

4 directions for the modern graduate to consider in the digital marketing space

At the beginning of every year there are a new generation of school-leavers and graduates trying to make an important choice that will determine their futures, which career path to follow and how to get there.



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The job landscape is constantly evolving and often seems unpredictable. Jobs that appear to be commonplace now didn't exist five years ago, while others are becoming obsolete. So, for someone trying to work out which career they would like to embark on, making an informed decision seems terrifying. How do you study for a job that does not exist yet and how do you ensure that what you study now is still relevant in the future?

"We need business leaders who are comfortable with creativity, and we need them everywhere, from factory floors to boardrooms. A lot of jobs that exist now weren't around when I started out in advertising, and change is not slowing down any time soon. These days you have to be prepared to change with the industry. Creativity and flexibility are the superpowers of the 21st century," Fran Luckin, Loeries chairperson and chief creative officer at Grey Africa, said at a recent Red & Yellow Creative School of Business event.

It is useful to look at what skills are needed for various roles. Traditionally, most jobs were strictly categorised as either creative or corporate, however the two are now no longer necessarily mutually exclusive. These days people are expected to have a combination of skills in order to be successful in most areas.

“With more and more young people choosing to start their own businesses and taking on the ‘one-man-band’ approach, it is a good idea to try and study something that gives you a broad knowledge and opens multiple doors. The key is to study for the career you think you want, but also choose something that teaches you the skills that could be useful in other careers,” said Carmen Schaefer, head of On-Campus Education at Red & Yellow Creative School of Business.

It is also a good idea to look at trends of where the working landscape is heading. According to an Adobe report released last year, despite tough economic times, online spend was still up 77% from the previous year, and in 2019 61% of companies surveyed by McKinsey reported that they planned to grow their digital marketing teams in 2020. With the worldwide digital ad spend set to reach \$500bn by 2023, the demand for digital marketers is set to continue to grow (Source: The Left Bank 2019). It is safe to say therefore, that studying for a career in the digital marketing space is a good choice.

“Although there are many options to choose from, there are three areas that will prove useful in any career. These are a good understanding of human behaviour, excellent writing abilities and a strong set of digital skills,” she continues.

With this in mind, what are some of 2021’s hottest career paths and how do they fit into the job landscape of the future? Below are four directions for the modern graduate to consider in the digital marketing space.

1. User experience (UX) specialist

A UX specialist works with marketing, product management and development teams to ensure that all points of contact of a product, from the opening of a box to the layout of its digital interfaces, are intuitive and effortless for the user to navigate. They apply sound strategic thinking and a deep understanding of what drives human behaviour to conceptually create and develop solutions to design challenges.

This career is suited to people who are both technically and creatively minded and who like practical problem solving. Those interested in pursuing a career as a UX specialist should first complete a tertiary qualification, such as a NFQ diploma or degree, followed by an Advanced Diploma in User Centred Design.

2. Marketing data scientist

A marketing data scientist collects, analyses and interprets information. This is done in order to gain understanding and insight to assist businesses to make confident, impactful decisions, understand customer behaviour, spot and predict trends, and improve business performance.

This career is suited to people who enjoy analysing and interpreting data and translating insights into compelling visualisations. Those interested in pursuing a career as a marketing data scientist should have a certain level of maths and numerical literacy as well as a basic understanding of marketing. They can then take a specialised course on data principles and visualisation.

3. Digital marketing specialist

A digital marketing specialist works alongside a company’s marketing team, to implement campaigns and projects through all digital channels. They develop, execute, implement and then optimise digital strategies to ensure the right customers are being reached in the most impactful, measurable and cost-effective way.

This career is suited to people who like implementing technical and data-driven projects, but who are also creative. Those interested in pursuing a career as a digital marketing specialist should first complete a tertiary qualification, such as a NFQ diploma or degree and have a basic understanding of marketing. They can then apply for an Advanced Diploma in Digital

Marketing.

4. Content creator

A content creator produces entertaining or educational material, primarily for digital platforms such as blogs, vlogs, and social media platforms, such as Instagram, Facebook and TikTok. All big brands now invest in creating content for these channels, while influencers can make a living from creating their own content and sharing on their own platforms.

Those interested in pursuing a career as a content creator should first ensure they complete their national senior certificate after which they can complete a higher certificate in creating digital content.

For school-leavers and others who are not sure which direction to go in just yet, a Bachelor of Commerce in Marketing forms a solid base for any of the above careers, plus many more.

“A Bachelor of Commerce in Marketing is a business degree, but with a technological and creative twist; giving the student the basic skills of marketing and commerce to keep building on in whatever direction they want in order to break into the industries of the future. The possibilities and opportunities are endless,” continued Schaefer.

“The best advice is to adopt a growth mindset and always stay curious. The job landscape will continue to change and to evolve, and so it is important to embrace constant improvement. Building a solid set of skills at the outset will ensure that job seekers have the foundation to build a career that can grow and change over time,” she concluded.

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