Career Path: BBA Marketing

Introduction
Ross Career Services (RCS) created the Career Path series to assist students with the career search process. Each Career Path handout examines a common business functional area in which Stephen M. Ross School of Business graduates pursue jobs each year.

Marketing Overview
“Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large.” [American Marketing Association, https://www.ama.org/AboutAMA/Pages/Definition-of-Marketing.aspx]

Marketing includes a wide variety of career opportunities (outlined later in this document). Furthermore, professional titles and specific roles in marketing may vary, depending on the organization. For example: in some industries, the title comparable to brand manager may be "product manager" (e.g., at Microsoft). In some firms, “business development” may be comparable to “sales.”

Product and Brand Management in all industries use general management and marketing skills to oversee the development of a product or service throughout various stages of its life cycle. Marketers develop strategic marketing plans that set positioning, pricing and strategic direction for products/services. They also develop programs to improve brand equity and increase profitability. In addition, marketers are responsible for developing communication with partners and customers along the distribution channel. Finally, marketers manage through cross-functional relationships various internal and external departments, driving all in the process toward common marketing goals and objectives. All of these responsibilities contribute to the general management experience gained from a marketing career.

Students interested in pursuing an entrepreneurial venture, general management, or just running his/her own business may want to consider marketing. A marketing career, which requires many of the same skills as a general manager, may prepare an individual for a future entrepreneurial experience. Understanding your long-term career objectives (through research and self-assessment) may help clarify the advantages of each of these paths.

Steps for Developing a Career in Marketing

Step #1: Conduct a Self-Assessment
Regardless of the specific marketing position, there are some basic skills and interests that marketing professionals should possess. Based upon the product management profile outlined in the CareerLeader assessment, marketers enjoy leading a process from start to finish. Marketing managers ‘own’ their product or service and essentially run a small business, so entrepreneurial interest is a positive trait. Marketing professionals have higher creative interests than most operating managers, and are effective at communicating with various stakeholders in an organization. They equally enjoy the
financials of the business as well as the creative aspects. In addition, marketing careers call for a strong interest in management of people, as many marketing efforts are organized around teams.

Marketing professionals can expect a diverse, dynamic work experience, with new challenges emerging each day. Very few marketers describe their work as “boring” or “routine.” Marketers should also expect a fast-paced, often challenging environment, with numerous internal and external pressures. While there may be seasonal fluctuations in workload, for example, during marketing plan development, workweeks typically range from 50-70 hours. Travel is not always a job requirement, but field visits to a sales office, manufacturing facility, customer account, advertising agency or local market research location are not uncommon. The level of travel varies, but expect a few days of travel a month. Travel requirements will also vary according to the role within marketing, particularly for a sales role.

To assess whether or not marketing is right for you, ask yourself if you have and enjoy using the following skills:

- **Initiative**: Able to accomplish complex projects and tasks with minimal assistance.
- **Action-orientation**: Ensure that decisions are implemented.
- **Leadership/Management**: Lead and motivate people from different departments, and provide visionary creative leadership.
- **Analytical and Strategic-thinking**: Sort through and identify critical data, understand and correctly interpret it, and apply it effectively to drive business growth; able to grasp the big picture and think long-term*
- **Quantitative Analysis**: Skilled in using quantitative analysis to understand business issues.*
- **Teamwork**: Work effectively in teams.
- **Creativity/Innovation**: Approach a problem from a different angle, find a better way of doing things, and generate unique ideas.
- **Professional Communication/Influence**: Support or defend a position in a clear, concise, and persuasive manner.
- **Political Skill**: Know how to get things done within the political framework of an organization.*
- **Organizational/Time Management**: Balance numerous projects and issues at one time, and properly prioritize projects.
- **Additional Skills**: Interpersonal skills; Enthusiasm; Passion for consumers; Interest in the particular product or service being marketed or sold.


