

# First digital industry salary survey

The IAB SA, in partnership with Millward Brown, has released the results of its first industry-endorsed digital salary survey. It benchmarks the salaries of specialist skills, relevant to the South African digital marketing and communication industry and relevant to the scale of agencies, which otherwise was ill-defined.

Fred Roed, CEO of World Wide Creative and head of agencies at IAB SA says, “This is the first time that the IAB SA has conducted a survey that focuses solely on the dynamic roles in the South African digital industry and their compensation. No other available survey comprehensively covers the unique skills that our agency members offer.”

## Investing in talent



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The data tells a clear story about how the industry is investing in talent. As expected, there is a slight discrepancy in average salaries for medium sized agencies and larger agencies, with large agencies offering on average 8% higher salaries compared to medium sized agencies.

Agencies of both sizes offer their own benefits. Large agencies are willing to invest more in experienced leaders, where regional and business unit autonomy is relied upon. Medium-sized agencies are showing more of a willingness to invest in particular in inexperienced leaders, senior client facing and project management personnel that can independently handle client/project tasks and specialist leaders in design and programming.

Interestingly, the data suggests that someone starting out in the industry is more likely to earn a higher salary at a medium-sized agency than a larger one.

## Top earners, lowest earners

The top earners in digital (excluding executive and business unit leadership) include project director, art director, paid search manager, account director and operations manager.

The lowest earning roles (excluding interns, PAs and office managers) are content writers, database analysts, community managers, photographers/videographers and front-end developers (non-specialist).

Another key finding is that the average gross monthly salary for programming roles within the agency environment is lower than the ICT sector. On average, programming roles with agencies are paid up to 26% lower compared to those within the ICT sector. There is a clear reason for this. As development is not the primary core capability of digital agencies, compared to ICT and large-scale enterprise development firms, the salaries of developers are less. This is balanced by digital agencies providing exposure for developers to a diverse range of projects that can test their craft and creativity as coders.

The task of reporting on and compiling the salary information of South Africa's agencies was always going to be a sensitive one. “The issue of trust with such sensitive information was a salient concern. Partnering with Millward Brown on the project illustrated our dedication to creating a confidential, credible benchmark for the industry,” continues Roed.

## Methodology

The survey was conducted using Millward Brown's proprietary survey solution, which is fully device agnostic, responsive

and secure. The IAB South Africa provided contact details of its members to Millward Brown, under strict non-disclosure agreements. The survey was sent to members via email to complete using Millward Brown's in-house survey and analysis technology. The 2015/16 IAB salary survey was conducted between 25/08/2015 and 30/10/2015.

Andrzej Suski, head of media and digital Africa & Middle East at Millward Brown says, "As one of the leading research agencies in mobile data collection, the Salary Survey provided us with a credible opportunity to show the benefits of a mobile research offering that provides fast and secure feedback to clients on a bespoke basis. We are entering an exciting era for market research and our South African team is pioneering many of the mobile developments that are being rolled out across the world."

Roed concludes, "A debt of gratitude must be extended to Andrzej and his team for ensuring confidentiality and professionalism throughout. I would also like to extend a thank you to the IAB Agency Committee team on this project, namely Danelle Stiles and Louis Janse van Rensburg, for adeptly facing the challenges in our path and executing a clear, detailed snapshot of our current industry."

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