



# IDM PROFESSIONAL SKILLS CENSUS 2018

The 'quantum marketing' skills challenge.

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In partnership with:



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# INTRODUCTION

**Welcome to the very first edition of the IDM Skills Census report, which we have created to investigate the skills marketers use day-to-day, as well as those needed to progress in their career.**

Marketing is evolving faster than ever, due to rapid technological advancement, proliferation of data and increasingly savvy consumers. In order to keep pace with the changing environment, attract and retain talented staff, organisations need to cultivate a culture of continuous upskilling and professional development. Relevant skills are essential for remaining competitive, delivering innovation and taking advantage of new opportunities.

The IDM Skills Census looks into 33 skills, grouped into five categories: Content/Creative, Data, Direct/Digital, Management and Strategy/Planning. Overall, the study highlights how marketing roles are becoming richer, more data-driven and strategic in their nature. We are witnessing a conflation of roles and skills, with marketers needing to think more like data analysts and data specialists needing to think more like marketers.

All five categories included in the IDM Skills Census survey show skills gaps, meaning that marketers anticipate having to use a wider portfolio of competencies and keep updating their existing skills to advance their careers. In fact, with 27 of the 33 skills showing a gap, the IDM Skills Census helps employers and marketers prioritise the most immediate and important areas. The survey suggests that employers need to invest urgently in training in 13 out of 33 skills, while also revealing that only 1 in 2 (51%) marketers have had training in any of these top priority skills.

It is important that employers and marketers recognise that in the fast-changing environment upskilling is important for even highly experienced staff, especially when it comes to digital or managerial skills. So it's worrying that less than 1 in 2 (47%) of the respondents with over five years' tenure in their current company have had training in any of the 33 skills listed in the survey.

Employers should rest assured that investing in professional training courses for employees does pay off. The IDM Skills Census shows that the majority of respondents applied their newly acquired skills in current workplaces. Less than a quarter (23%) took the skills gained in training elsewhere, which sometimes could be due to the lack of opportunities to apply those skills and insufficient recognition from current employers.

Training is essential for closing skills gaps and boosting employee productivity and engagement. In order for a training course to be effective and deliver a return on investment, it is important to define training outcomes, how and where new skills will be applied, and choose a course that is assessed or certified. The IDM can help organisations and marketers achieve the best outcomes.

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**Jane Cave,  
MD of the IDM**



# FOREWORD - SMART INSIGHTS

Our passion at Smart Insights is helping marketers develop their skills by learning about the latest digital marketing trends and best practices they can apply to support digital transformation in their businesses. So, I'm delighted to be involved in shaping this first IDM marketing skills survey and summarising some of the many implications for skills development for you and your teams.

## FOUR ACTIONABLE TAKEAWAYS FROM THIS RESEARCH



### **1 Focus on the in-demand transferable skills:**

The research shows that the complexity of modern marketing demands good project management and data analysis skills. Developing a strategic integrated communications planning approach is rightly rated extremely important by the majority.



### **2 Understand success-factors for channel optimisation:**

The many skills for inbound marketing and traditional marketing channels identified in this report shows the demand for marketers who have sufficient knowledge of channels to work with and challenge in-house specialists and agencies when reviewing performance and optimisation.



### **3 Improve data analysis and optimisation skills and a knowledge of AI:**

In common with other marketing skills surveys, this research shows the importance of customer insights, data analysis and reporting to career progression. In future, we will have opportunities to apply Artificial Intelligence solutions, so I recommend you develop the knowledge of machine learning which is crucial to many marketing applications of AI.



