Dr. Wayne Slough

Dr. Wayne Slough is an Assistant Professor of Marketing in the VCU School of Business. He has experience in several industries including insurance, information technology, corporate education and development, and organizational effectiveness consulting. His work experience includes roles at Jefferson Pilot, AT&T, Dale Carnegie Training, and Right Management Consultants. His teaching interests include personal selling, sales management and marketing and he currently teaches Personal Selling and Sales Management (MKTG 435) and Advanced Personal Selling (MKTG 491).

Sales is often considered the first step towards a marketing career. How did you get started in sales?

Like many new graduates today, I needed work! Armed with a business degree from Virginia Tech and varied, part time jobs as work experience, I started interviewing around. Most of the interest I was receiving from companies who were looking for sales-people. My first position was as a life insurance agent with Greensboro, NC based Jefferson Standard Life Insurance Company. I was actually scared to death of the prospect of calling on people and asking them to buy something. Ultimately I learned enough to be reasonably successful. This “B2C” led to my first B2B position with AT&T. By then, I had found my calling.

In 2009 you taught your first class here in the School of Business—Personal Selling (MKTG 475). Why did you transition from business to academia?

It has been an evolution! Salespeople are one of the most trained groups of professionals there are. I found myself attending company sponsored sales training programs regularly. I always did well in these programs and enjoyed them. Pretty soon, I was presenting them and discovered I had a passion for the classroom, whether as a learner or instructor. Over the next 20 years, I did two things. First, I continued to sell while representing companies which marketed training, workforce development, and management consulting programs while doubling as a facilitator of those programs. Second, I picked up Master’s and Doctorate degrees from VCU! I began adjunct work here in 2009, which led to the full time position I have now. I enjoy my work tremendously and am able to do the only two things I really know, teaching and selling. I am fortunate to be able to not only teach sales and marketing, but also to represent the marketing department in its Sales Managers Forum by calling on and developing relationships with sales executives in our region.

One of the newest course offerings in the Marketing Department is Advanced Personal Selling (MKTG 491-901). What can you tell us about it?

It is a fantastic course! Most, but not all, students who take it have a strong interest in sales as a career. A complement to MKTG 435, “Advanced Selling” students do a deep dive into more fully understanding and developing the skills and aptitudes they will need to hit the ground running as B2B salespeople. Sales executive guest speakers are a feature of the class as are activities designed to get students calling on businesspeople, presenting ideas, and selling themselves. It’s working! Students who have taken this class have been hired by outstanding organizations such as Altria, Goodyear, Hershey, and the Virginia Lottery. Others have found internships with the Martin Agency and Home Depot.
What are some initiatives and projects you are currently working on?

I continue to collaborate with department chair Dr. Michael Little in growing the Sales Managers Forum. We have three tremendously exciting programs scheduled for 2013. Also, *Winning New Business* is a one day sales training program for sales professionals I teach and help market in conjunction with Dr. Jean Gasen’s Center for Corporate Education. I’m working again with Mike Eisenman’s Career Services team to facilitate our fourth “Jump$tart Your Sales Career” sales executive panel presentation in February. I am very privileged to serve as one of three faculty advisors to our business school’s Alumni Society, a fantastic group of pro- VCU Business enthusiasts!

What advice would you give to students considering sales as a starting point, or a profession?

Two things: first, take MKTG 435 and 491! Second, don't walk – run to begin interviewing for a position in B2B sales. What a fantastic position in which to begin a career! It is tremendously rewarding, will teach them a great deal about how the marketplace works and if they do well, it will catapult them to greater responsibility and earning power!