

# Data and Marketing: Attracting the Next Generation

2019



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# / Introduction

## Welcome to the first DMA Talent research report

At DMA Talent, we're aiming to attract a new generation of fresh thinkers by raising awareness of the range of inspiring and dynamic career opportunities available in the data and marketing industry.

Schools, colleges, and universities struggle to keep up with the changing nature of skills required by employers, but it is our collective responsibility to make sure that they can and that they do.

This report is our starting point to show the opportunities that the Data and Marketing industry can offer and it will support our conversations with the major stakeholders who help young people make career decisions.

Moreover, the research will inform our programmes working to nurture aspiring marketers by providing a roadmap and outlining the skills and connections needed to kick-start their journeys.

This report covers three main areas regarding entry-level marketing jobs in the UK.

The first chapter outlines the current availability of entry-level jobs in marketing and the opportunity that exists in the marketing industry.

The second chapter explores the skills that employers currently require, and discusses whether current candidates actually fit these needs. It presents employer views on the skills they deem important for entry-level marketing employees to have and which they think will be important in the future. The section also discusses skills that employers struggle to find in candidates.

The third chapter presents possible actions that can be taken in response to the issues and challenges raised by employers' views and wants. We've outlined the key areas of focus necessary in order to create a successful future for the marketing industry and for the next generation of talent.

If employers want to find the right candidates they need to be clear about what they are looking for - a generalist? Or a specialist? They also need to be realistic about the skillsets entry level employees will already possess. If they don't necessarily have the ideal skillset, employers must be willing to invest in relevant training and development.

At DMA Talent, we believe that data skills are transferable across business sectors, but that the data and marketing industry offers some of the most rewarding opportunities. We just need to make prospective marketers more aware of the possibilities.

We instil our customer-first principles into every initiative we develop in order to inspire future marketers and to drive our industry forward in a responsible and sustainable way.

**Kate Burnett,**  
General Manager of DMA Talent

# / Executive Summary

**Employers are hiring for entry level marketing roles:** 88% of employers surveyed will have at least one entry level role related to marketing they are recruiting for over the next 12 months.

**Marketing has opportunities for school leavers as well as graduates:** The industry is open to employing graduates and school or college leavers in entry level marketing roles; 42% of employers surveyed have graduate jobs available in direct or digital marketing vs. 38% for school or college leavers.

**Appetite for apprenticeships is healthy:** 62% of the employers surveyed are already using apprenticeships, and a further 32% would be interested in using one.

**There are many work experience opportunities for young people in marketing functions:** Over 80% of the sample offer school work experience or internships while 64% offer university placements.

**Is employer reliance on personal networks hindering industry diversity?:** 62% of employers surveyed use either personal or employee networks as part of their recruitment strategies.

**Employers are primarily looking for soft skills in entry level marketing candidates:** Over 80% named at least one social skill as essential for entry level marketing candidates to have at hire.

**Marketing skills can help people differentiate:** While soft and core skills are essential, 69% consider skills in at least one marketing discipline as essential for entry level employees to have at hire.

**Soft skills gap:** Just over half of the sample find it difficult to find at least one of the social/personal skills deemed important among candidates.

**Employers acknowledge they need to offer young people training:** 84% of employers offer some training – either formal, informal or external – to entry level employees.

**A minority of employers make use of external training support:** 28% of employers use external training for entry level marketing roles.

**Unpaid internships still exist:** 21% of employers still claim to offer unpaid internship placements.

**Strong demand for industry wide training standards:** 38% of employers would like to see industry wide training standards established to support future of marketing talent

**Employers want to see diversity in marketing recruitment improve:** 3 in 10 placed recruitment of more people from ethnic minority backgrounds and regional backgrounds as a top industry change respectively.

# / The Opportunity

This chapter highlights the key findings from research regarding marketing job availability for young people.

