



Kickstarting Your Digital Marketing Career

11 Career Tips, Advice From Experts and Career Options



Introduction

If you're looking to break into the digital marketing industry, there's no better time than now.

According to research from 2018, the digital economy was growing at triple the pace of U.S. GDP with employees working in the digital economy earning on average **\$114,275** a year, more than **72%** of workers in the country.

Moreover, in 2020 COVID-19 has served to highlight the value of digital transformation across the board, as an increasing number of brands embrace remote working and seek innovative new ways to connect with their consumers.

In fact, experts project that around 70% of new value created within the economy over the next 10 years is likely to blossom from digitally-enabled business models.

In this guide, we share our top tips for aspiring digital marketers who wish to kickstart their career, offer advice from experts, and explore the career options available to you right now.

Eagerness to Learn

The digital marketing industry is fast-growing, ever-evolving, and wildly competitive. As an aspiring digital marketer, this means that you need to make an effort to stay on top of trends and developments that could have an impact on marketing activities.

These activities could be as simple as a new piece of software that will help schedule social posts, an online-based image optimizer, or a new feature on Google that will impact on customer



engagement and lead generation. After all, employers are looking for hires that can add to their workforce and capabilities in the area of digital.

In interviews it's easy for businesses to differentiate between candidates who have the willingness to learn, and those who are just along for the ride. Ultimately, this industry requires passion and a desire to succeed.

Stay Updated

In order for you to continue learning, you will need to keep on top of industry news by following major digital marketing sites and influential people on social media.

As the major players such as Google, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter regularly tweak their paid advertising platforms and algorithms, you're in for a bumpy ride if you don't keep on top of the latest changes.

While there is a lot of information out there (not least, in [our extensive DMI Library](#)), we can recommend a number of websites you can start using to build your knowledge in these specialist areas:

- **SEO** – Moz, Distilled, SEOGadget, Search Engine Land
- **PPC** – PPC Hero, Search Engine Land
- **Social Media** – Social Media Examiner, Social Media Today
- **Content** – Hubspot, Content Marketing Institute
- **Digital Marketing** – Marketing Week, Think with Google, Econsultancy
- **Advertising** – Campaign, Adweek
- **Video** – Vidyard Blog, Vimeo Blog
- **Emerging digital trends & Technology:** TechCrunch, AITrends, Think With Google



Networking

When it comes to career development and progress, networking is essential. A key tip here is to surround yourself with people more talented than you. The people you meet will be your ongoing support network when you run into problems; they will also help to open doors to opportunities you might not have otherwise found.

As influencer marketing becomes more effective across social media platforms, networking in the industry can help you to make contact with potential influencers that could prove valuable in your marketing efforts.

The best way to start networking is to attend industry meetups and conferences in your area or sector to nurture relationships with other digital marketers and enhance your skill set through in-depth workshops and presentations.

LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram are also effective forms of online networking. By honing in on relevant discussions and joining the conversation while sharing content with your desired connections, you will increase your presence in the right places while showcasing your worth as an aspiring digital marketer. Which brings us onto our next point.

“The key is to NOT think about a career per se, but instead think of your professional life, whether you’re an entrepreneur or employee, as a series of projects that present challenges that allow you to grow, learn and prosper.

The right path, the way we define hustle, is a series of moves both inside companies and outside of them as entrepreneurs.”



Neil Patel
Co-Founder of Crazy Egg,
Hello Bar and KISSmetrics



Personal Projects

Personal projects are important: Test your own ideas rather than just treating industry leaders' opinions as gospel. Things aren't always black and white in the digital marketing industry, with many grey areas between best practice and what can actually get results for a business.

Every digital marketer should have personal projects to test out theories, try their hand at multiple disciplines (like SEO, PPC, social media, content marketing etc.), and be able to take accountability for the success or failure of a project.

Having a personal digital space or publication will also display your commitment while demonstrating your talents which, in turn, will make you more visible to prospective recruiters or employers.

