# Marketing Sales and Services & Business and Finance

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Diane Kotlewski, Chief Executive Officer, Chaffey Federal Credit Union
Justine Rodriguez, Director of Marketing and Public Relations, Arrowhead Regional Medical Center
Kevin Garcia, Program Manager, Procurement & Warehouse Services, San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools
Leonard Dominquez, Business Counselor, Inland Empire Women's Business Center (IEWBC)

## K12 Educational Participants:

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Brandon Taylor, CTE Teacher, San Bernardino City Unified
Carrie Morgan, Educator, Redlands Unified
Crystal Hickey, Teacher/Virtual Enterprise, Colton-Redlands-Yucaipa ROP
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Tina Martinucci, Virtual Enterprise teacher, Colton-Redlands-Yucaipa ROP
Vidal Valdez, Teacher, Orange Grove Elementary

## Minutes:

The Marketing, Sales, and Services & Business and Finance panel was composed of five industry professionals with varying degrees of responsibility in their respective career fields. The following is a summary of their responses to the questions posed at the advisory.

## Question 1: What emerging trends and technologies do you believe will drive the most change in this industry over the next 3-5 years, and what should teachers and students focus on to stay ahead?

**Carl Dameron:** Carl emphasizes that while new technologies often dominate the conversation, the most significant concern he sees in students and early-career marketers is a loss of focus on fundamentals. Before jumping to AI, social media trends, or video content, he insists that students must be able to answer basic questions: *Who is the target audience? What are their needs and preferences? What is the specific goal of the campaign? What action do we want them to take?* He illustrates how ineffective it is to send audiences to a generic homepage when the true objective is to drive a purchase or sign-up and underscores the importance of using demographic data to choose the right platform. For example, luxury vehicles marketed heavily on TikTok may generate excitement among teens but will not reach the older, higher-income buyers who make those purchases.

Carl also highlights the role of emotion in effective marketing. Whether through humor, storytelling, or other emotional triggers, messages that connect to feelings are more likely to be remembered and shared. He shares that he is an early adopter of emerging platforms and spends time daily reviewing trends and research, but notes that his adoption of technology is always guided by strategy, not novelty. In his own service-based business, he deliberately maintains a human-centered approach on the front end: calls go directly to his team members rather than an automated phone tree, because responsiveness and personal connection are central to his brand. Technology and AI are used strategically in the background, for example, to segment a large database so that people receive content relevant to their interests, while human staff handle relationship-building and decision-making.

Carl encourages educators to teach students how to pair strong foundational marketing skills with evolving tools. He notes that much of the information shaping his online presence comes from press releases and content he has published, demonstrating the importance of regularly creating and posting original material. He also points out that the colleague who leads AI implementation in his firm does not hold a degree, illustrating that persistence, self-directed learning, and technical curiosity can open doors in emerging areas. For classrooms, he suggests emphasizing target-market research, goal-setting, emotional storytelling, ethical data use, and thoughtful integration of technology that aligns with the core purpose of the business.

**Leonard Dominquez:** Leonard agrees that knowing the target audience and doing solid research are the first steps in any effective marketing strategy. He explains that while emerging technologies have created a lot of "noise," they are powerful only when grounded in accurate data and clear objectives. One of the most important trends he identifies is the increased accessibility of high-quality data. Whereas parsing and cleaning raw data was difficult a decade ago, modern tools now allow marketers to aggregate, clean, and utilize data quickly, enabling more precise targeting and automation. This shift requires students to develop not just creative skills but also comfort with data analysis and an understanding of how to translate insights into action.

He also emphasizes the growing importance of digital branding, for companies and for individuals. Employers increasingly review a candidate's online presence as part of the hiring process, looking at how they communicate, who they are connected to, and how they present their professional identity. Leonard encourages educators to help students build positive digital portfolios and understand that their online behavior can impact career opportunities.

Building on comments from other panelists, Leonard underscores that technology, including AI, must remain a tool rather than a replacement for human thinking. He cautions against starting every task with AI and instead recommends a workflow in which humans define the problem, use AI to support or extend their work, and then apply human judgment to review and refine the results. He believes the industry is moving toward a clear divide between those who rely on AI passively and those who actively use it with strong critical-thinking skills, verification, and ethical awareness. He argues that the latter group, professionals who blend data literacy, human insight, and technological fluency, will be best positioned to lead in the coming years.

**Kevin Garcia:** Kevin discusses AI and digital tools as powerful supports for business operations, particularly in procurement, contracting, and compliance. However, he stresses that AI is only as reliable as the information it is given inaccurate inputs lead to inaccurate outputs. He shares how, upon joining his organization, he examined basic processes and discovered that contracts were being mailed with no reliable system to confirm their return, even though work could legally begin once the contractor had a signed copy. By reassessing existing technology rather than purchasing new tools, his team shifted to a digital workflow with email-based tracking, clear timelines, electronic signatures, and centralized storage accessible through their requisition system.

For Kevin, this example illustrates that meaningful innovation often comes from rethinking how current tools are used, not just adopting the latest trend. He encourages educators to teach

students how to analyze workflows, identify inefficiencies, and implement technology in ways that improve accuracy, accountability, and service. He wants students to understand that behind visible experiences, such as field trips, events, or classroom resources, there are complex systems of contracts and approvals that rely on careful, technology-supported processes. Students who learn to pair technology with attention to detail, data integrity, and problem-solving will be better equipped to support both instructional goals and operational needs.

**Diane Kotlewski:** Diane approaches AI with cautious optimism due to the highly sensitive financial and personal data her organization manages. She notes that AI can significantly improve efficiency in tasks like building presentations, drafting training materials, or solving technical problems, but stresses that it also introduces serious risks, particularly in the realms of fraud, misinformation, and data security. She believes students must learn how to distinguish credible information from inaccurate outputs and understand that AI-generated responses still require verification and human oversight.

