

Business Development Jobs: What Scaling the Career Ladder Entails

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Abstract

Many organizations are seeking graduates and professionals to fill positions with varying levels of responsibility in business development. If the parameters of a marketing or sales career are recognized, the same cannot be said of this new organizational function. This article therefore tries to identify the *tasks*, *attributes* and *incentives* offered to business developers at the *entry level*, *mid-level* and *upper level*. The research method retained is content analysis of job postings, an efficient approach to study the characteristics of postings. The results show that tasks in business development jobs are drawn from both marketing and sales. Desired attributes of business developers emphasize the sales dimension, along with managerial qualities at higher levels. Lastly, incentives offered include traditional monetary benefits, and advantages linked to organizational attractions and the work environment.

Keywords: business development jobs, career path, tasks, attributes, incentives, content analysis

1. Introduction

The offering of new business development jobs at all hierarchical levels has grown remarkably as many organizations seek young graduates and professionals in mid-career who can carry out the tasks and responsibilities of this field (Eidhoff & Poelzl, 2014). In addition, interest groups have proliferated on electronic platforms (e.g., LinkedIn Business Development Group, Google+ Business Consulting Community) or within professional associations (e.g., Scottish Lifesciences Association, Business Development Special Interest Group (SIG), Auckland Business Development Specialists SIG) that specialize in all aspects of jobs in this field. Many professionals seek advice on these sites, yet most often business development skills are acquired in the field (Sorensen, 2012; Davis & Sun, 2006). In this case, the fault lies with insufficient education because very few universities or colleges offer a specialization or even courses in the subject.

Despite definite educational gaps, many graduates and professionals interested in commercialization are quite eager to build illustrious careers in business development (Jensen, 2009). Business professors, headhunters and employers must recognize this new job reality and coordinate their actions (Weeks et al., 2014) to optimize efforts to train, attract, hire, supervise, retain and constantly upgrade professionals of all ages aspiring to their first job in business development or to a promotion in this area.

This article contributes to the ongoing reflection on careers in business development. If the parameters of careers in marketing or sales are largely recognized, those of business development are not. The objective is therefore to identify the assigned tasks, desirable attributes and incentives offered for each of three job levels: *entry level*, *mid-level* and *upper level*. The article is divided into four sections: the first reviews the research context. The next section explains the methodology, and the third section presents the results. The last section contains a discussion, review of the implications, limitations and avenues of future research.

2. Research Context

2.1 Business Development: Construct at Work

Business development has been portrayed in a growing number of publications as a driver of business growth. For example, Scheessele's (2009) advice is "...if you want consistent, long-term revenue growth, hire business development professionals..." (p. 2). Pollack (2012) argues that aligning the forces of business development will create opportunities for growth. Taylor (2013) concludes that business development is vital for "...generating new clients and working well with existing clients" (p. 3).

This focus on business development may be linked to the business downturn that several firms suffered following the financial crisis that shook economies around the world in the late 2000s (Robson, Beninger & Hall, 2014; Gayet, 2010). Interest is also partly linked to stagnating growth in several markets since the recession (Eidhoff & Poelzl, 2014), bolstering Day's (2003) call to make growth an imperative for businesses, with the marketing function playing a pivotal role in this effort. Therefore, marketing, growth strategy and business development must form a fundamental and functional triptych to ensure the sustainability of organizations. However, whereas marketing practice is anchored in an authoritative definition (AMA, 2013), and growth decisions have been analyzed theoretically for several decades using Ansoff's (1957) matrix, the construct of business development is more problematic. This is because its conceptualization is not unanimous (Lorenzi, 2013; Sorensen, 2014).

In Sorensen's (2012) operationalization, business development "refers to the tasks and processes concerning analytical preparation of potential growth opportunities, the support and monitoring of the implementation of growth opportunities, but does not include decisions on strategy and implementation of growth opportunities" (p. 26). This vision of business development excludes all tasks related to final commercialization, even the sale of products or services, because the measure of performance is linked only to investments in analyzing growth opportunities and investments in planning, coordination and control of efforts to capture and monetize business opportunities that were considered viable.