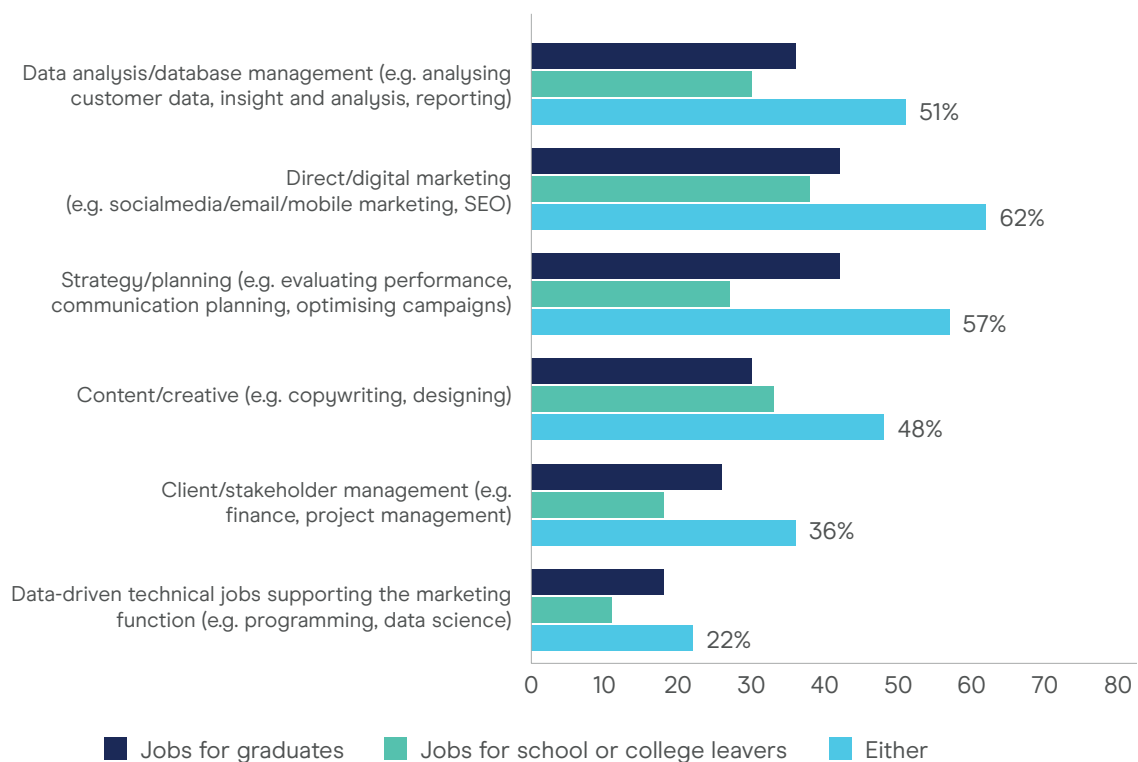
We discuss topics such if recruiters are recruiting, how they are recruiting, and who they are willing to recruit.

## Entry Level Jobs

Entry level jobs are available across many types of marketing functions. 62% of employers surveyed state they have entry level marketing jobs (either for graduates or school/college leavers) available in direct or digital marketing, 57% in planning or strategic functions and 51% in data management functions.

Almost half the sample (48%) have entry level jobs available in content or creative areas. Fewer numbers have jobs available relating to client or stakeholder management or data driven technical jobs.

Which entry level jobs are available in the following marketing functions of your organisation?



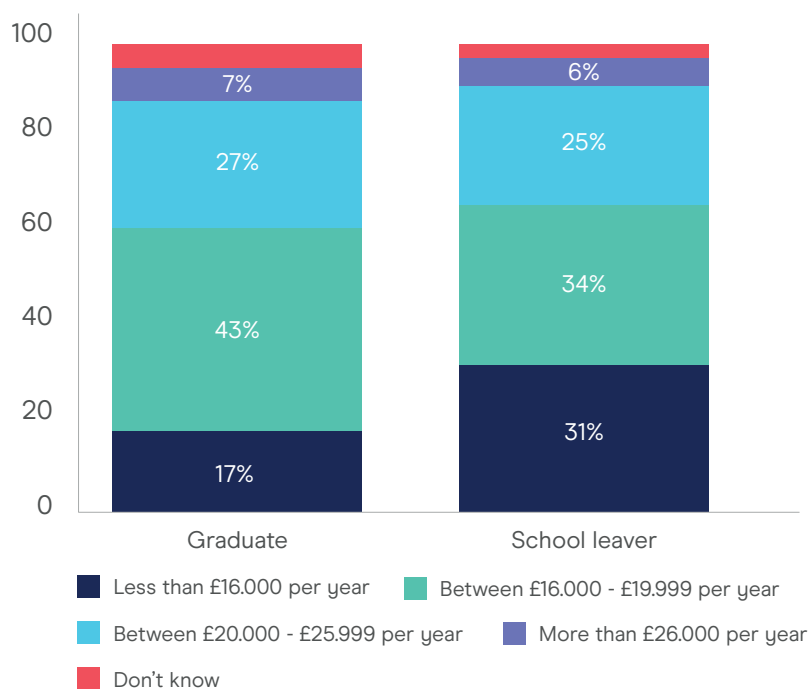
## Graduates and School Leaver Roles

The industry is open to employing graduates and school or college leavers in entry level marketing roles. Entry level roles are in general slightly more available for the graduate market but, perhaps surprisingly, not overwhelmingly so.

42% of employers surveyed have graduate jobs available in direct or digital marketing vs. 38% for school or college leavers. For strategic or planning jobs or client management jobs the gap in availability is a little wider.

Salaries differ between graduate and school leaver roles. While the majority of both school leavers and graduates entering into their first marketing role can expect to earn over £16,000 nearly 3 in 10 of the industry sample claimed their roles for school leavers pay less than this. It is interesting, however, that at the higher end of the pay scale salary ranges differ minimally between graduate and school leaver offerings.

