

Careers in Marketing



Are you good at coming up with original and innovative ideas? Do you have strong communication and digital skills? Do you enjoy working on challenging and diverse projects? Maybe you love looking at data, and analysing and reporting trends? There are surprisingly broad range of roles within marketing (and they're not all creative roles) - so open your mind and read on, because marketing is at the heart of almost every business or organisation and many, many Royal Holloway students start with a marketing-related role when they graduate!

What is marketing?

Marketing helps to make a business or brand visible in the marketplace. It's a growing and dynamic sector and it involves a variety of disciplines including market research, product development, pricing, packaging, distribution and promotion (which includes advertising, direct and digital marketing, sales and public relations [PR]).

Marketing roles exist in both the private and public sector: from charities to banks, from fashion to museums, healthcare, technology, energy services, retailers, aerospace, manufacturing, telecomms, local and central government, professional services such as accountants and law firms – they all have to promote themselves and the services that they provide. Even Universities have marketing departments.

Working “In-house” or for an “Agency/Consultancy”

If you work in marketing, the chances are that you will either work “in house” (where you work directly for the company or brand or service), or “agency-side”, where you work for a marketing/brand or communication consultancy or agency. Working for an agency can mean that you get exposure to a range of clients or brands, but can also be very fast-paced and may mean long hours at times (in order to meet client needs!). There are also many freelance or self-employed marketing consultants that offer either broad or niche marketing expertise and are employed either by agencies or directly by brands. Most consultants or freelancers are experienced marketers that have been employed and then “go it alone” - but increasing numbers of young people working in digital or social media marketing are able to sustain freelance marketing careers from quite an early career stage.

What are the main job roles in marketing?

General marketing roles: In a general marketing role you will create and measure marketing campaigns, track budget spend, conduct market research, and analyse consumer behaviour. Sometimes marketers are known as product or brand marketing managers, who are in charge of the launch and growth of a specific product, brand or service within an organisation. You may work in FMCG (fast moving consumer goods) marketing such as food or household products in which case your role will probably focus on consumer advertising, promotion ideas for in-store or online, the brand's presence in the digital space and also sometimes on brand or product development. Entry level roles that graduates often find could be Marketing Assistant, Marketing Executive, Junior Brand Manager, and Junior Product Manager.

Market research (also known as “business or consumer insight”): If you work in market research you provide information about customers, products and services to help businesses to make decisions about product development and how best to communicate with customers. Researchers use both qualitative and quantitative methods to draw conclusions and direct business strategies. You might help to spot new opportunities, identify issues or measure performance of current marketing campaigns. Large organisations might have their own “Consumer Insights team” and, in turn they might hire and brief external agencies to conduct the research. There are also many specialist Marketing Research agencies and consultancies.

[The Market Research Society](#) represents the profession in the UK and has some useful resources and a jobs board that includes some entry level positions. Some roles in business or consumer research involve analysing large data sets (sales data, online engagement data etc) and may suit people that have strong data and analytical skills. Your role could involve writing reports and presenting findings



or recommendations to clients or to other employees. Entry level roles might be Market Research Exec, Consumer Insight Exec, Business Insight Assistant or similar. Some of the larger agencies such as Kantar, Ipsos Mori and DunnHumby offer regular jobs for new graduates.

Brand management roles: Managing a brand involves creating a specific set of values and meanings about what the brand stands for and what differentiates it from others. This then influences the advertising, packaging, the distribution outlets, the price, and so on. Brand managers work closely with production, sales and finance to ensure the product or service performs meets targets. In a large company there may be junior and senior brand managers, and a large team all working on the same brand. In smaller organisations an individual brand or marketing manager might manage everything, including product development and all aspects of promotion. Entry level roles might be Junior or Assistant Brand Manager, or Marketing Assistant.

Industrial/Business to Business (B2B) marketing: If you work in B2B marketing you are usually promoting products or services to other organisations or businesses e.g. helping to promote/sell software or security or legal services to a company, or even materials or technical systems to an organisation. Marketers often work very closely to support sales professionals and marketing in this field can require a more complex, technical understanding of the products and customers as the range being marketed can vary from chemicals through to industrial equipment and each sale can be very high value (think selling software licenses to a large corporation). This is an area often initially overlooked by many graduates but careers in this area can be rewarding and in some sectors very lucrative.

