duties listed in the questionnaire in order to be considered for promotion to assistant buyer.

Personal Traits of Beginning Salespersons. Nine personnel directors willing to employ beginning salespersons indicate that training in the trait of paying attention to details is inadequate. Five personnel directors believe training is adequate in the trait of paying attention to details.

In the organization of duties, eleven personnel directors rate the ability of beginning salespersons as inadequate and three rate it as adequate.

Three personnel directors report that beginning salespersons are inadequate in ability to follow instructions, and eleven indicate that they are adequate in this ability.

Two personnel directors indicate that beginning salespersons are inadequately trained in the trait of getting along with people, and thirteen report they are adequately trained in this ability.

Also, four personnel directors are of the opinion that beginning salespersons are trained inadequately in the trait of grooming, while ten report adequate training on this trait.

In discussing tact, eleven personnel directors indicate that the training of the beginning salesperson is inadequate in this important trait, while three indicate it is adequate.

Three personnel directors report beginning salespersons are inadequately trained in honesty, and eleven indicate that they are adequately trained in this trait.

Only four personnel directors object to the dependability of the beginning salespersons by indicating inadequacy of training of this trait. Ten rate the beginning salesperson as having adequate training in this area.

Four personnel directors were uncertain as to whether or not salespersons were adequately trained in the trait of ambition. The remaining ten of the fourteen personnel directors willing to hire beginning salespersons rate training in this trait as adequate.

Training in alertness on the part of beginning salespersons is rated as inadequate by twelve personnel directors and as adequate by two.

Training in the trait of industry on the part of beginning salespersons is rated inadequate by four personnel directors, while ten personnel directors rate such training as adequate.

Of the fourteen personnel directors willing to hire beginning salespersons, eleven rate training in accuracy in beginning salespersons as inadequate, while three report training in this trait as adequate.

Seven of the personnel directors reporting on the loyalty of beginning salespersons indicate that training in this trait is inadequate, and seven report training as adequate.

Eleven of the fourteen personnel directors rate training of beginning salespersons as inadequate in courtesy, and three rate the training as adequate.

Also, in regard to initiative, eleven of the personnel directors report training in this trait as inadequate, and three report training as adequate.

It appears to the investigator in interpreting the above data that the development of personal traits in merchandising courses should receive more emphasis. The personnel directors rate salespersons as adequately trained in several of the listed traits. However, courses stressing the development of the traits not rated as adequate and the importance of those traits to the beginning salesperson should be given greater emphasis.

Personal traits that should receive additional emphasis in merchandising courses are listed as follows, in the order of their frequency of mention by personnel directors. Twelve of the fourteen personnel directors rate alertness in beginning salespersons as inadequate. Eleven personnel directors rate beginning salespersons inadequate in all of the following traits and abilities: organization of duties; tact; accuracy; courtesy; and initiative. Nine personnel directors list the trait of paying attention to details as inadequate, and five indicate it as adequate. On loyalty, seven personnel directors rate beginning salespersons as adequate, and seven also vote inadequate on it.

Since these personal traits are highest on the inadequate list, greater stress should be placed on them. However, none of the traits listed is unanimously accepted, thereby indicating a need for more stress on each of them. Data are summarized in Table XXIII.

Of fourteen stores reporting experience with Distributive Education, thirteen rate the work done by these students as excellent, and nine stores report Distributive Education students as their best and most promotable employees. Table XXIV summarizes these facts.

In view of these findings, it would appear that Distributive Education programs should be especially encouraged in larger cities and surveyed for possibilities in smaller cities.

TABLE XXIII
 TRAINING IN PERSONAL TRAITS
 OF BEGINNING SALESPERSONS
 THAT IS REGARDED BY FOURTEEN PERSONNEL DIRECTORS
 AS ADEQUATE OR INADEQUATE

<u>Personal Traits</u>	<u>Number of Personnel Directors Reporting Training as:</u>		
	<u>Uncertain</u>	<u>Adequate</u>	<u>Inadequate</u>
Ambition	4	10	
Getting along with people		12	2
Following instructions		11	3
Dependability		10	4
Grooming		10	4
Honesty		10	4
Industry		10	4
Loyalty		7	7
Paying attention to details		5	9
Accuracy		3	11
Courtesy		3	11
Initiative		3	11
Organization of duties		3	11
Tact		3	11
Alertness		2	12

This table should be read as follows: Four of the fourteen personnel directors are uncertain, and ten rate ambition as adequate in beginning salespersons.

