



digital
marketing
institute

HOW TO

DEVELOP YOUR DIGITAL COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

Tips to advance your career and make your mark.

Introduction

Writing a CV and cover letter to apply to your dream job can seem like an intimidating prospect. So can the idea of being in competition with countless other candidates.

Finding out how to develop a competitive advantage is essential information for any jobseeker. If you know how to effectively position yourself as the best choice for a role, there's no doubt you will be able to make your mark indelibly on the digital industry.

There are more opportunities to excel in the digital industry than you might think...

As the digital economy continues to prosper and generate a remarkable return on investment, an increasing amount of organizations have begun to adopt digital tools and channels. With this evolution comes a vital requirement for skilled professionals who can invent, execute and measure the performance of digital marketing strategies that will drive brand awareness and customer acquisition.

- In the United Kingdom, the digital and tech industries are massively stimulating employment, and currently account for 1.56 million jobs.
- In the US, digital marketing job listings have seen substantial growth. In 2009, they made up less than 0.1% of the jobs website Indeed.com's search results. In 2015 this number had grown by 300%.
- According to McKinley, 90% of all marketing roles now require digital skills.

Whether you're a recent graduate looking to break into the industry or you want to advance your existing career, the digital industry can offer you an abundance of opportunities.



Guarantee your success

To guarantee your digital career success, all you need is an understanding and firm grasp of the key skills that employers really want. Think like an employer, and you can gain a unique insight into how to set yourself apart from other jobseekers and make your mark in the digital industry.

If you're searching for work with a digital agency, tech startup or large enterprise, read on to find out what your employers are looking for. You'll be able to showcase these qualities in your CV and interview, and excel in the digital industry as a direct result!

1

Be proactive

Facebook's Human Resources chief Lori Golder says that the ability to "look at a problem and say 'I can make this better' is a valuable asset in people for Facebook".

This involves being confident and proactive enough to offer creative and strategic input into how things in your organization can be built upon and improved. To encourage people to be "their authentic selves" at work, Facebook encourages its new hires to be "sharers" of their thoughts and ideas.

The conventional wisdom for job seekers, and particularly for people seeking entry-level jobs, is to implement the advice and instructions of more senior colleagues.

Facebook, and other digital employers, view things differently. Being able to offer valuable input and make a positive impact are some of the most important skills they look for in employees.

If you can demonstrate a history of being proactive, be it through personal projects or initiatives you've taken in work, you will be able to set yourself apart from the competition.

Showing that you're a builder, and not just someone who goes through the motions with every project, shows that you can contribute in a scalable manner.

2

Be adaptable

The digital industry evolves at a rapid pace. You need to be able to acclimatize to constant innovations in order to progress professionally, especially if you're looking to work in a digital agency that has a diverse portfolio of clients. As new digital tools, channels and platforms are launched on an almost constant basis, the abilities to adapt and adopt are absolutely essential.

For example, if your organization redevelops their website and decides to implement a new Content Management System, you may need to be able to learn how to use it as quickly as possible. Similarly, your manager could decide they want a deeper insight into your lead gen plan, which could mean that you'll have to incorporate additional metrics into your reporting.

As your role and its requirements change and expand, you need to evolve with it. In an interview, being able to provide examples of these instances of adaptability and resourcefulness will significantly enhance your chances of securing your new role.

Sam Allcock, of content marketing agency [Custard](#) agrees: "Over the last decade, the digital marketing landscape has changed dramatically. When you can identify new opportunities and adapt to an industry that's constantly changing, you're a valuable asset to any digital agency."

When we hire, we look for a pattern of success over time. It's easy to be a 'one hit wonder' as part of a marketing team, but far more impressive to have a record of continual success across many years and multiple different channels."

What produces results today might not produce the same result tomorrow. Being able to see the next step in the process and the next opportunity is what sets an outstanding person apart from someone who's just riding a trend."

“ The strongest people I’ve hired have many examples of accomplishments throughout their lives.

Jennifer Dulski,

President, Change.org

3

Be able to demonstrate your value

“How many golf balls fit inside a Boeing 747?”

According to employers, the brain teasers that once defined digital and tech industry interviews are totally ineffective.

According to Laszlo Bock, Senior Vice President of People Operations at Google, people form first impressions quickly and typically use them to determine when someone is worth hiring. Most interviews are a waste of time, because the majority of the interview is spent simply confirming the interviewer’s first impression.

He thinks it’s more effective to test someone’s abilities by having them perform work live, as part of the interview process. “The best predictor of how someone will perform in a job is a work sample test”.

If you want to succeed in digital, being able to tangibly showcase your abilities is more valuable to an employer than being able to answer interview questions. Though your interviewer might not conduct a practical test, you can bring samples of your work, be it a design portfolio, analytics reports or ad creative, to demonstrate what you can achieve, and impress your potential employer.

You can even demonstrate your abilities with tangible examples before an interview. Attach relevant photos, videos, presentations or documents to your LinkedIn profile, create a PDF version of your CV in which you can include links to particular projects, or develop an online portfolio using websites like [Carbonmade](#) or [Dribbble](#). The more opportunities you create to showcase your strengths, the greater an impact you’ll be able to make on a potential employer.

4

Be able to align yourself to company culture

An incredibly important quality in any prospective employee, and one that is often overlooked, is the ability to fit in with a company and its culture.

Every organization has its own unique culture, and in an industry where team members work very closely together, being a good fit for the company's culture, personality, and working style is incredibly valuable.

Parallax co-founder Lawrence Dudley believes that one of the biggest responsibilities for any digital jobseeker is to make sure the company culture is "right for your personality".

"Company culture is a huge factor in the digital agency world. Like any job, the person and company need to be the right match. The digital scene in particular has its own little quirks and non-traditional work styles and practices".

As a jobseeker, you can emphasize your understanding of a company's culture by learning as much as you can before every interview. Does the company have any unique quirks or values that you share? Do you admire or have an interest in its previous work?

The more you can discover, and the more you can emphasize your suitability for the company's culture, the more appealing you'll become!

Become an in-demand digital employee

Feeling the pressure about standing out as the perfect digital marketing candidate? Setting yourself apart from the competition doesn't have to be difficult. By taking into account the tips we've outlined above, you will be able to identify your strengths and weaknesses and take action to improve accordingly.

From adaptability to proactivity, there are a variety of skills you can work to refine in order to make yourself a more marketable candidate.

If you really want to maximize your employability, a globally recognized and respected qualification will help to advance your skills and enable you to instantly apply your learning in the workplace.

