

THE IMPACT OF MARKETING SERIES



FOREWORD

When we first commenced our Impact of Marketing report series in 2019, we had little idea of the unprecedented global challenges that the pandemic was set to present. The three reports and the various pieces of research behind them have subsequently become a de facto account of the changing attitudes and confidence of the UK marketing community throughout this disruption, and also a record of the immense amount of good that the profession has delivered for society throughout this period.

From life-saving communications, supporting front line workers such as 'hands, face, space' to the wellbeing and working initiatives that saw so many prioritise themselves both from a professional and personal perspective - the marketing profession has truly elevated itself over the last two years.

As we now look forward to building back better, this latest report reflects the resilience of the marketing profession as it steps up to the challenge of helping the country recover post pandemic. I am immensely proud that, despite personal and professional setbacks, so many across the sector responded with ambition and determination. Covid-19 touched countless lives and livelihoods, and as we move forward, marketers have a critical role to play in helping to shape a future that works for both people and the planet.

My view remains that as a body of professionals we must speak up, and act as advocates not just for our profession but for our planet and its many people. We have a professional duty to promote high standards, instil trust and make clear the value marketing brings to our sector and society.

Our sector has always attracted dynamic and creative individuals, and to prosper, a professional marketer must be constantly seeking opportunities for personal development. We have a clear opportunity ahead of us to help our employers and wider industry to drive profits with purpose. Never has it been more true to say that we're all in this together, and with many years of effort to address the human and commercial costs of the pandemic, we all have a professional duty to do so in partnership with the planet and the public.

I hope the findings of these three collated reports fill you with confidence and underline how to demonstrate the value our profession can provide, detail the skills you will need, and provide you with hope for the future.

Chris Daly
Chief Executive, Chartered Institute of Marketing





CONTENTS

FOREWORD	2
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY THE IMPACT OF MARKETING 2019 - 2021	5
IMPACT 1 RECONNECTING WITH SOCIETY - SHOWCASING THE VALUE OF MARKETING	6
IMPACT 2 RESKILLING MARKETING - FUTURE SKILLS NEEDS	20
IMPACT 3 BUILDING BACK BETTER - MARKETING A FORCE FOR GOOD	34
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	44

METHODOLOGY

For this research we conducted three waves of polling overseen by Opinium, starting with an online survey of 1,000 marketing professionals, followed by 200 interviews with CIM members. The second stage of research took place between 3 – 13 September 2019, with CIM members being interviewed between 18 September – 14 October 2019.

Additional research both desk and via the CIM membership base was undertaken between July–August 2020 and again in May–June 2021 speaking to 545 marketers in agency and in-house roles, one third of whom were based outside of the UK.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE IMPACT OF MARKETING 2019 – 2021

This is the third and final report in our Impact of Marketing series, which set out in 2019 to explore the views of in-house and agency marketing professionals to help CIM shape the training and development agenda for a market sector worth a collective £291 billion each year to the UK's economy¹.

The Impact of Marketing series has been one of CIM's most in-depth examinations of the value of professional best practice in marketing within businesses to date. This is the third and concluding report in a series that documents how the profession is perceived in delivering business advantage, and how it has reskilled and coped with both long-term digital disruption, and the recent coronavirus pandemic.

Written annually since 2019, the three reports reflect the views of marketers pre-pandemic, during the peak of the virus, and as the country begins to recover and build back better.

A consistent theme emerges across all three reports, that are of clear belief in the value of professional marketing to drive business growth for both in-house and agency staff. That belief was clouded in the first study from 2019, which can be read in chapter one. It showed a clear disconnect between marketers, their employers and wider society. Just a quarter of those we spoke to at the time felt their colleagues had a clear view of their role within the wider business. While marketing was perceived to deliver clear value to business, colleagues and management understanding in how this was achieved was slim.

We identified that this confusion had arisen due in a large part to the digital disruption of marketing over the prior decade and the rapidly changing nature of the role marketing was playing within a business. Influencer marketing, programmatic ad buying, and new social media platforms had seen an explosion in technical complexity and a drop in understanding of marketing strategy across the business spectrum.

As lockdowns restricted many of us to digital channels both in our professional and our personal lives, the UK experienced a significant structural shift in the use of

such digital channels, and a consequent focus on them from management teams.

The second chapter of this combined report explores this digital shift and reflects findings from 2020 when widespread confusion and bafflement was seen amongst many senior executives over 'new' marketing channels. This confusion was found to be closely correlated with an age divide within the marketing profession, triggered by the rise of the specialist vs. the generalist marketing practitioners, and the rapid changes within the sector accelerated by Covid-19. We warned that those responsible for competency across digital channels were found to be failing to prioritise their own training needs, leaving their digital skillset behind that of their teams. Further blurring of the lines between digital competency and marketing strategy meant that many in the profession missed out on the opportunity to learn core marketing skills.

The final chapter reflects on the results of our latest polling from 2021, where we find that marketing has responded with resilience as it steps up to the numerous challenges that face the profession post-pandemic.

Our polling of the frontline carried out for this report, show that the motivation of marketing remains undimmed despite some seeing their pay reduced, or finding themselves placed on furlough.

Encouragingly, marketers have taken the opportunity to reskill and renew, emerging confidence in their ability to 'build back better'. As we explore later in this report there is a clear need for further investment in professional development, with a sizeable minority feeling they still lack the skills to reach their full potential.

Marketers' priorities for the months ahead are bolstering brand reputation, pushing authentic narratives, and an encouraging emergence of a bigger focus on sustainable marketing. Indeed, many of those we spoke to took an encouragingly moral stance on their professional role within their organisations, keen to advise and inform the business on how to respond positively to tougher regulation of the sector.

¹<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/ad-hoc-statistical-analysis-202021-quarter-4> NB: due to be updated August 2021

THE IMPACT OF MARKETING PART 1

CIM
The Chartered
Institute of Marketing

THE MISSION FOR MARKETING







My own career path in marketing has been unorthodox from publishing, to engineering, to the financial services industry. In this time, the marketing sector has changed dramatically as has how we measure the impact of campaigns.

My background in computing and philosophy has allowed me to bring new ideas and marketing (often digital) solutions to meet the challenges of the businesses I have worked in. A lot of the work marketers undertake from launching new websites to innovative new advertising campaigns are often under-recognised and under-appreciated, but hugely important to delivering value.

Soft skills and the ability to work closely with senior management to communicate their strategies to clients is key. By building bridges across internal silos, marketing can truly bring transformational benefits to any organisation.



Jacob Howard, FCIM, VP Marketing at Deutsche Bank,
and Chair CIM Financial Services Group



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WHAT IS MARKETING?

“Marketing” as a business practice can prove as hard to define as “management”. Different stakeholders in an organisation will attach different interpretations of the term to different elements of the role. Engineering and sales might feel it is the process by which products and services are introduced to potential customers, while a career marketer may feel it is the conscience of an organisation, shaping all aspects of corporate behaviour. An AI programmer might think it’s more to do with customer experience and insight, while someone in sports sponsorship will consider it much more of a transactional part of their role.

As we will discuss later on in this report, the value marketing brings to organisations and society is manifold. From changing perceptions of smoking in public; to shaping the market; and raising awareness in society across the world on climate change and sustainability.

The scope of the discipline today is considerable. Consider the roles those broadly grouped under marketing might embody – an events executive, an SEO or PPC specialist, a brand manager. The list of different job roles and responsibilities goes on.

In this report we will explore how people’s perceptions of marketing have blurred as a result. Our aim is to shape a better definition of what marketing truly means today and establish a stronger link to the commercial and social goals it serves.

With such a breadth of roles and responsibilities comes confusion. Just 23% of respondents in our survey of marketers believed their colleagues had a clear idea of what marketing was, let alone how it added value to business.

A lack of upskilling and development also contributes to lack of understanding. Shockingly, a third of those working in marketing have received no professional training at all in the last two years. Even amongst those who are CIM members, the proportion is just 14%, a proportion that is still too high given the crucial role marketing plays.

In this report we aim to deliver an improved understanding of marketing, the broad range of skills it embodies and the value it delivers commercially and societally. We also demonstrate the importance of communicating this value to those outside the profession.



ABOUT THIS RESEARCH

Opinium conducted two-stage research, starting with an online survey of 1,000 marketing professionals, followed by 200 interviews with CIM members. The first stage of research took place between 3 – 13 September 2019, with CIM members being interviewed between 18 September – 14 October 2019.

DEFINING MARKETING'S IMPACT

At CIM, marketing is defined as, 'The management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer requirements profitably'. Encompassing the sciences of analytics and psychology as much as the creative arts.

A collective understanding of the marketing function and roles is key, yet this report shows it is far from common. Research conducted for this paper across 1,200 respondents explored individual understanding of the role of marketing, how much training it required and how much of this training was actually undertaken.

The results are striking and concerning. Just a quarter (23%) of the marketers that we polled felt their colleagues were aware of what they did, leaving 77% that were not. Among that group the most common knowledge gaps were a failure to appreciate the purpose of marketing (15%) and a lack of recognition of its value (20%).

Despite repeated efforts across the industry to break down internal silos and encourage inter-departmental collaboration, according to our research the majority (62%) of marketers believe awareness of the efforts of marketing is only 'somewhat' or not understood at all by their business as a whole.