**What is the average per annual salary for entry level marketing roles in your organisation?**



## The Opportunities

When asked specifically about job recruitment over the next 12 months the vast majority of the sample have entry level jobs they will be recruiting for; 88% will have at least one entry level role related to marketing they are recruiting for over the next 12 months. This indicates that currently industry is willing to take on new entrants in the marketing functions of their businesses and that marketing roles represent an opportunity for young people looking to make their first mark in the working world.

How many jobs are available? 54% of the sample are recruiting 8 roles or fewer, and a third are able to recruit for 9 plus roles. Larger companies are more likely to be recruiting greater numbers of entry level employees. 44% of larger companies in the sample are recruiting 9 plus roles and just 10% would be recruiting less than 2 (vs a quarter of SME employers recruiting 1-2 roles). In indicative terms the research suggests that an average of 5-6 roles are being recruited for per employer across the sample.

Reflecting the types of areas where our industry sample has jobs available, job availability is stronger in areas of digital and direct marketing, database management and strategy/planning.

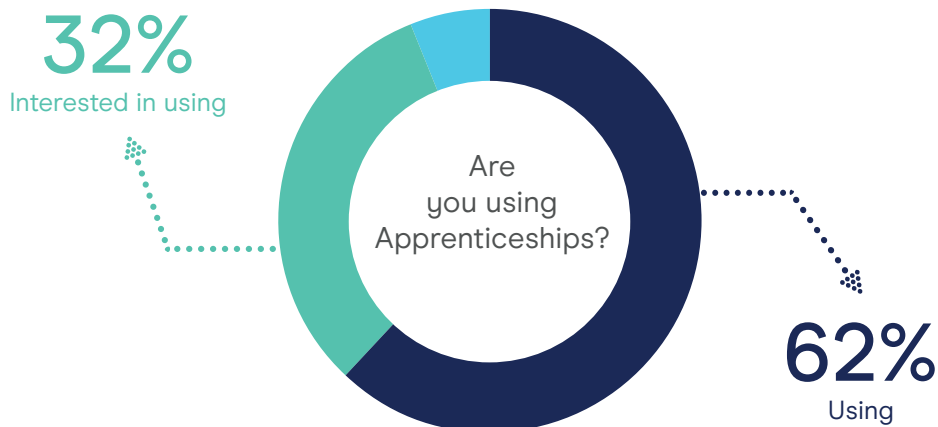
How many entry level jobs are you or your organisation planning to recruit over the next 12 months in the following marketing functions?\*



\*Among those who recruiting in any department

## Apprenticeships

We also asked our industry sample about their use and experience of apprenticeships.



62% of the employers surveyed are already using apprenticeships, and a further 32% would be interested in using one. This suggests that there is a strong current and latent appetite for apprenticeships roles among employers when hiring for entry level roles. With the vast majority of apprenticeship users satisfied with their experience – regardless of the type of apprenticeship they were employing – marketing as an industry is already benefitting from accessing entry level talent in this way.

However when looking at the types of apprenticeships being used there are some key differences. Technical and data apprenticeships are more popular than dedicated marketing apprenticeships. Near two fifths of the sample are using or have used technical apprenticeships, 33% data and 22% marketing apprenticeships. This suggests that technical and data roles supporting marketing, rather than traditional marketing roles are being more likely to be filled via apprenticeships. Given the range of entry level roles available across different functions of marketing there is definitely room for employers to make greater use of dedicated marketing apprenticeships when seeking young talent.

## Post-apprenticeship Roles

Among those in the sample using apprenticeships, a small minority state that apprenticeships don't lead to further employment – a strong indication that apprenticeships relating to marketing help young people to gain full time employment beyond their study.

So there are more apprenticeships that support the marketing function than those that perform marketing. 38% of the sample state roles lead to data driven or



technical jobs supporting the marketing function, 33% state roles lead to creative jobs such as design, and a third state roles lead to data management jobs.

