The Digital Marketing Skills Gap in Canada

WINTER 2022

JELLY
ACADEMY

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Executive Summary

Introduction

Jelly Academy surveyed 630 participants in varying industries across Canada to understand more about the digital marketing skills gap when hiring across these industries. In the past several years digital marketing has become one of the most popular career choices among many working professionals - the most popular in 2021 to be exact. With the rise in popularity, Jelly Academy wanted to get a clear picture of the gaps that are in need of being filled within businesses for digital marketing roles, and what employers are looking for when hiring for these positions.

About Jelly Academy

Jelly Academy is a British Columbia based digital marketing bootcamp that teaches the foundational understanding of the key sectors such as SEO, digital ads, social media, PR, and Google Analytics.

The goal of this report is to find the skill gaps that exist for hiring professionals when hiring for digital marketing roles and how to address this moving forward.

Purpose of study

The purpose of this study was to gather information from a variety of hiring professionals in multiple industries across Canada in order to better understand the hiring landscape for digital marketing roles. Jelly Academy experienced recent influxes in student enrolment throughout 2021 which inspired this study alongside Innovate BC.

"

In 2020 it was reported that 70% of business executives in Canada could not find skilled employees in digital marketing because they did not have the tactical skills or a specialized certification.

- Canadian Chamber of Commerce

Methods to Gather Data

To obtain this type of data, Jelly Academy and Innovate BC surveyed over 630 participants in industries such as marketing agencies, service based businesses, healthcare, hospitality, education, and more, across Canada.

Findings

The survey indicated that there are existing gaps between what skills were needed and what skills were available from job applicants. The primary skills gaps identified were among digital ads management (Instagram Ads, Facebook Ads, and Google Ads) as well as Search Engine Optimization skills.

> **23.2% of respondents found that ads management skills (Instagram, Facebook, and Google) were missing from new hires' resumes, indicating the gap within advertising training, and 28.4% of respondents answered ads management skills were the most important skills on a digital marketer's resume.**

18.15% respondents equally found SEO to be the primary skill missing from applicants' resumés and 12.4% said SEO was the most important skill on a digital marketer's resumé. Both gaps point to an opportunity to close the gap between supply and demand, and have more marketer's trained within these skills.

Recommendations

Following the results of the study, key recommendations include:

1. Ensure that governing bodies make digital marketing training more readily available for those seeking it.

2. Ensure that governing bodies build awareness about existing digital marketing training programs. *See conclusion of study for links to multiple programs across Canada.*

These steps are currently being taken, including via the Government of Canada's Canada Digital Adoption Program.

Report Limitations

A limited number of hiring professionals were surveyed across Canada, as a result, the data and findings are not exhaustive due to limited sample size.

Implementation

Businesses can implement the actions below based on the study's findings:

1. Research the training that is currently available, as outlined in the conclusion of this study.

2. Research available funding to hire and train their teams.

3. Government bodies must build awareness for these needs.

Conclusion

The study identified a great opportunity for both digital marketers to advance their skill set and course providers to assist in closing those identified skills gaps. The study covers an in-depth understanding of the industries surveyed as well as more individual breakdowns of the desired skills, what skills are missing, and the skills that were most likely to encourage promotion or growth within a company.

The study provides an in depth conclusion regarding how to best approach the skills gap identified and the key findings.

Study
Findings

Definitions

Digital Marketing Training

The process of learning new and strategic marketing practices
to enhance a subject's (business, brand, organization, or individual's)
online presence. I.e. Search Engine Optimization, Digital Ads Management,
Social Media, Website development and more.

Upskilling

Upskilling refers to the type of digital marketing training that takes an existing skill
set and enhances or updates it.

Reskilling

Reskilling is a form of digital marketing training that refers to the process of
shifting or gaining new skill sets to either shift to a different job role or promotion.

Microcredential

A microcredential is often a short-term, specified training or certification that
focuses on a particular skill.

Letters of Support for Research

Nir Kushnir, SearchKings

"The introduction of more automation digital marketing solutions options for businesses of all sizes demand deeper expertise and effective implementation.

We expect to see new roles that require a new skill-set. Education programs have to become more strategic and focus on the learning capabilities and effective execution of digital plans independent of the platform.

SearchKings doubled its workforce over the past two years and is now nearing 100 employees. Talent management and our ability to hire at scale is the single most impactful constraint on our business. We have over twenty open positions in Vancouver and Toronto at this point in time and we expect to hire over 50 employees in 2022.

The digital services industry is in **desperate need of education and training solutions** that can offer micro, relevant, certification at scale."
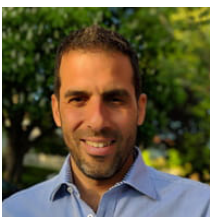
Nir Kushnir
VP, Strategy & Partnerships
SearchKings

Tara Ataya, Hootsuite

"In the past decade, we have seen micro certifications rise in popularity as people strive to educate themselves in the fast-paced tech and digital marketing industry. Our work with providing accessibility to our Hootsuite certifications and integrating [Hootsuite Academy](#) into higher education curriculums is just a start. There is a growing recognition in the industry around the idea that traditional degrees are only one way to demonstrate knowledge. When we look at this from a more holistic and inclusive lens, there is greater recognition that people learn in different ways, have access to different opportunities and transferable skills exist all around us. In many professions, our ideas around traditional post secondary education models are shifting and this is a great thing. We should always be looking for ways to innovate in society. At times, innovation is revolutionary ideas, and other times simply the repackaging of old ones.