What is clear is that many businesses continue to perceive marketing as a cost rather than an investment. Separate research carried out in 2017, identified that this was a common belief across more than half of organisations, and our more recent poll suggests there is little evidence that this has changed.²

Our findings show that there can often be a disconnect between CMOs and the rest of the C-suite. Discussion at a recent B2B summit identified that in their industry, while most of the C-suite agree that 'growth and profit' is the number one priority, there is a split in subsequent priorities. C-suite marketers were found to rank brand reputation and awareness after growth and profit, in contrast to the rest of the C-suite who on the whole prioritised customer experience or operational excellence.³

The research suggests there is a further disconnect in strategic scope, with CMOs more likely to focus on short-term goals than their colleagues driven by mid and long-term objectives.

The suggestion that awareness of a marketer's objectives may not always align with those of the wider business, does not imply a lack of value, but rather a disconnect. 85% of the marketers we spoke to felt their efforts were very important to business performance. Similarly, three quarters (75%) of marketers agree that marketing is valuable for society as well as business performance.

2

Marketing Week's annual Career and Salary Survey 2017

3

Wanted: CMOs with 20/20 Vision, Economist Intelligence Unit 2019



This report highlights the fundamental role that marketing has to play for any organisation wanting to navigate and prosper during the turbulent times that we are all facing today.

As consumers today are very much in control of the media they consume and the organisations they choose to engage with, public and private sector organisations need to invest significantly in their in-house marketing skills and knowledge.

This is particularly important for the sector I work in (Central Government) in order to engage with those customers we want to inform, influence, protect and help.



Eileen Curry, Vice Chair CIM Ireland

Head of MyNI – Department of Agriculture,
Environment & Rural Affairs (DAERA)





BUILDING BELIEF

Establishing the impact of marketing means overcoming three key barriers. Awareness of the efforts being made, understanding of the activities being delivered and belief in the long-term value.

We have seen in the previous section how confusion over the role of the marketing function and the responsibilities of marketers has undermined awareness of marketers' collective efforts. From frontline staff to strategists, the efforts of those handling social media channels may be seen as wins for customer services or operations rather than for marketing.

The increase in new marketing roles, driven by technology has also blurred some of the functional lines, with questions around where data analysts sit. More than half (53%) of those we spoke to agreed that their roles were poorly understood by society as a whole.

A significant minority were also clearly looking forward to automation of many aspects of their roles, with 25% believing mundane, run of the mill marketing work undermined their productivity.

As we have earlier noted, two in five (40%) marketing professionals believe that those who work outside of marketing do not understand what marketing entails. They also hold some interesting views where marketers and non-marketers agree. When asked what is most important to the future success of an organisation, both marketers and non-marketers agreed that new client acquisition and growing existing business were the top factors. Interestingly, non-marketers placed marketing as the third area important to the success of their organisation despite not fully understanding its role and value.

Modern marketers carry out multiple roles and have to maintain relationships with people across multiple functions to be successful. As outlined above, their objectives are also not always aligned with the rest of the business. The average marketer we spoke to wears six hats, from customer experience to data management and planning.

Figure two illustrates the sheer amount of skills and remit that can be required from a modern marketer. In light of this, it must be asked: is it actually reasonable to put such a mix into a single discipline and expect complete understanding across both the business and the function itself, without investment in learning and development?

1) How important do you think the following are to the future success of your organisation?



2) What are the most consuming tasks for marketers and people undertaking marketing activities?



THE VALUE MARKETING CAN DELIVER

For all of the obstacles outlined above, marketing continues to deliver rock solid value. There are a few requirements to ensure that its strategic execution is realised. For example, alignment with the board and wider business objectives, or closer communication with other key business functions. Marketing that builds customer trust and reflects customer needs, clearly translates into positive longer term returns.

Take the example of dairy giant Milk and More. The traditional daily doorstep delivery of a pint of milk had been suffering, as refrigerators and the rise of supermarkets allowed it to be purchased a week or a fortnight in advance from the supermarket.

Having suffered years of decline, consumer backlash against single-use plastics provided an opportunity for Milk and More's marketing team, now owned by Muller, to respond to a new set of customer values.

Their research team identified that 16% of people would be prepared to pay more for their groceries if their packaging was completely recyclable. The company started marketing its glass milk bottle deliveries more aggressively. More than 20,000 Britons signed up in the space of four weeks. This was good for Milk and More's customers who received a service and product in line with their values and it was good for the environment because it helped cut down on single-use plastics. And, most importantly, it was good for Milk and More's business growth, customer acquisition and sustainability objectives.

Marketing creates jobs, returns and benefits to society. Indeed, in the UK alone it accounts for 415,000 jobs and generates £36.5 billion in annual Gross Value Added (GVA) according to findings from CIM and PwC in 2018⁴. As we have discussed in this paper, this value extends further than the immediate commercial goals. Marketing is increasingly being used to shape more sustainable marketplaces, from behavioural change and ways of thinking to fresh innovations. Overall, 90% of those we surveyed saw marketing benefiting society as a whole.

Agile marketing has much to offer to those looking to respond effectively to environmental and ethical concerns. While Sir David Attenborough may be reluctant to view himself as a master marketer, his stance against plastics has, through an effective marketing campaign, underpinned sustained change in consumer and corporate behaviour. Such outcomes are laudable, but research and data also show they secure better long-term performance. It is the duty of each and every marketer to help their colleagues and partners to recognise the value they can bring, in helping organisations to adapt and shape sustainable development and secure their long-term future. Eight in ten of those we polled saw it as a critical future skill for senior business leaders. From fast fashion to professional services, those that do not change to the evolving landscape will fall behind.

4

Chartered Institute of Marketing, PwC – Export Ready 2018 – <https://sigs.cim.co.uk/media/4027/cim-export-ready-market-size-and-exporting-study-with-pwc.pdf>





3) Our research finds that marketers believe their discipline is second only to client retention as a factor in a business' success. The top responsibilities marketers have are:

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

48%

STRATEGY

42%

BRAND

41%



What does it take to succeed? As a marketing partner for our B2B clients, we are seeing a trend for deeper collaboration with our marketing clients and their sales counterparts in delivering complex performance related programmes. To make this happen, it is essential to immerse ourselves in the detail so that we can co-create marketing and sales strategies that everybody is bought into and actively contributing their insights to deliver the short, medium and long term impact that drives success.

With more and more complex ABM strategies required to cut through the noise, working closely with our C-level marketing clients it takes great care and clarity to establish a deep alignment with the sales function to transform the outcomes of marketing programmes. Once this alignment is established, the programmes are not only increasingly rewarding as you can exploit the collective data driven insights that drives better performance but critically, the perception of marketing within the sales operation is elevated.



Andrew Chaplin, Client Strategy Director, Transmission



WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO SUCCEED?

According to our research, seven out of ten (70%) marketing professionals currently see themselves as fairly or very well-equipped for the tasks they need to perform. Likewise, 65% feel well-prepared for anticipated changes to the industry over the next 10 years.

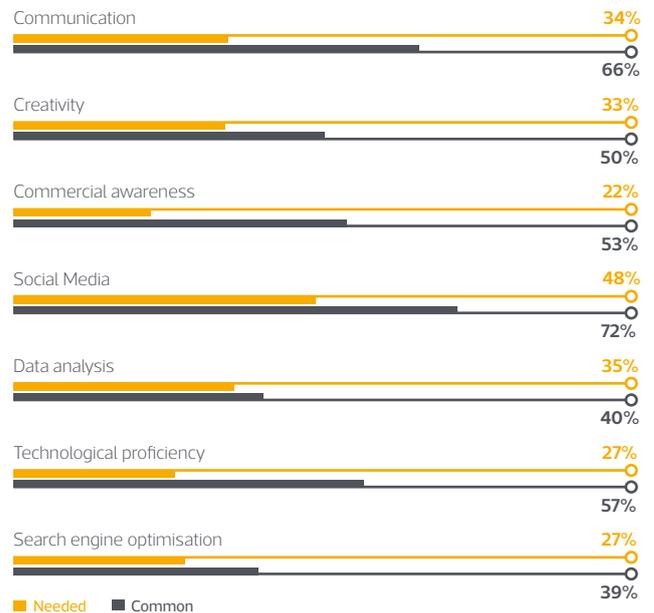
As a whole, marketing professionals identify communication (34%), creativity (33%) and commercial awareness (22%) as the top three skills most needed to succeed in practicing marketing today. Equally technical competencies in social media, technology and data analysis are seen as key.

Senior managers with responsibility for marketing tend to be more focussed on customer experience (51%), while those working in a marketing department do more brand work (55%) and email marketing (50%).

Meanwhile, those from the marketing agencies, often find themselves stretched across many responsibilities, including strategy (38%), brand (37%) and research (37%).

