

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Office of Career Services

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OVERVIEW

WetFeet Insider Guide – Careers in Marketing

The Industry

Marketers perform “careful demographic and statistical analysis, extensive testing and surveys, supplier and vendor management, and strategic thinking... They help their organizations anticipate the public’s needs and position them to satisfy those needs. As such, marketing is the necessary link between an organization and its target audience, which is now more broadly defined to include customers, clients, investors, and partners.”

Broken Down by Industry

Consumer Packaged Goods (CPG)

CPG marketers deal with cross-functional teams, manage manufacturing and logistics, apply market research findings, and work with creative agencies and other outside vendors. Insiders say that opportunities are competitive in the CPG industry, but that they are more consistently available than in other industry segments.

Professional Services

Professional Services include direct-to-consumer services such as health care, legal assistance, insurance, automotive services, and businesses like business consulting or representation for entertainment and sports figures. Marketers representing these fields work to differentiate their firm’s services from others.

Financial Services

Financial services are considered the more predictable industry unlike higher-risk segments like CPG and technology. Financial services marketers are primarily tasked with presenting information on returns and packaging value-added services, while ensuring compliance with disclosure requirements.

Pharmaceuticals and Technology

Technology marketing is a specialized field that often demands product-specific and subject-area knowledge, as well as specialized degrees, certifications, and training. It is one field in which headhunters and recruiters continue to compete for marketing talent, attempting to lure the top tech-savvy marketers from tech companies and ad agencies.

Nonprofit

This expanding sector offers marketers a wealth of career options, valuable experience, and increasingly competitive pay—and of course the opportunity to provide a valued service. Marketers have been hired by all sorts of not-for-profit organizations including hospitals, museums, and institutions of education.

Spanning Industries: Market Research

A market researcher identifies the business problem, the decision alternatives, the client’s needs, and then selects the appropriate research tools for the task at hand. They need to know the constraints and limitations for each type of survey or test they have to work with, and by using a combination of financial, statistical, scientific, and aesthetic skills—as well as a large dose of common sense—they can and should design an appropriate study that will effectively uncover consumer preferences or needs.

On the Job

Common Titles

Marketing Associate/Brand Assistant
Brand/Product Manager
Creative Specialist
Marketing/Fund Development Director
Market Researcher
Marketing Consultant
VP Marketing/Chief Marketing Officer

The Workplace

The workplace environment is dependent upon where employed. In other words, marketing departments are characterized according to each marketing sector. CPG and financial companies are more conservative with instituted dress codes and hierarchical structures. More women, however, are entering the once male dominated marketing field, and as majority-minority markets continue to grow, so does interest in expertise on these markets, creating a strong desire to diversify. Compensation ranges depending on the size of the company and number of brands. Vacations tend to be the standard two to three weeks.

For more information, please refer to WetFeet's Insider Guide to Careers in Marketing available at the Office of Career Services Front Desk.