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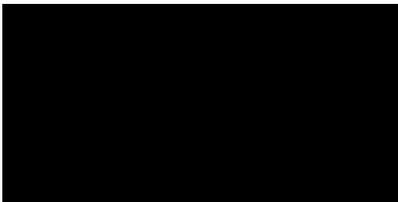


FILE: WAC 03 045 51462 Office: CALIFORNIA SERVICE CENTER Date: FEB 25 2005

IN RE: Petitioner: [Redacted]  
Beneficiary: [Redacted]

PETITION: Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker Pursuant to Section 101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b) of the  
Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b)

ON BEHALF OF PETITIONER:



INSTRUCTIONS:

This is the decision of the Administrative Appeals Office in your case. All documents have been returned to the office that originally decided your case. Any further inquiry must be made to that office.

Robert P. Wiemann, Director  
Administrative Appeals Office

**DISCUSSION:** The director of the service center denied the nonimmigrant visa petition and the matter is now before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) on appeal. The appeal will be dismissed. The petition will be denied.

The petitioner provides domestic and international shipping, money remittance, and travel. It seeks to employ the beneficiary as an advertising/promotion manager. The petitioner, therefore, endeavors to classify the beneficiary as a nonimmigrant worker in a specialty occupation pursuant to section 101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the Act), 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b).

The director denied the petition because the proffered position is not a specialty occupation. On appeal, counsel submits a brief and additional evidence.

Section 214(i)(1) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1184(i)(1), defines the term "specialty occupation" as an occupation that requires:

- (A) theoretical and practical application of a body of highly specialized knowledge, and
- (B) attainment of a bachelor's or higher degree in the specific specialty (or its equivalent) as a minimum for entry into the occupation in the United States.

Pursuant to 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A), to qualify as a specialty occupation, the position must meet one of the following criteria:

- (1) A baccalaureate or higher degree or its equivalent is normally the minimum requirement for entry into the particular position;
- (2) The degree requirement is common to the industry in parallel positions among similar organizations or, in the alternative, an employer may show that its particular position is so complex or unique that it can be performed only by an individual with a degree;
- (3) The employer normally requires a degree or its equivalent for the position; or
- (4) The nature of the specific duties is so specialized and complex that knowledge required to perform the duties is usually associated with the attainment of a baccalaureate or higher degree.

Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS) interprets the term "degree" in the criteria at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A) to mean not just any baccalaureate or higher degree, but one in a specific specialty that is directly related to the proffered position.

The record of proceeding before the AAO contains: (1) Form I-129 and supporting documentation; (2) the director's request for additional evidence; (3) the petitioner's response to the director's request; (4) the

director's denial letter; and (5) Form I-290B and supporting documentation. The AAO reviewed the record in its entirety before issuing its decision.

The petitioner is seeking the beneficiary's services as an advertising/promotion manager. Evidence of the beneficiary's duties includes: the Form I-129; the attachments accompanying the Form I-129; the company support letter; and the petitioner's response to the director's request for evidence. According to this evidence, the beneficiary would perform duties that entail directing and planning advertising and promotional print campaigns; developing and designing advertising materials; translating materials into other languages; and planning and selecting advertising mediums such as radio and television. The petitioner stated that a candidate for the proffered position must possess a baccalaureate degree in advertising, and have experience in directing advertising and promotions campaigns in various languages.

The director determined that the proffered position was not a specialty occupation. Referring to the Department of Labor's (DOL) *Occupational Outlook Handbook* (the *Handbook*), the director stated that the beneficiary's duties are performed by advertising, marketing, promotions, public relations, and sales managers, occupations for which employers prefer, but do not require, a baccalaureate degree in a specific specialty. The director found that the stated level of responsibility did not indicate complexity or authority beyond what is normally encountered in the occupational field or that the job offered could not be performed by an experienced person whose educational training fell short of a baccalaureate degree. The director stated that the evidence did not indicate that the petitioner normally requires applicants for the position to possess a baccalaureate or higher degree in the field.

On appeal, counsel states that the director misinterpreted the *Handbook's* information because it states that a baccalaureate degree is required for advertising management positions. Counsel claims that a DOL supervisor stated that a degree is normally required for marketing, advertising, and public relations managerial positions. According to counsel, the former employee who occupied the proffered position held a baccalaureate degree. Counsel contends that the proffered position's wages and the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT)* reflect that the position is professional in nature. Counsel asserts that educational equivalency (three years of experience and three years of college) qualifies the proffered position as a specialty occupation.