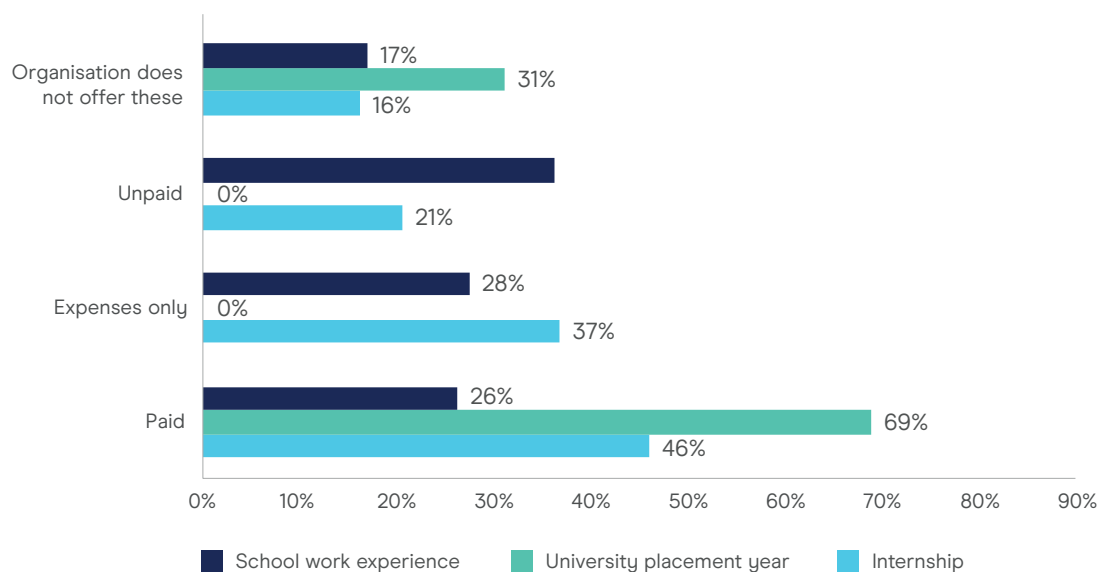
## The Availability of Work Experience

A majority of employers in the sample offer work experience with internships and school work experience being the most commonly offered – over 80% of the sample offer these while 64% offer university placements.

While internships are more likely to be paid than unpaid, a few pockets of the industry are still not remunerating interns for their contributions. 46% in the sample claim to offer paid internships, 37% claim to offer expenses only paid internships but 21% still claim to offer unpaid placements. Unpaid internships are still an existing barrier to marketing experience for young people unable to cover their own costs of participation.

School work experience is more likely to be unpaid compared to internships (36%) but significant numbers of the sample also offer paid school experience (26%) or expenses paid experience (27%).

### What kinds of work placements does your organisation offer in marketing functions?



## Recruitment

How are employers recruiting entry level employees?

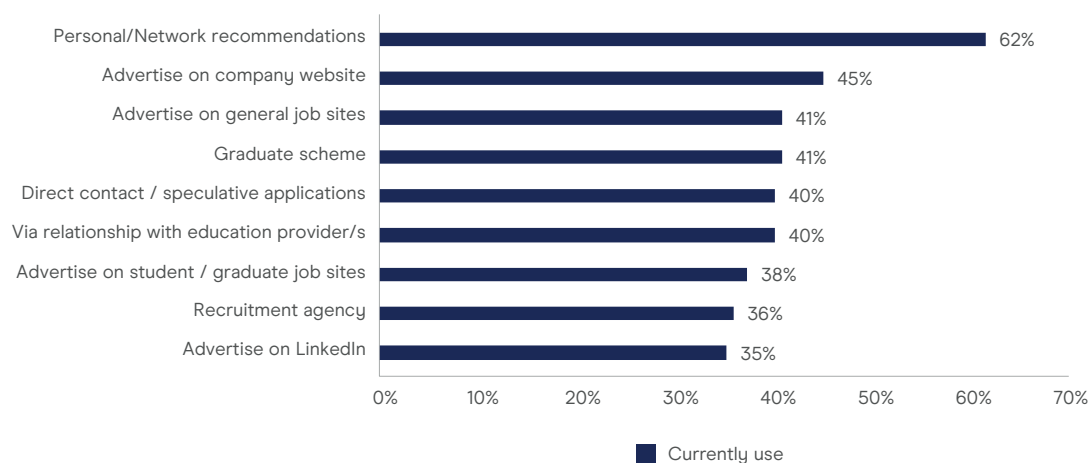
Employers are using a wide range of recruitment techniques to access entry level talents.

The most widespread recruitment strategies remain simple and low cost. 62% of employers surveyed use either personal or employee networks, or 45% advertise on their own company website. Around two fifths of employers use advertising on third party sites (either general or student) and the same proportion use relationships with education providers. Employers are less keen on using recruitment agencies or LinkedIn.

With many relying on personal networks to access young talent, employers may be limited in their ability to widen the diversity of talent in their workforce, and networking may still be providing an upper hand to candidates that have access to wider social networks. A question for both the industry and education providers is how can they support employers in accessing diverse talent outside of their own networks in cost effective ways?

However direct contact and speculative applications are also in the consideration pool for employers. Young people that can show proactivity in their job applications have an opportunity to be considered by employers who might not access them otherwise.

**Which recruitment strategies does your organisation use or would consider using to recruit entry level roles in marketing?**



# / The Skills Landscape

## Skills and Employability

The research sought to understand which skills employers deem most important for entry level marketing candidates to have at hire. Which general skills, soft-skills and which marketing skills are employers looking for? Twenty-four skills across six skill areas were tested.

The skills groupings are below and the detailed skills results in the appendix:

**Adaptability:** Solving complex problems/Critical thinking/Ability to adapt to or learn new materials, information/Managing own time and task prioritisation.