TABLE XXIV

REACTIONS INDICATED TO DISTRIBUTIVE
EDUCATION PROGRAMS AS TO PROMOTIONAL POSSIBILITIES

<u>Position</u>	<u>Number of Stores Reporting</u>	<u>Rating of Program</u>			<u>Number of Stores Promoting Distributive Education Students</u>
		<u>Poor</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Excellent</u>	
Salesperson	14		1	13	12
Buyer	14			14	6

This table should be read as follows: Of fourteen stores participating in Distributive Education, fourteen use salespersons; one rates salespersons' work as good, and thirteen rate their work as excellent. Twelve stores have promoted Distributive Education students to more responsible jobs.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study, as set forth in Chapter I, is to gather data pertaining to the minimum employment standards required of beginning salespersons and buyers employed in twenty selected department stores in Dallas, Texas, and Corsicana, Texas, and to interpret these data in such a manner that they may be helpful to instructors of junior college and high school merchandising courses.

Data were collected through personal interviews with personnel directors of twenty department stores located in two Texas cities. The interviews were held during the months of July and August, 1949. Data obtained through the interviews are presented in Chapters III and IV.

Summary of Findings. The findings are summarized as answers to the specific questions that are listed in the statement of the problem in Chapter I. The same procedure is followed in presenting the conclusions.

1. Does the instruction and training given by State Colleges and high schools adequately prepare students to enter employment with department stores as salespersons or buyers? If not, in what areas is the training inadequate?

The section of the interview schedule which was designed to yield information answering the above questions reveals that the store machines training of beginning salespersons is, on the whole, adequate except in the use of cash registers and marking machines. On these two machines, the stores that use them say the training is inadequate, and two personnel directors indicate need for additional training in making and counting change and feel that schools could remedy this defect by training in schools.

Beginning salespersons and buyers are found to be very inadequately trained in spelling, penmanship, lettering, arithmetic, speech, personality, and human relations. These data reveal a need for remedial training in spelling, arithmetic, penmanship, and speech, and for further training in simple lettering, personality, human relations, and attitude.

Beginning salespersons especially need additional training in ways of building a customer list and its importance, respect for store policy, importance of good stocking, and in remembering customers' names and faces. Beginning salespersons need varying degrees of additional training in the importance of studying new selling materials, in composing routine business letters, studying merchandise trends, in the importance of social habits outside working hours, and in the importance of avoiding displeasing personal mannerisms. Buyers need additional training in merchandising details and tests; of market practices and trading points; of applied economics; and buying balanced stocks within the allocated budget.

The personal traits of beginning salespersons and buyers which personnel directors believe need additional attention are, in the descending order of their frequency of mention: accuracy, initiative, organization of duties, attention to details, industry, loyalty, alertness, tact, courtesy, ambition, dependability, ability to follow instructions, honesty, and grooming.

2. What special training, if any, that is peculiar only to department stores should be given to prospective department store employees by high schools and by junior colleges? Eleven of the twenty personnel directors are of the opinion that special training peculiar only to department stores should be given in high schools and junior colleges. Of these eleven personnel directors, only three agree on the type of training

to be given. These courses are practical salesmanship, personality, and cash register operations; while twelve personnel directors suggest a simplified lettering course based on handwriting characteristics; that is, slanted letters as in penmanship, so that writing movements already mastered could be adapted to lettering.

"Suggestive Selling," "Psychology," "Customer Approach," "Store Courtesy," and "Economics" are suggested by personnel directors as courses needed. Each of these suggestions is made by only one personnel director. Eight personnel directors say neither salespersons nor buyers are expected to do lettering in their stores. Each personnel director says no amount of training alone will qualify a person as a buyer in his or her store, certain experience being a "must" for buyers.

3. Do department stores employ a sufficient number of salespersons and buyers each year to justify special instruction being included in high schools and junior colleges of this area? The twenty department stores included in this study employ a total of 3,267 salespersons and buyers. Table 1, page 21, shows the geographic distribution of these employees. Personnel directors of the twenty stores estimate that at least 1,278 vacancies occur during a normal business year, for which new employees are hired.