Nonetheless, for Gayet (2010) and Bussgang et al. (2013), business development is a construct that must also include direct commercialization activity. For example, Bussgang et al. (2013) mention activities such as: "formulating a strategy, identifying potential partners, crafting and delivering a pitch, negotiating terms, and finally, implementing a partnership" (p. 1). For Gayet (2010), good performance in business development requires varied skills: "project management, innovation management, business model construction, and control of operating accounts" (p. 106).

There are thus two operational visions of business development. The first is focused, applying uniquely in cases of *non-trivial growth opportunities*, namely business opportunities requiring adaptations of tasks, processes and resource allocation, within the constraints of the organizational strategy in place (Sorensen, 2014). A second broader vision adds to business developers' tasks and responsibilities cases of *simple expansion of existing sales channels* (Eidhof & Poelzl, 2014).

Business development has adopted the strategic dimension of marketing (Eidhof & Poelzl, 2014) that the marketing function had abandoned (Nath & Mahajan, 2011) after its responsibilities were reoriented toward operations, specifically marketing tactics. Business development is thus partly associated with the sales function, especially when it adopts a *strategic cross-functional process*. Proposed by Storbacka et al. (2009), this conceptualization establishes a direct link between the sales function and business strategy, notably due to the evolution of business models, with a strong emphasis on co-creation of value.

Business development therefore borrows tasks from both strategic marketing and strategic sales. Three tasks are commonly associated with business development: analysis of growth opportunities; planning, coordination and control of business partnerships; and direct and indirect participation in commercialization efforts aimed at target markets and customers.

2.2 Career Path: Entry-, Mid- and Upper-Level Jobs

Job market trends have made career-centrism a constantly evolving phenomenon. Short, medium and long-term employability at the same employer or for different ones has changed from generation to generation (Lyons, Schweitzer & Ng, 2015). Employability may be studied from the perspective of candidates or employers (Ahmed & Crossman, 2008). Accessing an entry-level job or being promoted to a mid-level or upper-level position requires qualifications that include capacities to execute tasks, in return for incentives offered by the employer.

2.2.1 On Attributes Needed

Two studies have tried to shed light on this subject in business development. The first, by Davis and Sun (2006), examined 26 businesses involved in B2B marketing in the Canadian IT sector. The results of interviews are presented in the form of a table containing 31 attributes that received 218 mentions. This represents an average of seven mentions of attributes (i.e., skills, competences, proficiencies, capabilities) sought in business development staff at these businesses. The attributes that received at least 5% of all mentions (maximum of 8.3% of mentions) are, in order: "communication; creative thinker, dreamer; listening; technical/analytical; understand client needs; and honest." Principal component analysis of these 31 attributes indicated two dimensions, the first on the "resourceful-likeable" axis and the second on the "knowledgeable-engaged" axis. The researchers also

linked some of these attributes with job level. For the entry level, “flexible and well organized, deal-close oriented, and entrepreneurial spirit” are among the attributes mentioned. For the upper-level, “integrity, aggressive but tactful, and working with team closely” were cited, whereas for the executive level, (CEO, or SME owner), “business maturity, ability to deal with ambiguity, and excellent oral/written communication” are salient attributes.

The second pertinent study in the literature review is that of Eidhoff and Poelzl (2014), which consists in interviews done with 16 German career business developers who also worked in B2B marketing. The results identify 15 qualifications, the most important of which are type of education (management, engineering and marketing) and 16 competences (combination of hard skills, soft skills and knowledge), the five most important (at least 4 mentions) of which are, in order: “methodical and analytical skills, knowledge in management/engineering, understanding markets and customers, capability for abstraction, and project management skills.” The authors did not analyze interaction effects with job level.

2.2.2 On Tasks Assigned

Eidhoff and Poelzl (2014) compile 16 tasks assigned to business developers, mentioned 41 times in total. Only two tasks received one mention by at least 50% of the people interviewed: “developing businesses and identifying growth opportunities” and “mergers and acquisitions.” The third task, which obtained 10% of the mentions, is “innovating business model.” Lastly, note that over 50% of the tasks inventoried received a minimal one or two mentions.