From a customer service perspective, Diane explains that AI can be used to handle routine questions, such as business hours or basic account information, through tools like chatbots, freeing staff to focus on complex issues that require empathy and deeper problem-solving. However, she also shares a personal example of a frustrating AI-based customer service system that made it difficult to reach a live person, highlighting the importance of designing technology that supports, rather than obstructs, human connection. She encourages educators to emphasize that all industries are ultimately about people and relationships. AI should be used to enhance the quality of human interactions, not to eliminate them.

**Justine Rodriguez:** Justine notes that in the healthcare sector, strict privacy regulations prevent the use of AI for any activity involving protected medical information, but AI can still play a valuable role in marketing and communications. Her team aims to increase the use of AI for tasks such as drafting press releases, generating ideas for outreach campaigns, and streamlining internal communication, while ensuring that a human always reviews and finalizes the content. She stresses that AI cannot replace creativity, imagination, or critical thinking; these human skills remain central to building effective, trustworthy messages.

She also highlights the importance of understanding demographic and cultural context in marketing. More than half of her organization's service population speaks Spanish, and younger family members often act as key messengers by consuming health and wellness content on platforms like TikTok and other social media channels, then sharing it with their families. For her team, this means tailoring content to youth-friendly platforms while ensuring that messages are accessible, culturally responsive, and linguistically appropriate. Justine encourages educators to help students see how language, culture, and generational behavior influence outreach strategies. She concludes that students who pair strong critical-thinking and creative skills with ethical, culturally aware use of technology will be well prepared for future roles in marketing and communications.

## Question 2: How should our Career Technical Education (CTE) pathways adapt to ensure students are well-equipped to meet future demands and changes in this industry?

**Carl Dameron:** Carl stresses that teachers need to intentionally connect with the people and industries they want their students exposed to. He explains that every field has professional organizations, public relations, advertising, philanthropic groups, chambers of commerce, and these are the places where teachers can meet people who are already working in the careers students want to learn about. These events are often low-cost, and teachers do not have to join as full members to attend.

Carl uses the analogy of "going to the trout stream if you want trout" to explain that teachers must go where the professionals are. He shares that early in his career, he attended every chamber meeting he could, especially the free ones, because he had no money but needed to build relationships. The people he met then are now leaders, presidents, vice presidents, supervisors, and because the relationship started years ago, the trust is already there.

He encourages teachers to ask themselves the same three basic questions he uses in marketing: *Who is your target market? What is your goal? What are you trying to get out of it?* Once those questions are clear, teachers know which meetings to attend and whom to connect with. Carl also reflects on his experience as a substitute teacher working with students who did not want to learn, explaining that it helped him develop the communication style he uses today. For him, CTE pathways improve when teachers build relationships in the community and stay connected to the people working in the fields they teach.

**Diane Kotlewski:** Diane agrees with Carl about the importance of connecting with local chambers of commerce. She explains that many business owners regularly attend these meetings, but they usually go with the mindset of promoting their own businesses, not necessarily meeting educators. Because of that, she believes teachers may need to take the first step and clearly communicate how industry can support students.

She acknowledges that most chamber events take place during the day, which can make it difficult for teachers to attend. However, she notes that even attending a few events can lead to meaningful connections. Diane also suggests that teachers can ask business owners they already know to help make introductions. She offers herself as an example, because she attends many events in Fontana and Rancho Cucamonga, she is willing to help teachers meet people in various industries. In her view, CTE pathways become stronger when teachers use these networks to bring relevant industry contacts into the classroom or into work-based learning opportunities.

**Leonard Dominquez:** Leonard explains that the most important starting point in adapting CTE pathways is understanding students, what interests them, what gets their attention, and what they naturally connect to. He compares this to narrowing restaurant choices for children: you don't ask an open-ended question, but instead give options based on what they might like. He encourages teachers to focus on content or project topics that "spark interest," such as video, technology, food, or other areas students already pay attention to.

In his own teaching, Leonard brings in real businesses that students can relate to. He shares examples of inviting a TikTok creator, someone who runs an embroidery business, or a food-truck owner, because these speakers feel familiar and relevant to students. He explains that students often provide insights and perspectives that business owners may not see because they are "too close" to their own projects.

Leonard believes that when teachers understand what grabs students' attention and make those connections part of project-based learning, students are more engaged and willing to learn more complicated topics like finance or management. Without something relatable, he notes, students' eyes "glaze over," but when the content connects to their world, they want to know more.

**Justine Rodriguez:** Justine emphasizes that CTE pathways should give students opportunities to attend industry events and see real workplaces in action. She shares examples from her hospital, such as EMS Day, where students can watch K9 demonstrations, see the Jaws of Life, or observe activities on the hospital helipad. She explains that events like 5K walks or runs also provide opportunities for students to interact with industry professionals and understand the different roles within a healthcare organization.

She encourages educators to reach out to industry partners to request these types of tours or visits, because being physically on site helps students learn what the work really looks like. For Justine, pathways strengthen when students can see and experience the industry directly rather than just hearing about it in the classroom.

**Kevin Garcia:** Kevin stresses that networking is essential, not just for students, but for teachers. He notes that people tend to sit next to those they already know, but he challenges educators to sit with new people, exchange business cards, and build connections they would not otherwise make. He shares an example of meeting someone at a conference years ago, later discovering he was an assistant superintendent, and ultimately helping that district by sharing documents that saved them significant time. Because of that act, the relationship became stronger and opened future opportunities.

Kevin also explains that strong pathways depend on having instructors or partners with real industry experience. He shares the example of an aviation program that purchased a flight simulator. While the simulator was necessary for safety and cost reasons, the program became much stronger when someone with actual pilot certification began running it.

For Kevin, pathways improve when teachers consistently network, build long-term professional relationships, and bring in industry partners who have authentic, hands-on experience. He believes that the people educators meet today may become valuable contacts for their programs years down the road.

## Question 3: What essential skills, educational qualifications, and certifications are currently required to gain employment in your industry, and how might these requirements change in the near future?