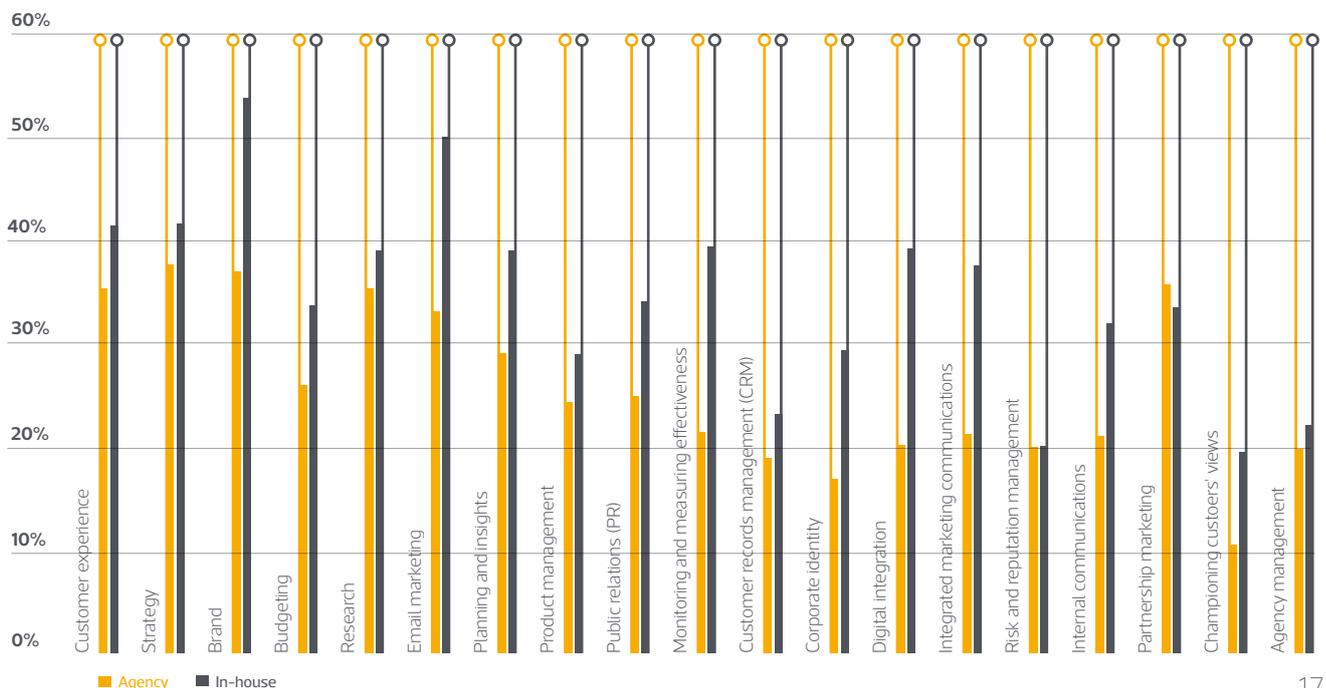
A concern that aligns to earlier findings over marketing's disconnect with long-term commercial goals, is that the least common skills found within the sector are entrepreneurialism (57% say this is not common) and commercial awareness (53%).

4) Core skills and technical competency training needs



Such commercial skills are seen to be more important than they were five years ago. Similarly, around six in ten of those surveyed saw an individual's personal communication and creativity rising in importance over the past five years.

5) Responsibilities of in-house and agency marketers



WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE

Overall marketing is in good health – as we highlighted previously, 85% of practitioners see it as vital to the business even if they aren't confident that their role is fully understood. To address this perception gap, business leaders must provide clarity on the responsibilities of marketing and set clear objectives, which are communicated and aligned to the rest of the business.

These same senior business leaders also need to invest in the ongoing learning and development of their marketing teams, as the skills required to be effective continually evolve and shift. The C-suite needs to recognise the value marketing brings to strategic planning and how it can deliver against business objectives. If they haven't done so already, elevating marketing to a board level role is essential – only a marketer will know what's possible and how to bring it into the business strategy.

Failing that, the status quo risks a profession, proven to deliver commercial and societal value, being restricted and underutilised. By better applying measurement of outcomes, we can ensure that marketers better understand their worth, their contribution and their role – and equally identify their skill gaps and development.

With brand trust high on the corporate agenda, the need to keep skills and technical proficiencies up to date is critical. With a third of companies reporting a stated set of ethics (and a lot more confirming they aim to behave ethically at all times) – putting someone in a mission-critical position but not investing in them to stay up to date and at the cutting edge of the profession, is unacceptable.

CONCLUSION

MARKETING CREATES VALUE, CONDITIONALLY

There is no one size fits all for marketing and more time must be given to building clarity and understanding across other business disciplines, if the sector is to unlock its true potential.

Marketing creates value. It creates jobs in its own right and is a driver of business growth. There are preconditions to this growth. First it must be aligned to business goals and marketing's contribution must be clearly communicated.

Our research highlights an awareness gap that can be overcome only by solid comprehension on both sides. Coherent, solid metrics will enable stakeholders to measure the effectiveness of the marketing team and this will foster trust and enable the team to increase its strategic value.

Marketing feeds into strong growth strategies by anticipating customers' future needs, looking ahead and identifying not

only current but future opportunities. Once again, the essence of this is communication. Strong communication with the wider business will help identify trends, while an understanding of the board's language of finance will help achieve buy-in from that quarter.

This first of three papers, shows that marketers clearly have some work to do. The disconnect between what they achieve, the recognition they get and the recognition they believe they get (which is less than the reality) is evident.

As marketers, we all need to communicate better and invest more in internal marketing to educate those around us. If we can do this, the impact of marketing and the value marketers bring to every business will be clearer.





TOP TIPS FOR DIRECTORS

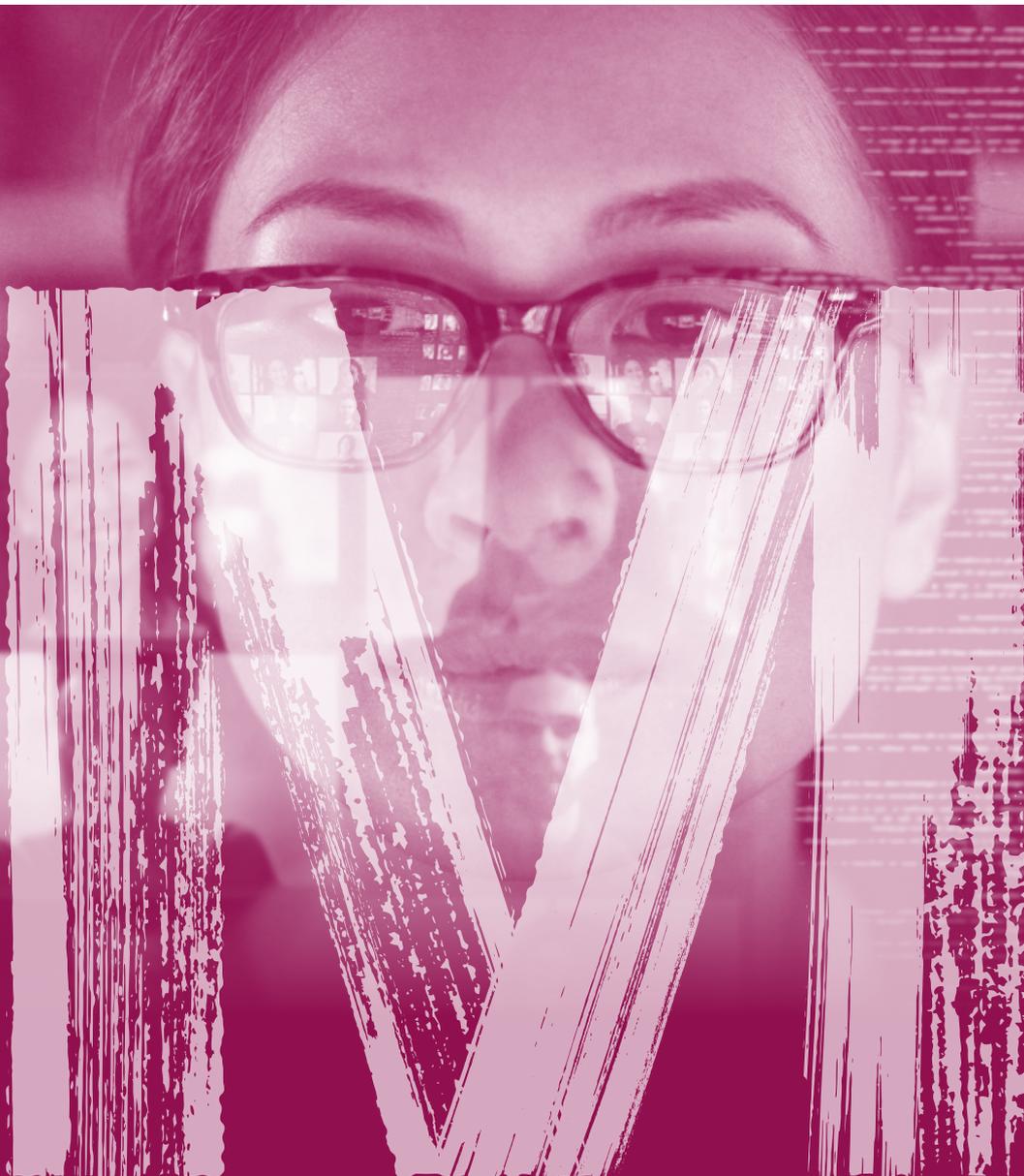
- 1 Marketing can create huge value when aligned properly with wider business goals. Influencing the board by speaking their language is key.
- 2 With consumers, employees, corporate boards and investors expecting high standards, building trust translates into loyal consumers, advocates and presents an organisation that is better prepared for the future.
- 3 Strong growth strategies are based on meeting future customer needs - marketing's role is to constantly look ahead and advise the business on future opportunities.
- 4 There is no one size fits all for marketing. Marketers should collaborate with all functions and stakeholders to deliver campaigns that enable the business to meet its objectives.
- 5 Invest in the right technology and data skills. A third of marketers felt they would benefit from additional training in order to develop their understanding.