Davis and Sun (2006) identified tasks taken from the content analysis of 80 job descriptions. They classified the tasks into two groups: the first, called external, comprises tasks oriented toward recognition of business opportunities and partnerships. The second, called internal, pertains to management-related tasks. When distributed by job level, the 51 tasks identified give an overview of the time dedicated to each of the two groups: for entry-level employees, 80% of their time is allotted to internal tasks (e.g., “gaining trust advisor status at executive level” and “sales presentation and proposal writing”) and the rest to external tasks (e.g., “telephone and face-to-face communication with customers and “distribution or channel relationship building”). At the senior level, the ratio is 40/60, with internal tasks like “leadership in people and change management,” “developing relatively short-term plan,” “sale pipeline budget” and “funnel report,” along with external tasks like “negotiating complex agreements at executive-level,” and “strategic moving forward.” For the Executive BD level, the ratio is 60/40; the researchers mentioned 10 internal tasks, according to priority: “effective interaction with all levels,” “developing strategic and long-term plan,” “strategic resources allocation” “profit enhancement plan,” “manage budget process, forecasting” and “risk analysis for new opportunities.” The authors identify 9 external tasks, including “large-scale national and international accounts,” “consultative selling,” “project management role,” “trusted partnership building,” and “significant individual thinking.” Principal component analysis of the tasks identified, regardless of job level, yields a two-factor solution, where the first axis ranges from “customer requirements” to “business flow/networking” and the second axis ranges from “prospecting” to “prepare offerings.”

Taken together, the two studies illustrate tactical and strategic roles for the organizational function of business development, with the proportions varying by job level. Although informative, these studies have a noteworthy limitation: their samples are drawn from specialized business sectors (IT) or uniquely as part of B2B marketing applications.

2.2.3 On Incentives Offered

No specific study of business development has examined *incentive schemes* offered to attract the desired talent or retain these employees by internal promotion. Knowledge of the elements to be considered in determining total compensation for business developers is useful to understand such incentives.

Herzberg’s (2003) classic study of motivation at work specifies two fundamental factors in relations between people and work: hygiene factors, corresponding to environmental factors such as working conditions; and motivator factors, which are intrinsic to the job. Using the nomenclature of Giancola (2009), we can operationalize these factors based on five elements derived from the concept of total rewards strategy: compensation; benefits; work-life balance; performance and recognition; and development and career opportunities. The elements form the incentive schemes offered to potential candidates.

Not only are these elements fundamental factors of attraction and retention, but they are also important in job searches. Giving and receiving information on each of the elements making up the incentive scheme is therefore logical in theory, and should be confirmed in practice. Feldman, Bearden and Hardesty (2006) indeed affirm

their hypothesis that "...individuals seek out specific information on compensation, job duties, developmental opportunities, and the work environment during the job search process" (p. 126). Subjects who found specific information on the company, the job and the work context in job postings rated the perceived appropriateness of advertised jobs, perceived truthfulness of the posting, attitude toward the posting, and attitude toward the company higher. Therefore, the more complete the content of the postings, the more they were considered informative.

More specifically, the mix of incentives to use as a means of attraction and retention may vary according to the context of the labor market (Robson, Beninger, & Hall, 2014), the advertiser (Diamond et al., 2014), the manager or professional in charge of the file (Giancola, 2014) and the vacant position (Baker, Gibbs, & Holstrom, 1993). Accordingly, we expect to find a variation in these factors, and hence in the mix of incentives, among organizations seeking business development professionals.

3. Research Questions

A study of the business development-human resources interface can provide insight into how to attract the right people to apply for a first job and what to offer to encourage them to build their career by taking on increasingly important positions. The premise of our research is to identify characteristics of jobs in this field and variations in the characteristics by job level. We ask three operational questions:

RQ1: What tasks must business developers fulfill? What is the effect of job level?

RQ2: What attributes must business developers possess? What is the effect of job level?

RQ3: What incentives are business developers offered? What is the effect of job level?

The fourth question is to identify differences between job postings by job level. Beyond the elements contained in the postings, it is important to determine variations in the intensity of use of these elements according to job level, hence the following question:

RQ4: What differences are observed in the wording of job postings for each of the factors (tasks, attributes and incentives) according to job level?

4. Sample & Method

The research method retained is content analysis of job postings, an efficient approach to study the characteristics of postings (e.g., Robson, Beninger, & Hall, 2014; Diamond et al., 2014; Pefanis Schlee & Harich, 2010; Jansen, Jansen, & Spink, 2005). To compile our sample, we used the meta-engine *ca.indeed.com*, which gathers job postings from a multitude of websites belonging to companies, employment agencies and specialized or general job search firms.