Although these are the basic skills needed by all marketers, the importance of each of these skills will vary depending on the industry and sector of marketing. High-tech and industrial firms may also look for candidates with either a technical background, or demonstrated ability to understand technical concepts. In addition, individuals interested in Market Research may need stronger analytical and quantitative skills. They also work more independently than other marketers do since there is generally less managerial responsibility.
Resume Tips

Crucial areas recruiters look for in Marketing resumes include:

**Leadership/Management Skills**
- Led cross-functional team
- Managed process
- Coordinated groups
- Set vision for project

**Analytical Skills**
- Analyzed retail company’s sales data
- Assessed market opportunities
- Investigated customer complaints
- Synthesized market reports

**Creativity/Innovation**
- Designed promotional materials
- Developed innovative strategies
- Devised solution for
- Identified new channels of
- Created campus-wide Twitter contest

**Teamwork Skills**
- Engaged in cross-functional team
- Collaborated with counterparts
- Facilitated constant communication

**Communication/Persuasion**
- Communicated with potential sponsors
- Persuaded 5 team members
- Trained 3 new co-workers
- Presented team findings

**Consumer Orientation**
- Surveyed club members to identify
- Adapted messaging to high school audience
- Aligned vision and opinions of 6-person team

Ensure your resume reflects the skill sets listed above. These skill sets are the standard for a Marketing resume. Recruiters are looking for a balance of these skills. A one-sided resume with nearly all bullets demonstrating leadership or all innovation will not nearly be as strong as one that shows multi-dimensional skills. Recruiters want to see a combination of off-campus summer work experience as well as leadership and involvement on-campus.

If your past work experience warrants it, tie in any marketing-specific terms:
- Determined consumer needs (*note: students you’ve tutored or campers you’ve supervised are your consumers*)
- Led focus groups
- Managed cross-functional teams
- Researched market trends
- Analyzed pricing (*e.g., ticket prices for an event*)

It is important to present yourself as a well-rounded, customer/client-focused (internal or external), interesting candidate. Marketers spend a significant time of their day in cross-functional meetings and strong interpersonal skills are paramount. Include interesting additional information or unique honors you may have received. Refer to the *BBA Career Guide* for instructions and tips on writing your resume, and Step 2: Develop Resume and Online Brand on the Career tab on iMpact for additional handouts.

Don’t be afraid to set your resume apart from those of the rest. A unique skill or fun fact brings life to a resume and is also a great way to break the ice when getting to know your interviewer or recruiter.
Understand which skills may not be strongly evident on your resume (based on your background) and be prepared to emphasize those skills in your interview.

**Highlight Your Interest by Selecting Marketing as an Academic Emphasis**

Generally speaking, there's no one set of marketing electives that best prepare a student for a career in marketing. Recruiters will look for you to show interest in the field by selecting marketing as an academic emphasis and indicating this on your resume (“Emphasis in Marketing”), but they won’t be particularly concerned with the specific classes. Below are some approaches you could take in selecting courses:

- If you're interested in a specific career path such as sales, advertising, or retail marketing consider taking a course in that area (MKT 310- Fundamentals of Sales Management, MKT 311- Advertising Management, MKT 312- Retail Marketing Management)
- Talk with your Academic Advisor about how to align your academic choices with your professional interests
- Browse the Course Descriptions Page located on the Academic tab in iM pact and select courses that sound interesting to you
- Visit the Kresge Course Syllabi Archive, also available on the Academic tab in iM pact, to view past syllabi for elective options

Consider taking classes with professors whose research interests you or who have professional experience in a field in which you are interested.

**Step #2: Investigate Possible Career Opportunities**

There are numerous career paths available for individuals interested in marketing. Typical career paths include:

- Brand Management – Products or Services (BBAs typically start as Analysts)
- Sales (entry level undergraduate positions)
- Retail Marketing
- Market Research
- High-Technology Marketing (separate Career Path handout available)
- Marketing Consulting (see the Career Path handout on Consulting)
- Entertainment and Sports Marketing
- Pharmaceutical Marketing
- Advertising (separate Career Path handout available)

While no two job descriptions will be the same, a marketer can expect to carry out the following responsibilities:

- Conduct analysis, such as sales forecasts, business trends/share, competitive reporting, pricing, budgets and promotion effectiveness evaluation.
- Execute projects, such as new product development, promotional programs and package/design change. May provide creative input on projects.
- Interact and provide service to other departments (especially Field Sales and R&D).
- Understand key issues and marketing opportunities for the product or service, including thorough knowledge of marketing plan and objectives.
Entry level jobs may focus on market research, with analysis of consumer needs and behavior, competitive activity and advertising effectiveness/spend levels.