FIVE KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR MARKETERS

- 1 Do not assume that your co-workers understand your role or the value you can deliver. Make sure to share what you do in a way people outside of marketing will understand and value.
- 2 As your role and responsibilities continue to develop, it is important that you keep your core skills and technical competencies up to date.
- 3 Be an ambassador for your profession. Build relationships, that will enable you to understand other parts of the business and deliver value.
- 4 Challenge yourself, are your skills up to date allowing you to define your value to the business? A third of marketers found it hard to explain their role to others.
- 5 It's proven that marketing delivers huge impact and value to the economy and businesses. Demonstrate how marketing can spot future opportunities and deliver on business objectives.

THE IMPACT OF MARKETING PART 2

DIGITAL VISION: LIVING ON THE CUTTING EDGE



THE CHALLENGE FACING THE MARKETING SECTOR

This report sets out the scale of the challenge our sector faces as we move past the tipping point at which 'digital natives', born after 1980, become the majority population within the 400,000 strong UK marketing community.

It explores the significant progress of so called 'digital immigrants' in making the most of modern marketing tools, and explores the impact of a shift in skills on current practice in the provision of learning and development within the marketing profession.

The concept of 'digital natives' and 'digital immigrants', that is the difference between those born after 1980 who grew up with widespread access to digital technologies and those born before, has been commonly accepted for the last twenty years.

What is interesting is how some of those preconceptions of the difference between today's under 40s and those over 40 have become synonymous with much more recent shifts in technology.

According to our research, 71% of respondents believed that younger people were ahead of their older peers in terms of digital marketing skills. This is as prevalent today amongst those aged under 30 as it is amongst those over 50.

Indeed, far from a discontinuity in knowledge between those over and under 40, it seems they're more alike than not. Roughly half of all those either side of being born in 1980 experience difficulty in keeping up with technology. This is in contrast to significantly lower numbers in the generations before and after this "digital discontinuity". Our research shows that the numbers experiencing difficulty falls to 41% amongst under 24s and 38% of over 45s.

Instead, it seems that every generation has its technological watershed moment or digital divide.

20 years on from the concept of digital natives and immigrants, we are now seeing the rise of the first social natives, and a rising sense of uncertainty amongst social immigrants.

The perceived importance of social media rises steadily with age, from 62% amongst under 24s to 72% amongst those aged 55-64. 69% of respondents saw social media as more important than it was five years ago while up to 43% felt social media skills were not common.

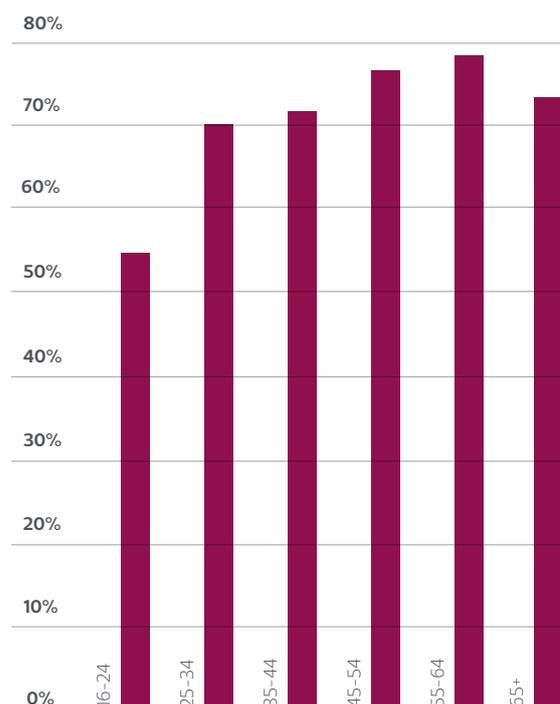
Whatever the underlying technological shift, it is clear that the preconception that digital skills are linked to age in favour of younger people is a strong and pervasive belief.

That belief is likely driven by the perception that younger people have not only grown up with such technology, but are also early adopters of it in their personal lives. They also benefit from the fact that such new technologies will have been present in the workplace for more of their working careers.

While those over the age of 40 will just about recall the phasing out of faxes and introduction of email, it is clear that the marketing function has changed significantly over the last thirty years and will continue to do so.

Whether or not we accept the premise of digital natives and immigrants, it is clear that the implications of today's experts schooling tomorrow's practitioners on tools and technologies with which their students are more familiar, will remain a significant challenge.

Proportion who agree young people are ahead of older generations in digital marketing



THE IMPORTANCE AND DELIVERY OF MARKETING TRAINING TODAY

Before we explore the impact of a “digital divide” it is important to consider overall attitudes to marketing training.

Respondents to our research appear to recognise the importance of structured learning. Professionals working in marketing but not specifically in the marketing sector (so working in departments but not in agencies) were asked how important skills and training were to the future success of their organisations.

Reassuringly, only 2% of those working in a marketing department thought it was not important at all, increasing to 7% of senior managers with sole responsibility for marketing; the net figures suggested that 86% of people working in these departments felt training and skills was not important, falling to 81% when the question applied only to senior managers.

We cannot disregard that nearly a fifth of those we spoke to felt training and skills were not important, as this is still a significant minority of people. Balancing this, it is

worth noting that a substantial amount of learning and development is happening, so one potential reason for this perception of its lack of importance is that those who feel this way may not have been recently exposed to relevant training.

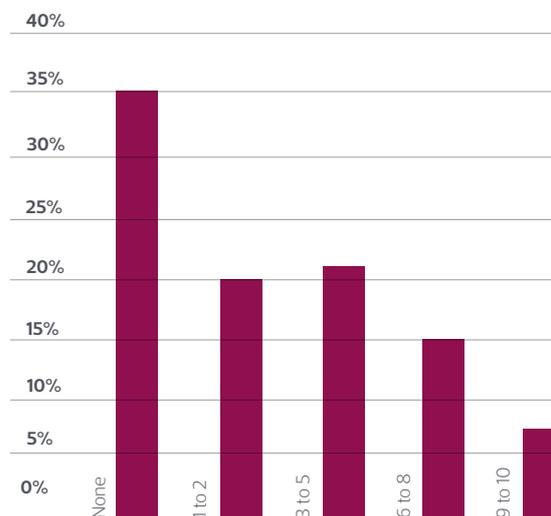
It is notable that amongst CIM members, just 5 per cent felt this way, in contrast to 19 per cent of general marketing professionals. Likewise, those who feel that training is less important, are also less likely to have attended training in the last two years, and overall, attended fewer training courses across their careers.

On average the marketing professionals we surveyed had taken part in three internal or external training courses, events or conferences over the past two years to improve their marketing skills. However, a third (35%) said they had received no training at all.

The majority of learning and development was delivered by external trainers (44%) or professional organisations (36%) and a quarter was provided in-house. This figure is consistent between CIM members and those we surveyed from a general marketing population.

The need for on-going development, then, is recognised but the shape and degree of professionalism of its delivery is highly variable. We should therefore ask whether employers are providing marketers with the skills and training they require to thrive in their careers.

Number of training courses attended to improve marketing skills in the past two years





86% FELT TRAINING WAS
IMPORTANT BUT **35%** HAD
RECEIVED NO TRAINING AT ALL



PROFICIENCY IN TECHNOLOGY WAS
SEEN AS AN ISSUE BY **41%**

59% DIDN'T FEEL COPYWRITING
SKILLS WERE COMMON IN THE SECTOR

WHERE ARE THE REAL GAPS?

If the formal act of training is to achieve anything, then the aim must be to build on areas in which there are skills gaps within an organisation. It is therefore essential to understand where the industry itself believes the gaps actually are.

A third of the CIM members surveyed for this report cited communication as a skill that was lacking in those practising marketing, and 31% of them completed a course in precisely that discipline over the previous two years.

A striking 59 per cent said copywriting wasn't common in the sector, and data analysis was cited by 61% as a skills gap.

In contrast to a digital skills gap, proficiency in technology was only seen as an issue by a relatively low 41%. In spite of the many courses on offer in the open market, technology is not seen as a significant skills gap.

Research conducted with Target Internet in 2018, and repeated in 2020, may offer an explanation. This examination of the skill sets of almost 9,000 marketing professionals found a dramatic shift in the digital marketing skills of the sector's junior level marketers.

Over the past two years, the skills of the marketing sectors' interns, graduates and executives have improved dramatically, while those at manager level have stayed at about the same level, and in some areas fallen.

In some critical areas - such as data and analytics, social media and Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) - it is clear junior staff have focused on their development, improving their digital skills to address key customer requirements or to further their careers. The specialists have become more expert, whilst managers and heads have focused on a breadth of digital and fundamental skills, and in some cases have fallen back where digital skills and knowledge is concerned.

The most striking improvement in digital skills since 2018 has

been among interns, suggesting that the newest generation of marketers are entering the marketplace far more skilled than their predecessors.