As mentioned, people don't all learn the same way, and micro certifications offer something different—something fresh and new. It allows people to leverage transferable skills and couple those skills with micro learning opportunities that can be applied in different ways. Innovate BC and Jelly Academy partnered to survey 630 participants in varying industries across Canada to understand more about the digital marketing skills gap. They found that when it comes to brands, nearly 32% are looking for ads management skills when taking into account their brand growth and marketing efforts. The next most in-demand skill was again social media, with 16.38% of the responses.

As the race for talent becomes more challenging every year, this has allowed people to learn about things quickly and experiment with different fields—bringing talent to market faster. As an industry, we should put a focus on building skills and knowledge and looking for creative ways to collaborate to elevate the market. It allows for far more diversity and inclusion. This removes cost barriers for people with different socio-economic backgrounds, broadens the talent pools for companies, and provides more opportunities for candidates."
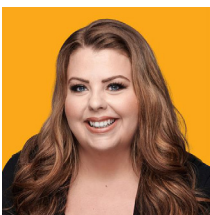

Tara Ataya
Chief People & Diversity Officer
Hootsuite

Participants Breakdown

To get a well-rounded understanding of digital marketing skills affecting various industries and business sizes, Innovate BC and Jelly Academy surveyed 630 professionals from marketing agencies, service based businesses, healthcare, hospitality, education, and more. The survey interviewed participants' from varying business sizes from micro (2-24 employees) to large businesses (500+ employees). All participants were located in Canada, with 45.67% of respondents located in a major city.

Choose the best option that describes your geographic location.

46.57% City
21.10% Suburban
17.23% Rural

Nearly 20% of respondents work in marketing.
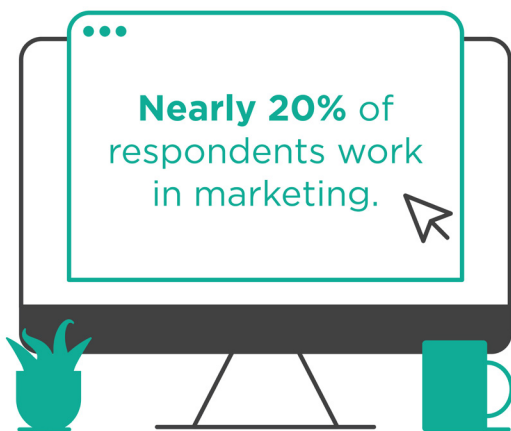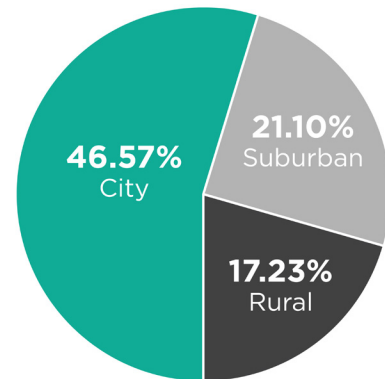
With nearly 20% of all participants currently working in the marketing industry, the survey provided great insight into what marketing professionals are looking for when hiring within the same industry. Other primary industries the participants are from include retail trade (18.91%), accommodation or food services (12.71%), education (11.35%), and healthcare (10.29%).

The majority, (89.71%) , of those surveyed came from either a small or micro sized business, or were solopreneurs, and 41.75% of respondents were actively hiring at the time the survey was conducted. This gives great insight into what active roles are being desired among average and small sized businesses.
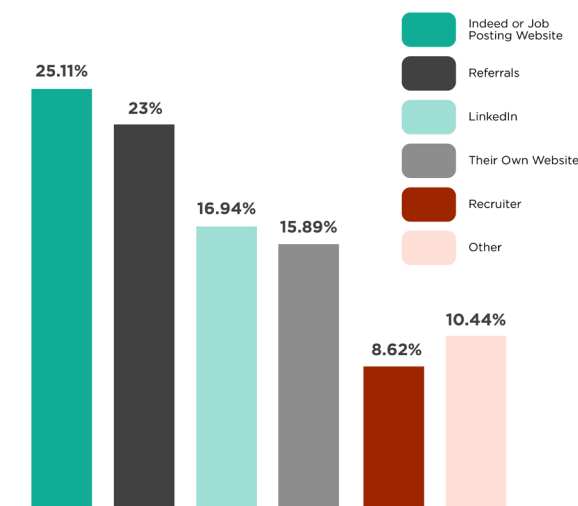
> **All participants were located in Canada, with 45.67% of respondents located in a major city. The majority, (89.71%) of those surveyed came from either a small or micro sized business**
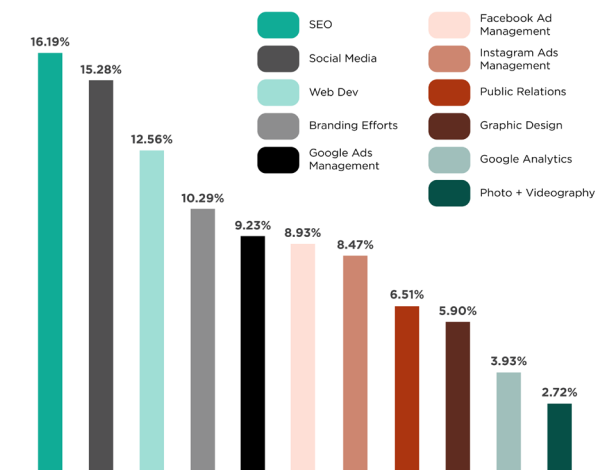
The Existing Skills Gap

This survey was able to determine the existing gaps within digital marketing roles based on participants' experiences in hiring for these positions and where their hiring was conducted. To understand where respondents were seeking new hires, we gathered data regarding their primary ways of hiring talent. 25% of respondents said they find most of their potential new hires from Indeed while another 23% rely on referrals. The remaining respondents either use LinkedIn or their own website for hiring postings. 42.06% of respondents said they request proof of credentials as part of the interview process to verify a new hire's certifications, while another 35% use LinkedIn - a great indication for job seeking professionals to keep their profile up to date and accurate.

