

ANTICIPATE ANYTHING

By Melissa Montemale

CAREER SEEKERS, BE WARNED: upon asking these three interviewees, Paul Williams, Jon Love, and Eric McLendon if they would be able to describe a “typical day” in their careers, I was treated to hearty laughter each time. The day-to-day tasks in a sales and marketing position in itself can vary as greatly as the industry. These three specialists demonstrate that the path to success in sales and marketing is not always one that is linear.

PAUL WILLIAMS, OMNICOM GROUP

Paul Williams graduated from the State University of New York (SUNY) at Albany in 1999, where he majored in psychology and minored in urban education. He started as a guidance counselor but then switched industries and worked with in technology recruitment. Since neither field was fast paced or varied enough, when his company relocated, Williams took the opportunity to switch gears again.

He broke into entertainment marketing by luck. His best friend, Keith Bulluck, of the Tennessee Titans, started a nonprofit foundation and asked Williams to help him raise money by selling sponsorships for a celebrity basketball game in Nashville, TN. He quickly learned that he wasn't just selling sponsorship—he was trying to push products as well.



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That experience led Bulluck to ask Williams to work with him full time, starting a company, Quan Unlimited, LLC. Two years later, while pitching his client at a meeting for Players Inc., the licensing and marketing subsidiary of the NFL Players Association, in Washington, DC, Williams received an E-mail asking about his background from Howard Skall, vice president of player marketing. "I thought that he was inquiring just to see if I was legitimate," he remembers. Instead, Williams was offered a job as a player marketing manager, a position he held for one year until the desire to get back to New York City hit him. A friend from SUNY Albany was working for Omnicom Group, which owns The Marketing Arm and ranks as the world's premier corporate media services conglomerate, with advertising, marketing, and public relations operations serving some 5,000 clients in more than 100 countries. Williams was put in contact with the talent division of Davie Brown Talent. Williams enrolled in sports marketing courses at New York University, but the unique opportunities that he has had are what helped him and he learned on the go.

Started in 1985, Davie Brown Entertainment (DBE), based in New York City, has provided strategy, ideas, insights, analytics, execution, and connections in sports, entertainment, and event marketing. As of 1993, DBE has been part of The Marketing Arm, a network of marketing services agencies building brands through the emotionally powerful platforms of entertainment, music, sports, promotions, events, and cause marketing. You may have seen commercials with Jessica Simpson pitching for Pizza Hut or Tiger Woods endorsing Gillette—the deals between those celebrities and those brands were negotiated by DBE.

In order to discover talent and negotiate deals, first relationships must be built by talking to brand agencies to learn their marketing initiatives to see how they can utilize talent. What Williams does is to bring in the brand company while his colleague reaches out to the celebrities to negotiate deals on behalf of the brand.

Williams advises that those looking to break into entertainment marketing really gain an understanding of the industry. Not only will school help to build a base of contacts, in an industry where technology plays such a huge part, being aware of changes is vital. Do not overlook any opportunities to build relationships – that skill is not only useful on the job; it can help you get the job. "People will know you as a go to person for projects."

JON LOVE, PITNEY BOWES

Jon Love attended Knoxville College and Bowie State University in Maryland, graduating with a degree in business management in 1983. He is also a graduate of Rutgers University's advanced management program and Columbia University's executive education program for marketing management.

What began as a summer job with AT&T turned into a 13-year career of various roles with increasing responsibilities. His passion for working with customers and his experience lead him to the position of general manager, national sales for AT&T federal government markets, through which he lead a national team responsible for sales of communication equipment and services to federal government and civilian and military locations throughout the U. S.

Moving into the role of vice president of enterprise networks sales for the Michigan region of Lucent Technologies, a spinoff company of AT&T, Love led a team that managed the company's relationship with large customers, such as Ford. At Avaya, as national vice president of implementation services, a spinoff from

Lucent, he led a team of over 4,000 employees worldwide. In addition, he has led the sales and government relations of Robbins-Gioia, Inc., a leading consulting firm.

Since 2005, Love has been the president of Pitney Bowes Government Solutions (PBGs). When he was approached for the position, he saw it as a unique opportunity because the company was not well known in the government market. His initial surprise turned to intrigue, as he reviewed the company's capabilities—he was attracted by the opportunity to try to grow a business.

Love's day often consists of looking at market opportunities in the government space, strategizing about opportunities on how to grow the business, and a capability to provide solutions for his client. Coaching his team is a large part of his day—operational problems, personnel issues, all the while still working with customers and onsite visits with employees.

Love states that developing and having a "thick skin" in crucial—in sales, you will be told "no" a lot. He also advises career seekers to sit down and assess their strengths versus their job responsibilities and to be honest with themselves regarding how a position would best fit them.

ERIC MCLENDON, THE CORCORAN GROUP

McClendon's career path started in 1985 upon graduating from Texas Christian University in Forth Worth, TX, with a degree in broadcast journalism and political science. His journey toward real estate was, in his words, "round about." After college, he landed the position of an on-air weekend sportscaster at WNBC in New York City. When he decided to pursue an acting career, he left broadcast journalism to go on to perform roles in soap operas, in film, off Broadway, and "Law and Order."

Because acting is an ever changing field, a steady income is not a guarantee and McClendon supplemented his income by entering real estate sales. When he found himself regularly referring friends to other agents, he decided to pursue a real estate career. Earning his license two years ago, he started working for The Corcoran Group, the largest residential real estate firm in New York City. Since 2001, The Corcoran Group has been owned by NRT, the nation's leading residential real estate brokerage company. Today, The Corcoran Group boasts 47 offices, nearly 2,200 brokers, and over 11.7 billion dollars in annual sales volume.

Though he describes his career journey as "round about," the experience that he gained was anything but. Broadcasting and interviewing were good practice to develop a public persona. "Acting taught me to listen; in sales, it's not about the agent. It's about listening to what the customer wants. It seems simple, but it's not." In addition, transitioning from acting to real estate helped him accept being told no.

For graduates seeking a career in real estate, McClendon believes that finding a reputable company is essential. Given that real estate is a referral business, students just starting out would not have the contacts that someone with several years of work experience. However, an assistant position helps to build a career or grow a business. McClendon's previous careers certainly helped his database.

Like Love and Williams, McClendon laughed upon asking about a typical day. The day before, he was close to closing on a property and in the final walk through, was called with a warning to anticipate flooding on the property after heavy downpours. "You have to anticipate anything," he concludes. **AACW**