- Intern improvement - Interns' scores on data and analytics skills jumped from 15% to 28%, on digital strategy from 6% to 24% and on general marketing from 12% to 30%.
- Heading downwards - Digital skills among heads of department have fallen across many digital disciplines measured by the benchmark, most notably in SEO.
- Directors are focused elsewhere - Two years ago it was clear the digital skills gap at director level was an issue. This has improved slightly in some cases, but gaps remain.
- Email in decline - Scores for email marketing have fallen at the same time as industries have become less reliant on email as a marketing channel.
- Growing complexity - Social Media, SEO and Usability have all seen slight decreases in scores as these disciplines have become increasingly complex.

The results reveal that the pace of technology has shown no signs of slowing down and the marketing profession continues to evolve in the range of skills required to be effective. Many organisations have changed the shape of their marketing functions to meet market demands. Technical roles such as pay-per-click (PPC) and SEO have been moved in-house, reducing both the cost and reliance on outsourcing, whilst ensuring those who carry out these roles are truly experts in their field.

The complex nature of digital means that in some places marketers need to be continually upskilling themselves just to stay in the same place. The trend that junior marketers are seeing significant investment in their development and increasing their technical knowledge is positive as businesses look to fill previous gaps in skill sets.



THE DIGITAL SKILLS CONFIDENCE GAP

It is clear that the core and technical skills within CIM's Professional Marketing Competencies remain as relevant as ever to the marketing community.

Across the 18 categories we assessed, only persuasion skills were seen as relatively uncommon within the profession. The other 17 skills were on average all more likely to be seen than not according to those we surveyed.

This is reflected in our research, with 61% of CIM members feeling well prepared for any changes the industry is likely to face in the coming decade, and 78% feel fairly or well-equipped to do their jobs at the time of the survey.

Such uncertainty about what the future may hold reflects the dynamism of the marketing sector. Across the core marketing skills we assessed, three out of five people said communication was more important than they had believed five years ago, with 58% saying the same about creativity and commercial awareness. However, the ever increasingly strong presence of digital, means that many marketers don't get the time to focus on these areas.

In terms of digital integration, key technical skills such as social media, data analysis and technological proficiency were picked as increasingly important. Worryingly, two fifths (41%) of those we spoke to felt basic technological proficiency was uncommon across the wider marketing sector.

It appears that the lack of confidence we identified earlier amongst those with responsibility for learning and development is reflective of a wider uncertainty in the digital skills in the marketing community, and a consequent upweighting of training provision.

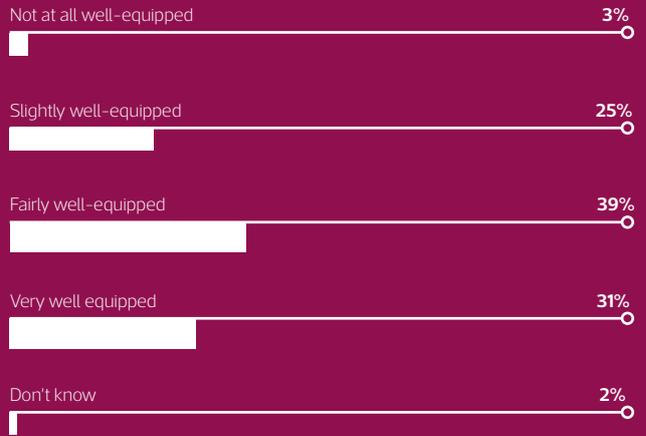
While there is no dispute that digital skills are essential, in the face of limited development budgets, digital skills have to be taught at the expense of something else. What impact is the uncertainty of "digital immigrants" having on the future of "digital natives?"

60 per cent of those we spoke to believe that a focus on digital skills comes at the expense of core marketing skills. This is felt more keenly amongst 25-44 year olds than those over 45. Those over the age of 45 were also more likely to feel their organisation lacked the processes and knowledge to equip them for the future.





How well-equipped do marketers feel to perform their role





While the outlook on our world of work is riddled with uncertainty, what we do know is that digital transformation plays a vital role in shaping the future of the marketing sector. Marketers are no strangers to the importance of technology, but the rapid shift to working, shopping and socialising entirely online has accelerated its role and significance in understanding the customer and improving their experience.

Much of our lives will stay online for the foreseeable future, so marketers need to invest in the skills which will enable them to use technology to evaluate data and extract insights from it. In turn, this will enable their brand to connect with the customer at speed; offer personalisation and efficiency; and increase engagement and retention. Transforming a marketing team will require agility, investment in skills and a place where continued learning is encouraged.

Technology and data will only become more embedded in the marketing function, but the ability to innovate, influence, engage and adapt will always remain the cornerstones of great marketing. As the impact of the pandemic eventually subsides, I'm looking forward to seeing how marketers respond to this blended approach – utilising technology, whilst retaining the essence of what marketing is. Continuing to pioneer in a new era of work while staying true to what makes us different will put marketers in pole position to thrive through changes and the inevitable challenges the future will bring.



Clare Kemsley, Director of Hays Marketing



62% OF 55-64 YEAR OLDS HAD RECEIVED NO TRAINING IN THE PAST TWO YEARS

THE GENERATION GAP ASSERTED

Since our research relies upon the measures of self-awareness and self-assessment of the level of skills amongst those we surveyed, it is important to look at less subjective benchmarks such as individuals' personal feelings of influence over their development.

Overall, three quarters of respondents felt they had moderate or major influence, and this was more pronounced amongst senior managers.

Whereas, 53% of people overall felt they had a major influence over their development, this drops to 38% for the under-24s. It nudges up to 43% for the 25-34s, and eventually reaches a peak of 65% for the 46-54s, when it starts to dip again.

This feeling of power over the setting of development varies by age, and reflects our earlier finding of a generational gap in confidence over technological proficiency. This implies that a disproportionate amount may be allocated toward digital skills.

In the wake of the widespread economic disruption from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is likely that training and development funding will be under pressure in the coming months as budgets are cut to reflect straitened times. It is clear that

professional development is to become even more important as the employment landscape shifts and the shapes of marketing teams undergo further change.

At the time of writing this report, we are seeing some dramatic shifts in both how learning is delivered and who is paying for it. Across the globe, measures such as furloughing staff due to COVID-19 or cost-cutting measures by employers have left many marketers uncertain of what the future holds.

An increased number of individuals engaged with CIM in early 2020, funding their own learning and development while provision from employers declined. Whilst this comes as no surprise, the reduced focus on learning and development by organisations may have yet further unforeseen impacts ahead.

In light of our findings that organisations are already placing undue emphasis on digital skills, a subsequent reduction in investment in learning and development could put marketers at further risk in the ever changing landscape, where both digital competence and core skills are becoming more required. Whether this is a short term trend remains to be seen.



THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

COVID-19 continues to have a dramatic impact on organisations and consumers alike. Buying behaviours have seen a significant shift to online, working practices went remote and career paths have had to be rethought.

The need to embrace digital skills - such as video conferencing, online advertising and social media - saw large numbers of people throughout the world, of all ages, upskilling themselves to adapt to the 'new normal'.

At the start of the lockdown, CIM moved the delivery of over 70 of its training courses to live virtual and online methods to meet a growing demand for learning and development, which could be undertaken remotely or around work. Alongside many marketers, our own staff have taken the opportunity to upskill themselves using the new online and virtual course options.

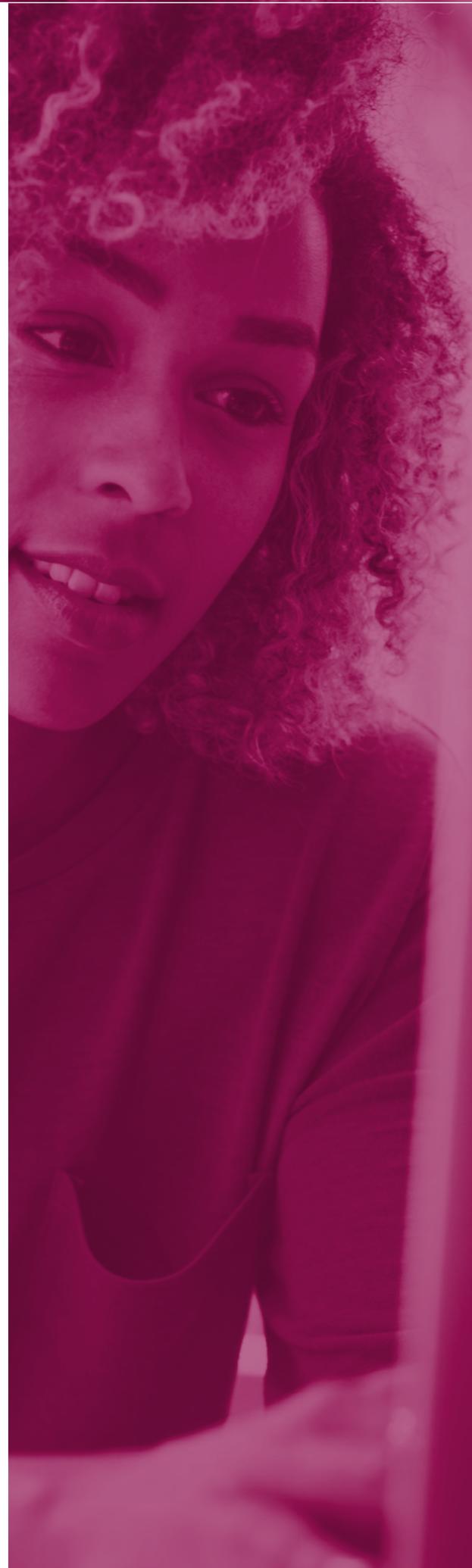
We've seen marketers on furlough use the time whilst not working to engage with courses, qualifications and membership to ready themselves for what still is an unknown return to working life. With the work life balance button being forcibly reset, many marketers have had time to reflect on their careers and put aside time to upskill and prioritise their professional development.