For a posting to be retained, the term "business development" had to be found in the title. Of the 117 compiled over a five-week period, after verification and validation 100 postings were retained. They were categorized by three hierarchical levels according to number of years of work experience required: 1) entry level (2 years of experience or less – 22 postings); 2) mid-level (3 to 6 years – 61 postings); 3) upper level (7 years or more – 17 postings). We analyzed the content of forty-eight postings, corresponding to 16 per job level.

The coding chart comprised six sections: 1) education (attributes); 2) experience (attributes); 3) hard skills (attributes); 4) soft skills (attributes); 5) tasks; and 6) incentives. Two graduate students in human resources analyzed the content of the postings, together with the main researcher. A pretest was done on 12 job postings (four postings chosen at random by job level), and the results were conclusive, with an *inter-judge agreement score* of .744 (Krippendorff, 1980) and a *composite reliability coefficient* of .853 (Shoemaker, 2003; Holsti, 1969). The final data set reports the number of mentions found in each posting for each element of the coding chart.

5. Findings, Job Posting Content by Job Level

The first series of results to analyze is the number of postings that mentioned one of the elements contained in the three sections (pertaining to tasks, attributes and incentives) of postings at least once.

5.1 RQ 1: Tasks Assigned

For the set of 48 postings analyzed, the results clearly demonstrate (see Table 1) that the main task of business developers is indeed associated with implementing commercialization. To underline its importance, the 193 mentions of tasks related to this managerial function account for 60% of all tasks compiled. The job level that receives the most implementation tasks is mid-level (71); next is upper level (59), followed very closely by entry level (53). The three most important tasks for entry level are, in order, prospecting; sales and customer follow-up;

and solicitation, representation and sales. The same applies to the mid-level, whereas for the upper level, internal networking receives the most mentions followed by external networking and sales and customer follow-up in equal proportions. One of the most assigned tasks for the entry level is organization of work, for which the postings mentioned preparation of materials and presentations, and making appointments for the two higher job levels.

Table 1. Tasks mentioned in job postings

	N= 48	Job postings with mentions, by level		
		Entry N= 16	Mid N= 16	Upper N=16
Analysis	23			
Competitive intelligence	9	0	4	5
Strategic intelligence	8	0	4	4
Market analysis/studies	6	1	2	3
Planning	40			
Operational planning	23	1	10	12
Strategic planning	17	0	6	11
Implementation	193			
Prospecting	37	13	14	10
Sales/client follow-up	36	11	14	11
Sales/solicitation/representation	33	9	15	9
External networking	28	7	10	11
Internal networking	23	1	10	12
Organization of work	17	10	3	4
Qualification/need assessment	12	2	3	7
Team organization	7	0	2	5
Control	49			
Team/work supervision	15	0	6	9
Performance management	13	0	6	7
Progress status/sales report	12	3	4	5
Process improvement	9	0	6	3

The three managerial functions that clearly distinguish entry, mid and upper levels are analysis, planning and control. For the analysis function, entry-level candidates have practically no responsibilities, nor do they have any for the control function. For the planning function, we observe that the upper level is practically twice as likely to do strategic planning as the mid-level. Other important roles for upper-level candidates include qualification/need assessment, team organization and team/work supervision. Two of the most striking elements between the mid- and upper level are sales/solicitation/representation and process improvement.

To summarize, there is a clear demarcation between the entry level and the mid and upper levels for the three functions of analysis, planning and control. However, there is no significant difference between the two upper levels for these functions, apart from the strategic planning task. In addition, overall, postings for entry-level jobs clearly mention fewer tasks to carry out, whereas the difference between mid-level and upper-level is minimal. However, for upper-level postings, tasks to assume are more strategic and related to team management, particularly of entry-level and mid-level employees.

5.2 RQ 2: Desirable Attributes

Soft skills, experience and knowledge are the three clusters of attributes mentioned most often in postings, with over 100 incidences of each, for all postings combined (see Table 2). The three attributes mentioned most often are “desirable persona/trait” (soft skills), “sales” (experience) and “sales/networking” (knowledge).