Twenty-nine of this 1,278 are estimated to be buyers, and 1,249 are salespersons. Geographic distribution of these new employees is shown in Table VI, page 29. Fourteen personnel directors indicate that the number of buyers used by their store is expected to increase within the next five years; eighteen personnel directors indicate that the number of salespersons newly employed by their store each year is expected to increase within the next five years. These increases are expected as a result of plans of

stores to expand, thereby necessitating an increase of new employees. No store expects to decrease the buyer-salesperson personnel.

4. What are the minimum educational qualifications required of new buyers and salespersons? None of the fourteen stores require high school graduation. One company requires college graduation or selling experience; another prefers college graduates.

Three of the twenty stores require college graduation plus experience for new buyers, while seventeen expect results from buyers and set no definite education or experience requirements. However, all personnel directors indicate that education is an asset and would be greatly to the employee's advantage.

Eleven stores want salespersons to be able to operate cash registers and make change. Also, eleven stores expect a salesperson to be able to do practical package wrapping.

One store requires salespersons to write sales slips in script writing of good quality. Four stores require salespersons to be able to use an adding machine, and six require use of marking machines by salespersons. All stores expect a salesperson to know how to take inventory.

5. What experience qualifications, if any, are required of new buyers and salespersons? Previous experience is mandatory for persons desiring employment with department stores as buyers; however, salesperson positions with department stores do offer an area of employment to the person who can apply the seven parts of a sale effectively, even if inexperienced. All twenty department stores require experience of their buyers in addition to technical qualifications. No store has a definite experience or training requirement set-up for buyers. Fifteen of the stores merely require a buyer to be able to do his job effectively.

Six of the twenty stores require that beginning salespersons have previous selling experience. These are the smallest stores included in the study. The larger chain stores are quite liberal toward beginning salespersons as are the larger independent stores.

The average minimum age for beginning salespersons is 17 years. No age requirement is found for buyers.

6. What duties are performed by beginning buyers and salespersons?

The duties performed by buyers--given on the interview schedule as a definition of a buyer--are reported to be generally acceptable to all stores, but no store is willing to set up a definite definition for a buyer if the store is to be bound by that definition in hiring buyers. The buyer's duties vary, and his responsibilities shift to meet changing conditions.

The definition for a salesperson is acceptable to all twenty stores, as stated in the interview schedule and reproduced in Chapter I.

7. Are buyer and salesperson vacancies filled by new employees or are they filled from other store personnel on a promotional basis? All buyer vacancies in nineteen of the twenty department stores are filled by promoting qualified and in-service trained employees. One store either promotes present employees or hires new buyers.

Personnel directors of all twenty stores report that a buyer must also be an outstanding salesperson, that no one can ever be a buyer in these stores unless he has first been an outstanding salesperson.

All the stores contacted fill salesperson vacancies with present employees as a first preference and with new employees as a second preference.

Some of the job classifications furnishing the stores with salespersons are delivery boy, bookkeepers, secretaries, stenographers, elevator

operators, clerical employees, stock clerks, and cashiers.

8. What methods are followed in hiring new buyers and salespersons?

Five of the stores included in this study maintain fully established personnel offices. One of the duties of these offices is to recruit salespersons and buyers and determine their qualifications, and to assign them to the place they are to occupy in the organization. In one store included in the study, the assistant manager assumes the duties of the personnel director, along with other duties. In the other fourteen stores, the manager or owner assumes the personnel duties along with the other duties. It appears that the manager-personnel type of director is perhaps better qualified to judge performance and needs of buyers and salespersons than any other, because he not only determines job needs but is also responsible for coordinating these duties with the whole system's needs. The personnel directors of all the stores studied depend on the friends and relatives of satisfactory employees as their first source of supply for store personnel needs.

Four of the stores use private employment agencies as a second source of supplying their needs. Six depend on United States Employment Service as a second source of supply. Sixteen stores actually notify school bureaus of vacancies, and if the schools have anyone to recommend, the store will consider him.

Ten of the stores report they use newspaper advertising, if needed, to secure suitable personnel. However, the methods used to secure employees vary to such a degree that no single classification of methods would apply.

None of the stores studied depends on tests of any kind to select salespersons or buyers. Two personnel directors state testing has been

tried and has proved unsatisfactory.

One personnel director asks for recommendations on tests. She also states she has unsuccessfully tried to use the Kuder Preference Tests.

Another personnel director reports they have tried having applicants tested by two commercial testing firms and that the recommendations of both firms are entirely contrary to the performance of the applicants on the job.