Those marketers still in active employment are also choosing to upskill to protect themselves or in preparation to move into new roles. Virtual and online engagement is proving an effective way to learn, with some marketers preferring learning from their own homes as they feel more relaxed and less anxious. In addition to virtual and online learning, there is also a growing trend towards the option to engage with bitesize and modular study. In times of uncertainty, being able to learn in a way that is flexible and manageable makes it a more viable option.

Aside from formal training, how our members and the wider marketing community have chosen to engage and consume content has also changed. Visitors have spent more time engaging with content in a more meaningful way. Webinars and podcasts consistently remain the most engaged content formats and audience engagement has grown significantly throughout the pandemic.

Sharing relevant content to support our members and followers as their situation changes has been critical. As a business we've ensured our social channels are delivering what people want, based on sentiment and engagement. In addition to posting and sharing CIM generated content, we have also seen a significant increase in user generated content. We've seen a growing trend towards people sharing their experiences and accomplishments, as well as offer advice and help to people, whether it be upskilling, finding hacks around challenges or navigating their career options and opportunities. Mentoring and coaching have also grown in popularity as people look for other ways to support and be supported.

As the landscape continues to shift and the shape of marketing teams change, we will use our ongoing engagement to share insights and develop propositions to support our members and the wider marketing community to continually develop in our fast-paced profession.



ADAPTING TRAINING TO THE NEEDS OF EVERY GENERATION

As we have already discussed, the majority of those we spoke to had attended on average three internal or external training courses, events or conferences over the past two years. It is important to understand how learning and development programmes are procured, and how context is balanced against content and accessibility.

When it comes to formal training, the majority appears to be focused upon the incoming generation; only seven per cent of young people (aged 16–24) had received no training in the previous two years, increasing to 12% in the 25–34 age group.

While this still leaves almost a fifth of the under-35s receiving no training at all, this untrained figure increases with age, with 74% of over-65s receiving no extra training and 62% of the 55–64s.

The provision of training reflects the return an employer or individual feels they will get out of the investment. While the adage “you can’t teach an old dog new tricks” likely doesn’t apply to proficiency in data analysis, the opportunity to deploy such skills and earn back the cost of training will reduce with age.

It is important to note that this is a challenge for all professions, not simply marketing. Deloitte’s April 2015 study ‘Building Competitive Advantage with Talent’, concluded that only about 10–15 per cent of companies have well-developed learning and development programmes that reflect the needs of the full workforce.

Another factor in the lower level of provision of training for older employees is an overreliance on experience over formal training. The widely accepted Charles Jennings’ 70:20:10 Learning Model concludes that 70% of actual learning is through ‘Experience’ (i.e. actual practice at work), 20% is through ‘Exposure’ to informal, social learning & coaching and only 10% through formal classroom courses and other ‘Education’.

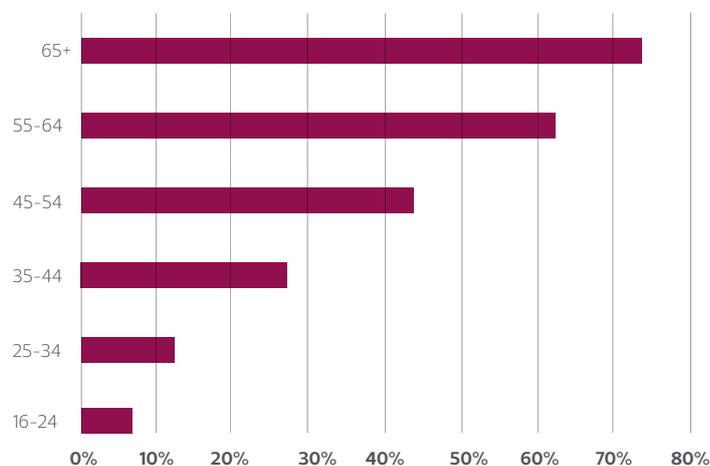
It is difficult to track exactly how much informal training through exposure and experience is actually happening. Many of those offered on-the-job training by colleagues and managers may not even regard this as training, however, some of the most important learning you’ll ever have in your career is through experience and conversations with your peers.

It is worth highlighting that older respondents report being given more leeway than their younger counterparts in their training and skill acquisition, with a nine point gap between those aged under 34 and those aged between 46 and 54 saying they have major influence over their training. This suggests that younger professionals are more likely to be offered a more general ‘out of the box’ approach as opposed to development specifically tailored to their needs.

As the working life of professionals increases worldwide to reflect changing attitudes to age and health, it is becoming increasingly illogical to neglect the training of older employees. A 55 year old, with 12 years to go before reaching retirement age, should not have to rely purely on experience with no formal skill top-ups. As we have highlighted six in ten marketing professionals, regardless of age, believe their marketing responsibilities have increased over the previous five years.

Whether an organisation rigidly follows the 70:20:10 approach, or its own blend of formal and informal training, the importance of a strong framework to recognise and embrace more subtle forms of training such as reverse-mentoring, and job-role shadowing is key for all ages.

Proportion of marketers who had received no training in past 2 years by age



CONCLUSION: IT IS TIME FOR A CO-ORDINATED APPROACH TO INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

If marketing is to be seen as a business-critical function in the boardroom it must ensure that its professionals are well-rounded, skilled, up-to-speed and speak the language of business, not just schooled in the latest digital techniques.

As we have shown, marketing remains a dynamic and vibrant industry, and over the course of an individual's career they are likely to cross a number of technological watersheds requiring them to reskill.

Providing effective training to support such inflection points is a challenge. Establishing best practice in cutting edge industry practices takes time, and practitioners that are capable of not only delivery but tutoring too.

That challenge however cannot excuse a reliance on pure "learning on the job", effective training should follow the 70:20:10 rule and should incorporate an element of formal training or clearly understood learning frameworks.

The concept of the ultra-skilled "digital native" has proven a persistent one since it was first conceived twenty years ago. In the period since it has been updated to reflect a series of technological tipping points, such as the rise of social media.

The response of the professional world under lockdown has been one of global resilience and adaptability. The concept of home working via digital technologies is now firmly embedded with all age groups, and this understanding of its benefits and pitfalls will likely trigger another shift in our industry.

To date, despite shifts towards hierarchy free flat structures, the junior, senior, executive hierarchy remains persistent in the provision of training. As we have shown, the pitfalls of this approach are a gradual loss of structure and independent assessment in favour of experience and informality.

The good news is that our research shows the ongoing value that professionals of all ages and seniority place on personal development. It is clear that as the profession faces into a post-COVID economy that a well-rounded capability, particularly in soft skills, is seen as a distinct advantage.

Our research finds that the majority of our profession believes that communication, leadership, teamwork, adaptability, the ability to work under pressure, social skills and a great many other "soft" skills have become more important in the last five years.

The issue of what constitutes "technological competence" is also important. This typically is ill-defined, with people reporting that they are good at social media, but finding themselves failing on analytics when they do a test that applies structured criteria. Once again this is the symptom of an ill-defined, possibly even sprawling area in which people are too frequently asked to assess their own skills.

The division between technological and other quantifiable skills is an illusion as our research suggests professionals value a combination of each of them and see clear weaknesses in perceived gaps in others knowledge and capability.

There is an opportunity for digitally literate marketers to share a clearer picture of their strengths and needs with those that have preceded them into the profession. In turn this earlier generation not only accepts, but increasingly respects - and perhaps envies - their technological capability, recognising opportunities for not only corporate but personal growth.

Harnessing the opportunity for the effective cross-generational exchange of skills requires academic rigour and a robust framework to support a widely recognised set of qualifications as part of a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme.

There is no question: now is the time to invest in independently structured and audited CPD schemes that cover the whole person rather than a preconception of that person's capabilities and needs based on lazy thinking.

We believe as the world begins another economic cycle, that organisations that reject generational stereotypes, in favour of a culture of ongoing structured learning, will provide the best opportunities for their teams and for themselves to succeed commercially.

FIVE KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR MARKETERS

1. Experience alone isn't enough. A strong development framework requires a blend of both formal and informal training. It's also important to consider more subtle forms of learning such as reverse-mentoring and job-role shadowing for people at all stages of their career.
2. Be careful not to get lost down a specialist rabbit warren. If you are to progress in your career you need to be more than just the person who is good with a particular digital skill.
3. Take comfort in the crowd. It seems we all, young and old, feel a bit overwhelmed by the online world. 71% of the marketers we spoke to said people younger than themselves were ahead in terms of digital marketing skills. This view was as common among under 30s as among over 50s.
4. Beware a disproportionate focus on digital skills - 60% of those we spoke to believe that a focus on digital skills comes at the expense of core marketing skills. This is felt significantly more keenly amongst 25-44 year olds than amongst those over 45.
5. Recognise the importance of training and development - there is strong recognition across the industry of the importance of training. Only 2% of people working in a marketing department felt training was important, this increases slightly to 7% among senior managers.