How do you currently find new employees to fill vacancies?

- Indeed or Job Posting Website
- Referrals
- LinkedIn
- Their Own Website
- Recruiter
- Other

25.11% 23% 16.94% 15.89% 8.62% 10.44%

What sector of digital marketing do you have the hardest time finding employees for?

- SEO
- Social Media
- Web Dev
- Branding Efforts
- Google Ads Management
- Facebook Ad Management
- Instagram Ads Management
- Public Relations
- Graphic Design
- Google Analytics
- Photo + Videography

16.19% 15.28% 12.56% 10.29% 9.23% 8.93% 8.47% 6.51% 5.90% 3.93% 2.72%

Ads management roles had the highest number of responses for being the most difficult to hire for, at 26.63% of respondents. When it comes to hiring from the above platforms, 16.2% of respondents noted that the sector of digital marketing they find most difficult for finding candidates for was Search Engine Optimization (SEO). The next most difficult role to hire for was website development positions, with 15.28% of respondents in agreement. Very few respondents found public relations, graphic design, Google analytics, and photography and videography to be difficult to hire for.

Along with difficulty for hiring and finding candidates for particular digital marketing roles, 18.15% respondents found SEO to be the primary skill missing from potential new hires' resumes. 14.52% of respondents found that branding efforts were often missing as a skill on new hires' resumes. Not far behind, 13.31% of respondents found website development to be missing from new hires' resumes. Based on this, we can decipher that the 2 roles that respondents had difficulty hiring, SEO, and website development are likely based on the fact that there are few applicants with these skills listed. Interestingly, as digital advertising was a difficult skill to hire for, 23.2% of respondents found that ads management skills (Instagram, Facebook, and Google) were missing from new hires' resumes, indicating the gap within advertising training.

What skill do you find is missing from most digital marketer's resumes?
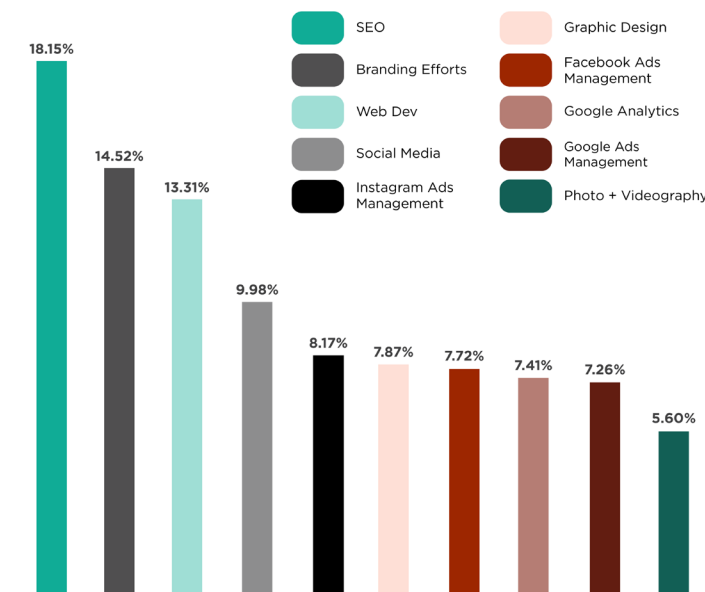
Legend:
- SEO
- Branding Efforts
- Web Dev
- Social Media
- Instagram Ads Management
- Graphic Design
- Facebook Ads Management
- Google Analytics
- Google Ads Management
- Photo + Videography

Bar values: 18.15%, 14.52%, 13.31%, 9.98%, 8.17%, 7.87%, 7.72%, 7.41%, 7.26%, 5.60%

> **"** Along with difficulty for hiring and finding candidates for particular digital marketing roles, 18.15% respondents found SEO to be the primary skill missing from potential new hires' resumes.

What Employers Are Seeking From New Hires

Training: Micro-Credentials and Certifications

Within this survey, we wanted to gather insights from respondents on what skills incited tangible growth for their companies. Of the respondents who hired employees with a combination of micro credentials and certifications, as well as work experience, 24% saw more growth within their company. 21% of respondents that hired employees with 2 year diplomas saw growth and 17.10% of respondents felt they saw the most growth with a Bachelor's degree.