**Brand Management**

More senior brand management jobs include management of multiple products and brand groups. Work at this level becomes more strategic and long-term in scope, with less day-to-day execution of plans. Relationship building is crucial at both junior and senior levels, including relationships with advertising agency partners, key customer account executives and other operating units (e.g. Operations). The typical job progression for an individual who remains in brand management follows:

Assistant Brand Manager => Associate Brand Manager => Brand Manager => Category Manager

**Service Marketing**

While brand management markets physical, tangible products, service marketing offers intangible goods through B2B (Business-to-Business) and/or B2C (Business-to-Consumer). Examples of service marketing careers include User Experience Analyst at Spotify, Platinum Card Product Management at American Express, or Engagement Marketing at Airbnb. Similar to brand management, service marketing routinely work with internal cross-functional teams in Finance, Digital, and Operations to execute long-term projects and strategies. Service marketing is an essential department across a wide net of industries such as financial (banks, investment firms like JPMorgan, American Express), health care (HMOs, hospitals, group medical practices), public utilities, entertainment (sports, radio, television, movie), travel, real estate, non-profits, and more organizations that market to consumers intangibly.

**Retail Marketing**

Similar to brand management, retail marketing works closely with both internal and external teams to develop campaigns to shape brand awareness and drive product sales of the specific retailer. Retail marketing is a fast-paced industry and acute problem solving skills are critical to execute projects on increasing market share or decreasing business risk. Examples of responsibilities include forecasting advertisements, troubleshooting instocks, and strategically writing purchase orders. The retail space includes warehouse clubs (Sam's Club, Costco), department stores (Marshall Field's, Nordstrom, Macy's), discount stores (Wal-Mart, Target, Walgreens), gas chains (BP Amoco), Clothing (The Limited, Gap), and restaurant chains (Domino's, Pizza Hut).

**Market Research**

The market research function typically performs the analysis work that goes into successfully marketing a product or service. Market researchers are responsible for identifying consumer insights and behaviors, studying competitors, segmenting target markets, and calculating the optimal price and level of advertising and promotions. A strong analytical focus is required as much of the work involves utilizing marketing models and frameworks. Market research opportunities exist across all industries, as well as in service agencies.

**Sales**

Opportunities in Sales are extremely varied and plentiful. Virtually all industries and companies need people to fulfill the sales function. In many companies, a sales career provides an entry into the
corporation, and provides a possible path into product management. Many BBAs who pursue a career in 
brand management start in a sales position.

Modern sales techniques have come a long way, and often include implementation of marketing tools
such as analysis of local markets, customer asset management, and regional programming and pricing.
Many larger firms have specific training programs in place to develop sales professionals to move into
greater roles managing larger territories and other sales people. Sales careers often provide a route into
general or business unit management.

High Tech

While particularly attractive to MBAs with previous technical experience, those interested in this field
can supplement previous experience with strong technical aptitude and coursework. Opportunities in
this area are varied, but include product management and sales of technical products such as
computers, software, system services, etc. Several high-tech firms, including Amazon and Microsoft,
recruit at Ross for marketing positions. However, the majority of the search in this arena will be off-
campus. Becoming a member of the BBA Marketing Club or any Ross-affiliated student organization with
alumni networking resources will help supplement your off-campus search.

Many West Coast firms do not come to the Midwest to recruit, and the nature of this industry is such
that hiring decisions are made on a cycle much different (later) than the traditional recruiting cycle at
Ross. RCS has resources at the Career Center available to assist in the off-campus effort. There is a
separate Career Path handout available for individuals interested in pursuing careers in the high-tech
industry.

Entertainment and Sports

There are many marketing opportunities available in the entertainment and sports industries, but these
firms typically do not recruit at Ross. Therefore, students interested in these fields will have to conduct
an off-campus search. The Entertainment Sports Media Club sponsors a Forum in New York City and Los
Angeles to facilitate interaction between students and industry contacts. The University of Michigan
Career Center has also sponsored career treks that have included entertainment companies, and some
entertainment and sports firms participate in the U-M career fairs (Fall and Winter semesters). Register
with “Handshake” on the U-M Career Center website [http://careercenter.umich.edu/content/find-job-
or-internship].