Direct marketing: Involves marketing products or services directly to individuals. At the heart of direct marketing is targeting, personalisation of messages and measurability – a lot of which is driven by insights gained from databases and CRM systems. E-mail marketing within direct marketing is becoming an important tool. You may be involved in copywriting letters and brochures, doing data analysis, customer profiling and segmentation.

Marketing communications (marcomms): Is a broad term covering roles which are all about getting the right message using the most effective promotional method. In this area of marketing you could be

writing and designing printed media, leaflets or posters, or producing advertising for cinema, radio, TV or online. The work could also include PR, getting press coverage for products and securing sponsorship deals, and can even also include all forms of digital and social media marketing. Many roles in this area are in agencies, which call themselves either communications agencies or advertising agencies/consultancies.

Public Relations (PR): If you work in public relations, your job is to strategically build and manage an organisation's brand and reputation with the public and media. PR professionals attempt to get their client's/company's brands and stories in front of target consumers or audiences. The job can also involve building relationships with key stakeholders such as industry influencers, journalists or even government bodies - and it might involve helping to manage a company's reputation during a crisis (this is sometimes called "Public Affairs"). Some PR agencies or consultancies specialise in particular sectors, and you might also find that PR roles are advertised within a more general "Communications" role or agency. You'll need good writing and organisational skills, great communication and networking skills and possibly a bit of creativity to thrive in this field. Journalistic and media skills and awareness can also be useful – and you'll also want to be someone that enjoys meeting people and networking.

Entry level roles can be found in PR agencies – PR Exec or Assistant, Junior Account Manager (where you are helping to manage the relationship with the client). To get into public relations, try to secure internships or work experience at a PR agency. Developing an online portfolio of written work that includes non-academic writing, ideally commercial or promotional copy-writing, or social media content that you've posted will also help you.



Digital marketing: Is the use of any and all online and digital media platforms and tools – it's a rapidly growing area and you can learn a lot by "googling it". Work in this area could involve elements of email marketing, SEO (search engine optimisation), online and PPC (pay per click) advertising, affiliate (influencer) marketing, social media and text messaging and blogging.

Digital marketing employees use **content management systems (CMS)** such as Wordpress or Joomla to create, manage and publish content on websites. Knowing how to use one or two of these systems is a really beneficial skill.

SEO (Search Engine Optimisation) is also a really key area within digital marketing – and you can learn the basics by accessing one of the many free online courses.

Social media marketing: Engages the target audience and promotes an organisation's brand using Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Tiktok and other social platforms. Entry level roles tend to be Social Media Executive or similar, and responsibility for this area is often combined with digital or content marketing in many roles. Getting familiar with a social media content management system such as [Hootsuite](#) will be important, and you'll need to be comfortable with metrics, analysis and reporting. This is a really fast-growing area and there are lots of opportunities to progress fast if you can show initiative and passion.



Getting a first job in marketing

Entry into marketing can be through a number of different routes;

Graduate schemes at global marketing companies (consultancies and agencies) are often available but are highly competitive. Try looking up "Top 20 UK Advertising/PR/Digital Marketing agencies" and see what's available, examples include:

- WPP – [WPP Marketing Fellowship](#) offers three one-year rotations through WPP companies
- [VCCP - careers](#) top agency with entry level opportunities and a summer school

Marketing graduate schemes at global companies (either consumer or B2B companies) in other sectors include:

- EE – rotational marketing programme
- Sky – two year graduate programme
- KPMG – two-year sales and marketing graduate programme
- [Diageo graduate marketing programme \(Guinness, Gordons Gin, Smirnoff\)](#)
- Unilever – three year future leaders marketing programme
- Associated British Foods – two year programme looking after brands such as Twinings, Jordans and Kingmill
- Centrica – UK-wide scheme in commercial marketing
- Marks & Spencer – 18-month marketing training programme
- Tesco – two-year marketing programme
- Reckitt-Benckiser (manufacture home/health brands eg Clearasil, Dettol, Nurofen, Vanish) [graduate programme](#)
- Disney

There are also an increasing number of graduate training opportunities in consultancies specialising in research and brand management, such as; Interbrand, The Value Engineers, Sparkler and Happen.

