



Alter

your trajectory

Career Trajectory Series

2: Evolving marketing
competencies and how
to build them



At Alternatives we connect with precision the best with the best, and all the time with unrelenting integrity, passion and expertise.

To help you on your career journey, we have developed the **Alternatives Trajectory Toolkit**. Whether you are simply planning or reviewing your career; taking an initial look at potential opportunities; applying for a specific role or actively interviewing, we have tips and insights to share with you, accumulated by our team, over many years.

In our **Career Trajectory** series we share:

1. How to plan your career

2. **Evolving marketing competencies and how to build them**

3. How to write a winning cv

4. How to succeed at interview

5. How to prepare for a competency based interview

And of course, you can contact our **specialist talent team** at any time to advise you along the way. They are industry and talent specialists of standing, who recognise the complex and rapidly evolving world of marketing, digital, and customer focused careers. They can advise, and at times challenge you. They will go the extra mile to ALTER your trajectory.

We hope you find these insights useful and we look forward to hearing from you.

From all of the team at Alternatives



Evolving marketing competencies and how to build them

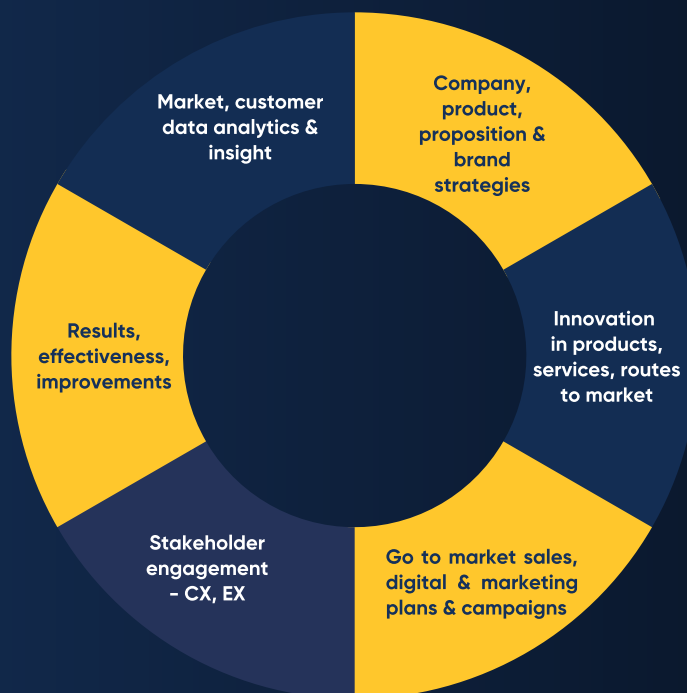
In the pre-Covid world, Marketing was already a very dynamic, diverse and evolving discipline. Covid has since refocused our roles and the world of work has changed, but the basics remain the same. Here we look at

- The evolving and strategic role of marketing
- Core Competencies for role and career development
- Skill sets required now
- Where and how to build them

The evolving role of marketing

The role of Marketing is to drive profitable growth by understanding, creating and delivering value for the customer. Marketers align the strategic and commercial goals of the business with those of its customers, whose voice they represent.

Successful marketers will build skills where they can lead and contribute across the full strategic process:



Equally, they **never under-estimate the importance of great people skills** and seek out opportunities to build them. They know that the most experienced technical marketer will not advance until they can take stakeholders with them.



Marketing Competencies

The **Marketing Institute of Ireland (MII)** developed a **Competency Framework**, in conjunction with marketing industry leaders, to help marketing professionals understand the capabilities required for their current and future careers. There are four types of competencies -technical marketing, business, people and critical business foundational competencies.