**Core basic skills:** Computer literacy & basic IT skills/Reading or understanding instructions, reports etc/Basic numerical skills/Good written and spoken communication.

**Personal/social skills:** Building relationships with stakeholders/Team working/Positive, enthusiastic attitude/Managing own feelings or handling those of others/Creativity

**Data skills:** Analysing customer data/insight/Data & database management/Data analysis & reporting

**Marketing skills:** Customer support/Email marketing/Social media marketing/Search marketing/Event planning

**Content marketing skills:** Content marketing/Copywriting/Graphic/web design/Optimising campaigns

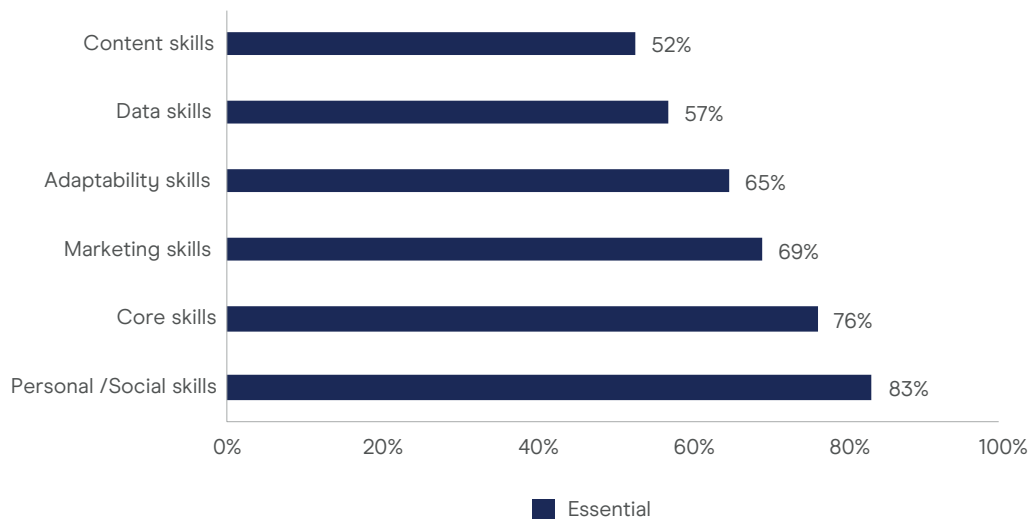
When analysing the skills at a grouped level, employers consider personal and social skills and core basic skills most essential for entry level candidates to have. Over 80% named at least one social skill as essential and 76% named at least one core skill as essential for their entry level marketing employees to have at hire.

When analysing skills at an individual level, the skills most likely to be deemed essential for young entrants to have at hire by employers were teamwork (51%) and good written and spoken communication (50%). Employers are looking for young people with good soft and general skills when hiring for marketing roles.

However, marketing skills are not completely overlooked among businesses recruiting – 69% placed at least one marketing skill as essential. It is also interesting that data skills rank higher than content marketing skills – an indication of the shifting needs of the industry and of the rising importance of data skills even among junior employees.

While soft and core skills are the most essential for young people to master these are arguably applicable across industries. Knowledge and experience of key marketing/technical skills will help young people be even more relevant/ready for marketing opportunities and attractive to potential employers.

When recruiting entry level employees in marketing roles which of the following skills do you consider essential vs. desirable for candidates to have at hire?\*



\*% choosing at least one skill within skill group as essential

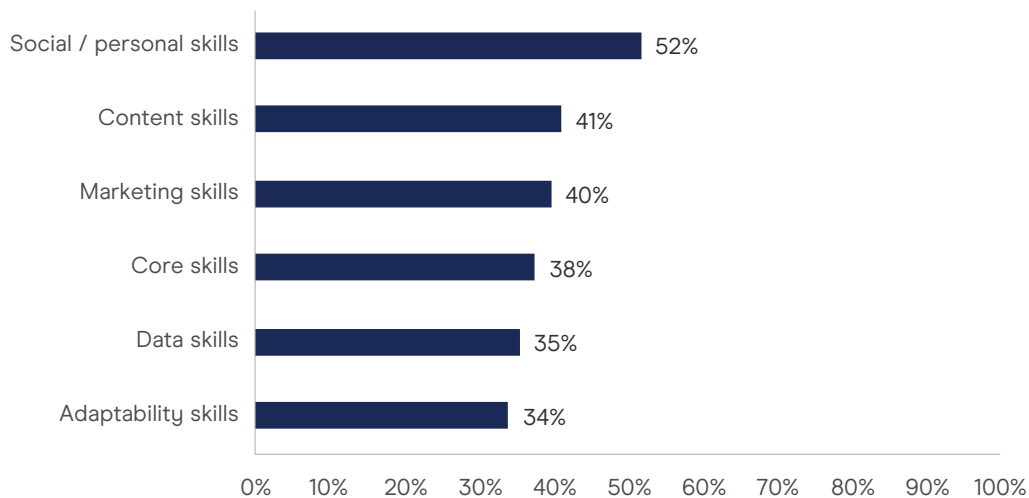
## Scarce Skills

Employers are looking for candidates with a good grounding in soft skills, basic skills such as good communication, and also desire specific marketing skills that help to differentiate candidates over and above the essentials.