Upon review of the record, the petitioner has established none of the four criteria outlined in 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A). Therefore, the proffered position is not a specialty occupation.

The AAO first considers the criteria at 8 C.F.R. §§ 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A)(1) and (2): a baccalaureate or higher degree or its equivalent in a specific specialty is the normal minimum requirement for entry into the particular position; a specific degree requirement is common to the industry in parallel positions among similar organizations; or a particular position is so complex or unique that it can be performed only by an individual with a degree in a specific specialty. Factors often considered by CIS when determining these criteria include: whether the *Handbook* reports that the industry requires a degree; whether the industry's professional association has made a degree a minimum entry requirement; and whether letters or affidavits from firms or individuals in the industry attest that such firms "routinely employ and recruit only degreed individuals." See *Shanti, Inc. v. Reno*,

36 F. Supp. 2d 1151, 1165 (D.Minn. 1999)(quoting *Hird/Blaker Corp. v. Sava*, 712 F. Supp. 1095, 1102 (S.D.N.Y. 1989)).

In determining whether a position qualifies as a specialty occupation, CIS looks beyond the title of the position and determines, from a review of the duties of the position and any supporting evidence, whether the position actually requires the theoretical and practical application of a body of highly specialized knowledge, and the attainment of a baccalaureate degree in a specific specialty as the minimum for entry into the occupation as required by the Act.

The AAO routinely consults the *Handbook* for its information about the duties and educational requirements of particular occupations. On appeal, counsel states that the director misinterpreted the *Handbook's* information because it states that a baccalaureate degree is required for advertising management positions. Counsel's statement is not persuasive. The *Handbook* reports that:

A wide range of educational backgrounds is suitable for entry into advertising, marketing, promotions, public relations, and sales managerial jobs, but many employers prefer those with experience in related occupations plus a broad liberal arts background.

For advertising management positions, the *Handbook* relays "some employers prefer a bachelor's degree in advertising or journalism." This however, does not indicate that employers *require* a bachelor's degree in advertising or journalism. A preference of some employers cannot establish that a baccalaureate or higher degree or its equivalent is normally the minimum requirement for entry into the particular position, advertising/promotion manager.

Counsel's assertion that the proffered position is a specialty occupation because of information in the *DOT* is not convincing. The *DOT* is not a persuasive source of information regarding whether a particular job requires the attainment of a baccalaureate or higher degree in a specific specialty, or its equivalent, as a minimum for entry into the occupation. The DOL has replaced the *DOT* with the *Occupational Information Network (O\*Net)*. Both the *DOT* and the *O\*Net* provide only general information regarding the tasks and work activities associated with a particular occupation, as well as the education, training, and experience required to perform the duties of that occupation. The *Handbook* provides a more comprehensive description of the nature of a particular occupation and the education, training, and experience normally required to enter into and advance within the occupation. For this reason, CIS is not persuaded by a claim that the proffered position is a specialty occupation simply because of information in the *DOT*.

There is no evidence in the record that would establish the second criterion - that a specific degree requirement is common to the industry in parallel positions among similar organizations or that the proffered position is so complex or unique that it can be performed only by an individual with a degree in a specific specialty. Again, the *Handbook* shows that advertising management positions do not require a baccalaureate degree in a specific specialty.

Nor is there evidence in the record to establish the third criterion at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A): that the petitioner normally requires a degree or its equivalent for the position. Counsel contends that the former employee who occupied the proffered position held a baccalaureate degree. The submitted newspaper article that refers to the former employee indicates that the employee had been a medical technologist by profession; it does not indicate that the employee held a baccalaureate degree in advertising or a related field. The unsupported statements of counsel on appeal are not evidence and thus are not entitled to any evidentiary weight. *See INS vs. Phinpathya*, 464 U.S. 183, 188-89 n.6 (1984); *Matter of Ramirez-Sanchez*, 17 I&N Dec. 503 (BIA 1980).

The evidentiary record fails to satisfy the regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A)(4): that the nature of the specific duties is so specialized and complex that the knowledge required to perform the duties is usually associated with the attainment of a baccalaureate or higher degree in a specific specialty. The *Handbook* shows advertising management positions do not require a baccalaureate degree in a specific specialty.

As related in the discussion above, the petitioner has failed to establish that the proffered position is a specialty occupation. Accordingly, the AAO shall not disturb the director's denial of the petition.

The burden of proof in these proceedings rests solely with the petitioner. Section 291 of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1361. The petitioner has not sustained that burden.

**ORDER:** The appeal is dismissed. The petition is denied.