

Phillips, Hager & North Investment Management Ltd.
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Mr. Nate Vogel
The Southwestern Company
2451 Atrium Way
Nashville, TN 37214

Dear Nate,

It has now been over four years since I had the opportunity to work with you, and I feel grateful and fortunate to be where I am because of it. My experiences from those days, regardless of how short, set me on a path culminating in the career I desired with the skillset I needed. For those who are considering selling books I think perhaps I can best speak to how the benefit of the Southwestern experience goes beyond simply jobs in sales and marketing.

As it stands currently, I am engaged in a very specialized career path as an equity analyst in an investment management firm. My job requires an analytical and quantitative acumen which at no point begins to resemble a sales or marketing role. However, I can still look back with confidence and say that selling books was unequivocally beneficial to getting me to where I am, and improving my effectiveness in the workplace. The reason behind this was first relayed to me when I joined Southwestern, “Every job is sales job, and sales is the most desired skill sought by any and every employer”. Initially I was skeptical, but when I finished my first summer I began to understand the point. Sales extends well beyond the skills associated with selling a product; sales is about a paradigm for being able to effectively engage people. If the job you desire involves being around co-workers, bosses, subordinates, suppliers, competitors or clients, an ineffective selling and communications framework will definitively limit your success.

I quite deliberately chose the negative phrasing of the above point to emphasize that although proficiency in sales may not be a precondition for *getting* the job you desire (although in many cases it may be), it is undeniably a precondition for *succeeding* at the job you desire, regardless of the job, unless you aspire to become a monk. In the years following my Southwestern experience three of the most successful individuals I have met in the financial industry have emphasized this point. None of them were sales people at any point in their lives.

At the University of British Columbia there is a program called the Portfolio Management Foundation (PMF), a specialized and notable finance program which annually selects six students after a series of screens and interviews. My interview happened just a couple months after I got back from the bookfield. From those tough interviews to the even tougher finance interviews in the years that followed as part of the PMF, I have found two things: my Southwestern experience not only increased my effectiveness during the interviews, but more importantly, the experience on paper and through conversation drew significant interest from the employers and helped distinguish myself from other highly qualified-candidates. Beyond that, the skills I developed are still very relevant for my day-to-day roles which involve regular coordination and engagement with the many people at my workplace and in the financial industry. At the end of the day, this industry is a “people business” just like every other one. Nate, thanks again for the opportunity you gave me, feel free to pass my name along to anyone who has any questions about the Southwestern experience.

Best Regards,

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