The research indicates that significant numbers are struggling to find candidates who demonstrate the key skills they are looking for - there are some significant gaps in the skill sets of young people in the eyes of employers. Just over half of the sample find it difficult to find at least one of the social/personal skills deemed important and two fifths find it difficult to find candidates with content marketing or marketing skills respectively.

Data skills are difficult to find for 35% – suggesting that more technical skills are easier to recruit for compared to softer and general skills. Looking at core skills still 38% find it difficult to find at least one of these core skills in candidates.

And of these skills which, if any, do you find difficult to find in entry level candidates at hire?\*



\*% who find at least one skill within skill group difficult to find

## Training at Work

With many employers prepared to focus on core and soft skills when hiring, on-the-job training becomes a crucial step to the success of those hires. Employers largely respect the need to invest in training their young employees. 84% of employers offer some training, either formal, informal or external, to entry level employees.

The research also suggests that employers take a varied approach to training. 53% offer a formalised company training programme and 49% train on the job internally – however only 1 in 5 only offer this informal kind of training.

Larger companies are more likely to train via a formalised programme – 65% vs 35% for SMEs.

28% provide some external training support too with little difference between larger and SME companies in the sample – the majority of which is offered via colleges or universities or training institutions.

# / The Employers' Views

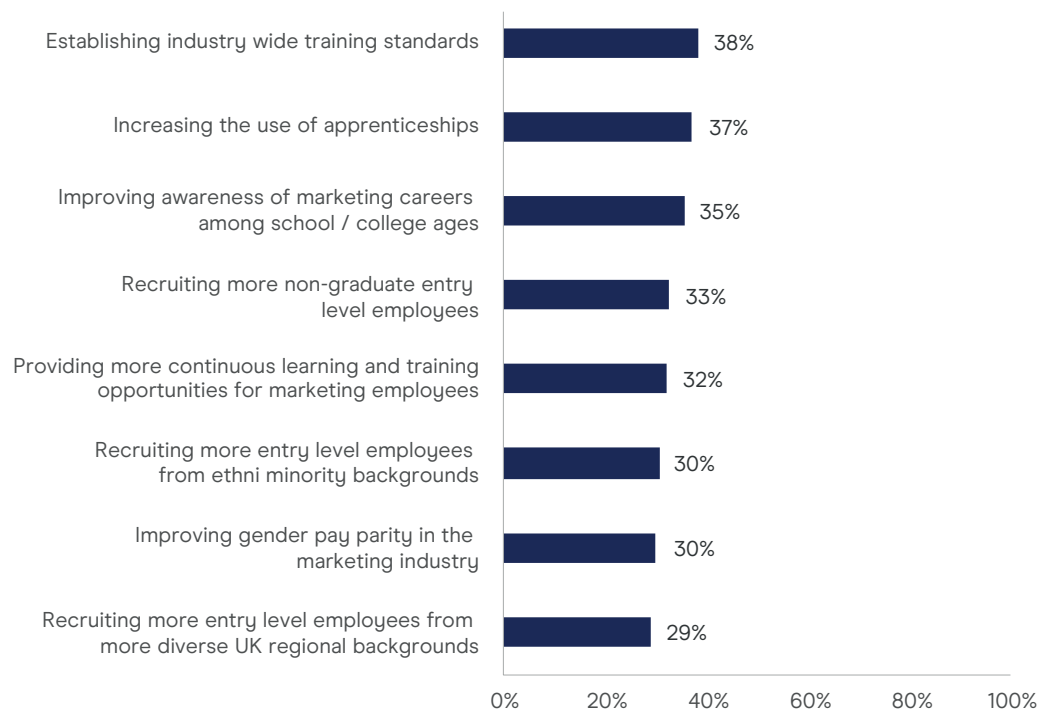
This chapter presents employers' views on what is needed to support future recruitment and considers the possible responses that industry, education providers and policy makers can action to support the future of entry level talent and marketing

## Industry Change

When asked what three industry changes will be most needed to support future entry level recruitment, industry wide training standards was the top option - chosen by 38% of employers as one of their top three changes. With employers focused on soft skills at hire training young employees with specific industry skills is something employers are taking on themselves and would like greater support with.

And over the next five years, what industry changes do you think will be most needed to support the future of entry level talent and recruitment in the marketing industry?

Any ranked 1, 2 or 3



This was closely matched by increasing the use of apprenticeships (37%) and improving awareness of marketing jobs among school leavers (35%).

The research suggests that apprenticeships are being used but marketing specific apprenticeships are not being used as much as they could or as well as data or technical apprenticeships.