Pharmaceutical Marketing

BBA Students interested in this field should look for MBAs who have experience in the
pharmaceutical/healthcare industry (find them on Ross Connections via the iM pact Home page) and do
informational interviews with these MBAs to learn more about the industry and sales and marketing
roles within healthcare.
Step #3: Research Employers

Numerous companies recruit at the Ross School of Business or through iM pact off-campus job postings for marketing and sales positions, as well as through the UM Career Center including the organizations below that are well recognized for marketing careers. (Note: not all of these companies recruit each year, and some recruit for specific level of students; e.g., BBA Seniors.) Ross Career Services strongly advises students to pursue both on- and off-campus internship/job searches.

Amazon.com  
American Express  
Anheuser-Busch  
Apple Inc.  
Cardinal Health Inc.  
Cisco Systems, Inc.  
The Clorox Company  
Dell Computer Corporation  
Delta Air Lines  
Dimensional Fund Advisors  
Eli Lilly & Co.  
Energy BBDO (Advertising)  
Ford Motor Company  
General Motors  
Intel  
International Business Machines Corp (IBM)  
JPMorgan  
Kraft Foods  
L’Oreal USA  
The Mars Agency (Advertising)  
Microsoft Corporation  
PepsiCo Inc.  
The Procter & Gamble Co.  
Reckitt Benckiser  
Rosetta (Marketing Consulting)  
S.C. Johnson & Son  
Target  
Unilever  
Union Pacific Railroad, Inc.  
Walgreens  
Walmart Stores, Inc.  
Whirlpool Corp.  
Wyeth Consumer Healthcare

Information on firms is available online through the Kresge Library website for on- and off-campus career searches. The Employment Profile also has a complete list of companies that hired Ross students in the prior recruiting year. This report is online on Ross’s public website on the Recruiters’ page in the “Community” section, and through iM pact.

While on-campus recruiting opportunities are numerous, consider an off-campus effort if your interests are in a particular industry or geographic location. Since most product and service firms need some level of marketing activity, opportunities are virtually limitless. Take advantage of the U-M Career Center Career Expos and “Handshake” system for additional opportunities in marketing and sales.

The BBA Marketing Club can offer numerous resources to aid your on- and off-campus search such as exclusive member-only company presentations and workshops and access to experienced BBA Seniors. Attend a BBA Marketing Club Mass meeting in the fall, or find a contact on the BBA Marketing Club page on the “Clubs & Organizations” page in the Student Life section of iM pact.
Step #4: Develop a Career Search Strategy

There are many things you should do now that you've decided that a career in marketing is right for you.

- Understand which skills and interests are important for a marketing career track. Attend a wide variety of company presentations for differing marketing opportunities in order to determine which kind of marketing career would most interest you. Most company presentations occur from September until November. Identify what differentiates companies and the positions. Pay close attention to internal culture, geographic location, and day-to-day responsibilities of incoming Analysts. Additionally, faculty and marketing courses can provide the opportunity to learn the general marketing language and apply skills in various disciplines (market research, sales, and advertising) which can be helpful in narrowing your career choices.

- Prepare to market yourself. Ross Career Services and the BBA Marketing Club sponsor a number of workshops in the fall that will help you market yourself to target firms. Workshops include resume and cover letter preparation and behavioral/case interview skills. One-on-one appointments are offered for all aspects of the career search and skills development process. Career consultants and Peer Career Coaches with marketing experience may be available to provide specific functional perspective. Refer also to the marketing-specific resume and interview guidelines are included in this handout.

- Network, network and network! There are many opportunities to network with marketing professionals at Ross. The Marketing Club sponsors different events involving marketing professionals and receives exclusive face time with companies during their time on campus. These events provide the opportunity to learn more about marketing careers from someone working in the field. Most importantly, after attending company presentations, use the reception hour as an opportunity to network, make contacts by obtaining the recruiter’s name and email and get to know companies more intimately.

Be sure to frequently check the Recruiting Events schedule on iM pact for RCS-sponsored corporate presentations and Winter Garden Networking Hours and Business Over Bagels. Many companies also host events such as coffee chats, resume reviews, and mock interviews. Take advantage of these opportunities, as they can provide valuable face time with recruiters.

Also pursue off-campus contacts with alumni (using the alumni database on iM pact as well as LinkedIn), and discuss internships with experienced BBA Seniors to learn more about what is happening inside brand organizations. Kresge Library also has a number of sources, including online databases to aid in the search.