**Carl Dameron:** Carl explains that the most essential skills across all industries remain the fundamentals: *reading, writing, and arithmetic*. These basic competencies allow workers to adapt as tools and technologies change. He notes that people often choose careers like automotive work to avoid paperwork or technical reading, but modern industries, including mechanics, require strong literacy and math skills because technology now drives most job functions.

Carl points out that software, platforms, and tools change constantly. He lists examples such as GoldMine, Google tools, Gemini, ChatGPT, Hootsuite, QuickBooks, Salesforce, and HubSpot, emphasizing that today's "must-learn" programs may be replaced within two years. Because of that, he encourages students to master the basics first so they can adjust as technology evolves.

He also recommends that students pursue current, recognized certifications, especially ones that are free or low-cost. He highlights Google certifications and Hootsuite credentials as valuable because they demonstrate practical skills that employers look for. He also stresses the importance of learning QuickBooks and financial basics, even for students pursuing technical or hands-on trades. In his view, math connects directly to money, and understanding financial management is essential for anyone who plans to run a business or manage a budget. By pairing the basics with up-to-date certifications, Carl believes students will be prepared to transition into new tools and technologies as industries continue to change.

**Leonard Dominquez:** Leonard focuses on the importance of soft skills, particularly communication, listening, and interpersonal awareness. He explains that after COVID-19 and the shift to online interaction, many young people, including college students, struggle with basic communication skills. He sees a decline in the ability to have conversations, communicate over the phone, and build relationships, which are essential whether someone chooses entrepreneurship or traditional employment.

He notes that emotional intelligence, empathy, and the ability to connect with others are becoming increasingly important. Leonard believes these fundamental people skills are foundational to career success and must be emphasized more intentionally. As students move into the workforce, he observes a gap between expectations and reality, many assume communication skills will "just develop," but without practice and guidance, they often do not. He believes that strengthening communication, relationship-building, and listening skills will shape the success of the next generation.

**Kevin Garcia:** Kevin explains that many students, and even adults, do not realize how many business-focused jobs exist within education. He shares that his own family once assumed he worked as a principal simply because he worked for a school district. To help students

understand the business side of education, he often visits classrooms to explain how purchasing, supply chain, warehousing, and budgeting work.

He emphasizes that students need to understand basic business processes: how furniture or technology is ordered, how budgets are created, how supplies move from vendors to warehouses to classrooms, and how many people are involved behind the scenes. Kevin highlights the value of emerging technologies such as drones, explaining that drone operation has become a real job opportunity, something few would have imagined 15 years ago. He shares examples such as drone footage used in sports stadiums, youth baseball tournaments, and professional productions.

For Kevin, essential skills include understanding how business processes work, being open to new technology, and recognizing how tools like drones create new job opportunities. He believes that as long as students are taught to use technology correctly and safely and see how these tools function within real workplace systems, they will be well-positioned for future roles.

**Diane Kotlewski:** Diane emphasizes that soft skills, especially empathy, communication, and customer service, are essential in the credit-union and financial-services fields. She explains that her industry deals directly with people's finances, which are often their biggest source of stress. Employees must be able to listen, relate, and connect with members in a human and supportive way.

She shares examples from her organization, where staff members show care in small but meaningful ways, such as assisting members who are waiting for transportation. To her, these actions reflect the value of "humanity," which her credit union emphasizes. Diane explains that technology is helpful, but it cannot replace the need for genuine interpersonal connection. Employees must be able to communicate clearly, provide service with empathy, and demonstrate consistent professionalism. She believes these skills will remain essential regardless of changes in technology.

**Justine Rodriguez:** Justine explains that in marketing roles, especially in healthcare, degrees are not the most important requirement. She hires based on skills such as social-media management, storytelling, content creation, analytics, and search-engine optimization. She believes certifications can be more valuable than degrees because they show that a candidate's skills are current and actively used.

To evaluate skills during hiring, she always includes a writing test. For videographers, she requires a practical editing assignment during the interview process, explaining that her team has previously been misled by candidates who interviewed well but could not perform the work. She shares that drone certification has also stood out in hiring decisions for certain roles.

Justine prioritizes demonstrated ability and skill over formal education, and she believes this approach will continue to shape hiring practices. Candidates who can show what they can do, especially through practical tests, are more competitive than those who rely solely on degrees.

## Question 4: What are a few occupations within the industry that do not require advanced degrees yet offer a living wage? Additionally, what advice would you give to a recent high school graduate that would help them gain employment in your industry?

**Carl Dameron:** Carl explains that there are several entry-level positions in marketing, communications, and events that do not require advanced degrees. However, he emphasizes that candidates must be clear about what they want to do. He advises students not to approach employers by saying they will "do anything," but instead to research specific roles, such as event support, reception, or public relations coordination, and communicate their interests directly.

Carl also shares that internships are an excellent way to enter the field. When he hires interns, he asks each one what they truly want to do, and he expects them to be able to answer that question clearly. He gives an example of an intern who wanted to be a photographer. Although the company did not have a photography position at the time, the intern's clarity allowed Carl to structure opportunities that eventually grew into a major part of that student's role. The intern-built relationships, delivered high-quality work quickly, and created a niche for himself that eventually opened professional doors.

His advice to students is to identify their interests, communicate with them confidently, and pursue entry-level opportunities where they can demonstrate initiative. Carl believes that students who know what they want, and can articulate it, are better positioned to create opportunities and grow professionally, even without a degree.

**Leonard Dominquez:** Leonard highlights the importance of transferable skills, especially for students who may choose not to pursue a degree immediately after high school. He explains that many young adults encounter barriers in hiring because they lack practical experience, even when they complete certifications or college coursework. To address this, he recommends encouraging students to pursue roles that build communication, negotiation, marketing, and interpersonal skills early on.

As an example, he plans to help his own son become a real estate referral agent while attending college. He explains that roles like this provide real-world experience and valuable skills that students can carry into any career path, whether in sales, business, or a completely different field. Leonard believes that strong communication and relationship-building abilities, combined with practical experience, allow young adults to enter the workforce with confidence and credibility. Employers cannot discount meaningful hands-on experience, and he encourages educators to support students in finding roles that develop these long-term, transferable strengths.

