



Last summer, University students employed by Southwestern Co. worked in Kansas and Texas. This year they will head to either upstate New York or the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

at ease.

After the first step comes the approach, the introduction, the demonstration, the close, answering objections and collecting the money. This whole process is rehearsed over and over at sales school and at the first few Sunday meetings, according to John McBarron, a University student who sold for Southwestern last summer. He describes sales school as reminiscent of military indoctrination.

Role playing and video tapes of sales techniques also play a big role in the five-day school, according to Susan Douglass, a University student on McBarron's team last summer.

Sales school is described by Carey and Douglass as a sort of "brainwashing" session.

Although he says that brainwashing is pretty strong language, Paul Squire believes it's partly true because of the company's message that one can succeed if one works hard, keeps a positive mental attitude and doesn't quit. "You could call it training too," Squire says.

"It is sort of like finals week," according to Squire, who says at times he felt like he was suffering from the strain of an "information overload."

During sales school students also attend talks by motivational speakers who have sold for the company in the past. All people who work for the company began as dealers selling for Southwestern during summers while in college.

The speaker on the last day of school is the vice president of the company, Allen "A.C." Clemens, described by McBarron, who saw him speak at the school, as resembling an evangelical preacher.

Friday afternoon, after A.C. gives them their last talk, the students once again pile into cars and caravan to their designated sales areas.

Motivation is stressed as the key to a successful summer. An entire section of the sales manual is devoted to motivation. The section in the manual on positive mental attitude suggests that between each house the dealer say aloud: "This is the best day I've ever

had. I can, I will, I'm going to help 30 people a day live a richer, fuller more meaningful life because I stopped by and showed them my books. I can, I will, I'm going to become, day by day, one of the greatest salesmen the Southwestern Company has ever had."

The manual goes on to say that by repeating that phrase one can not help but maintain a positive mental attitude and an enthusiastic outlook.

McBarron says that each team is also expected to make up a name for themselves to create team spirit and unity. McBarron's team was the RAMS; Rams Attitude Means Success.

Each morning after the team eats breakfast together they do the bookman song and dance in the parking lot of the cafe or restaurant, something McBarron refused to recreate during the interview.

Peer pressure, according to Douglass, is used as a strong tool to keep students from quitting and to keep students motivated and willing to put in long grueling hours.

In the Midwest, temperatures of 100 degrees and humidity readings of 100 percent are common during the summer.

The company and student managers expect dealers to be knocking on doors from 8 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. and even later if one wants to be successful they tell students.

Douglass says at times she would sell until 10:30 p.m.

At the Sunday meetings, according to Douglass, everyone who worked more than 80 hours is asked to stand and be recognized. "They make you feel really small if you, God forbid, only worked 70 hours that week," she says.

There are other incentives. For example, she got a pie in the face at a Sunday meeting for losing a selling contest to another dealer, she says. "They were going to do it again but I refused" to allow it to happen a second time, she says.

McBarron says he also experienced strong peer pressure not to quit from his teammates when he suggested he might leave. He eventually did, regardless.

Squire says that he admires anyone

who sells books door-to-door, even if they only do it for a week and then quit. "You get a lot of 'no's' for every 'yes'," he says, noting how hard it is to continue while being constantly rejected. "I don't think anyone can really fathom how hard it really is," Douglass says.

Almost everyone interviewed agreed that selling door-to-door was one of the hardest things they had ever done.

Opinions on why sellers are given areas so far from home vary. Rodgers says it is due to simple geographical logistics. Students coming from the West sell relatively close to Nashville so they don't have to make the long trip from Oregon, for example, four times; once to sales school, once back to Oregon to sell, once to Nashville to pick up their check and then home. If Oregon dealers sell closer to Nashville, he says, they only have to make the long trip twice; once out and once back.

Conversely, McBarron met students from Georgia who were being sent to Oregon to sell for the summer.

McBarron, who sold for about three weeks last summer before borrowing money from his land lady so he could afford the 48-hour bus trip back to Oregon, says he thinks the reason for locating students far from home is so they will have little incentive to quit once they reach their sales turf. That did not deter McBarron and nearly 40 other University students from quitting last summer, however.

"I don't care if people are on the moon, if they want to go home they're gonna find a way home," says Rick Schyer of Seattle, who sold for Southwestern for 9 summers and was a student manager.

Of the 12 student team McBarron was with, three finished the summer. Others including Carey believe dealers are placed far from home so there will be few if any distractions to prevent them from selling. Ten of 13 in Carey's team left early.

Once a team gets to the area they are assigned they are on their own in finding living quarters. Some teams are given names of potential places to stay,

other teams, like the one Susan Douglass was in, are given no references. Carey's team's list contained one name. The people were no longer interested in putting up college students in their home for a whole summer.

McBarron's team was assigned Salina, Kan. What they weren't told before they left Nashville was that Salina has a Green River Ordinance prohibiting door-to-door selling. They had a few run-ins with the police. When McBarron called Nashville for advice he was told to either sell in the outlying areas, not a feasible option for him since he didn't have a car, or risk being arrested and continue to sell in Salina. McBarron says company officials kept telling him "to have that problem-solving attitude."

Students had been selling in Salina for several summers before McBarron's team was sent there, Davis says, and had experienced no problems selling door-to-door. By the time the company sent someone to discuss the problem with the Salina City Council, students had "discontinued their work with us," according to Davis.

Dealers, college students after sales school indoctrination, will sell the Volume Library, a two-volume set of educational books designed as reference material for school age children. Dealers get 40 percent of what they sell, around \$56 for each full set of books sold.

The full set includes a cookbook which can be purchased separately, although students are encouraged to pitch the books as a set. If the prospective buyers are not interested the dealer then informs them that the library can be bought without the cookbook for about \$30 less. Whether this is an underhanded sales technique is a matter of interpretation, according to Squire. "The extra thirty bucks isn't going to hurt anybody," he says. He notes that if dealers wish they can sell the Volume Library and the cookbook separately. "Nobody is forcing anyone to sell both together," he says. "You can do what you want. I'm trying to make money for school and you can make a little bit more money that way."

The average amount of money that students from the University made three years ago was extraordinary, Rodgers says. Every student made money and every student completed the entire 13 weeks. The average gross profit for each student was more than \$6,000 for the summer of 1985, Rodgers says. Prospective sellers for the '86 season were told they could make that much if they considered themselves average. Naturally most went to Nashville expecting they could make at least that much. Susan Douglass, who finished last summer and netted about \$2,100, says the experience was good but that she could have made more money and worked less if she had stayed home and took on two full-time jobs.

"I did well at it but it's not something I enjoy enough to put myself through again," she says.

Of the unrealistic expectations, Douglass says, "I did second best of everyone from Oregon and I didn't even do average."

The exceptional first year, Schyer says, no doubt helped raise expectations of success too high.

The group that went in 1985 was tiny compared to the 1986 group, according to Rodgers. Rodgers says he opposed recruiting so heavily the second year and believes that may have been a contributing factor to the high attrition rate suffered by the Oregon group last year. Even second-year sales people were leaving, Douglass says.

Barbara Bending's student manager