

Students uncover good, bad in summer marketing jobs

■ Students can make money as representatives for marketing companies, but not without investing a lot of time and work

By Danielle Gillespie
Oregon Daily Emerald

As summer approaches, marketing companies are stepping up their efforts to recruit sales representatives by offering students the chance to make big money, but lots of cash doesn't come easy. Many of these jobs require long hours and lots of hard work.

Career Center Director Larry Smith said even with the downturn in the economy and lack of internships available, he does not think the level of student interest in these marketing jobs has increased because they require such hard work. He said students have several reasons for wanting to work in these jobs, whether for sales experience or making money during the summer, but only students who are interested in the opportunity will pursue it.

"I don't even think that with the economy down that more students will be drawn to this type of work," he said. "If it's not their cup of tea, they most likely won't do it."

In summer 2000, senior Alissa Scott worked about 80 hours a week and earned \$14,000 selling books door-to-door in Louisiana for Southwestern, a marketing company.

"I would recommend this to anyone. It puts life in a better perspective and you develop your personality," she said. "It's great on your résumé."

Smith said Southwestern and Vector Marketing Corp. are among the most active campus recruiters for student sales representatives. Southwestern has worked through

the Career Center for about 20 years to recruit students for selling books in the United States.

Vector Marketing offers students a chance to sell Cutco Cutlery, a line of kitchen knives, in the United States and Canada.

Tye Thompson, Southwestern district sales manager, said representatives make an average of \$7,200. However, the money doesn't instantly roll in the minute a student gets hired.

Thompson said representatives must buy their own books as demonstrations for sales, ranging from \$30 to \$260 and this purchase goes onto their account as money they owe the company.

He said when representatives start selling books, the money they make will be used to pay back the company for the demos, and the remainder goes onto their account as earnings they will receive at the end of the summer.

Southwestern sends representatives to various states and each representative is responsible for finding a place to live. They have the option of riding a bike or using a car for transportation around town while selling books. In addition, every Sunday representatives are required to drive to meetings often four hours away from where they work. The company does not pay for any transportation costs.

Senior Korren Hough worked for Southwestern in summer 2000 and earned \$2,000. She said because she had to move three times during the summer around Mississippi and Louisiana, it made her summer earnings lower than other representatives.

"I think it was a good experience overall, but I don't think it's for everyone," she said. "I don't think there is a harder job and working 80 hours a

week is almost incomprehensible."

Vector Marketing spokeswoman Jennifer Wright said its representatives make an average of \$2,000 to \$5,000 in a summer.

"This job is not easy," she said. "It creates some degree of effort, and it is not a job that you can just show up at. A representative needs self-discipline."

Wright said Vector Marketing has a three-day training session and does not ask its representatives to relocate for the summer. Most representatives stay in their hometown and can continue working at Vector while attending school.

"The hours are really flexible, and at the training sessions, representatives can set up a schedule for how much money they would like to make, and how many hours they would need to work to meet this goal," Wright said.

Representatives sell products through pre-scheduled in-home appointments and are paid a base rate of about \$14 per appointment along with commission for their sales. The base rate pays the representatives for completing the presentation regardless of whether they sell the product. The company does not pay for gasoline because representatives can decide the location of their appointments, Wright said.

"If I could offer a word of advice, it would be to go out there expecting to work your tail off and do exactly what they say and you'll be fine," Scott said.

Hough said students thinking about doing this type of work for a summer job need to approach it with an open mind.

"Be expecting the worst, and it will be better," she said.

E-mail reporter Danielle Gillespie at daniellegillespie@dailyemerald.com.

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