Most graduates don't start on a "scheme": Look at opportunities to work as a marketing assistant, or junior brand/product manager, or an account executive in smaller firms who do not have enough openings to warrant a formal graduate programme. These may be advertised on relevant careers sites (see list of useful sites at the end of this helpsheet) or you can approach firms or people working in the marketing teams directly, either by email or via LinkedIn.

There is a big skills shortage in the field of digital and social media marketing and lots of new graduates find their first step is working for a (smaller) organisation running social and digital media.

Postgraduate study?

A postgraduate marketing course is not required to secure a marketing job, however the [Chartered Institute of Marketing \(CIM\)](#), the [Institute of Data & Marketing](#) and the [Institute of Sales and Marketing Management](#) offer accredited, practical courses and modules that you can take to gain relevant skills and evidence your interest in these sectors.

There are also many Masters Programmes which will give you a good insight into marketing theory and principles and will certainly increase your commercial

awareness and enable you to talk in appropriate marketing language as well as demonstrating to a prospective employer that you have an interest and intent towards working in Marketing.

How can I learn about marketing and get relevant skills?

Courses that will boost your skills

There are lots of free marketing courses online: many of them will give you practical or technical skills which employers will recognise and value, particularly if you have never studied marketing or anything business-related.

Online Learning platforms such as [Future Learn](#), [Udemy](#) and [Coursera](#) offer a variety of free short courses, both general and specific, about Marketing. If you haven't studied a business or marketing related subject then taking one of these courses will help to show an employer that you're genuinely interested in pursuing a marketing career, and demonstrates initiative.

[Google Digital Garage](#) has some free online courses on Digital Marketing and you'll also find that having some knowledge of [Google Analytics](#) (free beginners course) is helpful if you're managing websites.

Learn to create professional looking online content and posts for social media or web using [Canva](#) – which has great online tutorials

[LinkedIn Learning](#) has some great courses – you can access them free for a month (take the free trial subscription for a month – and remember to cancel at the end of the month).

Microsoft Office (PowerPoint, Excel, Word); in most marketing jobs you'll need to write reports, create presentations and build spreadsheets to organise and communicate complex information or data. It's worth brushing up your skills and taking courses so that you can legitimately claim to be proficient on your CV.

Graphic Design skills- Adobe Photoshop, InDesign and Illustrator are commonly used and could be particularly useful if you are working in digital or social media marketing or if you are working for a smaller company where you'll be "hands on" creating and developing content.

Social Media Management tools such as [Hootsuite](#) offer free courses to help you understand how to optimise social media posts and engagement

Getting useful experience

Placements and Internships: Many large graduate recruiters offer formal placements and internships which will give you a really good taste of what it's like to work in a large marketing department.

Work Experience and Shadowing: Many employers and individuals are open to the idea of offering a short work experience or work shadowing opportunity to students. You could try approaching alumni or other connections to ask whether they might be able to help with this, or use LinkedIn or social media to reach out to people working in marketing for advice.

Other ways to get experience: Employers are always impressed by students that have taken initiative and developed relevant knowledge and skills in their own time. Here are some ideas of things you could do whilst studying:

- Start a blog about something marketing-related that interests you and demonstrate its progress on your application.
- Offer to run the social media pages for a club or society, measure engagement or effectiveness of a particular campaign or initiative.
- Volunteer for a charity or local organisation - could you help with their web pages or social media, organise an event or write some copy to help them get publicity?
- Take some courses that develop technical, analytical or creative skills (see above)

Useful organisations and links

- [The Chartered Institute of Marketing](#) (CIM) – officially represents the industry in the UK
- [Campaign](#) online site for the Marketing industry feature jobs board
- [Marketing week - jobs](#) another online site featuring a jobsboard
- [PR Week](#) site for the PR industry with jobsboard
- [The Drum - jobs](#) advertising agency online news including jobsboard
- [LinkedIn](#) – lots of valuable things on LinkedIn – entry level marketing jobs and internships regularly posted, courses that you take on LinkedIn Learning, and lots of groups you can join which will enable you to network with marketing professionals.
- [Targetjobs list of top 300 employers in media and advertising](#) a useful place to start!