It is also interesting that 35% consider improving awareness of marketing jobs among school leavers a top priority for industry. Employers believe industry needs to raise its profile as a career for consideration and its suitability for school leavers. This likely suggests industry needs to strengthen ties with educational providers with regards the opportunities they have to offer.

## Addressing Diversity

Diversity is also an issue employers wish to see industry tackle to support the future of talent. A third place greater recruitment of non-graduates as a top change for the industry and around 3 in 10 placed recruitment of more people from ethnic minority backgrounds and regional backgrounds as a top industry change.

Without changes and support for other recruitment methods that actively promote marketing opportunities to underrepresented groups the reliance on personal networks to recruit will continue to hinder diversity of applications.

# / Key Actions for Young People

The research findings suggest that marketing represents an entry level career opportunity for young people – with jobs available and employers actively looking to hire young people into roles.

The findings also suggest that marketing roles are suited to young people that can demonstrate first and foremost good soft and basic skills and are suitable for graduate and school leaver candidates.

A challenge remains for employers - to find candidates that demonstrate these skills and to attract the best candidates to the industry.

So, what actions and responses can help to address these challenges? Not only from employers themselves, but also schools, universities and policy makers?



# / Key Actions for Education Providers

- **Make marketing a career option.** Marketing is a viable option for both school leavers and graduates looking for their first role. Education providers can improve awareness of marketing as a career option among young people. Do career advisors have enough information about the industry? Can stronger ties be made with marketing employers to offer work experience and internships to more young people?
- **Create a work ready generation.** Education providers need to deliver on key soft skills to help young people meet their future employers' expectations. How can these skills be taught through current education methods? Education providers need to consider how their curriculum and teaching methods encourage students to foster the soft skills that will create a generation fit for the future workplace.
- **Make young people aware of their assets.** Improve young people's awareness of their soft skills and their value to employers. A good attitude, common sense and basic skills are essential for young people to have to be attractive to employers. Also consider how to make young people aware of the value of proactivity in their job searches – many employers consider speculative and proactive applications alongside recruitment routes like graduate schemes.
- **Foster adaptable learning mind sets among young people.** Employers are looking for candidates that have the right mix of technical and soft skills among new recruits now but ultimately, they need candidates with the capacity to continually learn and adapt. As the workplace and needs of marketing industry will continue to evolve the ability of young people to adapt and learn as they progress will become even more important. School and colleges will need to instil this learner mind set into young people to prepare them for their future working lives.

# / Key Actions for Industry

- **Improve diversity in the industry.** Employers want the industry to better represent diversity. Industry needs to develop recruitment strategies that widen their pool of entry level talent and move away from only or largely relying on familiar and personal networks.

Developing ties with schools and other institutions that can connect industry with wider ranges of young people is one way to widen access and exposure of roles to more young people and ensure marketing as a career is made visible and attractive to groups that are under-represented. Another is for industry leaders to discuss the status quo openly by seeking input from those already in the industry that are under-represented on how things could change.

- **Make work experience more accessible to all.** Consider how to make work experience and internships more accessible to a wider range of young people. Consider building partnerships with local schools and universities to better serve your intern needs and improve the diversity of your talent pool.
- **Improve training standards.** Employers are looking for consistency in training. How can the industry standardise entry level training methods and create a uniform code of practice that employers of all kinds can use to shape their training of entry level marketing employees?

# / Key Actions for Government Policy Makers

- **Improve awareness and uptake of marketing apprenticeships.** Current employer satisfaction with apprenticeships relating to marketing are high but marketing specific apprenticeships could be utilised by greater numbers of employers. Showcase current satisfaction levels to engage potential employers.
- **Stay alert to the skills areas needed by industry.** Employers are seeking first and foremost entry level candidates who have sound social and personal skills and core skills. Employers want young employees who can use their soft skills to remain flexible to fast changing needs and to quickly learn the specifics of the marketing industry. Policy needs to support education providers in their role in developing young people with key soft skills.
- **Create routes to work that improve diversity in industry.** The research indicates unpaid internships are still in use. Incentivise recruitment methods which promote diversity of entry including continued promotion of paid internships.

# / Methodology

In 2019, **Foresight Factory**, on the behalf of the DMA, conducted a 10 minute online survey with 141 business respondents able to comment on the recruitment of entry level marketing employees.

Unless referenced, all data included in this report is taken from this survey.

Participants were recruited using panel based recruitment firm **Dynata**.