### **4 Develop your integrated lifecycle communications skills:**

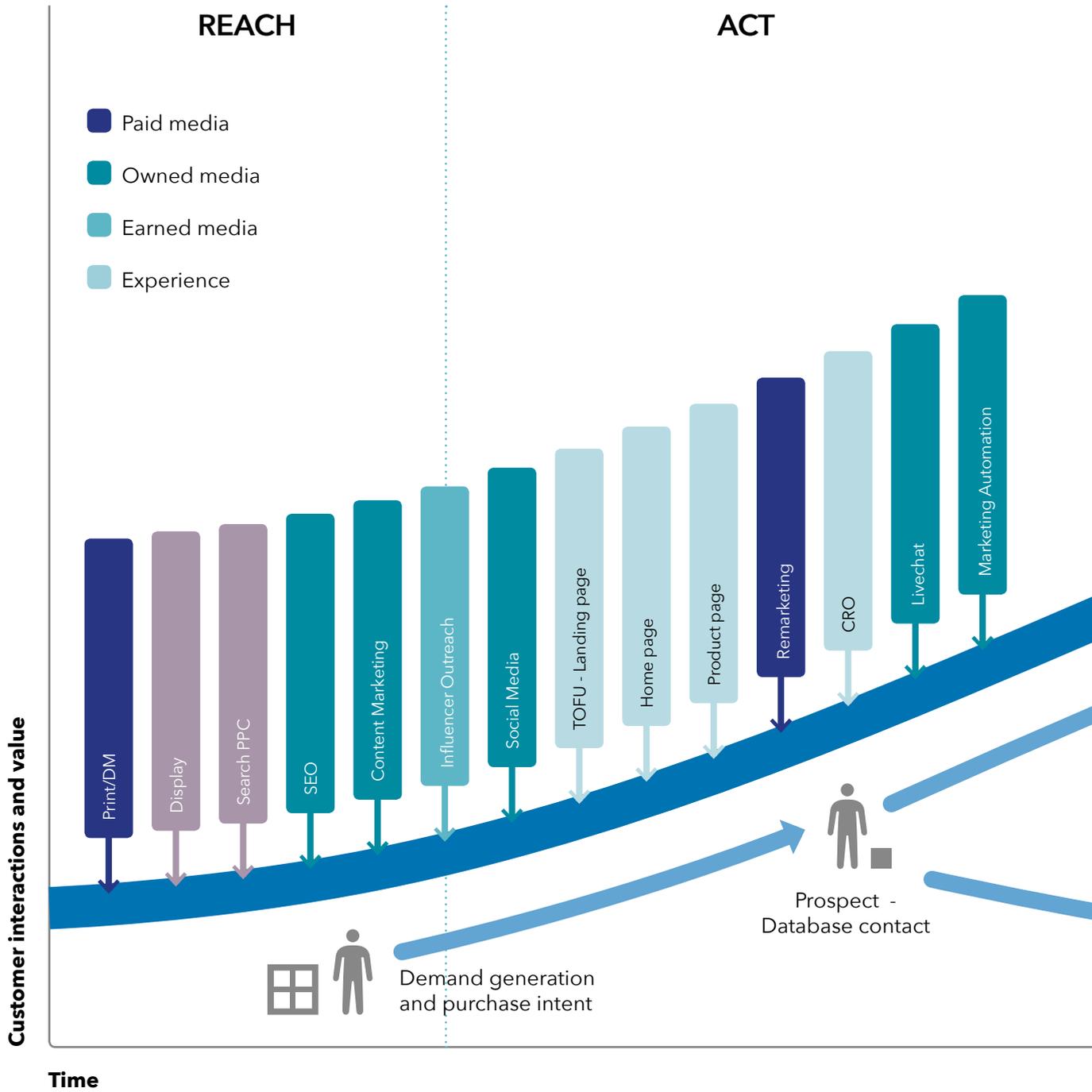
The report shows the substantial skills gap for many tactical marketing channel activities. Today, we need to deploy these both within campaigns, but also to support continuous 'always-on' customer lifecycle activities for customer acquisition and conversion as shown in this visual for the Smart Insights RACE planning framework.