MII Competencies Overview

<p>I/ Marketer Competencies</p> <p>Technical Skills required in specific areas of marketing and special to our profession</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Integrated Analytics 2. Brand 3. Marketing Capability 4. Channel Management 5. Corporate Communications 6. Digital Marketing 7. Marketing Campaigns 8. New Product Development 9. Marketing Strategy 10. Research 11. Customer Centricity 	<p>I/ Marketer Competencies</p> <p>Relevant to all marketers regardless of their role, their industry sector. Different level of competence depending on career stage</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Action & Results 2. Change & Improvement 3. Commercial Awareness 4. Ethics & Integrity 5. Decisions & Judgment 6. Innovation 7. Organisational Awareness 8. Planning & Prioritisation 9. Project Management
<p>III/ People Competencies</p> <p>Behavioural capabilities needed to effectively contribute to the achievement of business goals</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communication & Interpersonal Skills 2. Conflict Management 3. Developing People 4. Influencing 5. Leadership 6. Managing People 7. Negotiation Skills 8. Relationship Management 9. Resilience Building 10. Team building 	<p>III/ People Competencies</p> <p>Behavioural capabilities needed to effectively contribute to the achievement of business goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of/ Exposure to /Principles of Risk Management • Financial Management, Governance, Legal & Compliance • Sales

Although these are common competencies, different competencies will be required dependent on career level, the generalist or specialist nature of the role and sector and the desired future career trajectory.

Responsibility for each will also be different. A director will lead the development of marketing and brand strategy for example, whereas a junior team member will feed into the process by gathering and analysing the data required.



Transitions in Your Career

As you travel up the career ladder, your performance and development needs change.

Career Stages	Career Responsibilities
Support- early career-first or second role	You are responsible for your own performance. Your key focus is to deliver results.
Practitioner- 5-7 years plus, without managing people	You need to 'dive deep' in terms of your knowledge and skills as well as your business acumen, so you know where your performance fits in with the overall business performance. Upskilling is extremely important at this level.
Manager	You are responsible for the delivery of other people, e.g. brand managers, product managers, so you need to develop your people management skills
Director	You are responsible for the results of a business. Your strategic skills need to be honed as well as your ability to engage, influence and drive through programmes at a cross-functional level.

Each stage requires its own set of skills and behaviours. To move from one stage to the next, you need to 'unlearn' certain behaviours and adopt new skills and behaviours. For example, as you move from a practitioner role to a marketing manager role, you need to let go of work which defined previous successes. Your key task will be to develop and support the growth of others. As you move further up, your business acumen and stakeholder management skills come to the fore. You are moving from being a people manager to being a business manager and organisational influencer.

By adopting a planned and proactive approach to your career you will develop the marketing career path of your choice. You're in control.

Your Competency Development Plan

Most people do not use personal development plans to maximum advantage, because of lack of focus by either themselves, the company or the line manager. You cannot control how other people behave, all you can directly influence is yourself. To help keep you focused on the right career moves you could work with a mentor - ideally someone who is not your line manager.

When it comes to your personal plan, simple is good. If you over burden the plan, set too many goals or create an overcomplicated strategy you are likely to falter. Complete a SWOT analysis on your performance in your current and previous jobs and then draw all this information to form your personal competency profile.

Your career plan should help you set your end goal: do you want to go into general management or do you want to become a marketing specialist? The next stage is to identify the competencies associated with the stages of transition in your career so that you can identify and address the skills gaps.



Alternatives View: Skills most in demand now

In companies where marketing is more strategic, marketers play a greater lead role outside the classical brand, digital and marketing management space. They engage across all strategic customer touchpoints, particularly in the areas of business strategy, lead gen, proposition development & product management, CX and data analytics.

These are the skill sets to develop to truly play a strategic role, to drive value for your organisation and ultimately for your career.

Marketing Role Focus

Although already a rapidly evolving function, events of recent years have highlighted the need to further build technical and personal skills. The following areas are where marketers are now focused:

Focus Area	September 2020 %	June 2023 %
Strategy/Planning	59	50
Digital Communications / Social Media	48	48
Consumer Insights	28	28
Brand or Product Management	24	24
Demand / Lead Generation	24	24
Sales	23	22
Customer / Client Management	21	21
Loyalty / Retention	21	20
Data Analytics	18	28
ATL Communications	17	17
Project Management	16	17
Internal Communications	15	20
Innovation/NPD	14	15

Today we see a continued focus on strategy and digital comms, and more on better consumer/customer data & insights and on greater demand/lead generation.