“The modern marketer is an experimenter, a lover of data, a content creator, a justifier of ROI”. – Kim Walsh, HubSpot

Learn the Terminology

As any digital marketer will tell you, there's a lot of lingo to get used to when you first start out! While it can seem daunting, the best way to understand it is to dive in head first either by reading up on it or using it as (and when) you can.

Along with acronyms such as ROI, CTR, and SEM, you'll also need to familiarize yourself with strategies such as A/B testing, buyer personas, personalization, and remarketing.



In a working environment all these terms mean different things and if it seems you don't understand them fully, that's a clear sign that you have a beginner's skill set and need further training.

You will be able to access extensive glossaries of digital marketing terminology and phrasing with a simple Google search—resources you can bookmark for ongoing reference. Alternatively, our DMI library offers a wealth of resources, including a full glossary, that will help you stay up to date with the latest trends and digital lingo.

Build your personal brand

Fancy yourself as a digital marketing hotshot but have no visible online presence? Circling back to 'Personal Projects', if you want to show an employer that you can build their company's visibility then you need to show that you can create your own personal brand.

Do you have a favorite social platform that you like to use? Or do you take a lot of photos or create videos which you could upload to an Instagram account or YouTube channel? Or do you have a blog that is refreshed with new content regularly?

All of these platforms will provide an invaluable opportunity to get your name out there, network with influencers as well as peers, and show an employer that you are active online and passionate. Your content doesn't have to be about digital marketing, the aim is to give an insight into your personality and show your proficiency online.

A strong online presence could potentially be the deciding factor for an employer between two candidates who have applied for the same position.

“The best piece of advice I ever received was that “No” is often just the starting point, and most careers worth having involve a fair amount of determination, grit, and just general “try, try again”-ing.”



Kathryn Minshew,
Founder of The Muse



Considering that [78% of hiring managers](#) connect with the best candidates through referrals, working on your personal brand will help you get ahead as an aspiring digital marketer.

Bear in mind though that if it is in the public arena then make sure it's content you want a potential or existing employer to see!

The T-Shaped Marketer

As a term commonly used by Rand Fishkin of Moz, 'T-shaped marketer' refers to having a basic understanding of multiple marketing disciplines but specializing in one or two particular skills.

Most marketers fall into two categories: specialists or T-shaped marketers, also known as growth hackers. The difference between a T-shaped marketer and a specialist is that the specialist might understand a little bit about the other areas of marketing, but not too much.

Ultimately, companies value T-shaped marketers as they can bring more to the table compared to a specialist as they can jump from one area to another. In addition, a good foundation in many skills can make these types of marketers more agile and successful in times of change—which as we all know, is constant.

Plus, T-shaped marketers tend to earn more, most probably due to the high demand for them and being seen as a good hire by employers.



Get Graphic

Digital marketing is often perceived as quite glamorous, but truth be told it's often more technical and data-driven than we would care to admit.

In addition, as it's a department that collaborates with most departments within a company, it's key to keep your skills and knowledge top notch and rolling at all times.

So while you won't be developing websites from scratch, you will be communicating your marketing strategy to a team of developers or designers who have a responsibility for incorporating your recommendations.

As a result, a basic knowledge of HTML as well as user experience (UX) and graphic design will help you to stand out among other candidates.

Metrics are King

In the digital marketing world there's nothing more important than metrics. Data is the beating heart of digital information after all. It's how you prove the success (or failure) of your marketing efforts and how teams learn to optimize campaigns while understanding their consumers on a deeper, more personal level.



Do you know your CPC from your CPA? Or your CTR from your OR?