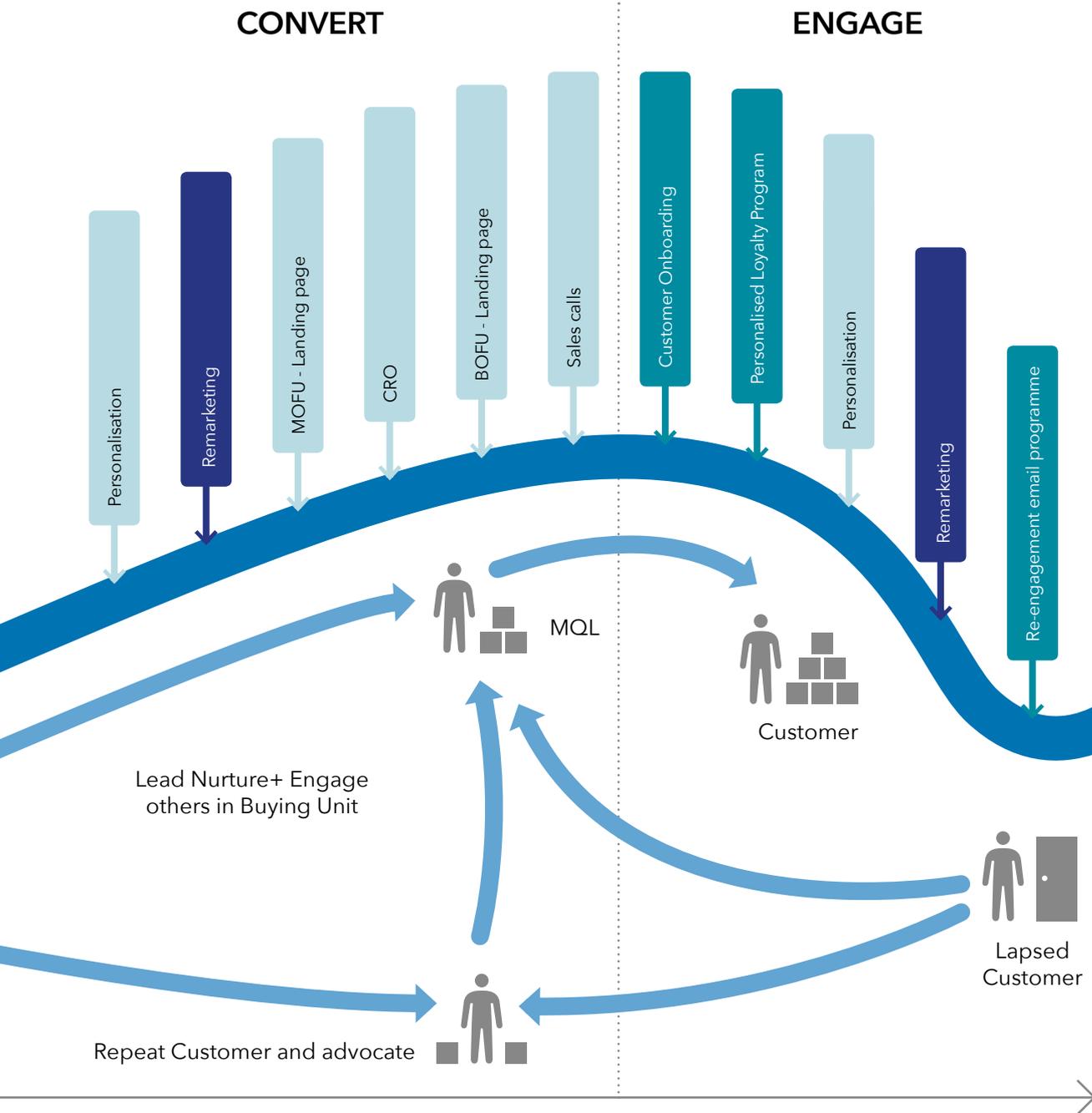
**Dave Chaffey F IDM,**  
Co-founder & Content Director  
of [smartinsights.com](https://www.smartinsights.com)



# SMART INSIGHTS PERSPECTIVE

Four actionable takeaways from this research





**Dave Chaffey F IDM,  
Co-founder & Content Director of Smart Insights**

Dave Chaffey, F IDM is an IDM course tutor, author of Digital Marketing Strategy, Implementation and Practice and content director of digital transformation advice platform Smart Insights. He is creator of the Smart Insights RACE planning framework which defines 25 key activities to plan, manage

and optimise digital marketing you can review in this digital marketing skills assessment.

View the Digital Skills Assessment: [smartinsights.com/personalized-learning-plan/](https://smartinsights.com/personalized-learning-plan/)



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Marketers say the most important skills in their current roles are Project Management (77%) and Communications Planning & Strategy (77%), Customer/User Experience (76%), Email Marketing (74%), and Data Analysis & Reporting (72%).

When asked about skills that were important for career progression, Communications Planning & Strategy (87%), Analysing Customer Data/Insight (83%), Data Analysis & Reporting (83%), Project Management (83%), Optimising Campaigns (81%) and Customer/User Experience (81%).

The Data and Management skills categories present the biggest gaps between current and future importance - 13% and 10% respectively. Strategy/Planning has a smaller gap of 6%, but remains the most important area overall in both current roles and career progression.