**Kevin Garcia:** Kevin explains that in the procurement field, several positions, such as buyers and contract specialists, do not require advanced degrees. These roles involve reviewing requisitions, confirming account codes, understanding what items are being purchased, and

ensuring accuracy throughout the purchasing process. He emphasizes the importance of questioning details, understanding why items are being purchased, and researching unfamiliar products.

He notes that many essential jobs in public agencies and in the trades require certifications, training, or a high school diploma, not a college degree. Kevin stresses the importance of curiosity and a strong work ethic. He encourages students to "stay hungry," continue learning, and become lifelong students of their field. He distinguishes between knowledge and wisdom, explaining that true professional growth comes from applying what you learn and gaining experience over time.

Kevin also highlights the importance of trade programs and certifications, noting that many critical jobs, such as plumbing, electrical work, and other skilled trades, are in high demand and do not require a four-year degree. His advice to students is to pursue certifications, stay open to learning, and look ahead to where they want to be in their careers, even if they begin in entry-level roles.

**Diane Kotlewski:** Diane explains that most entry-level roles in the credit union industry require only a high school diploma. In her organization of 44 employees, only a few hold bachelor's degrees, and only one (herself) has a master's degree. She emphasizes that many people advance by learning on the job, gaining experience, and demonstrating a strong desire to learn.

She notes that while a college degree can be helpful, especially for leadership roles, it is not the degree itself that matters most, but the skills learned through the college experience: time management, communication, teamwork, and leadership. She provides several examples of colleagues who built highly successful careers without completing a degree, explaining that they advanced through hands-on experience and a willingness to grow.

Diane's core advice to students is that attitude matters more than credentials. She can teach skills, systems, and procedures, but she cannot teach someone to want to learn. Students who bring enthusiasm, commitment, and a positive attitude can succeed and advance, whether or not they pursue a degree.

**Justine Rodriguez:** Justine encourages students to be lifelong learners. In marketing, she explains, degrees are less important than practical skills and a willingness to take on new challenges. She recommends that students volunteer or seek entry-level opportunities in marketing departments to gain real experience. Practical exposure allows students to build skills, create portfolio pieces, and better understand how marketing works in a real organization.

Her advice to graduates is to take initiative, stay open to learning new tools, and gain hands-on experience wherever possible. These actions can help students build a strong foundation for a marketing career, regardless of whether they pursue an advanced degree.

## Audience Questions

**Audience Question 1:** *The AMA (American Marketing Association) has formally endorsed ethics as the foundation of all its branches for the first time in its history. How do you incorporate ethics into your organization, and is it central to your work or an added component?*

**Carl Dameron:** Carl emphasizes that ethics is the core of what his organization does and has always guided his approach to public relations and advertising. He explains that ethical decision-making determines which clients he works with and which industries he avoids. For example, he intentionally chooses not to represent companies in areas such as gambling, alcohol, and certain others because he does not want to contribute to harm that may arise from those industries.

He stresses that ethical boundaries are essential for long-term success. His firm will not lie, misrepresent information, or cross ethical lines, and he believes that adherence to ethical standards should guide all work in communications. Carl shares that his values were shaped early in life, and those principles continue to influence his professional decisions today.

Carl adds that even major companies, such as Google, originally built their identity around ethical principles ("do no harm"), but over time, some organizations have moved away from their original commitments. He views ethical consistency as essential, regardless of changes in the industry.

**Leonard Dominquez:** Leonard responds that ethics has become even more important due to increased transparency across industries. He explains that organizations now expect alignment across departments, marketing, sales, finance, security, and ethical practices ensure consistency across these functions.

He notes that ethics is not new to the field; many of the values being re-emphasized today reflect longstanding principles taught in marketing programs for decades. However, some companies gradually shifted boundaries over time. He believes the renewed focus on ethics represents an industry-wide effort to re-establish expectations and rebuild trust.

**Audience Question 2:** *What are the top three certifications you look for when hiring for an entry-level marketing role?*

**Leonard Dominquez:** Leonard focuses his response on the broader shift happening across the industry. He explains that marketing teams are expected to work in full alignment with sales, finance, security, and other departments because transparency and accountability now extend across the entire organization. This integrated structure makes ethics even more important.

While he does not list specific certifications, he notes that companies are increasingly looking for employees who can think holistically, operate across departments, and adapt to a more granular understanding of audiences and organizational needs.

**Audience Question 3:** *A participant shared the challenge of applying for hundreds of jobs without hearing back, despite having seven years of experience, and asked how students can make themselves visible to employers in such a competitive market.*

**Carl Dameron:** Carl acknowledges how difficult and discouraging this can be. He explains that when his agency posts an opening, they may receive 300–500 applications, and it is not always possible to review every resume. He emphasizes that many employers face similar constraints.

His strongest advice is for candidates to attend professional meetings and industry associations such as PRSA or local marketing groups. Showing up in person allows job seekers to introduce themselves directly, stand out, and build relationships. He notes that employers often meet talented individuals at these events before they ever apply formally. For students, he recommends joining these groups early, attending regularly, and making personal connections that help them rise above large applicant pools.

**Diane Kotlewski:** Diane encourages job seekers to reintroduce "old-school" approaches that many applicants no longer use. She shares that in her 16 years of hiring, only a handful of applicants have ever walked in to introduce themselves, bring a resume, or call to follow up. She believes visibility is key: applicants should make themselves known to the employer rather than relying solely on online submissions. Being proactive demonstrates initiative and sets candidates apart.

**Justine Rodriguez:** Justine recommends using LinkedIn strategically, even for those who dislike the platform. She explains that reaching out directly to someone within the organization can make a difference because it creates name recognition. She notes that many professionals receive large volumes of messages, but consistent and professional follow-up helps candidates stand out and increases the likelihood that their application will be noticed.

