Abstract (Document Summary)
A study was conducted to assess the most salient thoughts of college students in regard to personal selling. A word association technique was used on a sample of 300 marketing students. To analyze the students' freely associated thoughts, a coding scheme was developed to represent 8 distinct categories of the majority of thoughts. Three judges working independently coded the thoughts. Nearly a fourth of all thoughts were direct references to the door-to-door aspect of selling, and 68% of those thoughts were negative. In the characteristics category, 59% of the thoughts were negative. Much effort needs to be directed toward changing negative stereotypes of salespeople. This will require a combined effort by major corporations, professional sales associations, and academic institutions.