In all, 27 of the 33 skills show a gap in perceived importance for career progression and current roles. The six skills that don't are those that are already well-established: Direct Marketing, Email Marketing, Copywriting, Producing Content or Creative Work, Event Planning and Compliance and Legal.

**There are 13 top priority skills, where the skills are highly important for career progression and skills gap is the biggest, which include skills in four different areas:**

## **Direct/Digital skills**

- Mobile marketing
- Marketing automation & integration
- Search marketing

## **Data skills**

- Analysing customer data/insight
- Data analysis & reporting
- Data & database management



## **Management skills**

- Appraising employee performance
- Client/stakeholder management
- Presentation/public speaking
- Marketing finance

## **Strategy/planning**

- Optimising campaigns
- Briefing agencies & evaluating performance
- Communications strategy & planning

Over a third (38%) of marketers had no training in the last 12 months on any of the 33 skills, but for those that have been in their current role for five years or more this rises to almost half (47%). While marketers that have been in their current company for two years or less are most likely to have had training in the last 12 months.

The vast majority of marketers who took a training course did so in order to increase their knowledge base and/or help career progression, with 91% and 71% respectively.

Further analysis reveals marketers' roles tend to fall into one of five profiles: Data-driven marketers (27%), Generalists (24%), Strategic marketers (21%), Response marketers (19%) and Data specialists (8%). Each with a unique role and outlook on the key skills they need today and in the future.

For the majority of respondents (52%), taking a course led to recognition within their existing organisation with 28% receiving a promotion. Less than a quarter of the respondents (23%) took their newly acquired skills elsewhere, which sometimes could be due to the lack of opportunities to apply those skills and insufficient recognition from current employer. However, for 4 out of 10 (39%) training did not result in any outcome beyond the direct skills acquired.

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# IMPORTANCE OF SKILLS IN THE MARKETING INDUSTRY

One of the key challenges currently facing the marketing industry is ensuring employee skills stay relevant in the fast-changing environment. To address this challenge, employers need to understand what skills are important for marketers' future career progression vis-à-vis their current roles. They need to identify if there is a skills gap, and close that gap by offering relevant training to their employees.

To help the marketing industry understand where there might be skills gaps, the IDM Skills Census asked marketers to rate the importance of different skills in their current roles and for career progression, on a five-point scale ranging from "not important at all" to "extremely important". The list included 33 skills grouped into five categories: Content/Creative, Data, Direct/Digital, Management and Strategy/Planning.

## 33 marketing skills and corresponding categories used in the survey



Skills category	Skills
<b>Content/Creative</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Content marketing</li> <li>Copywriting</li> <li>Digital/web development</li> <li>Graphic/web design</li> <li>Producing content or creative work</li> <li>Video production</li> </ul>
<b>Data</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analysing customer data/insight</li> <li>Artificial intelligence/machine learning</li> <li>Data &amp; database management</li> <li>Data analysis &amp; reporting</li> <li>Programmatic</li> </ul>
<b>Direct/Digital</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affiliate marketing</li> <li>Direct marketing</li> <li>Display advertising</li> <li>Email marketing</li> <li>Marketing automation &amp; integration</li> <li>Mobile marketing</li> <li>Search marketing</li> <li>Social Media</li> </ul>
<b>Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appraising employee performance</li> <li>Client/stakeholder management</li> <li>Compliance and legal</li> <li>Marketing finance</li> <li>Negotiation/Sales</li> <li>Presentation/Public speaking</li> <li>Project management</li> <li>Public relations</li> </ul>
<b>Strategy/Planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Briefing &amp; evaluating creative work</li> <li>Briefing agencies &amp; evaluating performance</li> <li>Communications planning &amp; strategy</li> <li>Customer/user experience</li> <li>Event planning</li> <li>Optimising campaigns</li> </ul>