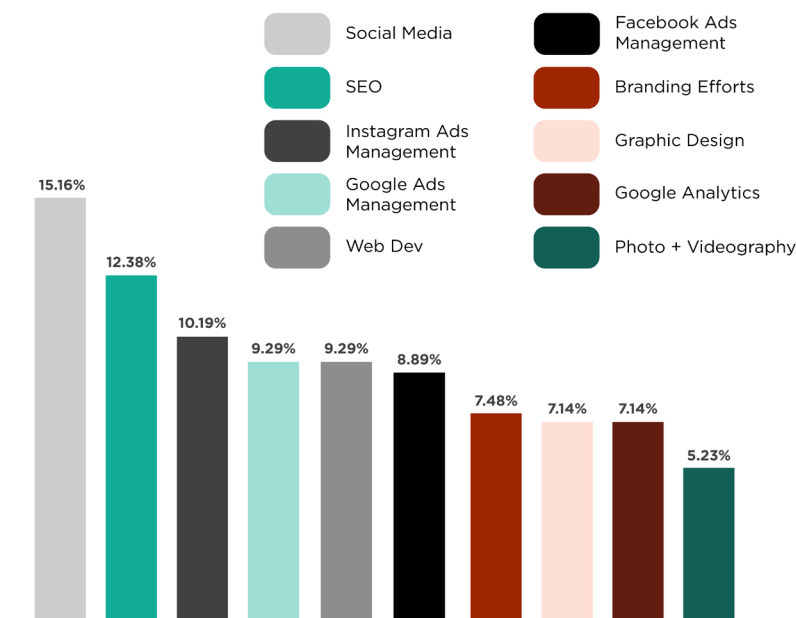### What level of training in employees has shown the most growth?
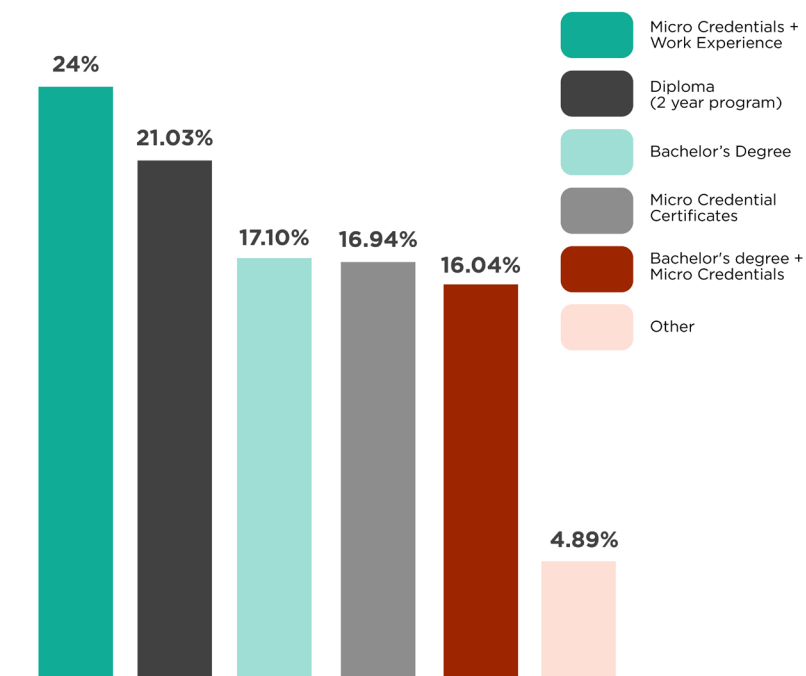
From this data, we can derive an impactful result that could shift industry hiring practices. Respondents who hired employees with micro credentials and work experience saw the most tangible results, creating more reason to encourage micro credential training to supplement work experience and post-secondary education.

Skills: Ads Management, Social Media, and SEO

When hiring for digital marketing roles, respondents felt the most important skills they were searching for are ads management, social media, and SEO. 28.4% of respondents answered either Google, Facebook, or Instagram ads were the most important skills on a digital marketer's resume and 15.16% noted social media, while 12.4% said SEO.

Most important skills that you look for on a resume when hiring for digital marketing roles?

Legend:
- Social Media
- SEO
- Instagram Ads Management
- Google Ads Management
- Web Dev
- Facebook Ads Management
- Branding Efforts
- Graphic Design
- Google Analytics
- Photo + Videography

Bar values: 15.16%, 12.38%, 10.19%, 9.29%, 9.29%, 8.89%, 7.48%, 7.14%, 7.14%, 5.23%

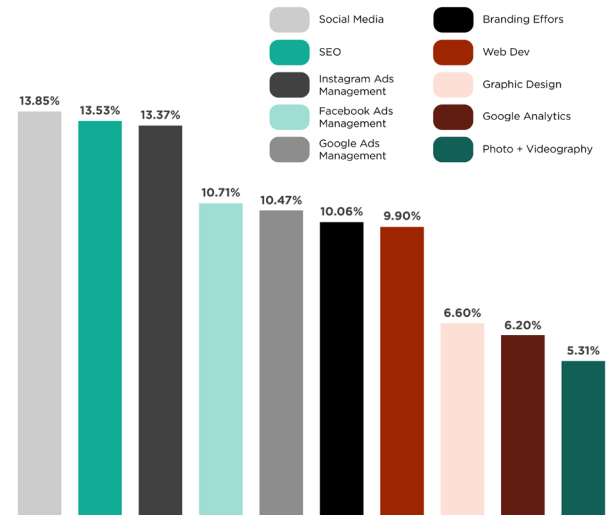The skills respondents valued the most when considering an employee for a promotion or raise in their marketing department were also digital ads management, SEO, and social media. 32.5% of participants considered ads management, with Instagram ads being the priority, 13.79% noted SEO and 12.6% said social media.

When surveying varying business types, we were able to collect more specifics when it came to desired skills.