**Kevin Garcia:** Kevin emphasizes the importance of thorough research. When interviewing candidates, he listens carefully to see whether they understand the mission, structure, and responsibilities of the organization they are applying to. Applicants who research the organization, its departments, goals, leadership, and programs, immediately distinguish themselves. He encourages students to enter interviews prepared, knowledgeable, and aligned with the organization's purpose.

**Leonard Dominquez:** Leonard adds that success often comes from developing strong habits. He references the idea that people tend to quit just before they break through because the repetitive, "boring" parts of the process feel discouraging. He encourages students to push through these moments, build persistence, and continue applying themselves even when progress feels slow. He notes that resilience and consistent effort are powerful differentiators for young professionals entering an unpredictable job market.

## Cross-Panel Key Takeaways

*These are the themes that appeared consistently across the full four questions AND the audience Q&A.*

### 1. Soft Skills and Communication Are Essential Across All Roles

Panelists repeatedly emphasized communication, listening, empathy, interpersonal skills, and professionalism as the most critical skills for entry-level and advanced work.

### 2. Networking and Relationship-Building Are Required for Entry and Advancement

All panelists described networking as the key differentiator for hiring, job visibility, career mobility, and partnership-building.

### 3. Practical Experience and Demonstrated Skills Matter More Than Degrees

Panelists heavily stressed real-world work samples, internships, certifications, and hands-on skills over formal education.

### 4. Ethics, Professional Integrity, and Transparency Are Non-Negotiable

Ethical standards—both in workplace conduct and in public-facing work—were described as critical, foundational, and increasingly visible across organizations.

### 5. Students Must Be Adaptable and Lifelong Learners

The industry changes rapidly; students who are curious, willing to learn, and capable of adapting will succeed regardless of role or career stage.

### 6. Understanding the Audience (or "Knowing Your Customer") Is Central to All Marketing & Business Roles

Across multiple questions, panelists explained that understanding people—their needs, interests, and motivations—is essential to effective communication and career success.

### 7. Certifications and Technical Skills Support Employability but Are Secondary to the Fundamentals

Tools change, but certifications like Google, Hootsuite, SEO, or QuickBooks demonstrate initiative and strengthen resumes.

## Cross-Panel Action Items

*These action items synthesize the most actionable guidance from the full advisory. These are the steps teachers can embed into coursework, lesson plans, or pathway design.*

### 1. Integrate Soft-Skill Development Across the Curriculum

- Include practice with phone/email communication, professional introductions, listening skills, and customer service.

- Use role-play, group work, and real client-style communication assignments.

**2. Build Structured Networking Opportunities for Students**

- Host industry mixers, advisory visits, mock networking events, and LinkedIn outreach practice.
- Teach students how to follow up with employers and introduce themselves professionally.

**3. Increase Hands-On, Real-World Learning Experiences**

- Bring in local businesses for projects, competitions, and presentations.
- Incorporate writing tests, content creation assignments, video-editing tasks, or analytics projects that mirror real hiring processes.
- Arrange industry tours, job shadowing, and attendance at public events.

**4. Emphasize Ethical Decision-Making in Coursework**

- Include discussions and scenarios involving responsible communication, transparency, and boundaries.
- Reinforce the role ethics plays across marketing, finance, and customer-facing work.

**5. Encourage Students to Obtain Industry Certifications**

- Promote certifications such as Google digital marketing, Hootsuite, QuickBooks, SEO tools, drone certification (where relevant), etc.
- Use free or low-cost certification programs as class assignments or extra credit.

**6. Teach Students to Research Employers and Tailor Their Approach**

- Build assignments where students investigate an organization's mission, structure, and services.
- Incorporate interview preparation that requires students to demonstrate knowledge of a potential employer.

**7. Help Students Identify and Articulate Their Career Interests**

- Provide tools for career clarity: career inventories, reflective writing, and goal-setting.
- Encourage specific statements of interest ("I want to support events," "I want to work in content creation") rather than generalized "I'll do anything" approaches.

## Panelist Key Takeaways and Action Items

These key takeaways and action item lists highlight each respondent's insights, concerns, and suggested actions to address industry trends and to prepare students for the evolving landscape within their respective industries.

**Carl Dameron, President, Dameron Communications**
**Key Takeaways:**

- Students must communicate clear, specific career interests to employers; clarity creates opportunities that general statements ("I'll do anything") cannot.
- Ethical boundaries guide client and industry choices; long-term credibility relies on maintaining honest, responsible practices.
- Participation in professional organizations is one of the most effective ways for students to gain access to employers and build long-term relationships.

**Action Items:**

- Incorporate assignments that require students to define and articulate the exact job functions they are interested in.
- Develop ethics-based case studies where students analyze client or industry decisions and practice setting professional boundaries.
- Facilitate exposure to professional associations by arranging student attendance, guest passes, or teacher-led visits to industry meetings.

**Leonard Dominquez, Business Counselor, Inland Empire Women's Business Center (IEWBC)**
**Key Takeaways:**

- Early entrepreneurial or real-world sales experiences build transferable communication, negotiation, and interpersonal skills.
- Relatable business partners (creators, food vendors, small shops) increase student engagement and authenticity in project-based learning.
- Persistence and strong habits are critical; students often quit just before they break through challenging or repetitive tasks

**Action Items:**

- Integrate entrepreneurship or sales-based mini-projects to build negotiation and interpersonal confidence.
- Partner with relatable local businesses to create student projects tied to their interests and cultural context.
- Incorporate habit-building strategies or reflective exercises that teach students resilience during challenging tasks.

**Kevin Garcia, Program Manager, Procurement & Warehouse Services, San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools**
**Key Takeaways:**

- Procurement and many back-office business roles do not require degrees, but they do require precision, questioning, and responsibility.

- Understanding purchasing, contracts, and supply-chain processes helps students see the "business behind education," a career path they often overlook.
- Drone technology is rapidly creating new job pathways both inside and outside education.