Some of the digital marketing metrics, also known as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), you should become well versed on are:

- Unique visitors
- Impressions
- Goal completions
- Bounce rate
- Conversion rates
- Open and click-through rates
- Time on site
- Lead to close ratio
- Cost per lead
- Cost per acquisition
- Qualified leads
- Channel-specific traffic
- Customer retention rate
- Customer value
- Scroll rate
- Core Web Vitals
- Domain authority
- Return on marketing investment (ROMI)

Tip: When it comes to interviews, you can set yourself apart from the pack by talking about the return on ad spend for a campaign you've run yourself, for instance. It's easy to talk about an exciting creative concept you've helped to develop but the fact remains...money talks.

Certification

If you really want to stand out from your peers in the industry, earning a digital marketing certification will go a long way.

“Before even starting with your resume, think what you’re most proud of, and write down 5 of your biggest achievements. It could be anything – winning a school competition, speaking three languages, studying abroad, or even living a balanced life. Any major part of your lifestyle or personality is worth mentioning.

That, coupled with why you’d want to work specifically for the company you’re applying for and how you can contribute to the company, would hardly ever get you rejected for an interview.”



Lou Adler
CEO and founder
The Adler Group



The right credentials will not only help you to hone new skills or update existing ones, but they will also show employers that your skills are of a certain industry standard.

One of the issues facing the digital marketing industry is that there are no barriers to entry, meaning that anyone with a loose grasp of industry terminology can potentially get a position in a company.

And as the industry matures, recruiters are becoming ever more savvy about what differentiates a candidate that can talk the talk, but who could turn out to be a costly mistake for the company. You really need to understand how each marketing channel has performed and what the key learnings have been.

Earning a digital marketing certification will help you:

1. Showcase your specific skill set to prospective employers
2. Help you become an in-demand professional
3. Expand your digital marketing career options
4. Get paid more than your peers
5. Kickstart your career more easily and hit the ground running
6. Become more adaptable and agile
7. Work with different people regularly
8. Display more creativity in your work

Reconsider your CV/Resume

According to Seth Godin: “A resume is an excuse to reject you.”

It's a stark fact that **90%** of resumes get rejected. After all, when you're applying for a position, unless you can differentiate yourself, it will end up in a reject pile with the rest.



The main reasons resumes or CVs are rejected by employers are:

- A lack of relevance
- Typos and poor grammar
- Style inconsistency
- A failure to convey why you make the ideal candidate
- Too much focus on background and experience
- Inappropriate social media content

Also, and this is a vital point, in hiring circles the traditional CV or resume has been dying a slow death. After all, from a company's perspective they want to see who you really are, but more importantly, what you can do for them rather than just a list of your work experience and education.

So how can you make your resume stand out?

Don't follow the traditional layout

Do something different such as adding a design, or having a URL that links to a video or presentation that shows off your talents.

Quantify your achievements

Instead of simply writing 'I manage the Twitter page', say 'Raised engagement on Twitter by 110% over 3 months, by creating team video ads.'

Reflect the keyword on the job description

It may seem obvious but many people fail to do this. In both your resume and cover letter, include keywords that the company is looking for, as listed in the job description, such as 'optimize', 'customer experience', 'engagement' etc. so you are showing them how your skills are applicable. Just make sure that when you add these key terms or phrases that they read naturally and are placed in the right context (or your resume will probably get rejected).



Tell Your Own Story

Remember that employers are looking for a great candidate that will fit in well with their culture. Show them how your traits can benefit the company by telling your story.

Trim the fat

Before you sign off your resume and hit 'send', read through it with a fine tooth comb, taking out any words, information or phrases that aren't absolutely essential. Also, to display confidence, you should always aim to write in the active voice ("I did" instead of "Doing"). Above all when writing your resume, remember that your story is unique to you! So, capitalize on your successes and skills.

What are the Career Options?

Digital marketing is fast becoming the backbone of revenue generation in every company. Even traditional bricks-and-mortar businesses are seeing the benefits of staying on top of digital marketing.

So, who are these digital marketers? Where do they come from and what sort of education or experience do they need?

The answers to these two questions are as varied as the career options available, ranging from analytics to social media, and the skills required are equally vast and diverse. Here are some of the top jobs in the industry, to give you an idea of the skills needed and possible paths to success.