9. What is employer's reaction to Distributive Education, if he has had experience with it? All employers, with one exception, are enthusiastic about the results obtained by the Distributive Education program. One employer states that some of the store's best employees, both sales and executives, have been Distributive Education students. One employer reports dissatisfaction with the students he has used.

On the basis of facts secured in the study, it is believed that the following conclusions are justified:

CONCLUSIONS

Beginning salespersons and buyers are rated by the majority of the twenty personnel directors as being inadequate in their training in knowledge of grammar, spelling, penmanship, voice, speech, personality, and human relations.

Store machines in which beginning salespersons and buyers need further training are, in descending order, as mentioned by the personnel directors: cash registers, marking machines, and adding machines.

Beginning salespersons and buyers need to develop the following personal traits: alertness, tact, organization of duties, initiative, courtesy, accuracy, paying attention to details, and loyalty.

Store duties in which beginning buyers and salespersons are inadequate are: checking, freedom from personal mannerisms, study of new materials and selling suggestions, study of merchandise trends, stocking, simple filing, respect for store policy, and composing routine business letters.

2. Special training recommended by personnel directors for this vicinity includes additional salesmanship training, case-study selling, elements of job opportunities, courses in personality development, courses in human relations, package wrapping, and simple form of lettering based on handwriting fundamentals.

3. The number of new buyers and salespersons newly employed by department stores each year is believed large enough to justify high schools and junior colleges of this section providing the students who anticipate employment with department stores as buyers and salespersons with the special instruction suggested above. This special training is believed to be further justified by its practical nature in that much of it would be usable in filling other jobs as well as the ones studied.

4. No educational qualifications are set up for buyers. Rather, they are expected to get results. A large percentage of the twenty personnel directors are of the opinion that their buyers are high school graduates, but this is not a specified requirement. All personnel directors prefer high school graduates for salespersons, and five stores require high school graduation for beginning salespersons.

5. Previous buyer experience of equal or greater magnitude than present position requires is required of all new buyers, as well as outstanding experience as a salesperson.

Previous experience of a nature similar to present position is preferred by all stores and is required by six of the twenty. Distributive

Education experience is acceptable by four of the six stores as qualifying experience. One store requires five years' full-time experience, which is more than Distributive Education offers.

6. Beginning buyers perform regular buyer duties which include:

- Purchases merchandise within budgetary limitations.
- Assigns selling price.
- Initiates price reduction.
- Initiates advertising and displays.
- Knows sources of supply.
- Observes store policy on buying.
- Keeps informed on economic trends.
- Obtains special advantages where possible.
- Is a good trader.
- Supervises sales.
- Keeps sales force informed on merits of new merchandise.
- Receives goods.
- Is responsible for mark-up and mark-downs.

Beginning salespersons perform all or some of the following duties:

- Displays, explains and sells merchandise to the customer.
- Ascertains kind of merchandise desired.
- Points out chief selling point of the article.
- Writes out sales slip.
- Receives payment or credit authorization.
- Cares for stock on sales floor by attending to restocking.
- Authorizes alterations where necessary.
- Takes periodic inventory.
- Does store housekeeping.

The duties of department store buyers and salespersons are in many ways peculiar to department store requirements and require thought and constant alertness on the part of each employee.

7. Buyer vacancies in department stores are filled by promoting present salespersons or assistant buyers who are qualified to do buying. Personnel directors of all twenty stores report this as the procedure in use. Only one store will accept a buyer not already a part of the store personnel.

Salespersons are promoted from a number of other store positions. However, the general reaction of personnel directors is "if he is or can

be a good salesperson, that is where we want him." All stores hire new salespersons if promotion from within is not deemed advisable.

8. The first source of supply for department stores is friends or relatives of present employees. School employment programs are used but are not considered to be a dependable source since many times schools do not have qualified people available. Four stores depend on private employment agencies as a second means. Other means are used when necessary.

The stores of this study have found no testing program of any great help in selecting employees for buyers and salespersons.

9. Reports of employers who have had experience with Distributive Education are enthusiastically for it in every case except one. One personnel director reports only fair results from Distributive Education students are indicated. Other employees will be given preference. All other personnel directors who have had experience with this program report very good results.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings of the study, and on the basis of the conclusions drawn therefrom, the following recommendations are made:

1. That provisions be made in merchandising courses of high schools and junior colleges for programs of remedial instruction in spelling, penmanship, lettering, arithmetic, and speech; if possible, a study be made to determine if a method can be evolved for teaching spelling in a more meaningful manner to students who are in the grades. Since all studies made find a woeful lack of spelling ability, the recommendation for a study regarding methods of teaching spelling seems justifiable.