Looking at the classes of attributes one by one, the elements of experience that emerged the most are team management, experience in the sector and experience in business development. Note that for the entry level, having marketing experience is mentioned more often than for the two higher levels, for whom experience in sales predominates. Regarding hard skills, the mention of total bilingualism appears often and is required more often as the job level rises. For soft skills, the greatest difference is seen in interpersonal relations, practically doubling between entry level and the two other job levels. There is also a notable difference for the attributes

“effective time management,” “leadership” and “business culture.” Regarding the class of attributes linked to knowledge, there is only one striking difference that related to rudiments of management. Education requirements are generally a bachelor’s degree for higher-level positions, whereas technical or trade training is acceptable for the entry level. In addition, eight of the postings did not mention any diploma requirements for business development job applicants. An MBA or any other master’s degree is rarely required. Lastly, an additional requirement for higher-level positions is travel flexibility.

Overall, the profile of business developers based on attributes mentioned in postings, regardless of job level, corresponds well to the tasks discussed in the previous section, namely predominant participation in implementing the commercialization of products and services under their responsibility. The profile reflects a person with maximum skills, knowledge and experience in the business context of sales, representation, and internal and external networking.

Table 2. Desirable attributes

	N= 48	Job postings with mentions, by level		
		Entry N= 16	Mid N= 16	Upper N= 16
Experience	105			
Sales	32	11	10	11
Sector	28	6	8	14
Management (team, projects)	10	0	1	9
Marketing	16	7	6	3
Business development	13	2	6	5
Strategy	4	0	1	3
International	2	0	0	2
Hard skills	67			
Full Bilingualism (French and English)	31	7	11	13
IT (MS Office)	17	6	5	6
Second language proficiency, oral and written	8	4	1	3
Other (finance, technical writing)	6	0	3	3
Knowledge of more than two languages	5	2	1	2
Soft skills	116			
Desirable persona/traits	35	12	13	10
Interpersonal relations	26	5	11	10
Action orientation	15	4	5	6
Effective time management	14	4	3	7
Leadership	10	2	3	5
Business culture	9	1	4	4
Stress management	7	3	1	3
Knowledge	101			
Sales/networking	31	10	11	10
Communication	30	10	11	9
Marketing	22	8	8	6
Management	18	3	8	7
Education required	74			
Bachelor (various)	22	2	10	10
Technical/Trade	15	9	5	1
No degree mentioned	14	8	4	2
Bachelor (Commerce)	9	0	5	4
Other degrees (various)	8	1	2	5
MBA	3	0	0	3
Other master’s degrees (various)	3	0	0	3
Other assets	16			
Travel flexibility	12	1	5	6
List of contacts	4	1	1	2

5.3 RQ 3: Incentives Offered

The class of elements of incentives that obtained the most mentions is that of the work environment (see Table 3). The element “young and dynamic team with stimulating challenges to face” received the highest score. It is followed very closely by “reputation,” which is one of the organizational attractions used in postings, and by “compensation” (pay and other benefits) and “company values” (business environment).

Regarding differences between job levels, entry-level candidates are offered more compensation based on commission and bonuses than the other two levels. The opposite is true for employee benefits, which are mentioned more often for higher levels. Two incentives for entry-level candidates are training and support, along with career planning and skills development. The content of postings seeking mid-level candidates emphasizes the concept of a young and dynamic team, whereas company values are highlighted more for upper-level candidates.

Lastly, each of the categories of elements is represented in the job postings. This result is consistent with the previous observations of the importance of this content for job seekers. Cumulatively, the number of mentions in the three categories of elements other than pay and other benefits is markedly higher, which underlines the importance of nonfinancial attractions.

Table 3. Incentive Schemes Offered

	N= 48	Job postings with mentions, by level		
		Entry N= 16	Mid N= 16	Upper N= 16
Compensation and other benefits	45			
Compensation	19	7	6	6
Employee benefits	13	2	5	6
Commission and bonuses	10	5	3	2
Rebates on products and services	3	2	1	0
Training and support	19			
Career plan, advancement and growth	10	6	1	3
Continuous training and skills development	9	5	1	3
Work environment	53			
Young, dynamic team, stimulating challenges to take on	22	8	12	5
Company values	18	4	5	9
Advantages of physical workplace	10	2	5	3
Flexible work environment	3	2	1	0
Organizational assets	28			
Reputation	20	5	8	7
Noble mission	4	2	0	2
Best employer award	4	1	1	2

6. Total Mentions in Postings by Job Level

An additional interesting question concerns the differences in elements found in job postings, by job level. Beyond counting the number of postings that mentioned one of the elements of each of the three sections at least once, it is important to determine the intensity (or proportion of noise) with which each element was mentioned in the post.

