

Is Marketing a Challenging Career?

Introduction

From time to time, some students pursue a marketing career because marketing sounds fun, creative and quite easy. The reality is that while marketing can be fun, it is also quite challenging and usually not that easy.

Below is a discussion between a group of marketing professionals. Review the conversation and then answer the questions below.

Discussion Between Marketing Professionals

Jose

What I enjoy about marketing is its complexity and responsibility, but sometimes I experience frustration from the additional challenges that we face as marketers, as compared to other corporate careers.

Britney

I agree. As marketers we have more scrutiny placed upon us than in other professions. For example, I've lost count of the number of times that somebody walked into my office and said they don't like the latest social media post.

And I've given up trying to explain that the content needs to be considered in its totality and were trying to achieve with the brand and with customer engagement overall.

Peter

That's right. And usually the person coming in to complain is not even in the target market. I mean I don't go to their office and complain about their spreadsheets or IT program or whatever else they are working on - but it seems almost everyone has an opinion about marketing, especially new products and promotional tactics.

Sara

And it is much worse if you have a big brand to manage and have a large TV advertising budget. We are on national TV across most of the year, plus run extensive outdoor and transit advertising.

You can only imagine the number other managers and employees who are nit-picky about an image or some piece of copy, without understanding the essence of the brand position or the intent of the campaign.

Tommy

I suppose what I get disappointed in is the pressure that is placed on us as marketers. I mean we have to justify how much money were earning for the company. I had managers asked me what is my salary's return on investment for the brand that I'm managing?

Taylor

Yeah I agree, as marketers are expected to "pay our own way" and bring in more than we cost in salary. I think that that standard is not applied to other disciplines, such as human resources and accounting or even IT.

Steve

I think that other disciplines don't have appreciation of the dynamic environment that marketers operate in. There are constant shifts in competitors, their innovation and new products, changes in consumer behavior, economic factors to consider, and so. We don't operate in a stable environment where we can do the same thing year in and year out.

Zane

And we need to test and experiment and to learn. A lot of current day marketing is built around data, testing, and simply seeing what works and then improving over time. And I found that a campaign that worked last year may not work as equally as well this year, and we need to know why and how to fix it.

Yvette

And there are lots of things to test too. There are so many approaches and tools we could use. The number of marketing mix configurations we could implement would be enormous.

For each of marketing mix elements, there are multiple ways of designing each, and then we go to work out how they fit together. I'm sure that in other disciplines they might have three or four possible approaches, where we would have literally thousands of legitimate approaches to the same problem.

Gail

That's why no two firms/brands are ever in the same marketing position. There are always differences in the internal and external environment, plus differences in their brand, their product range, and their overall marketing mix. There is no one set solution for any marketing challenge, even for relatively similar firms.

Harry

I suppose the biggest challenge that I face is that I need a broad range of skill sets. I need to be both strategic and an implementer, I need to be both analytical and creative, plus I need communication skills, I need people skills, I need project management ability, I need to understand finance and profits. There's almost no end to it?

Marty

And even if you manage to have all those skills somehow, the field of marketing keeps changing. Compared to when I started in marketing, it now relies upon more data and is more analytical than it has ever been.

Emma

That's a good point and along with that, as marketers, we have to "talk the language" of every other discipline. We need to talk to finance in their terms, human resources, production and logistics. Marketing touches every area of the business, and we need to be the bridge that connects all areas and be the voice of the consumer.

Kylie

It is not just the departments; we have to also convince senior management and the CEO that we know what we're doing. I feel so much pressure in pitching for spending \$10 million of the company's money in front of a management team that almost wants guaranteed results.

Student Discussion Questions

1. Review the above conversation and list all the challenges discussed by these marketing professionals.
2. In your opinion, which of these challenges would be the most difficult for you to overcome (or mitigate)?
3. Do you think that these challenges make marketing more or less interesting as a career option for you?