**Action Items:**
- Use procurement-style assignments (reviewing requisitions, matching codes, product research) to teach accuracy and critical questioning.
- Provide career exploration lessons showing how business operations in education function and what skills those roles require.
- Incorporate demonstrations, simulations, or examples of drone applications to highlight emerging opportunities.

**Diane Kotlewski, Chief Executive Officer, Chaffey Federal Credit Union**
**Key Takeaways:**
- Many credit-union careers offer advancement without degrees; employees often rise through hands-on learning and motivation.
- "Old-school" visibility, calling, walking in, following up, still meaningfully separates candidates in the hiring process.
- Degrees matter less for their subject area and more for developing transferable skills such as teamwork, time management, and communication.

**Action Items:**
- Teach students how to introduce themselves professionally in person and follow up after applying.
- Use customer-service simulations that require students to demonstrate empathy, listening, and problem-solving.
- Include lessons on how employees advance within financial institutions through on-the-job learning and demonstrated reliability.

**Justine Rodriguez, Director of Marketing and Public Relations, Arrowhead Regional Medical Center**
**Key Takeaways:**
- Marketing roles prioritize demonstrable skills, such as writing, storytelling, SEO, analytics, and video editing, over formal degrees.
- Skill assessments (writing tests, editing tasks) are essential in hiring and reveal abilities interviews alone cannot show.
- Drone certification can be a unique advantage in modern marketing and production environments.

**Action Items:**
- Assign writing tests, editing challenges, or portfolio pieces that mirror real hiring tasks.
- Encourage students to pursue niche certifications (e.g., drone operation) that strengthen employability in content-driven roles.

- Teach students how to conduct professional outreach via LinkedIn or email to build early career relationships and visibility.

# Labor Market Information

The following labor market information was sourced from https://www.onetonline.org/ on November 26, 2025.

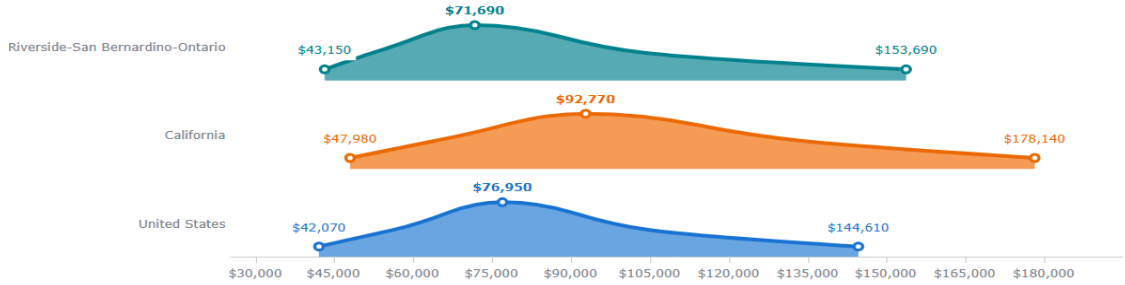
## Local Wages

**13-1161.00 - Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists** Bright Outlook

Wages for state: California Go

Wages near ZIP Code: 92408 Go

Annual Wages | Hourly Wages




### In Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA:

- Workers on average earn **$71,690**.
- 10% of workers earn **$43,150 or less**.
- 10% of workers earn **$153,690 or more**.

### In California:

- Workers on average earn **$92,770**.
- 10% of workers earn **$47,980 or less**.
- 10% of workers earn **$178,140 or more**.

### In the United States:

- Workers on average earn **$76,950**.
- 10% of workers earn **$42,070 or less**.
- 10% of workers earn **$144,610 or more**.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics 2024 wage data.

## California Employment Trends

**13-1161.00 - Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists** Bright Outlook

View trends for state: California Go

### In California:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Employment (2022)** | 120,200 employees |
| **Projected employment (2032)** | 137,300 employees |
| **Projected growth (2022-2032)** | 14% |
| **Projected annual job openings (2022-2032)** | 13,240 |

### In the United States:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Employment (2024)** | 941,700 employees |
| **Projected employment (2034)** | 1,004,700 employees |
| **Projected growth (2024-2034)** | 7% Much faster than average |
| **Projected annual job openings (2024-2034)** | 87,200 |

California source: Projections Central 2022-2032 long-term projections. United States source: Bureau of Labor Statistics 2024-2034 employment projections. "Projected growth" represents the estimated change in total employment over the projections period. "Projected annual job openings" represent openings due to growth and replacement.

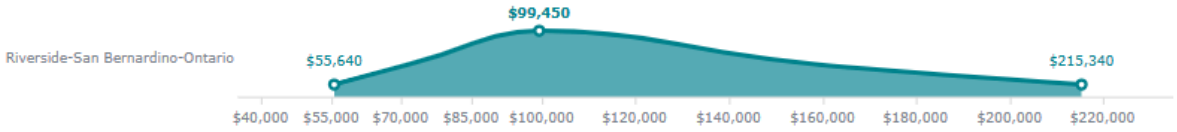
# Local Wages

## 11-2022.00 - Sales Managers Bright Outlook

Wages for state: California Go

Wages near ZIP Code: 92408 Go

Annual Wages | Hourly Wages




## In Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA:

- Workers on average earn **$99,450**.
- 10% of workers earn **$55,640 or less**.
- 10% of workers earn **$215,340 or more**.

## In California:

- Workers on average earn **$132,440**.
- 10% of workers earn **$63,110 or less**.
- 10% of workers earn **$239,200+ or more**.

## In the United States:

- Workers on average earn **$138,060**.
- 10% of workers earn **$66,910 or less**.
- 10% of workers earn **$239,200+ or more**.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics 2024 wage data.