Marketing Agencies: Ads Management

More than 34% of agencies surveyed are looking for their hires to have digital ads management skills when it comes to their company's growth. Similar to the above results, agencies are also searching for social media skills (13.85%) and SEO skills (13.53%).

What skill sets are key in employees to amplify a client's marketing efforts?

Social Media — Branding Effors
SEO — Web Dev
Instagram Ads Management — Graphic Design
Facebook Ads Management — Google Analytics
Google Ads Management — Photo + Videography

13.85% 13.53% 13.37% 10.71% 10.47% 10.06% 9.90% 6.60% 6.20% 5.31%

Brands: Ads Management

When it comes to brands, nearly 32% are looking for ads management skills when taking into account their brand growth and marketing efforts. The next most in-demand skill was again social media, with 16.38% of the responses.

What skill sets are key in employees for your brand's growth and marketing efforts?

Social Media — Google Ads Management
Branding Efforts — Web Dev
SEO — Graphic Design
Instagram Ads Management — Google Analytics
Facebook Ads Management — Photo + Videography

16.38% 13.10% 12.57% 12.17% 9.83% 9.76% 9.43% 6.82% 5.35% 4.61%
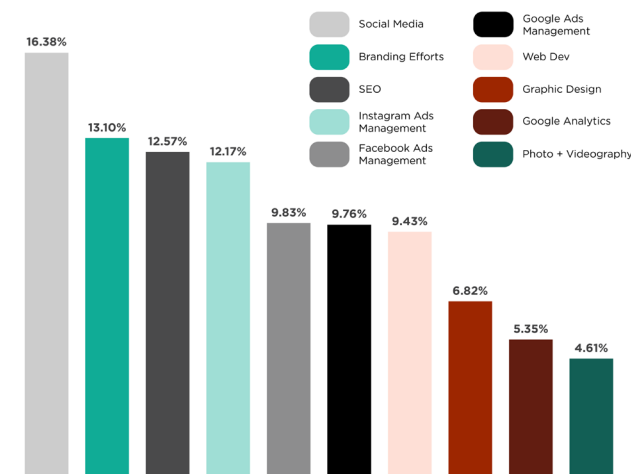
Small Business Owners: Ads Management

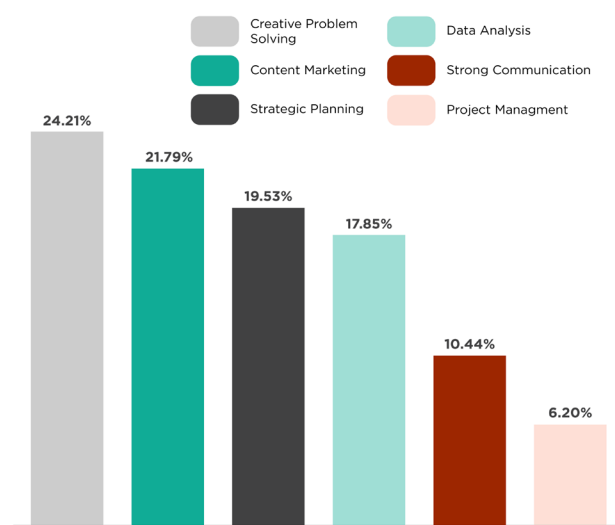When it came to participants who are small business owners, 30% noted ads management was also their most important skill when it comes to hiring for brand growth, with Instagram ads also leading the charge as the most important. Social media and SEO were also the next most important skill sets.

What skill sets are key in employees for your brand's growth?

Social Media
SEO
Instagram Ads Management
Web Dev
Branding Efforts
Facebook Ads Management
Google Ads Management
Graphic Design
Google Analytics
Photo + Videography

15.96%
13.60%
10.91%
10.91%
10.85%
9.67%
8.94%
7.14%
6.41%
5.62%

What is the most impressive skill on a potential hire's resume?

Creative Problem Solving
Content Marketing
Strategic Planning
Data Analysis
Strong Communication
Project Managment
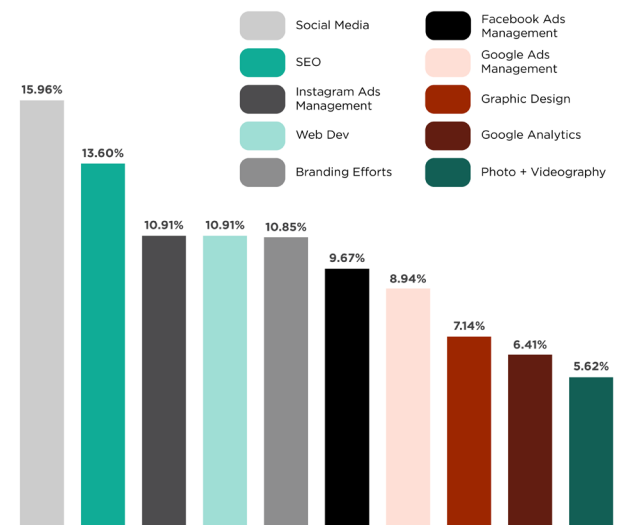
24.21%
21.79%
19.53%
17.85%
10.44%
6.20%

Additional Impressive Skills

When asked which skills are most impressive on a potential hires' resume, 24.21% of respondents noted creative problem solving. While 21.79% of respondents said content marketing.