6.1 RQ 4: Differences between Postings by Job Level

The test performed on total content of postings by level illustrates that the higher the position advertised in the posting, the more elements the posting contained (see Table 4). Whereas on average there are slightly more than 24 elements in a posting intended to recruit an entry-level employee, the number increases for each of the two other levels to reach almost 40 for the upper-level. Postings for entry-level candidates therefore differ significantly from those of the other two levels. However, no significant gap is observed between the two higher levels. We consequently examine the sections of postings that differ.

First, for tasks we observed significant differences (see Table 4) for each of the four managerial functions. Apart from the managerial function of analysis, the content of postings for entry-level positions is less elaborate than that of the two other job levels. In addition, for the planning function, entry-level and mid-level postings contain

significantly fewer elements than those directed at upper-level candidates. The results also show that activities related to implementation appear more in managerial functions expected from business developers, with a higher mean of mentions than for the three other functions even when their means are added together.

Table 4. Differences in amount of mentions of elements in job postings

	Entry	Mid	Upper	Statistical significance	Post hoc test results
Job posting layout					
Total mentions	24,19 (11.15)	33,38 (12.17)	39,13 (16.54)	F*= 4.988 Sig.= .012	E<M**** E<U***
Tasks					
Analysis	.25 (.775)	.75 (1.06)	1.38 (1.71)	F*= 3.280 Sig.= .051	E<U****
Planning	.060 (.250)	1.51 (1.50)	3.50 (2.875)	F*= 13,502 Sig.= 000	E<M** E<U** M<U****
Implementation	4.88 (3.38)	8.88 (3.77)	10.31 (6.70)	F*= 4.888 Sig.= .013	E<M** E<U***
Control	.88 (1.08)	2.31 (2.18)	3.00 (2.04)	F*= 4.888 Sig.= .012	E<M**** E<U**
Attributes					
Experience	2.00 (1.317)	2.38 (1.360)	4.50 (2.989)	F*= 6.971 Sig.= .004	E<U** M<U****
Hard skills	2.38 (1.45)	1.81 (1.42)	2.13 (1.02)	F*= .734 Sig.= .486	NS
Soft skills	4.94 (4.15)	6.75 (5.23)	5.88 (6.73)	F*= 1.739 Sig.= .188	NS
Knowledge	2.44 (1.49)	3.00 (2.09)	2.88 (2.80)	F*= .291 Sig.= .749	NS
Educational background	.75 (1.00)	1.38 (.80)	1.63 (1.02)	F*= 3.611 Sig.= .035	E<U***
Incentive Schemes					
Compensation	1.44 (2.13)	1.06 (1.34)	.88 (1.20)	F*= .506 Sig.= .607	NS
Training/Support	1.25 (1.88)	.38 (.80)	.38 (.88)	F*= 2.466 Sig.= .104	NS
Work environment	2.00 (2.53)	1.75 (1.65)	1.19 (1.90)	F*= .754 Sig.= .478	NS
Organizational attractions	.53 (.64)	.69 (.87)	.69 (.94)	F*= .177 Sig.= .839	NS

*Brown-Forsythe, F distributed asymptotically

** p<.01; ***p<.05; ****p<.10

For the attributes section of the posting, significant differences were observed (see Table 4). Postings aimed at entry-level candidates are more voluminous for the elements of experience and education. In each case there is a progression between the three job levels. For experience, we also observe a significant difference between the mid-level and upper level. Postings for the mid-level place more emphasis on soft skills and knowledge than do postings for the other levels, and less emphasis on hard skills, although the differences are not significant.

No significant difference was observed in the incentives section of postings (see Table 4). On average, this section contains fewer elements than the two other sections, for all three job levels. In addition, entry-level postings are on average shorter, although the difference compared with the two other job levels is not significant. Lastly, the work environment element dominates this section of the postings for each job level.