Mid- to managerial levels are more focused on digital communications, strategy and on consumer insight. 82% of those at director level are now focused on reshaping strategy and on driving the commercial agenda—managing customers, generating new business and on sales.

Large companies are currently relatively more focused on ATL comms, consumer insight, data analytics, loyalty and strategy. Small companies are more focused on sales, customer management and lead generation.

How to develop skill sets

For a marketer to be successful, they need to develop skills throughout their career that enable them add value to the strategic and tactical. The question is how?

1. **Work for companies and sectors where marketing is valued** and is allowed play a significant role. Work where strategy is both created and executed. Not just imported from an overseas HQ
2. Work for companies and bosses who **value learning**, who will invest in training and who will purposefully plan your career to have as many skill building exposures as possible
3. **Engage in your own further education**, training and development, funded personally or via your company
4. **Be proactive, committed and accountable** for your own career development and learning. Carefully select your career path based on your long-term career ambitions and go for it.

Marketing plays the most strategic role and is represented at board level in sectors that are typically very brand and consumer focused such as drinks, FMCG and retail. It also plays a strategic role in the telco, tech, transport, travel, financial services and e-commerce sectors, which are increasingly customer insight and data led.

How marketing is perceived how the marketing remit differs in different organisations and sectors needs to be very carefully considered. If a marketer wishes to own both a strategic and commercial agenda and ultimately aspires to general management, then it is vital to choose an organisation and sector in which marketing plays a growth driving role. If however, a marketer aspires to become a leading specialist eg in strategic planning, communications, innovation, e-commerce, digital, or CX, then they need to look to the sectors in which those functions are essential.

And it's not all down to sectors. There are **companies, owners and CEO's and individual marketers who value and invest in the marketing function**. They're typically very passionate about brands, customers, new ways of doing things. You'll see their brands in their marketplaces, you'll hear them and see them on social and online platforms. They'll be on speaking and judging panels. Try and work for them. We can advise you on this too.

Once proven, you can often co-create your role, responsibilities and deliverables with your CEO or CMO by demonstrating how you can help contribute to the future strategy of the organisation and to its short and long term commercial objectives.

In any case it is the **onus of the marketer to take responsibility** for ensuring that they align their talent and potential to the organisations and sectors which are best going to enable their personal growth.



Training & Education – Building Marketer Competencies

Here are some training & education options that we have had recommended to us:

Organisation	Website	Programmes
The Marketing Institute of Ireland	https://mii.ie/#	Range of shorter and longer term programmes, based on Marketer Pathways. Including marketing fundamentals series, CMO masterclass series, diplomas, post grad programmes.
UCS Michael Smurfit Graduate Business School	https://www.smurfitschool.ie/programmes	Range of Masters programmes including MSc in Marketing Practice, Marketing & Retail Innovation, Digital marketing
Digital Marketing Institute	https://digitalmarketinginstitute.com	Range of digital marketing diplomas as well as specialist courses in social media, digital strategy & planning.
UCD	https://www.ucd.ie/professionalacademy/	Range of programmes including B2B Marketing, Social Media Marketing, Digital Transformation
Trinity College	https://www.tcd.ie/business/programmes/	Range of executive education and longer-term programmes and Masters incl. MSc Marketing, Digital Marketing Strategy
Hubspot	https://www.hubspot.com/resources/courses	Range of courses incl. lead management, E-commerce marketing, content strategy



Contact us

We hope you find these career insights useful. For further guidance on how to plan your marketing career, contact our specialist team at Alternatives.

Call us on **+3531 6618889** or email us at **hello@alternatives.ie**
We look forward to hearing from you.

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