Frequently Asked Interview Questions

Marketing interview questions typically fall into two broad categories:

- "Fit or Behavioral" questions assess your interest in marketing, how well you would fit at the company interviewing you, and how well you have demonstrated the skills crucial for marketers. Before the interview, talk to people familiar with the company to identify what characteristics are specifically key to this position and how you have utilized those skills in your past experiences. Refer to the “Prepare & Interview” step in the BBA Career Guide (online on the iM pact Career tab).

- "Case" questions assess your general knowledge of marketing, marketing frameworks, and your quick critical thinking abilities. Before the interview, make yourself aware of current products and
strategies, and have new ideas in mind. Check the “Careers” page of companies with which you will be interviewing for advice they offer on the process. Refer to the RCS handout “Frameworks for Case Interviews Across Functions/Industries” on the interview preparation page on the iMpacK Career tab.

**Fit/Behavioral Questions**

**General**

1. Walk me through your resume/Tell me about yourself.
2. Why are you interested in Brand Management/Retail Marketing/Services Marketing?
3. Why do you want to work for our company?
4. Why did you select the University of Michigan/the BBA program?
5. How would your peers describe you?/Describe yourself in one word.
6. What do you think are the most important characteristics for a marketer?
7. Is there anything you would change about your summer experience?
8. What are your strengths and weaknesses?

A question could be a spin on a previous answer that was given. For example, you may be asked to describe your most interesting project this summer and how you went about solving the problem. However, the interviewer may then ask you, “What would you have done if XYZ has happened?” They are testing your knowledge of the situation and your ability to think quickly through scenarios to come up with a recommendation. An interviewer could ask you about a controversial situation facing the company.

**Leadership/Management**

1. Describe a situation where your efforts really made a difference.
2. What was the hardest decision you ever had to make at work?
3. Give an example of how you work without direction.
4. Give me an example of a time when you’ve led a group.
5. What is the difference between a manager and a leader?
6. Give me an example of a time you took a risk.
7. How do you deal with stress?
8. If you were the CEO of our company, what would be your three goals for the upcoming year?

**Motivation/Enthusiasm/Communication**

1. What goals have you set for yourself and how will you reach them?
2. What’s the biggest risk you’ve ever taken?
3. What was your biggest failure and how did you learn from it?
4. Tell me about a situation where you had to persuade someone.
5. Tell me about a time when you had to simply present complex information.
6. What is your professional self-development plan for the next 3-5 years?
Teamwork
1. What type of a team player are you? / How would your teammates describe you?
2. Give me an example of when your team had a conflict and how you resolved it.
3. Tell me about a time you had an issue with a particular individual and what happened.

Creativity
1. Give me an example of a time when you had to find a better way of doing things.
2. If you were a consumer product, what would you be and why?
3. What new product would you like to see?
4. What’s the most creative thing you’ve ever done?

Analytical
1. Give me an example of when you had to use data during your last job.
2. How do you decide which data is useful to solve your problem?
3. How do you prioritize?
4. Tell me about a time when you had to set a long-term goal and how you broke it down into smaller more short-term steps.

Answering Fit/Behavioral Questions

With any fit or behavioral question, never miss the opportunity to relate your (structured) answer to a specific experience you have had while keeping your answer at about 2 minutes. Sharing your ideas on leadership, motivation, or creativity is good, but sharing those ideas in the context of a concrete professional experience/accomplishment makes your answer much more relevant to the interviewer. Moreover, the interviewer is trying to judge how you will act in future situations based on what you’ve done in the past. Utilize the Context - Action - Result (CAR) format to form your answer intelligently and concisely.

CAR Format

Sample Question: Tell me about a time when you took a risk.

Context: Begin by briefly describing the scenario and enough background for the interviewer to understand what was challenging and that sets the stage for the actions you took.

Sample Context: I took a risk that developed my decision-making process. When I was a senior in high school, I was struggling with whether to attend the University of Maryland - my home state - on a scholarship, or the University of Michigan with loans. I was admitted to the Maryland Smith School of Business but was not accepted to the Ross School of Business’ Preferred-Admission Program, so if I were to attend Michigan, I would have to apply to Ross at the end of my freshman year. I was faced with a difficult decision that included financial implications for my family. I knew I wanted to attend a top undergraduate business program and that Ross was the perfect fit. However, I also understood that even after putting in hard work and leadership in student organizations during my freshman year at Michigan,
there was a chance I would not be admitted to the Ross BBA program. If I were not admitted, I would be left to choose another major at Michigan or possibly transfer to Maryland.