CIM offers a wide range of training courses to help build your skills and confidence as a marketing professional click here: <https://www.cim.co.uk/training/list-courses/>

KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR DIRECTORS

1. You are responsible for developing the marketing leaders of the future. It is important to have specialist expertise in your team, but don't forget to ensure people are developing skills that will help them progress in their individual careers.
2. Learning and development is not just for the young. The research shows that the majority of formal training appears to be focused upon the incoming generation; only seven per cent of young people (aged 16-24) had received no training in the previous two years, increasing to 12% in the 25-34 age group. 74% of over-65s had received no extra training and 62% of the 55-64s. Given the dramatic change in the marketing landscape these figures are remarkable; consider whether you should be upskilling your more experienced team members.
3. Fill the right skills gaps. Interestingly, our research suggested that the biggest skills gap wasn't in digital skills and bigger issues were a lack of copywriting ability and data analysis. Carry out an audit of the skills in your team and use a competency framework to ensure you have every base covered.
4. Your team values development. The people most likely to think that training is not important were senior managers in marketing departments. If this is you, don't lose sight of the fact that the people you manage do place a high priority on continually learning.
5. Don't assume the 'digital natives' know everything. This report finds both a lack of confidence and significant knowledge gaps amongst the younger generation when it comes to digital marketing. It's important not to simply assume that because someone is young that they have an innate understanding of all things digital.

THE IMPACT OF MARKETING PART 3

THE IMPACT OF MARKETING THROUGH THE PANDEMIC



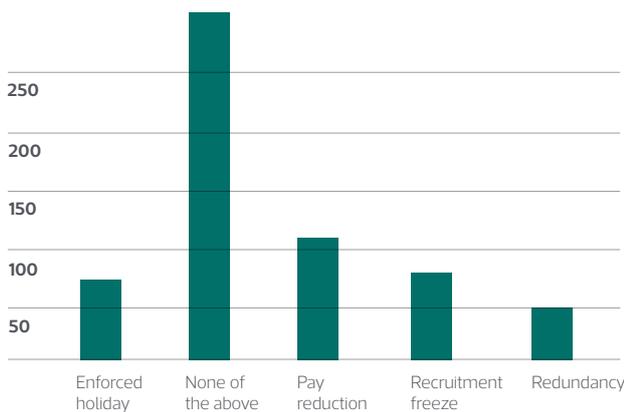
BUILDING BACK BETTER & RECONNECTING WITH SOCIETY

We set out to understand how the country's marketers are adapting to build back better in 2021 and beyond. In response to the challenges of the pandemic, we were interested to understand how this had affected their confidence, what motivated them, and what their priorities were for the years ahead.

Adapting to build back better

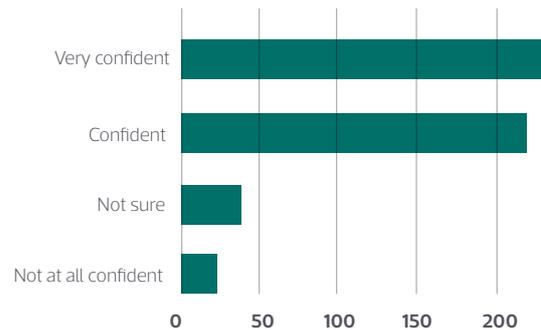
We surveyed 545 marketers, the majority of which had been personally affected by a wide array of consequences as a result of the pandemic: 59% had seen enforced holiday, pay reductions, recruitment freezes or redundancies and in all, two thirds (69%) of agencies had seen clients reduce their marketing spend.

Been affected by?



Despite these challenges the vast majority (89%), told us they were confident of the marketing sector's ability to 'build back better' from the challenges of 2020. This confidence was impressive, given that one in five of those we spoke to had been furloughed – indeed there was no difference between their levels of confidence and those who had not been furloughed. More junior roles were more likely to have been furloughed than managers and directors.

Confidence in marketing sectors ability to 'build back better?'



Overall, marketers were optimistic for the future, they told us that they felt the marketing sector had a critical role to play in the economy with 90% seeing it as important to the nation's economic recovery. This is higher than the 85% who felt this way when we polled them in 2019, suggesting that the pandemic has boosted confidence in marketing's importance to society.

Importantly this optimism for the future of the marketing sector was matched by marketers' optimism for the future of the sector they worked in.

A strong belief in the future importance of marketing in the UK's economic recovery is directly related to confidence in the marketing sector's ability to 'build back better'. This matched a robust belief amongst those we polled of the opportunity to do things differently, and better in the years to come. Economic growth whilst important, cannot be the sole focus and priority. Making profit is not a bad thing, how you do it, and what you do with it are what organisations need to focus on in order to take positive actions which drive a sustainable future.

	Very confident	Confident	Not sure	Not at all confident
Very important	67.7%	52.2%	38.5%	30.8%
Fairly important	22.0%	41.1%	33.3%	53.8%
Don't know	8.5%	6.2%	15.4%	0.0%
Not really important	1.8%	0.5%	12.8%	7.7%
Not at all important	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	7.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%



THE SKILLS TO SUCCEED

For busy marketers, the enforced inactivity of furlough or a cut in client spending appears to have forged the opportunity to address some of the skills shortages we reported in prior editions of the Impact of Marketing.

In all, two fifths of respondents suffered personal challenges to their professional development, through either being placed on furlough or accepting a pay reduction. Likewise agency teams suffered, with 69% reporting a fall in marketing activity in contrast to 40% of in-house teams.

The resilience of marketers however shone through and half have since adapted the services they offer, and have emerged better equipped. This pandemic related investment in skills echoes the findings of recent research carried out in partnership with CIM by recruiter Hays. This found that 42% of the 723 polled said they planned to make changes to their skills and prioritise upskilling in their current profession. A further 61% expected to make changes to their working practices and find a new role that is more of a mix of hybrid working.

Adaptability



Social skills



Communication



Taking responsibility for others



Creativity



Such skills were certainly tested to the limit during the lockdown, with many marketing teams forced to work from home and adapt to new styles of working and interacting with colleagues.

CIM's course consumption figures and data supplied by recruiter Hays both show that post lockdown, the situation began to stabilise and that many organisations started to look to long-term development and hiring needs. It's clear that since 2020, leaders have had to shift their priorities dramatically. Whether putting new ways of working into practice, recruiting and onboarding new talent remotely or looking at how to retain and sustain a sense of culture across their organisations.

Perhaps the greatest change has been in the revised list of skills prioritised by employers. As our 2020 data revealed, the ability to adapt to change is critical and soft transferable skills, such as communication and problem-solving are key. As a result, the CIM and Hays data highlights that the following skills have been in high demand throughout 2021.

- **SEO & digital measurement**
- **Strategic marketing & leadership**
- **Copywriting**
- **Product innovation & marketing**
- **Social media & digital marketing**
- **Presentation training**
- **Core marketing skills (branding etc.)**
- **Sustainability**



A VIEW FROM THE RECRUITMENT SECTOR

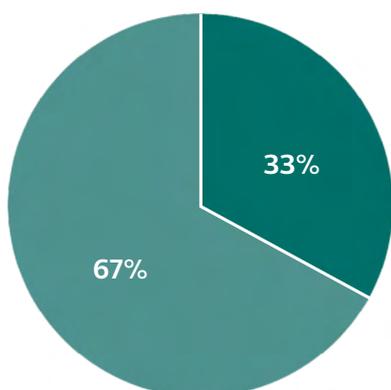
The marketing sector has skills gaps

77% of marketing employers experienced skills shortages in 2020. Companies are looking to address the skill shortage by increasing salaries in some areas to attract qualified candidates. Whether these increases in salaries are a short term fix remains to be seen.

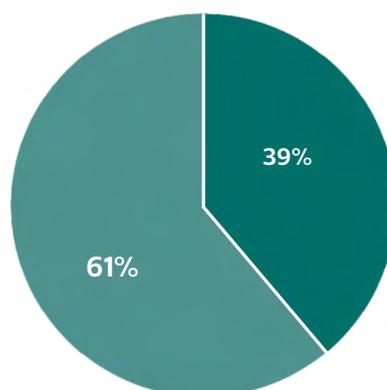
Recruitment and retention are key

- 67% of marketing employers were actively hiring in 2021.
- Six in 10 marketers are motivated to switch jobs in 2021.
- Those considering career changes had a range of motivations:
 - 61% said that they planned to make changes to their working practices and find a new role that is more of a mix of hybrid working. 17% said they planned to find a new role based completely remotely.
 - 42% said they planned to make changes to their skills and prioritise upskilling in their current profession.
 - And 22% said they planned to make changes to their career paths entirely, and find a role with a greater purpose.