2. That more attention be given to teaching cash register operations, and that some attention be given to training in operating marking machines.

3. That instruction be included in merchandising courses for ways of building a customer list, importance of proper stocking habits in salespersons, importance of respect for store policy, and importance of remembering customers and customers' names.

4. That activities be provided and materials be made available for developing the following traits in merchandising students: alertness, accuracy, tact, organization of duties, initiative, courtesy, and paying attention to details.

5. That the following store attitudes be emphasized in merchandising courses: importance of avoiding careless work; bad manners; employee difference; tardiness; bad attitude; dishonesty.

6. That junior colleges and high schools of this section include in their merchandising curriculums at least a unit on personality development, and at least one unit in human relations. That the possibility of evolving and teaching a unit or course in simple lettering based on handwriting fundamentals, that is, slanting letters of approximately 60° slant, be investigated and tried as a means to better and easier simple store signs, without student being required to learn an entirely new process as it is now.

7. That students aspiring to be buyers be offered more technical subjects in which they plan to specialize pertaining to the particular line of merchandising and that, if possible, actual buying situations be presented as a part of their training rather than all situations on an ideal basis.

8. That students, high school or junior college, who are pursuing courses leading to department store employment be advised to secure part-time jobs in department stores in either work programs or on a cooperative

part-time basis in order to qualify themselves better for employment requirements in merchandising fields.

9. That students or others desiring employment with department stores as buyers or salespersons be advised to apply directly at the store personnel office in which employment is desired and that students apply through school placement bureaus if possible, or through Distributive Education Programs where they are available.

10. That Distributive Education Programs be encouraged and enlarged, especially in larger cities where many department stores are found, and that smaller towns be surveyed where possible to determine training possibilities.

11. That additional studies be made of the employment requirements in other types of businesses employing buyers and salespersons to determine the needs there.

12. That a similar study be made in which the opinions of buyers and salespersons in department stores are secured with regard to qualifications necessary to successfully perform the duties of buyers and salespersons. This type of study should be especially valuable when compared with opinions of personnel directors as found in this study.

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APPENDIX

DEFINITIONS*

Salesperson: Displays, explains and sells merchandise to customer on sales floor; (1) ascertains make, type, size, or design and quantity of merchandise ordered by customer and approximate price customer is willing to pay; (2) displays merchandise and assists customer in making a selection by suggestions and explanations; emphasizes the chief selling point of the article, be it quality, style, durability, popularity, utility, taste, appearance, freshness or price; may tell or show the customer how to use the article; (3) writes out sales slip or fills out a sales contract for the customer's signature, if such is used. (4) Receives payment or secures credit authorization, and gives wrapped article to customer or arranges for its delivery; (5) cares for stock on sales floor, placing new merchandise on shelves, racks, or stands, keeping stock orderly and dusted during the day, requisitioning replacements from the stock room as necessary or informing buyer or department head of shortages as they occur. Covering stock or removing it from the counter at night; (6) writes out accommodation slip when customer returns merchandise for alteration or repair, indicating disposition of the merchandise; (7) takes periodic inventories of stock.

Buyer: Purchases merchandise within budgetary limitations in sufficient quantity and with sufficient appeal to warrant its rapid and profitable sale; assigns selling price to merchandise; initiates procedure, such as price reductions and special sales, to promote the sale of surplus or slow-moving goods. Specifically designated according to type of merchandise bought. Merchandise purchased is resold and is not processed, consumed or used in the organization.

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

I. Personal Qualifications:

Type of Position	Number of Employees		Minimum Age at which employees will be hired		Previous Selling or Buying Experience		Marital Status Preference		
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Single M W	Married M W	Immateral M W
Salesperson							-	-	-
Buyer							-	-	-

II. Educational Qualifications:

Type of Store Employee	Minimum Educational Qualifications Required							
	Less than High School Graduate		High School Graduate		Business College Graduate		College Graduate	
	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W
Salesperson								
Buyer								

*Definitions taken from Dictionary of Occupational Titles, U. S. Department of Labor.