**Action:** Use plenty of “I” statements and take credit for actions you initiated and drove!

So as a high school senior, I performed a cost-benefit analysis, taking into consideration financial implications and personal influence from family and friends to help make my decision. I also researched the employment outcomes of both Ross and non-Ross students at Michigan and compared that to data from Maryland’s Smith School. In addition to what was quantifiable, I examined how each university fit with my expectations about college life.

**Result:** Always tie in a result to each question, whether it is quantitative or qualitative, and show how your actions developed professional skills or made a positive impact to the company or student organization.

Ultimately, I determined that it was worth taking the risk of choosing Michigan and possibly not getting into Ross. I learned that putting in hard work, building relationships, and becoming a leader on-campus helped me to be admitted to Ross and that making the hardest financial and personal decisions often leads to the greatest future value.

**Brand Management Case Interviews**

Quite a few recruiters will ask case questions during an interview. These are typically "mini-cases" that don't require in-depth analysis and number crunching. The most important thing to do with cases is to take your time and clearly think through your response. In most situations, the recruiter is not looking for the “right” answer. They are focusing on your thought process, how you approach a problem, and your general marketing knowledge.

When approaching a Marketing Case question it is important to consider the 3 C’s: Clear, Concise, and Complete. This is an opportunity to show strategic thinking and your ability to work under pressure. Try to think outside of the box, as this is a perfect opportunity to display creativity. Before beginning your analysis, repeat the question to the interviewer to be sure you understand exactly what is being asked.

Many people find it very helpful to use a framework when answering a case. One method that works well for marketing cases is an inverted triangle framework.

![Inverted Triangle Diagram](image)

Start broad by taking a look at the industry. For example, what is the level of competition, what the demand is for the product, what consumer trends are, etc.

Narrow your discussion to the company in question. For example, how well known is the company’s product, what is its market share, is the company cash-rich and can they support an intensive marketing
campaign, what is the organizational structure like, can they react quickly to a volatile marketplace, what sets it apart from other competitors, what are its advantages, etc.

Set up the 4 P’s (Product - Price - Promotion - Place) with a discussion of the Customer – this is critical and should come first. Who is the customer? How will you segment customers? Which segments will you target? What will your product positioning be [target, frame of reference (i.e., what product competes against, point of difference from competition)]? If you don’t focus on the customer, it is unlikely your case interview will be successful! Next go through the 4 P’s in discussing the specific situation, covering what the product is or should be (extensions?), where you think the product should be priced, how to advertise/promote, and how is it going to be distributed/where it will be placed. You do not necessarily need to mention that you are going through the 4 P’s, but you can if it makes you feel more comfortable.

If you would need further information for making recommendations for the case, state what you want to find out and then ask the interviewer a question to get the necessary information. (e.g., “I’d want to know if our product has changed. Can you tell me about that?”)

Try to tie in an angle of creativity in your answer. Think of an innovative new way to market the product, mention an interesting brand extension, packaging, shelf placement, etc.

Don’t forget strategies used to get the products in the stores, not just into the consumer’s hands (e.g., bundling, discounts to retailers).

Another way framework that is often used and appreciated by marketing firms is “The Big Picture” that is learned in Ross’s introductory marketing course. Utilizing The Big Picture will help cover all bases and also demonstrate marketing terms and knowledge.

Infuse your response with thoughtful and specific information you gained through your industry and company research, the direction in which it seems to be headed in, and/or current or past successful promotions to show you have done your research.

When approaching a case, ask the interviewer some questions to help reach your solution. These questions should be somewhat conversational in order to demonstrate your flow of thoughts. Most marketing case questions fall into one of four categories: New Product Launch, Declining Sales, Pricing, and New Competitor. In conducting a case question here are key points and questions to ask yourself or the interviewer during your analysis.

- **Always begin by considering the consumer.** Is this a product the consumer needs or wants? Does this new competitor meet consumer needs? Are consumers in this segment willing or able to meet this price point?
- **Be sure to consider the market as a whole.** Can the costs or barriers to entry be overcome? Is there room for another competitor in this market? How large is the consumer need in this market? Are sales declining for the category as a whole?

- **Examine the competition.** How many competitors are there? Is the company competing with mature brands or new entrants? Are new competitors a viable threat? How are the competition’s sales in comparison to your company? Is the competition providing a new benefit or alternative?