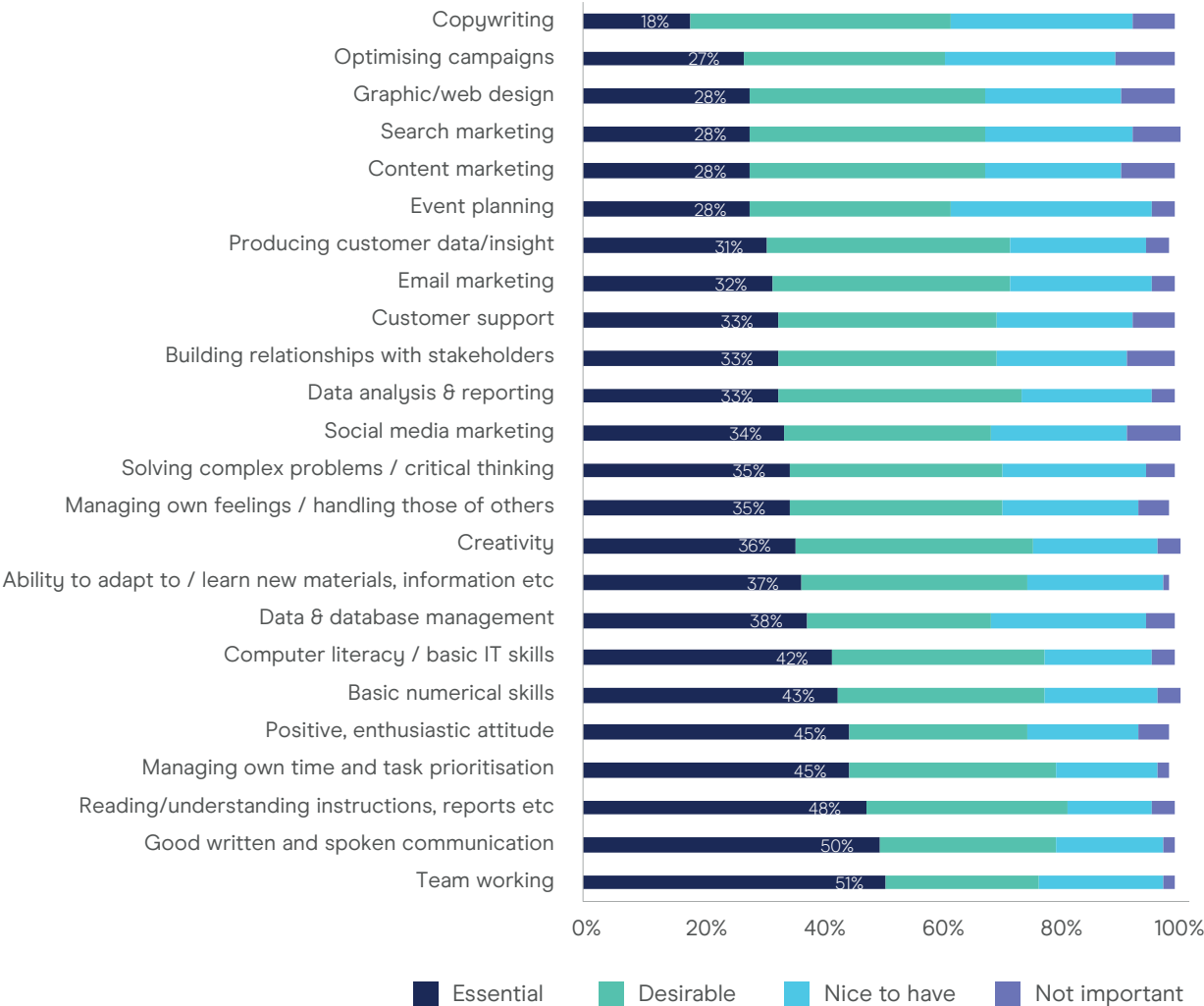
All respondents were of manager level or above.

The gender split of the sample was 57% male and 43% female.

The sample span a range of industries, business sizes and regions of the UK.

# / Appendix Charts

When recruiting entry level employees in marketing roles which of the following skills do you consider essential vs. desirable for candidates to have at hire?



And of these skills which, if any, do you find difficult to find in entry level candidates at hire?



# / About the DMA

The Data & Marketing Association (DMA) comprises the DMA, Institute of Data & Marketing (IDM) and DMA Talent.

We seek to guide and inspire industry leaders; to advance careers; and to nurture the next generation of aspiring marketers.

We champion the way things should be done, through a rich fusion of technology, diverse talent, creativity, and insight – underpinned by our [customer-focussed principles](#).

We set the standards marketers must meet in order to thrive, representing over 1,000 members drawn from the UK's data and marketing landscape.

By working responsibly, sustainably and creatively, together we will drive the data and marketing industry forward to meet the needs of people today and tomorrow.

[www.dma.org.uk](http://www.dma.org.uk)

## About DMA Talent

DMA Talent champions young people as the future of our industry. Our goal is to attract a new generation of fresh thinkers by raising awareness and showcasing the sector's inspiring and dynamic range of career opportunities. We nurture aspiring marketers by providing the roadmap, skills and connections to kick-start their professional journey, and by instilling our customer-first principles, we drive our industry forward in a responsible and sustainable way.

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