# California Employment Trends

## 11-2022.00 - Sales Managers Bright Outlook

View trends for state: California Go

## In California:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Employment (2022)** | 115,300 employees |
| **Projected employment (2032)** | 121,800 employees |
| **Projected growth (2022-2032)** | 6% |
| **Projected annual job openings (2022-2032)** | 9,230 |

## In the United States:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Employment (2024)** | 619,500 employees |
| **Projected employment (2034)** | 648,500 employees |
| **Projected growth (2024-2034)** | 5% Faster than average |
| **Projected annual job openings (2024-2034)** | 49,000 |

California source: Projections Central 2022-2032 long-term projections. United States source: Bureau of Labor Statistics 2024-2034 employment projections. "Projected growth" represents the estimated change in total employment over the projections period. "Projected annual job openings" represent openings due to growth and replacement.

# Local Wages

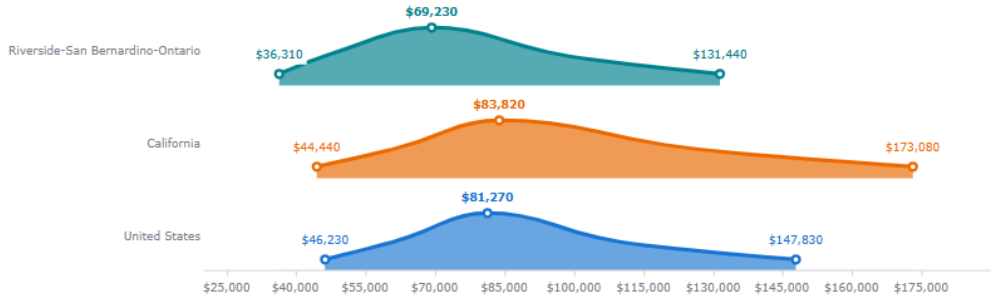
## 13-1199.06 - Online Merchants Bright Outlook

Wage data collected from **Business Operations Specialists, All Other**.

Wages for state: California Go

Wages near ZIP Code: 92408 Go

Annual Wages | Hourly Wages




## In Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA:

Wage data for **Business Operations Specialists, All Other**.

- Workers on average earn **$69,230**.
- 10% of workers earn **$36,310 or less**.
- 10% of workers earn **$131,440 or more**.

## In California:

Wage data for **Business Operations Specialists, All Other**.

- Workers on average earn **$83,820**.
- 10% of workers earn **$44,440 or less**.
- 10% of workers earn **$173,080 or more**.

## In the United States:

Wage data for **Business Operations Specialists, All Other**.

- Workers on average earn **$81,270**.
- 10% of workers earn **$46,230 or less**.
- 10% of workers earn **$147,830 or more**.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics 2024 wage data.

# California Employment Trends

## 13-1199.06 - Online Merchants Bright Outlook

View trends for state: California Go

## In California:

Employment data for **Business Operations Specialists, All Other**.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Employment (2022)** | 169,900 employees |
| **Projected employment (2032)** | 182,100 employees |
| **Projected growth (2022-2032)** | 7% |
| **Projected annual job openings (2022-2032)** | 16,210 |

## In the United States:

Employment data for **Business Operations Specialists, All Other**.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Employment (2024)** | 1,205,700 employees |
| **Projected employment (2034)** | 1,242,000 employees |
| **Projected growth (2024-2034)** | 3% Average |
| **Projected annual job openings (2024-2034)** | 108,200 |

California source: Projections Central 2022-2032 long-term projections. United States source: Bureau of Labor Statistics 2024-2034 employment projections. "Projected growth" represents the estimated change in total employment over the projections period. "Projected annual job openings" represent openings due to growth and replacement.

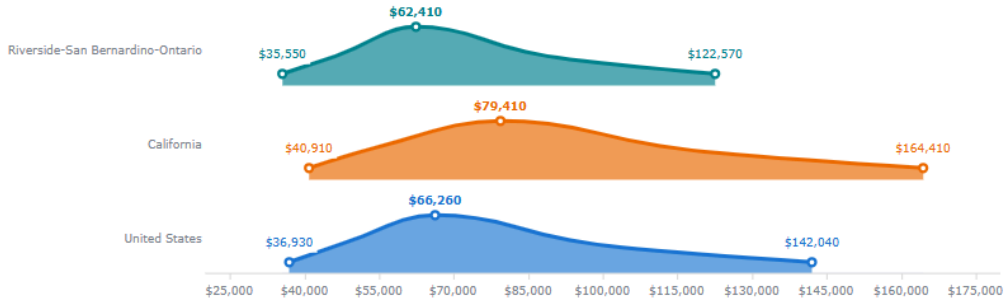
# Local Wages

**41-3091.00 - Sales Representatives of Services, Except Advertising, Insurance, Financial Services, and Travel** Bright Outlook

Wages for state: California Go

Wages near ZIP Code: 92408 Go

Annual Wages | Hourly Wages




## In Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA:

- Workers on average earn **$62,410**.
- 10% of workers earn **$35,550 or less**.
- 10% of workers earn **$122,570 or more**.

## In California:

- Workers on average earn **$79,410**.
- 10% of workers earn **$40,910 or less**.
- 10% of workers earn **$164,410 or more**.

## In the United States:

- Workers on average earn **$66,260**.
- 10% of workers earn **$36,930 or less**.
- 10% of workers earn **$142,040 or more**.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics 2024 wage data.

# California Employment Trends

**41-3091.00 - Sales Representatives of Services, Except Advertising, Insurance, Financial Services, and Travel** Bright Outlook

View trends for state: California Go

## In California:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Employment (2022)** | 128,000 employees |
| **Projected employment (2032)** | 138,000 employees |
| **Projected growth (2022-2032)** | 8% |
| **Projected annual job openings (2022-2032)** | 13,420 |

## In the United States:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Employment (2024)** | 1,226,700 employees |
| **Projected employment (2034)** | 1,264,700 employees |
| **Projected growth (2024-2034)** | 3% Average |
| **Projected annual job openings (2024-2034)** | 123,000 |

California source: Projections Central 2022-2032 long-term projections. United States source: Bureau of Labor Statistics 2024-2034 employment projections. "Projected growth" represents the estimated change in total employment over the projections period. "Projected annual job openings" represent openings due to growth and replacement.