- **Evaluate the 4 P’s: Product, Price, Place, Promotion.** Is your product meeting consumer needs and expectations? Is the product a durable good or luxury item? Is this item at a premium or generic price point? Where will customers buy this product? How widely distributed will the product be? Through which medium will advertisements be most effective? Should other incentives like coupons be offered?

Sample Case Questions

1. What is the most innovative recent new product introduction? Why was it innovative? If you were the brand manager on this product, what would you have done differently?

   *Tip: Do not use the company’s products since the interviewers know them too well.

2. Assume you are the brand manager on Brand X. Sales have been declining recently. What kinds of things may be causing the decline? Given your hypotheses, what would you do?

3. What is the best commercial that you have seen lately? Why was it a good commercial?

4. Be prepared to evaluate print advertisements that the interviewer brings to the interview.

5. What is a current good/bad advertisement? What is a current good/bad product?

6. Pick any consumer products (or high tech, healthcare, etc.) category, what are the strategic issues facing this category? What would you do if you were a brand manager in this category to address these issues?

7. Market this paper clip (or any object).

8. What is the best new product you’ve seen lately?

9. You are considering launching a cereal that has been very successful overseas. What questions should you ask before the launch?

10. You are the brand manager for a popular salad dressing brand and have realized a decline in sales. What questions should you ask to determine what is happening? How should you react?

11. Name an innovative new product and explain its success? How would you improve it?

12. How will you decide the pricing strategy of a new product your company is launching?

13. You are the brand manager for Brand X all-purpose bathroom cleaner. Brand Z focuses on producing hand soaps, but has recently introduced a new type of bathroom cleaner. How should you react?

14. Give an example of a product/brand that you feel is poorly marketed and how would you improve this campaign?

15. If you were a brand manager for a line of BBQ sauce, how would you determine the number of people that grill in the U.S.?
16. Name 5 possible line extensions for Brand Y.

17. You work for Brand W, one of the top charcoal brands, and the company is considering launching a new type of charcoal. Should you lend the Brand W name to this new charcoal?

**Bibliography of Information Resources**

- BBA CareerLeader™ profiles found on Career tab on iM pact (refer to your CareerLeader results and the “Career Match” section for links to functional profiles)
- “Vault Campus” career guides and company specific reviews available through Kresge Library - [http://www.bus.umich.edu/kresgelibrary/secure-all/vault.htm](http://www.bus.umich.edu/kresgelibrary/secure-all/vault.htm) (Be sure to go through the Kresge Library site to get free access.)
- Kresge Library Career Resources Guide that will link to relevant databases and other industry and company information useful for interview preparation and for off-campus job searching. [http://kresgeguides.bus.umich.edu/offcampusjobs](http://kresgeguides.bus.umich.edu/offcampusjobs)

**Other Helpful Marketing Resources**

* Wall Street Journal, Market Place
* Brandweek
* AdWeek
* Ad Age Magazine
* Individual Company Websites
* Super Market Guru website and e-newsletters

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<td>§ Forbes – Forbes.com</td>
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**BBA Senior Peer Coach Notes of Advice**

- Be genuine and thoughtful. At the end of the day, recruiters want to hire someone who is not only a good fit with their company’s unique culture but also someone whom they would want to work with on their own team.
- Don’t be afraid to reach out to alumni
- Utilize the RCS BBA Career Guide and peer career coaches!
- Start your off-campus search early!
- Utilize LinkedIn to seek contacts at both on and off campus firms
  - Join groups on LinkedIn to be able to send messages to contacts you are not directly connected to (e.g. University of Michigan Alumni, Ross School of Business, Industry/Interest specific groups).
  - To make your network as wide as it possibly can be, include non-professional connections such as your family members, neighbors, and professors.
- Use your calendar to stay on top of course requirements and recruiting events/deadlines.
· Avoid the temptation to take a certain career path just because others are - you have your unique interests and dreams. Be honest about who you are and what you enjoy - this will more likely lead to a successful career search!
· Talk with a Ross Career Consultant and/or your Academic Advisor if you are getting discouraged; there are lots of resources available to help you.
· Represent the Ross School of Business professionally throughout all touch points of the recruiting process as a well-rounded product of academics, real work experience, community leadership and positive thinking.