“Every 10 mins you give yourself to learn something new at the beginning of your career will pay off 1,000 times over in 5 years time.

I always come across holes within my skill set, whether it is to do with PPC, SEO or social marketing, where I wish I put more time into learning things when I had less responsibility.

When you are an intern or junior, you should be soaking up as much information through experiences, books and online blogs, as possible as this will pay off multiple times over when you are striving for bigger things later on in your career.”



Liam Solomon
Marketing lead,
Love the Sales



1. SEO Manager

An SEO manager oversees the company's overall SEO strategy from planning to implementation. Their main objective is to improve the company's ranking in search engines, particularly Google. Responsibilities will vary as needed but include:

- Web marketing
- Web analytics
- Content strategy planning
- Developing a social media strategy
- Organizing campaigns to improve search listings results
- Link-building
- On-page design optimization (working in collaboration with UX and content designers)
- Developing a keyword strategy

Who is this good for?

Someone with a proven SEO track record and good leadership skills will thrive in this role. It also calls for adaptability.

You will be the driving force behind the company's online presence, so you have to stay on top of the trends and know how to use them to drive traffic and increase sales.

Qualifications

A Bachelor's degree is desirable and usually at least two years' relevant SEO experience.



2. PPC Marketing Manager

PPC marketing managers oversee pay-per-click campaigns and are responsible for running client campaigns in Google Ads and on Bing, Facebook, and Instagram, among other platforms. They specifically handle:

- Audience targeting and keyword selection
- Writing copy
- Running A/B testing
- Data analysis
- Increasing traffic and reducing ad spend through optimization

Who is this good for?

People who love stats and data are excited about this job.

PPC is all about analyzing data sets and using the information to your advantage.

Qualifications

A minimum of a bachelor's in Marketing, Digital Media, or a related field, and a certification in Google Ads or a search related qualification is an asset.

“I’d offer three tips for getting into digital marketing.

First, have a firm grasp of marketing fundamentals. Having a university degree in marketing can give you this. If you don’t have a degree, then there are great resources available online.

My second tip is to walk-the-talk. Create social media profiles across as many platforms as you can manage. Use these for creating and seeding content. It doesn’t have to be your own content, but it needs to be focused. This demonstrates that you have at least a personal understanding of social and content.

You will also need to “be the consumer.”

- Buy things online
- Use e-commerce sites
- Sign up for e-newsletters

Once you have a thorough understanding of digital platforms, you’re in a good position to educate others about them.

My last tip is to create something you can showcase. It’s tough hiring someone with no experience but it’s a lot easier if you’ve created your own personal e-commerce site (Shopify is great for this) and are using digital marketing tactics to generate revenue.”



Daniel Cummings
Founder, Peoplewave



3. Blogger/Content Creator

A blogger's primary goal is to write, edit, and publish content to a website or blog. The aim is to increase traffic to a site by writing content that is relevant to, and educational for, the reader.

Specific duties will include:

- Promoting products from affiliates
- Writing and researching articles
- Providing helpful tricks and tips to readers
- Pitching and developing ideas
- Keeping up to date on social media trends that are relevant to the business
- Maintaining the brand's image and tone in all posts
- Promoting the brand through social media
- Working with the SEO team to implement keywords
- Collaborating with influencers to develop valuable, targeted blog content
- Working with others producing video, podcasts, and other content formats

Who is this good for?

Writers, of course, are suited to this position! If you're someone who loves to learn and research, then this is for you.

Qualifications

For some in-house blogging positions with bigger companies, you may require a bachelor's in English, Journalism, or Communications.

However, anyone with a knack for putting words together well and synthesizing information can become quite successful in this kind of role.



4. Influencer

As an influencer, you would promote a brand's message, products, or services on social media as you incorporate it into your daily life. In addition, you will interact with your followers on an ongoing basis.