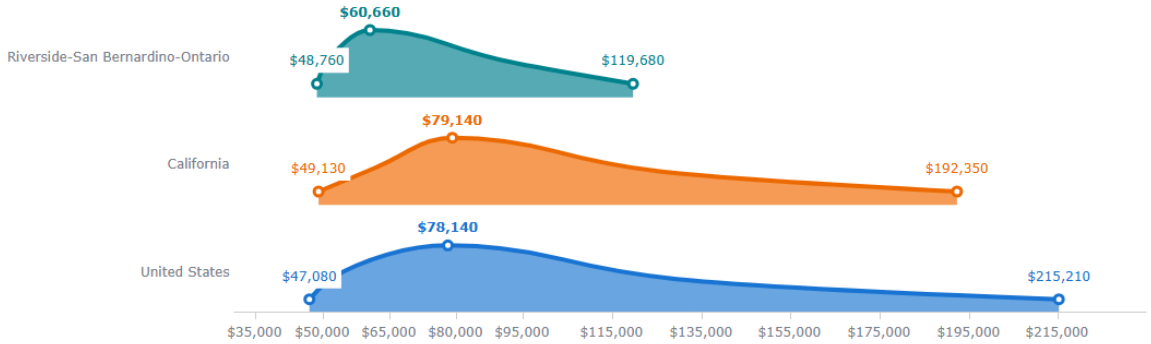
# Local Wages

## 41-3031.00 - Securities, Commodities, and Financial Services Sales Agents

Wages for state: California Go

Wages near ZIP Code: 92408 Go

Annual Wages | Hourly Wages




## In Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA:

- Workers on average earn **$60,660**.
- 10% of workers earn **$48,760 or less**.
- 10% of workers earn **$119,680 or more**.

## In California:

- Workers on average earn **$79,140**.
- 10% of workers earn **$49,130 or less**.
- 10% of workers earn **$192,350 or more**.

## In the United States:

- Workers on average earn **$78,140**.
- 10% of workers earn **$47,080 or less**.
- 10% of workers earn **$215,210 or more**.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics 2024 wage data.

# California Employment Trends

## 41-3031.00 - Securities, Commodities, and Financial Services Sales Agents

View trends for state: California Go

## In California:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Employment (2022)** | 64,200 employees |
| **Projected employment (2032)** | 68,500 employees |
| **Projected growth (2022-2032)** | 7% |
| **Projected annual job openings (2022-2032)** | 5,280 |

## In the United States:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Employment (2024)** | 514,500 employees |
| **Projected employment (2034)** | 531,600 employees |
| **Projected growth (2024-2034)** | 3% Average |
| **Projected annual job openings (2024-2034)** | 38,100 |

California source: Projections Central 2022-2032 long-term projections. United States source: Bureau of Labor Statistics 2024-2034 employment projections. "Projected growth" represents the estimated change in total employment over the projections period. "Projected annual job openings" represent openings due to growth and replacement.

# Local Wages

## 13-2052.00 - Personal Financial Advisors Bright Outlook

Wages for state: California Go

Wages near ZIP Code: 92408 Go

Annual Wages | Hourly Wages

## In Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA:

- Workers on average earn **$96,840**.
- 10% of workers earn **$63,450 or less**.
- 10% of workers earn **$239,200+ or more**.

## In California:

- Workers on average earn **$128,650**.
- 10% of workers earn **$65,990 or less**.
- 10% of workers earn **$239,200+ or more**.

## In the United States:

- Workers on average earn **$102,140**.
- 10% of workers earn **$49,990 or less**.
- 10% of workers earn **$239,200+ or more**.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics 2024 wage data.

# California Employment Trends

## 13-2052.00 - Personal Financial Advisors Bright Outlook

View trends for state: California Go

## In California:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Employment (2022)** | 37,600 employees |
| **Projected employment (2032)** | 43,900 employees |
| **Projected growth (2022-2032)** | 17% |
| **Projected annual job openings (2022-2032)** | 3,130 |

## In the United States:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Employment (2024)** | 326,000 employees |
| **Projected employment (2034)** | 357,200 employees |
| **Projected growth (2024-2034)** | 10% Much faster than average |
| **Projected annual job openings (2024-2034)** | 24,100 |

California source: Projections Central 2022-2032 long-term projections. United States source: Bureau of Labor Statistics 2024-2034 employment projections. "Projected growth" represents the estimated change in total employment over the projections period. "Projected annual job openings" represent openings due to growth and replacement.

# Local Wages

**11-2021.00 - Marketing Managers** Bright Outlook

Wages for state: California Go

Wages near ZIP Code: 92408 Go

Annual Wages | Hourly Wages

## In Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA:

- Workers on average earn **$140,650**.
- 10% of workers earn **$75,050 or less**.
- 10% of workers earn **$239,200+ or more**.

## In California:

- Workers on average earn **$178,160**.
- 10% of workers earn **$97,890 or less**.
- 10% of workers earn **$239,200+ or more**.

## In the United States:

- Workers on average earn **$161,030**.
- 10% of workers earn **$81,900 or less**.
- 10% of workers earn **$239,200+ or more**.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics 2024 wage data.

# California Employment Trends

**11-2021.00 - Marketing Managers** Bright Outlook

View trends for state: California Go

## In California:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Employment (2022)** | 63,400 employees |
| **Projected employment (2032)** | 68,200 employees |
| **Projected growth (2022-2032)** | 8% |
| **Projected annual job openings (2022-2032)** | 5,600 |

## In the United States:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Employment (2024)** | 407,000 employees |
| **Projected employment (2034)** | 433,700 employees |
| **Projected growth (2024-2034)** | 7% Much faster than average |
| **Projected annual job openings (2024-2034)** | 34,300 |

California source: Projections Central 2022-2032 long-term projections. United States source: Bureau of Labor Statistics 2024-2034 employment projections. "Projected growth" represents the estimated change in total employment over the projections period. "Projected annual job openings" represent openings due to growth and replacement.