24.21%
said the most impressive skill on a potential new hire's resume is creative problem solving.
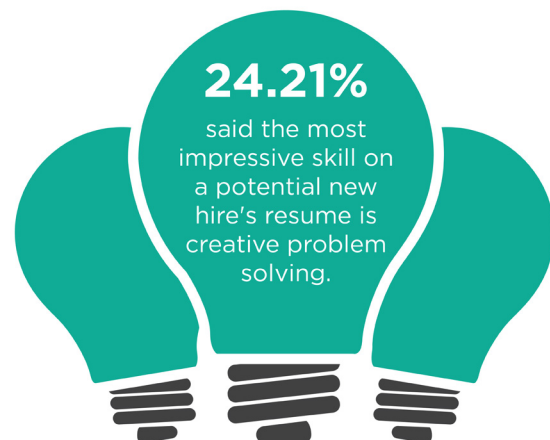
Conclusion

Based on the key findings from this survey, we were able to determine that ads management skills, including Google, Facebook, and Instagram, are currently the most in-demand skills and are equally the most difficult roles to hire for. We can conclude that ads management skills are what digital marketers should be eager to boost their resumes with as there is an existing space for them within the industry. In addition to this, SEO was equally a difficult role to hire for and a skill many respondents felt was missing from new hires' resumes. From these results, we can gather that there is opportunity to make SEO training available to allow for a growth of these roles. Within this sector of digital marketing. While social media was one of the most desired skills, it wasn't common to be missing from many resumes, indicating that supply is meeting the current demand for these roles.

Most in-demand skill: Ads Management
Most difficult skill to hire for: SEO
Most desired skill: Social Media Manamgent
Most tangible growth: Micro-credentials & previous work experience

These results clearly display there is a demand for digital marketing training across Canada to meet the current hiring needs. As digital marketing is key for providing growth for companies in varying industries, it is necessary to make training and schooling opportunities accessible for job seekers as well as in-house training. Rapid reskilling, micro credentialing, and reskilling are the primary education approaches to assist in boosting these skills due to their speed and accessibility for businesses. To understand each term, Jelly Academy blog outlines each in detail. Based on results from this survey, we can derive that the companies who experienced the most tangible growth, had hired employees with micro credentials and previous work experience, pointing to the value of micro credentialing programs for digital marketers. These insights will be valuable moving forward as the need for digital marketing roles continues to expand.

Rapid reskilling is the ideal approach to addressing this gap as it is convenient and offers quick solutions for in-house teams to improve upon their skills. This type of training provides in-depth and a comprehensive understanding of a particular skills set in a much quicker and expedited timeline. To approach this skills gap, it will be imperative that businesses promote the available rapid reskilling and micro credentials available for digital marketer's. This can be done through business partnerships, public facing social media promotion, and internal communications. Businesses who are experiencing current skills gaps would be encouraged to put in-house teams through this type of training in order to increase skills sets without having additional new hires.

For businesses looking to advance their team's digital marketing skills or promote to other digital marketers looking to grow within their career, there are a variety of micro credential training programs and diplomas across Canada that will support you on your journey.

Check out the many industry-recognized programs below to get going on your digital marketing training as well as this blog that includes top Canadian micro credential courses that have corporate partners.

BCIT - Marketing Management Diploma

BCIT - Micro Credentialing Programs

BrainStation - Micro Credentialing Program

Conestoga College - Digital Marketing Micro Credential

Google Grow Certificates

Jelly Academy - Micro Credentialing Program

Lighthouse Labs - Micro Credentialing Program

Meta Blueprint - Digital Marketing Micro Credential

SEMRush - Micro Credentialing Program

Stenberg College - Marketing Diploma

Toronto School of Management - Digital Marketing Diploma

UFV - Digital Marketing Micro Credential

University Canada West - Social Media Marketing

About Innovate BC

Innovate BC helps foster innovation in B.C. so that British Columbians in all regions of the province can benefit from a thriving, s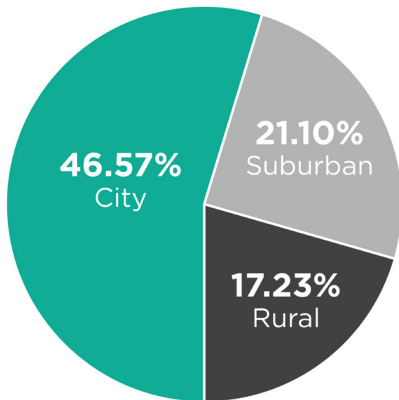ustainable and inclusive innovation economy. A Crown Agency of British Columbia, Innovate BC funds and delivers programs that support the growth of the B.C. economy by helping companies start and scale, train talent that meets labour market needs, and encourage technology development, commercialization and adoption.