III. During a normal business year, what is the approximate number of new employees hired to fill the following positions:

1. Salespersons _____ 2. Buyers _____

Do you, for any reason, expect this number to change within the next five years?

Yes _____ No _____

If the answer is yes, do you expect the number of salespersons to be increased? _____ or decreased _____?

Do you expect the number of buyers to be increased? _____ or decreased _____?

IV. Are salespersons and buyers vacancies filled by new employees or are they filled by present employees on a promotional basis?

<u>Salespersons</u>	<u>Buyers</u>
Filled by:	
a. New Employees _____	a. New Employees _____
b. Present Employees _____	b. Present Employees _____
c. Both _____	c. Both _____

If filled by promotion of present employees, from which store positions are the new salespersons and buyers promoted? (Please give specific job titles as "stock clerk" and in the order of frequency.)

1. Salespersons (promoted from)	
a. _____	a. _____
b. _____	b. _____
c. _____	c. _____
d. _____	d. _____

To what positions are present salespersons and buyers promoted?

<u>Salespersons (promoted to)</u>	<u>Buyers (Promoted to)</u>
a. _____	a. _____
b. _____	b. _____

V. Which of the following media are used in locating prospective salespersons and buyer personnel. (Please indicate the order of frequency in which the agencies are used.)

1. Company Employment Bureau _____	5. College and/or High School Employment Bureaus _____
2. Private Employment Agencies _____	6. Personal acquaintances, friends or relatives _____
3. U. S. Employment Agencies _____	7. Other _____

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VI. Are employment tests given to prospective salespersons and buyer personnel?

Yes _____ No _____

If "Yes," what is the nature of the tests? (Such as Detroit Selling Tests, Intelligence tests, aptitude tests, personality tests, Vocation Interest Tests, and so forth). Indicate after each test whether it is a commercially prepared test, (indicate by "A") or a company prepared test (indicate by "B").

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Tests given to prospective salespersons | 2. Tests given to prospective buyers |
| a. _____ | a. _____ |
| b. _____ | b. _____ |
| c. _____ | c. _____ |
| d. _____ | d. _____ |

VII. Training Qualifications of the Beginning Salespersons and Buyer Personnel.

A. Since the seven parts of a sale are usually divided into: Pre-approach, approach, opening the sale, determining customer's wants, presentation of the goods, answering objections and closing the sale, what policy does your store follow in training beginning salespersons for the different parts? Please number as many as apply and in order of your estimate of importance.

1. Preapproach: () depend on the employee's initiative, () appoint trained salesperson to supervise beginner, () offer pre-sales courses, () suggest training courses beginner should take, () require beginner to read a specified number of sales books and/or sales magazines, () work with high school or college in a cooperative school-work program to train salespeople, () visual aids.

2. Approach: () depend on the employee's initiative, () appoint trained salesperson to supervise beginner, () offer pre-sales courses, () suggest training courses beginner should take, () require beginner to read a specified number of sales books and/or sales magazines, () work with high school or college in a cooperative school-work program to train salespeople, () visual aids.

3. Opening the Sale: () depend on the employee's initiative, () appoint trained salesperson to supervise beginner, () offer pre-sales courses, () suggest training courses beginners should take, () require beginner to read a specified number of sales books and/or sales magazines, () work with high school or college in a cooperative school-work program to train salespeople, () visual aids.

4. Determining customer's wants: () depend on the employee's initiative, () appoint trained salesperson to supervise beginner, () offer pre-sales courses, () suggest training courses beginner should take, () require beginner to read a specified number of sales books and/or sales magazines, () work with high school or college in a cooperative school-work program to train salespeople, () visual aids.

5. Presentation of goods: () depend on the employee's initiative, () appoint trained salesperson to supervise beginner, () offer pre-sales courses, () suggest training courses beginner should take, () require beginner to read a specified number of sales books and/or sales magazines, () work with high school or college in a cooperative school-work program to train salespeople, () visual aids.

6. Answering objections: () depend on the employee's initiative, () appoint trained salesperson to supervise beginner, () offer pre-sales courses, () suggest training courses beginner should take, () require beginner to read a specified number of sales books and/or sales magazines, () work with high school or college in a cooperative school-work program to train salespeople, () visual aids.

7. Closing the Sale: () depend on your employee's initiative, () appoint trained salesperson to supervise beginner, () offer pre-sales courses, () suggest courses beginner should take, () require beginner to read a specified number of sales books and/or magazines, () work with high school or college in a cooperative school-work program to train salespeople, () visual aids.