Responsibilities will include:

- Engaging your social media following with the brand
- Promoting the brand and its products or services
- Using hashtags to ensure that your posts come up in as many relevant places as possible
- Social listening to engage with relevant conversations and drive follower engagement

Who is this good for?

Those with a social media following of 10,000+ engaged followers and a niche can make good influencers. According to Influencer Marketing Hub, this market comprises celebrities, industry experts and thought leaders, bloggers and content creators, and micro-influencers (everyday people who have become known as an expert in a particular area or niche).

Qualifications

A sound working understanding of key social media platforms will get your foot in the door, as will a substantial, active, and engaged following.



5. Marketing and Automation Specialist

Marketing automation specialists focus on the day to day handling of a company's automated marketing strategy. They take care of all the tech involved with that, such as website design and app development and will:

- Make landing pages
- Set up email automation and marketing campaigns
- Use analytics to optimize targeting
- Increase conversions
- Automate customer communication
- Experiment with new platforms and technologies including artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML)

Who is this good for?

Anyone who likes data, technology, and advertising can combine those interests in this role.

The key to a good career in this field is creating successful ad campaigns, launching them, checking the data, optimizing and adjusting, and then repeating it over again.

Qualifications

Most employers will want a minimum of a bachelor's in business or marketing, although some will require a Master's degree in a related field. Having some experience in the industry is also an asset.



6. UX Designer

A UX (user experience) designer, is responsible for what users see when interacting with an app or a website.

That includes everything from the way it looks and functions to the emotional reaction they feel when using it. It's key to consult with users for feedback throughout the process too. Some of the duties include:

- Designing functional and visually appealing software
- Developing user interface elements as required
- Pitching ideas using storyboards
- Testing for bugs or inefficiencies
- Analyzing the usability of applications, platforms or web pages to optimize their performance

Who is this good for?

UX/UI is a highly specialized field and requires tech skills.

Former code writers, app designers, and video game developers are the sort who will do well in this position.

Qualifications

A bachelor's in Design, Computer Science, or a related field is required.



7. Social Media Manager

Social media managers take care of the company's social media strategy, including creating content and advertising. Some of the duties that would be expected are:

- Posting updates
- Gaining followers for social media accounts
- Interacting with followers of social media accounts and answering questions
- Promoting the company's brand and image
- Measuring and analyzing follower engagement
- Social listening and competitor content analysis
- Developing creative and relevant content strategies across platforms

Who is this good for?

Anyone who loves content and social media and can use analytics will enjoy this role. If you know what goes into a great post and are great at interacting with social users, chances are this is right for you.

Qualifications

A strong understanding of social media platforms and how to use them to generate leads that convert to sales will go a long way. SEO experience is an asset.



8. Brand Marketing Specialist

A brand marketing specialist is responsible for developing an original and consistent tone of voice and style across all platforms and touchpoints by using a mix of creative planning and analytical thinking.

The key responsibilities of a brand manager include:

- Developing storytelling-based content ideas
- Create targeted, emotionally-driven content and campaigns across channels
- Ensure style and consistency, both in terms of content and visuals, across the board
- Produce effective and tight-knit brand briefs for designers and content writers
- Identifying brand-boosting opportunities through data and analytics

Who is this good for?

Anyone with a keen eye for detail, a creative mindset, and working analytical skills. If you can write and edit content and believe you can create a powerful brand style guide, this is the job for you.

Qualifications

A practical understanding of content design and analytics as well as solid copywriting skills. Strong communication skills and relevant experience as a content writer, blogger or social media marketer will also help.



Final Thoughts

Digital marketing is a growing industry that will offer you a wealth of opportunities across industries if you're willing to get out there and grab them.

The key to a successful digital marketing career is to be flexible, passionate, a team player, dedicated, and have an unwavering appetite for new things.

We hope this guide will help you to understand what's involved in digital marketing and the tips and advice from seasoned experts will help you land the job of your dreams.

It's your time to shine.



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