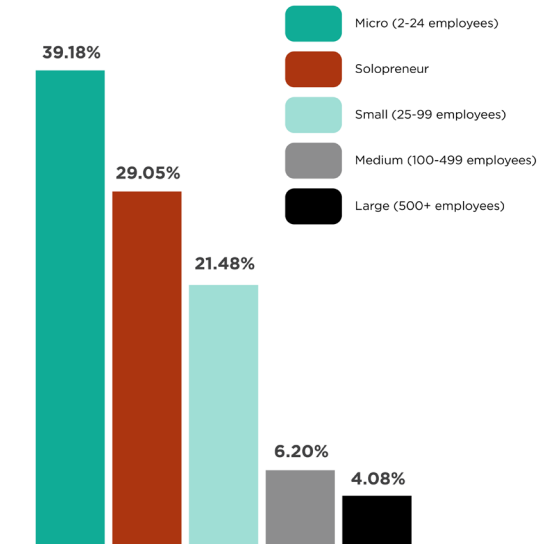Learn more about Innovate BC at www.innovatebc.ca
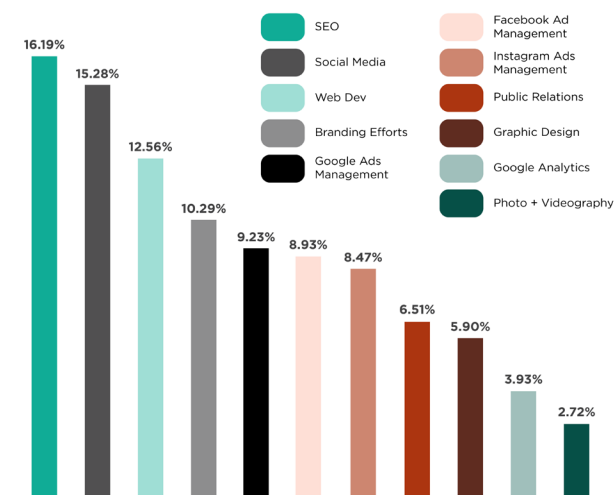
Appendix A - Survey Data Infographics

Choose the best option that describes your geographic location.

- **46.57%** City
- **21.10%** Suburban
- **17.23%** Rural

What size is your company?

- 39.18%
- 29.05%
- 21.48%
- 6.20%
- 4.08%

Legend:
- Micro (2-24 employees)
- Solopreneur
- Small (25-99 employees)
- Medium (100-499 employees)
- Large (500+ employees)

What sector of digital marketing do you have the hardest time finding employees for?

- 16.19%
- 15.28%
- 12.56%
- 10.29%
- 9.23%
- 8.93%
- 8.47%
- 6.51%
- 5.90%
- 3.93%
- 2.72%

Legend:
- SEO
- Social Media
- Web Dev
- Branding Efforts
- Google Ads Management
- Facebook Ad Management
- Instagram Ads Management
- Public Relations
- Graphic Design
- Google Analytics
- Photo + Videography

What skill do you find is missing from most digital marketer's resumes?

- 18.15%
- 14.52%
- 13.31%
- 9.98%
- 8.17%
- 7.87%
- 7.72%
- 7.41%
- 7.26%
- 5.60%

Legend:
- SEO
- Branding Efforts
- Web Dev
- Social Media
- Instagram Ads Management
- Graphic Design
- Facebook Ads Management
- Google Analytics
- Google Ads Management
- Photo + Videography

Most important skills that you look for on a resume when hiring for digital marketing roles?

Legend:
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- SEO
- Instagram Ads Management
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- Web Dev
- Facebook Ads Management
- Branding Efforts
- Graphic Design
- Google Analytics
- Photo + Videography

Values: 15.16%, 12.38%, 10.19%, 9.29%, 9.29%, 8.89%, 7.48%, 7.14%, 7.14%, 5.23%

What skill sets are key in employees to amplify a client's marketing efforts?

Legend:
- Social Media
- SEO
- Instagram Ads Management
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- Branding Effors
- Web Dev
- Graphic Design
- Google Analytics
- Photo + Videography

Values: 13.85%, 13.53%, 13.37%, 10.71%, 10.47%, 10.06%, 9.90%, 6.60%, 6.20%, 5.31%

What skill sets are key in employees for your brand's growth and marketing efforts?

Legend:
- Social Media
- Branding Efforts
- SEO
- Instagram Ads Management
- Facebook Ads Management
- Google Ads Management
- Web Dev
- Graphic Design
- Google Analytics
- Photo + Videography

Values: 16.38%, 13.10%, 12.57%, 12.17%, 9.83%, 9.76%, 9.43%, 6.82%, 5.35%, 4.61%

What skill sets are key in employees for your brand's growth?

Legend:
- Social Media
- SEO
- Instagram Ads Management
- Web Dev
- Branding Efforts
- Facebook Ads Management
- Google Ads Management
- Graphic Design
- Google Analytics
- Photo + Videography

Values: 15.96%, 13.60%, 10.91%, 10.91%, 10.85%, 9.67%, 8.94%, 7.14%, 6.41%, 5.62%

24

What is the most impressive skill on a potential hire's resume?

Creative Problem Solving
Content Marketing
Strategic Planning
Data Analysis
Strong Communication
Project Managment

24.21%
21.79%
19.53%
17.85%
10.44%
6.20%

What industry is your business in?

Marketing
Retail Trade
Accommodation or Food Services
Education
Healthcare
Technology
Construction
Other