7. Discussion

Several research approaches have contributed to advancing knowledge to improve career outlooks, notably for marketing graduates. Researchers have tested different types of teaching approaches to use in class to favor the attainment of educational objectives that can serve graduates throughout their careers (e.g., Brennan & Vos, 2013; McCorkle et al., 1999). Other scholars have examined short, medium and long-term teaching goals. Specifically,

should they favor marketing knowledge or marketing skills? (e.g., Finch, Nadeau, & O'Reilly, 2012; Pefanis Schlee & Harich, 2010). Lastly, some researchers have sought to unravel the knowledge and skill requirements linked to specific jobs such as sales (e.g., Cummins et al., 2013), product or brand management (e.g., Browne, 1979), advertising (e.g., Kerr, Waller, & Patti, 2009), database marketing (Pefanis Schlee & Harich, 2010) and commercial research (e.g., Freeman & Spanjaard, 2012). The present study has applied this precise approach by examining job conditions in business development, a vigorous labor market sector.

Theoretically, business development is mainly concerned with analyzing business opportunities, and pays particular attention to implementing commercialization strategy and tactics to maximize the profitability of the opportunities retained. The results of this study confirm that a job in this area entails combining tasks drawn from marketing and sales. Further, desirable attributes of business developers highlight the sales dimension. Lastly, the incentives offered include commission and bonuses, an often used form of compensation in the sales field.

For candidates who want to build a career in business development, the gateway is not necessarily a junior level job in the field. Although experience in business development is among the list of attributes, it is not a priority. Rather, the list of attributes clearly indicates the need for diverse and pertinent experience, an element evaluated as significant in the move from one job level to another. In addition, the emphasis, as reflected by a high number of mentions, on having an appropriate educational background must be considered by all people interested in such careers, especially those seeking positions at a higher job level. Lastly, the requirements increase in proportion with job task complexity. Expectations for upper level jobs are oriented more toward management: mainly strategic planning, market analysis and control of operations.

8. Implications, Limitations and New Research Avenues

8.1 Managerial and Educational Implications

The contribution of human resources to the success of business development professionals is considered critical, as it is to the success of marketing strategies (see the marketing-HR interface, Hulbert, Capon, & Percy, 2003) and that of sales (see Marshall, Stone, & Jawahar, 2001 for the sales management-HR interface). The results of the present study, together with those of Eidhoff et al. (2014) and Davis and Sun (2006), allow us to better manage the double interface between business development and the other commercialization functions, namely marketing and sales.

The list of motivations behind the researchers' interest in marketing careers must include the emergence of new types of jobs; indeed, each decade ushers in a series of technological and conceptual developments that engender unprecedented jobs. For example, the 1970s saw a rise in jobs in telemarketing whereas the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s were marked by a proliferation of new jobs in services, advertising on the Internet, e-commerce and database management. For each of these new jobs, education has adjusted by developing new course content, creating specific teaching materials and offering customized professional development. Today, the number of jobs in business development is growing steadily. Similar to the case of the many other types of jobs created in marketing in recent decades, a new academic adjustment and new teaching materials and customized education are necessary to better prepare students and managers in mid-career. These academic contributions should mitigate the lack of training in business development, which Sorensen (2012) describes as "training scars" in the field, and thus allow interested people to access quality jobs or obtain a promotion based on their performance.

8.2 Limitations and New Research Avenues

One limitation concerns the job posting website used in this study (*ca.indeed.com*). It is general in focus and does not claim to reflect all the jobs available in business development at the time of the study. For practical purposes, we compiled the sample in the summer, which usually corresponds to a slower hiring period; this is another limitation of our study. Lastly, job postings may not communicate all information about a job. Specific details are often clarified or added to in the stages of selection, hiring and signing of the employment contract.

New research avenues may, however, ensue from the limitations identified in this study. For instance, future studies could endeavor to mitigate the undesirable effects of the sample used, the data collection and the research method retained. In addition, comparing tasks, attributes and incentives typically identified with business development with those of marketing and sales can capture the properties of careers in each of these commercialization functions. Given that business development is a construct whose conceptual resonance is evolving, additional theoretical reflection on the subject should be pursued to better define the specificities of the profession.

9. Conclusion

The possibility of building a career in business development, this new exit that complements marketing and sales, which Dixon and Peltier (2013) consider most important, increases with the quantity of new job offers that appear daily on specialized and general websites. The results of this study will let marketing and sales professors better play their role of knowledge broker (Weeks, Rutherford, & Boles, 2014) by providing useful information to students considering this career option.

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