

**By V Pradeep Kumar** □



Years ago, a young and shy boy called Shrikanth, who was just out of management college, sat in front of me. He was facing the first interview of his life for a marketing job. I made him relax, said a few encouraging things and took a chance by offering him the job. Though a weak performer initially, he gradually got better. Working with our firm for three years, he worked hard. After accumulating the necessary experience, Shrikanth is a successful entrepreneur today.

Albert was 22 years old when he joined a bank as a Sales Executive selling credit cards. He worked hard at developing his selling skills and achieved the targets set for him. He made enough money, joined a premier management institute and completed an Executive MBA. Today at 30, he heads the branch of a reputed financial services organisation.

In my thirty years of corporate experience, I have been witness to scores of such success stories. It was Swami Vivekananda who said, "All power is within you. You can do anything and everything. Believe in that." If you are an MBA graduate beginning your career, choose marketing as your preferred option as it can kickstart your career, offering you both money and growth.

### **Voting for youth power**

An evaluation of performance of marketing staff at the entry level, across companies, reveals that fresh candidates without any experience perform better than the ones with experience. Therefore, for entry level jobs, companies prefer fresh graduates of either gender, as they come with a positive attitude and plenty of enthusiasm, essential for success. It is also easier to train and mould them in a manner that they achieve individual and organisation goals.

## **One size does not fit all**

Companies that you apply to could be marketing products like fast moving consumer products (soaps, detergents, cosmetics, food products etc), automobiles, computers, pharmaceuticals, or industrial products (metals, cement, paints, machinery, spare parts etc). There are also marketing companies in the services sector such as telecom, airlines, hotels, advertising, entertain-ment, banking, insurance, financial services and so on.

If you are ambitious and determined, skills like communication can be learned through training.

## **Start at the very beginning**

Typically, you may start as a Marketing Executive handling a well-defined territory with a database of clients. You will be responsible for business development. Your company will equip you with product knowledge and marketing techniques. Your work will be supervised by a team leader, who will guide and help you sell. Your environment is sure to be competitive. Remember, competition will bring out the best in you, leading to job satisfaction.

## **Challenges and rewards**

The job, being target-driven, is sure to keep you on your toes. Maintaining physical and mental energy levels is important.

Companies encourage you on, using a combination of monetary and non-monetary techniques. There is no need to be apprehensive about targets which are possible to achieve with planning. The best thing about a marketing job is you get paid better than any other profession. Commissions, incentives and allowances are the perks that you will enjoy.

You also get to travel and work in diverse work cultures.

## **Growth curve**

Sales is the engine that keeps an organisation up and running. Despite the existence of an established hierarchy in most companies, with sustained performance, career growth is possible. There are enough examples of people starting out as marketing executives and rising to head companies in 15-20 years.

## **Strike it out on your own**

It is necessary to have an overview of the sectors that are performing well. A marketing job gives you the opportunity to meet high profile clients and interact with them. This gives you a chance to get the bigger picture. Such exposure makes you confident to start on your own venture.

Zig Zigler, an American motivational speaker and author, says: "It's not what you've got, it's what you use that makes a difference. You don't have to be great to start, but you have to start to be great." Teachers open the door for you, but you must walk through yourself.

## **About the Author**

**Mr.V Pradeep Kumar**, hailing from Bangalore has over 28 years of hardcore management experience in all aspects of management in a variety of Industries including FMCG, Industrial marketing, Media and Publishing. Currently based at Dubai, his focus in the last fifteen years has been on Media and Publishing.

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