19.67%
18.91%
12.71%
11.35%
10.29%
8.93%
2.57%
15.57%
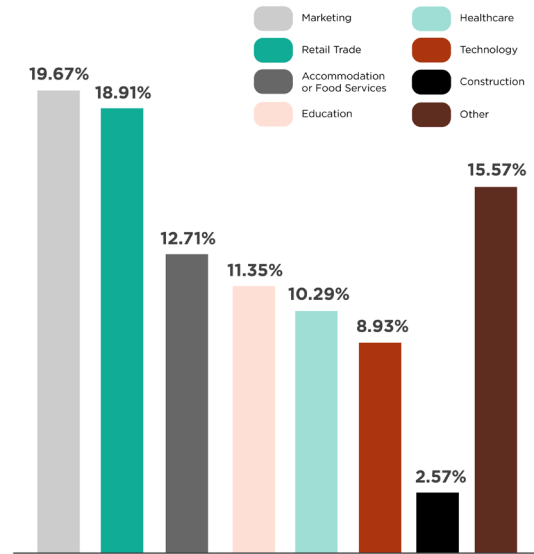
Is your company currently hiring?
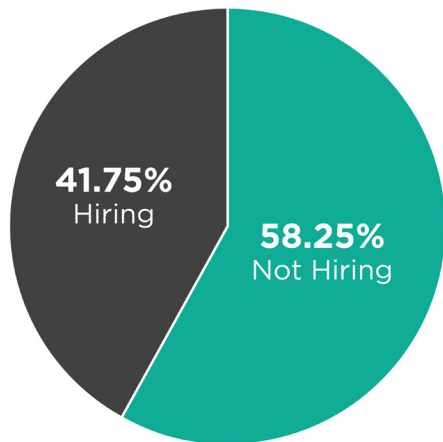
41.75%
Hiring

58.25%
Not Hiring

How do you currently find new employees to fill vacancies?

Indeed or Job Posting Website
Referrals
LinkedIn
Their Own Website
Recruiter
Other

25.11%
23%
16.94%
15.89%
8.62%
10.44%

What level of training in employees has shown the most growth?

24%
21.03%
17.10%
16.94%
16.04%
4.89%

- Micro Credentials + Work Experience
- Diploma (2 year program)
- Bachelor's Degree
- Micro Credential Certificates
- Bachelor's degree + Micro Credentials
- Other
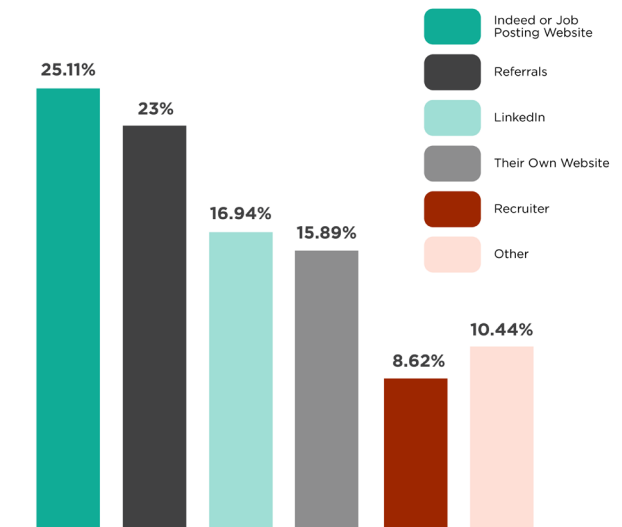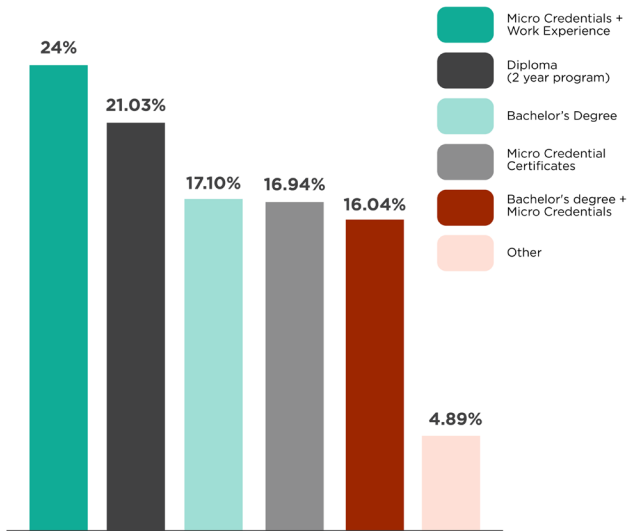
How do you verify a potential hire has the skills they noted they have?

42.06%
35%
17.40%
5.24%

- Request proof of credentials as part of the interview process
- Review LinkedIn for proof of credentials
- Verbal Confirmation
- Other
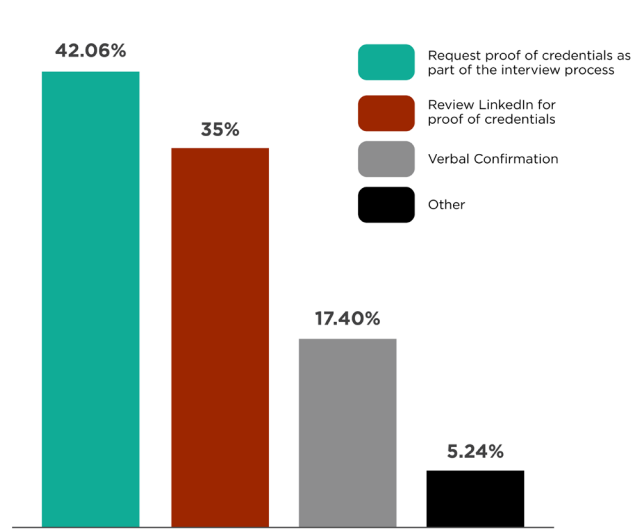
What skill upgrades do you look for when considering a promotion or raise in a Digital Marketer?

13.79%
12.64%
11.53%
10.51%
10.42%
10.33%
9.98%
7.17%
6.82%
6.78%
5.53%

- SEO
- Social Media
- IG Ads Management
- Google Ads Management
- Website Development
- Photography & Videography
- Facebook Ads Management
- Branding Efforts
- Graphic Design
- Copywriting
- Google Analytics