Career Opportunities in MARKETING + SALES

Description of the Field
The objective of any firm is to market and sell its products or services profitably. In small firms, the owner or chief executive officer might assume all advertising, promotions, marketing, and sales responsibilities. In large firms, which may offer numerous products and services nationally or even worldwide, an executive vice president directs overall advertising, promotions, marketing, and sales policies. Advertising, marketing, promotions, and sales managers coordinate the market research, marketing strategy, sales, advertising, promotion, pricing, and product development.

According to the Occupation Outlook Handbook, there are several ways to achieve these goals. Strategic marketing involves planning the way a firm will handle the marketing of its product or service by targeting their appropriate audience or clientele. Tactical marketing includes the tasks to achieve this strategy, such as distributing fliers or making cold calls. Those distinctions depend upon whether a firm is marketing to another business (business to business (B2B) marketing) or whether they are advertising a service (services marketing). It is important to remember the 3Cs (customers, competitors, and channels) and the 4Ps (product, positioning, price, and promotion), as they constitute the foundation of marketing.

Marketing managers develop the firm's detailed marketing strategy. With the help of subordinates, including product development managers and market research managers, they determine the demand for products and services offered by the firm and its competitors. In addition, they identify potential markets—for example, business firms, wholesalers, retailers, government, or the general public.

Marketing managers develop pricing strategy with an eye towards maximizing the firm's share of the market and its profits while ensuring that the firm's customers are satisfied. In collaboration with sales, product development, and other managers, they monitor trends that indicate the need for new products and services and oversee product development. Marketing managers work with advertising and promotion managers to promote the firm's products and services and to attract potential users.

QUALIFICATIONS TO ENTER THE FIELD

Persons interested in becoming advertising, marketing, promotions, public relations, and sales managers should be mature, creative, highly motived, able to manage stress, flexible, and decisive. The ability to communicate persuasively, both orally and in writing, with other managers, staff, and the public is vital. Managers also need tact, good judgment, and exceptional ability to establish and maintain effective personal relationships with supervisory and professional staff members and client firms.
Sales managers direct the firm's sales program. They assign sales territories, set goals, and establish training programs for the sales representatives. Managers advise the sales representatives on ways to improve their sales performance. In large, multi-product firms, they oversee regional and local sales managers and their staffs. Sales managers maintain contact with dealers and distributors. They analyze sales statistics gathered by their staffs to determine sales potential and inventory requirements and monitor the preferences of customers. Such information is vital in order to develop products and maximize profits (Occupational Outlook Handbook).

Career Paths and Entry Salaries
A wide range of educational backgrounds are suitable for entry into advertising, marketing, promotions, and sales managerial jobs, but many employers prefer those with experience in related occupations plus a broad liberal arts background. A bachelor's degree in sociology, psychology, anthropology, literature, journalism, or philosophy, among other subjects, is acceptable for most entry-level positions. Requirements, however, depend upon the particular job.

For marketing, sales, and promotion management positions, some employers prefer a bachelor's or master's degree in business administration with an emphasis on marketing. Courses in business law, economics, accounting, finance, mathematics, and statistics are advantageous. In highly technical industries, such as computer and electronics manufacturing, new employees are preferred with a bachelor's degree in engineering or science, combined with a master's degree in business administration.

Most advertising, marketing, promotions, and sales management positions are filled by promoting experienced staff or related professional or technical personnel. For example, many managers are former sales representatives, purchasing agents, buyers, product or brand specialists, advertising specialists, and promotion specialists. In small firms, where the number of positions is limited, advancement to a management position usually comes slowly. In large firms, promotion may occur more quickly.

Although experience, ability, and leadership are emphasized for promotion, advancement can be accelerated by participation in management training programs conducted by many large firms. Many firms also provide their employees with continuing education opportunities, either in-house or at local colleges and universities. Such firms also encourage employee participation in seminars and conferences, often provided by professional societies. In collaboration with colleges and universities, numerous marketing and related associations sponsor national or local management training programs.

Demand
Advertising, marketing, promotions, and sales managers held about 646,000 jobs in the US in 2008. These managers were found in virtually every industry. The following table shows the distribution of jobs by occupational specialty:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational Specialty</th>
<th>Number of Jobs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sales managers</td>
<td>346,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing managers</td>
<td>175,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public relations managers</td>
<td>56,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising and promotions managers</td>
<td>44,600</td>
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Sales managers held nearly half of the total number of jobs; most were employed in either the wholesale and retail trade or finance and insurance industries. Marketing managers held more than one-fourth of the total. Within this division, the professional, scientific, and technical services industries employed almost one-third of marketing managers. A smaller proportion consisted of advertising and promotions managers working in the professional, scientific, and technical services industries, as well as the publishing and information industries, which includes advertising and related services. Most public relations managers were employed in service-providing industries, such as the professional, scientific, and technical services, finance and insurance, health care and social assistance, and educational services. (http://www.bls.gov/ooh/business-and-financial/market-research-analysts.htm)
Most major companies have their own marketing departments.

Resources for Additional Information

Associations

- American Marketing Association (AMA) provides professional development services for marketing professionals such as special interest groups, seminars, and publications. It also has a reference center focusing on marketing issues – www.marketingpower.com
- Business Marketing Association – www.marketing.org
- Direct Marketing Association (DMA) has been the leading source of news and information for direct marketers since 1917 – www.the-dma.org
- Association for Women in Communications (AWC) recognizes the complex relationships that exist across the communications disciplines. – www.WOMCOM.org

Internet Resources

- Careers in Marketing – www.careers-in-marketing.com
- Wetfeet Careers in Marketing – http://www.wetfeet.com/articles/career-overview-marketing

Publications

AMA Publishing Group publishes some of the top marketing books as well as eight business magazines and scholarly journals. All of their resources can aid professional development and knowledge of the latest research and trends in the marketing industry.

FUTURE CHALLENGES OF THE PROFESSION

Advertising, marketing, promotions, and sales manager jobs are highly coveted and will be sought by other managers or highly experienced professional and technical personnel. While this results in keen competition, college graduates with related experience, a high level of creativity, and strong communication skills should have the best job opportunities. Those who have new media and interactive marketing skills will be particularly sought after.

Employment is projected to grow much faster than average in scientific, professional, and related services, such as computer systems design and related services, and in advertising and related services, as businesses increasingly hire contractors for these services instead of additional full-time staff. In contrast, a decline in employment is expected in many manufacturing industries.