67% of marketing employers are actively hiring in 2021



61% of marketers plan to make changes to their working practices and find a new role





SKILLS

MARKETERS COMMITMENT TO PERSONAL GROWTH

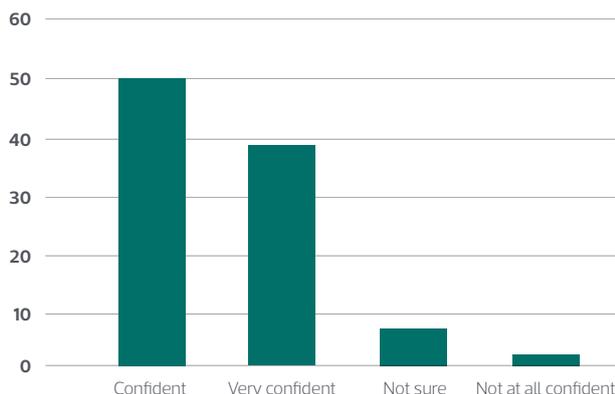
- Marketing employers say an investment in learning and development is important to support staff attraction and retention (**67%** attraction; **71%** retention).
- **37%** of marketing employees say work-life balance is the most important factor when considering a new role.
- **82%** of marketing employees plan to upskill or undertake professional qualifications in 2021.
- **60%** of marketers are motivated to switch jobs in 2021.



BUILDING BETTER TEAMS

There is a clear link in the Impact of Marketing data which shows that companies with furloughed staff are more likely to have emerged from the pandemic offering a wider range of services. Likewise, there is a strong link between those who feel they have the skills to fulfil their role to its full potential and those who are confident in the marketing sector's future potential.

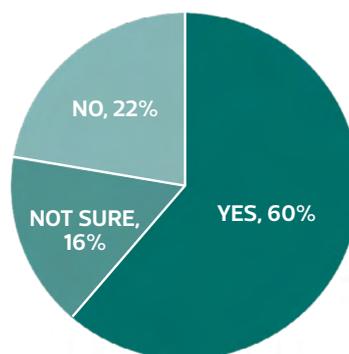
Furloughed marketers confidence in future of marketing sector



This is an encouraging step forward from our original research which in 2019 saw 87% admit that they worked with marketers with little formal training. In contrast our most recent research identified that more than half feel they now have the right mix of skills to succeed. The Hays research underlines the consequences for firms that fail to invest in their talent, one in five (22%) of those interviewed were planning significant changes to their career and were intending to find a role with a greater purpose.

It is clear that organisations are starting to look longer-term, with hiring plans for marketing departments focused on skills shortages within teams. CMOs and HR teams have had to quickly understand how to best develop these missing skills and to drive a growth mindset. As many sectors around the world look to build back better, the ability to adapt is now critical, as is the importance of soft transferable skills, such as communication, problem-solving and the ability to be flexible to meet new marketing opportunities.

Furloughed marketers confidence in their own skills - do they believe they have all the skills they require?



The role of digital in team building

Separate research benchmarking the digital skills of 7,000 marketers by Target Internet and CIM concluded that marketing technology, search engines and social media platforms continue to innovate at pace. Consumer use of digital channels has also increased, but keeping upskilled in digital has not been a focus during the pandemic.

While it is clear marketers have upskilled themselves on the core marketing skills such as brand, strategy and communications, the research found that many digital marketing skills have stagnated or declined over the past year, across most sectors and at all levels of seniority.

For the first time in three years the research showed a closer alignment between seniority and the level of digital marketing skills. That is, the more senior the marketer, the better the digital skills they possess. The research also found that agencies scored well for digital marketing skills as they were asked to support in house marketing teams with either reduced resources or new requirements during the pandemic and therefore skills we maintained.

ACTING WITH PURPOSE

The increased importance of social purpose post-pandemic is a consistent theme of the 2021 Impact of Marketing polling.

The pandemic hit many businesses hard, reducing their ability to maintain customer or client engagement. The interruption of 'business as usual' activities offered many firms the opportunity to directly contribute more to society. The support provided by the private sector in working alongside local authorities in some cases switching supply chains to produce hand sanitiser or providing transport to NHS workers, demonstrated the role businesses can play in providing a wider social commitment.

The health crisis combined with the environmental crisis has caused many organisations to reflect, reassess and consider their brand's social purpose. Of the five priorities we questioned, brand reputation emerged as the clear leader, opening a 15-point lead over sales led messaging.

Brand reputation alongside communication are two areas that CIM have also seen increased engagement across our training offering as marketers look to improve and upskill.



The challenges we are faced with today have contributed to a wider shift in a marketer's belief in their role in addressing wider societal goals such as sustainability – however there is also an acknowledgement that businesses cannot drive positive change alone. 70% of those we spoke to in our latest research believe there are too few marketing restrictions on environmentally damaging goods and services, and brand reputation is ranked overwhelmingly as the number one concern for marketers.

Many of the results of the Impact of Marketing 3 report echo also, the findings of a survey of 50 of the UK's most senior marketers, interviewed in early 2021 for CIM's influential 'CMO50' report. In this, 71% believed that their response to Covid had boosted the reputation of their brands, and 76% would back greater regulation for environmentally damaging products.

Crucially as with our wider panel, the CMOs interviewed for this study saw a clear opportunity for regulatory reform. Just 26% of the 50 marketing leaders spoken to believe the current regulatory regime was fit for purpose. It will require collaborative efforts coming from government, business and society if we are to make progress and deliver wellbeing for all. CMO's priorities for the future, which are set out in more detail in the report ([here](#)) can be clearly broken down into four themes:

- 1) Adapting to changes in technology and data
- 2) Motivating, retaining and managing people
- 3) Recruitment and developing the right skills
- 4) Proving to the business the value of investing in marketing

As the marketing sector and those who work in it emerge from the challenges of the pandemic, it is likely that profit with purpose will require marketers to think differently, drive focus away from executional responsibility and move towards the strategic contribution they can make. It will also require marketers to address societal concerns over their role using authentic and transparent communication when it comes to their brand's purpose and demonstrating that it goes beyond the products and services they provide.

The research suggests that the marketing sector has an opportunity to capitalise on its increasing role as the 'conscience' of a business, and boost business transparency to tackle public perceptions of 'woke-washing' and 'green-washing' through authentic communications.

Overall, the research highlights the widespread benefits and opportunities for the retaining and reskilling of talent across the sector. Encouragingly it demonstrates that the pandemic has provided momentum for self-improvement. This must be maintained if the profession is to fully embrace the opportunities it sees for the sector in the years ahead.



CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, these three collated reports set out clear recommendations for those responsible for the marketing function, the shape of it and the skills required to deliver for business.

The key findings and recommendations across the Impact of Marketing report series are:

1. Marketing is increasingly connected to business success, yet is often misunderstood by the wider business. Nine in ten are confident they add value back into the business, yet one third of those we spoke to struggled to explain their roles to colleagues, and 60% feel colleagues don't value their contribution.

a. We believe that professional marketers have responsibility to be able to effectively articulate their value – led by professional bodies, the marketing sector as a whole needs to work together to boost recognition of the value it delivers within the UK economy.

2. This failure to effectively articulate value is undermining the business case for development and allowing a digital divide to set in. Six in ten of those we spoke to agree that the marketing skills set has changed completely over the last decade, and yet one third had received no training, and as a result 40 per cent today worry they lack the skills to fulfil their roles.

a. We believe that business leaders must address this awareness gap with an independent audit of competency post pandemic, and not rely purely on internal recommendations.

b. It may be worth considering referring to external providers to benchmark training programmes to ensure they are maximizing productivity.

3. The pandemic has boosted the resilience of the sector and those working in it. It has also provided marketers with the confidence to be more assertive in championing the value of a strong reputation for excellence around ESG/sustainability projects and mental wellbeing of employees. Half have started offering different products and services as a result of COVID-19, and 75% supported stronger regulation of the sector and saw brand reputation as a top priority.

a. We believe the marketing sector should capitalise on its increasing role as the 'conscience' of a business, and boost business transparency to tackle public perceptions of 'woke-washing' and 'green-washing'.

b. Specifically, the marketing skills and training supply chain should consider a clear set of professional standards and key skills necessary to deliver profits with purpose.



TOP TIPS FOR DIRECTORS

1. Listen to your team and help guide them in articulating their value back into the business. As business leaders you have a responsibility to help your colleagues in marketing to effectively express how they are supporting your organisation's vision and mission.
2. Not all training is equal, and those closest to the coalface often lack the perspective to identify their training needs. Consider an independent audit of the competencies of your team, and act on their recommendations.
3. You may be leading the business but are you a leading business? Benchmarking your marketing performance is as essential as having a clear picture of your financial metrics.
4. Do what is right, not what is right on. When setting ESG goals, consider whether these reflect your corporate values and social footprint or are simply keeping pace with the market.
5. Re-engage with your marketing team, the pandemic has seen a huge amount of personal and professional growth amongst your colleagues. Those that learn to tap into this new resource will undoubtedly lead the recovery.

FIVE KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR MARKETERS

1. Don't forget to market yourself and your team. Showcasing the value you deliver back to the bottom line is essential in unlocking the investment you require to maximise your future value and wider societal needs.
2. Secure acknowledgement and consider professional accreditation for skills gained during furlough or lockdown. Remind the business that you are not the same colleague they employed in 2019.
3. Review both your immediate competitive set and how marketing best practice has moved on. Do you still possess a leading marketing strategy or have you fallen behind the curve?
4. Challenge the business to substantiate its product, process and people claims. Society is increasingly more aware of "greenwashing", don't allow your hard-won reputation to be compromised by empty promises.
5. Refresh your professional network. Just like you, your colleagues and contacts have all grown over the course of the pandemic. Ensure a mutual appreciation of current skills sets to maximise your professional connections.

THE IMPACT OF MARKETING SERIES

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