B. Are beginning buyers required to: () take any training courses, () study current literature or lines, () turn in a suggested list of purported purchases, () make one or more supervised shopping trips with another and seasoned buyer, () other requirements _____

III. Store Attitudes.

What action is taken to correct the following:

	NONE	CONFERENCE	TRANSFER	PROBATION	DISCHARGE
a. Careless work					
b. Bad Manners					
c. Employee Differences					
d. Tardiness					
e. Careless Personal Appearance.					
f. Bad Attitude					
g. Dishonesty					

IX. What duties, other than those included in the definitions of a salesperson and a buyer given at the beginning of this questionnaire, are performed by beginning salespersons and buyers employed by your company?

1. Salesperson's Duties:

2. Buyer's Duties:

X. Is there special training, peculiar only to the Department Stores, which is not usually given in high school and/or college courses, but which should be included in such courses? Yes _____, No _____

If "Yes," of what should such training consist? _____

1. After considering the quality of work done by beginning salespersons and buyers in your company in the past, complete the following questionnaire which is an effort to determine whether or not the high school and/or college training of the employees has been adequate in preparing students for such work in your company. (Answer in terms of duties that beginning salespersons and buyers are expected to be able to perform. Whenever a comment does not apply to both types of employees, indicate by writing "sales" for salespersons and "buy" for buyer in the appropriate blank.)

Fields of Instruction and Training	Adequate	Inadequate
Office Machines.		
Operating the following machines:		
a. Marking Machines		
b. Adding Machines		
c. Calculating Machines		
d. Duplicating Machines		
e. Cash Registers		
f. Other		
Subject Matter.		
a. Grammar		
b. Punctuation		
c. Spelling		
d. Arithmetic		
e. Penmanship		
f. Speech:		
(1) Manner of Delivery		
(2) Tone of Voice		
(3) Enunciation		
g. Personality		
h. Human Relations		
i. Package Wrapping		
j. Lettering		
k. Other		
l. Filing		
Store Duties:		
a. Ways of building a customer list		
b. Respect for store policy		
c. Stocking		
d. Filing		
e. Willing to take training		
f. Study of new selling materials and suggestions		
g. Study of merchandise trends		
h. Composing business letters of a routine nature		
i. Remembering customer and customer's name		
j. Good social judgments, i.e., social contacts and habits outside business hours		

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. (Continued)

Fields of Instruction and Training	Adequate	Inadequate
Office Duties (Continued)		
k. Willingness to adopt good store habits		
l. Personal Mannerisms (biting nails, etc.)		
m. Checking Invoices, etc.		
Personal Traits:		
a. Attention to details		
b. Organization of duties		
c. Ability to follow instructions		
d. Ability to get along with other people		
e. Grooming		
f. Tact		
g. Honesty		
h. Dependability		
i. Ambition		
j. Alertness		
k. Industry		
l. Accuracy		
m. Loyalty		
n. Courtesy		
o. Initiative		

. If you have had Distributive Education experience, what are your reactions to it?

Suggestions: _____

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SPECIAL BUYER QUALIFICATIONS

Do you require buyers to have (1) expert _____ (2) good _____ (3) fair _____ technical knowledge of merchandise he buys?

Do you require a buyer to be familiar with the store in which he is buying, or would similar experience in another store qualify?

Is buyer expected to know economic trends? Yes _____ No _____

Do buyers operate on a budget plan? Yes _____ No _____

Are your buyers expected to develop or recommend sources of supply?
Yes _____ No _____

Are your buyers held responsible for purchases? Yes _____ No _____

Are your buyers _____, department heads _____, or floor managers _____ responsible for training and informing salespersons?

Do you use: Monthly _____, annual _____, or semi-annual _____ budget?

Are buyers required to secure advance approval on buying expeditions?

Are buyers _____, department heads _____, or floor managers _____ responsible for mark-up procedures?

Are buyers _____, department heads _____, or floor managers _____ responsible for receiving the goods?

Merchandise calendar used? _____ by whom prepared? _____

Buyers _____, department heads _____, and/or floor manager _____ are/is responsible for publicity and/or promotion?

Buyers are acceptable who have had no sales experience _____, some sales experience _____, outstanding sales experience _____.

Typist:

Harold A. Coonrad