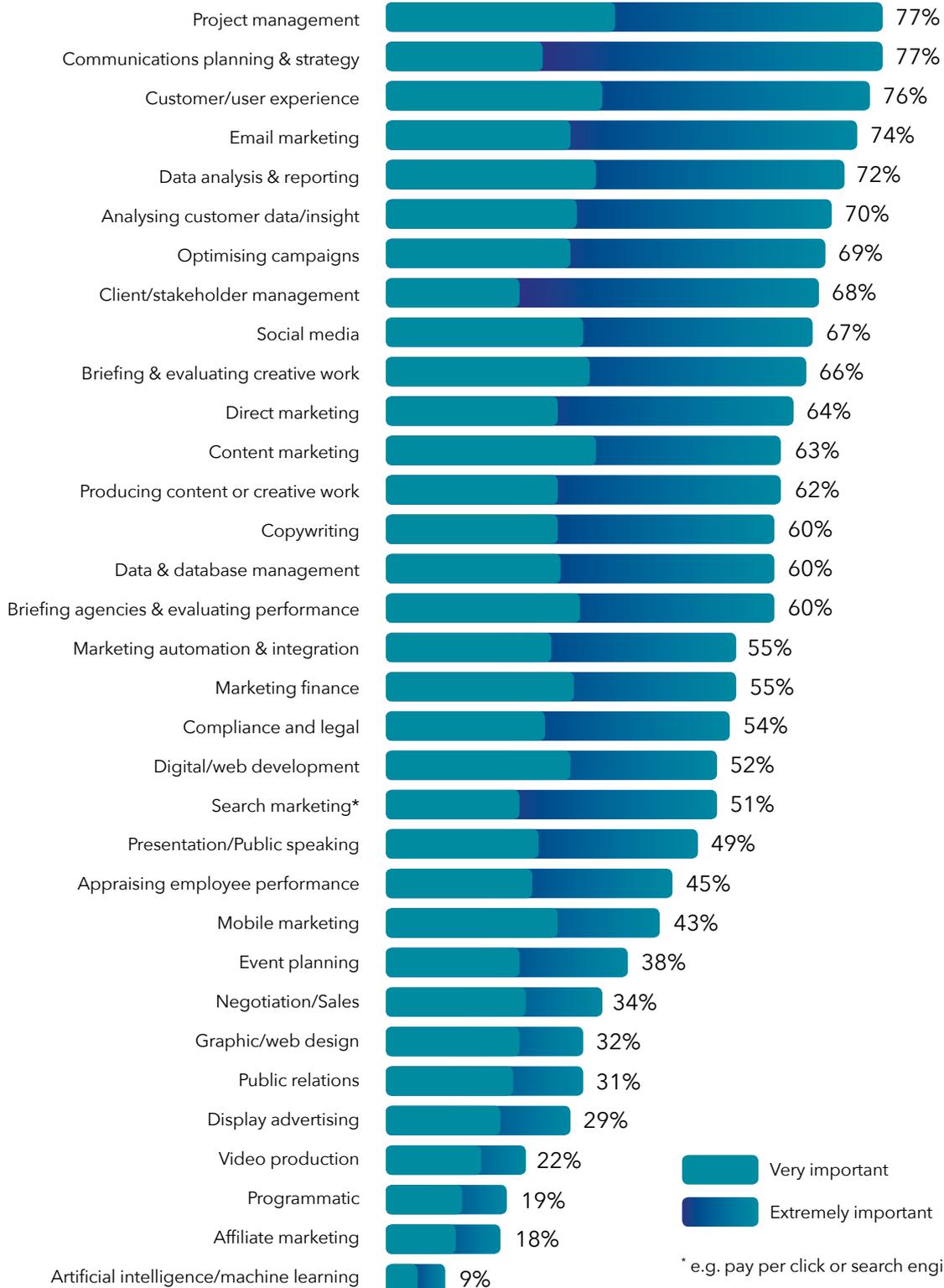
## HOW IMPORTANT OR UNIMPORTANT ARE THE FOLLOWING SKILL AREAS IN YOUR CURRENT ROLE?

On average respondents to the IDM Survey rated more universal skills as the most important in their current roles. Project Management and Communications Planning & Strategy, with 77% of respondents saying they were very or extremely important, top the ranking. Customer/User Experience (76%), Email Marketing (74%), Data Analysis & Reporting (72%) make the Top 5.

Emerging skills like Artificial Intelligence/ Machine Learning (rated by only 9% as very or extremely important in current roles), Programmatic (19%) and Video Production (22%) or more niche skills, like Affiliate Marketing (18%), Display Advertising (29%), Public Relations (31%) and Graphic/Web Design (32%), make the bottom of the ranking.



**% of responses 'very important' or 'extremely important'<sup>†</sup>**



## HOW IMPORTANT OR UNIMPORTANT ARE THE FOLLOWING SKILL AREAS FOR YOUR CAREER PROGRESSION?

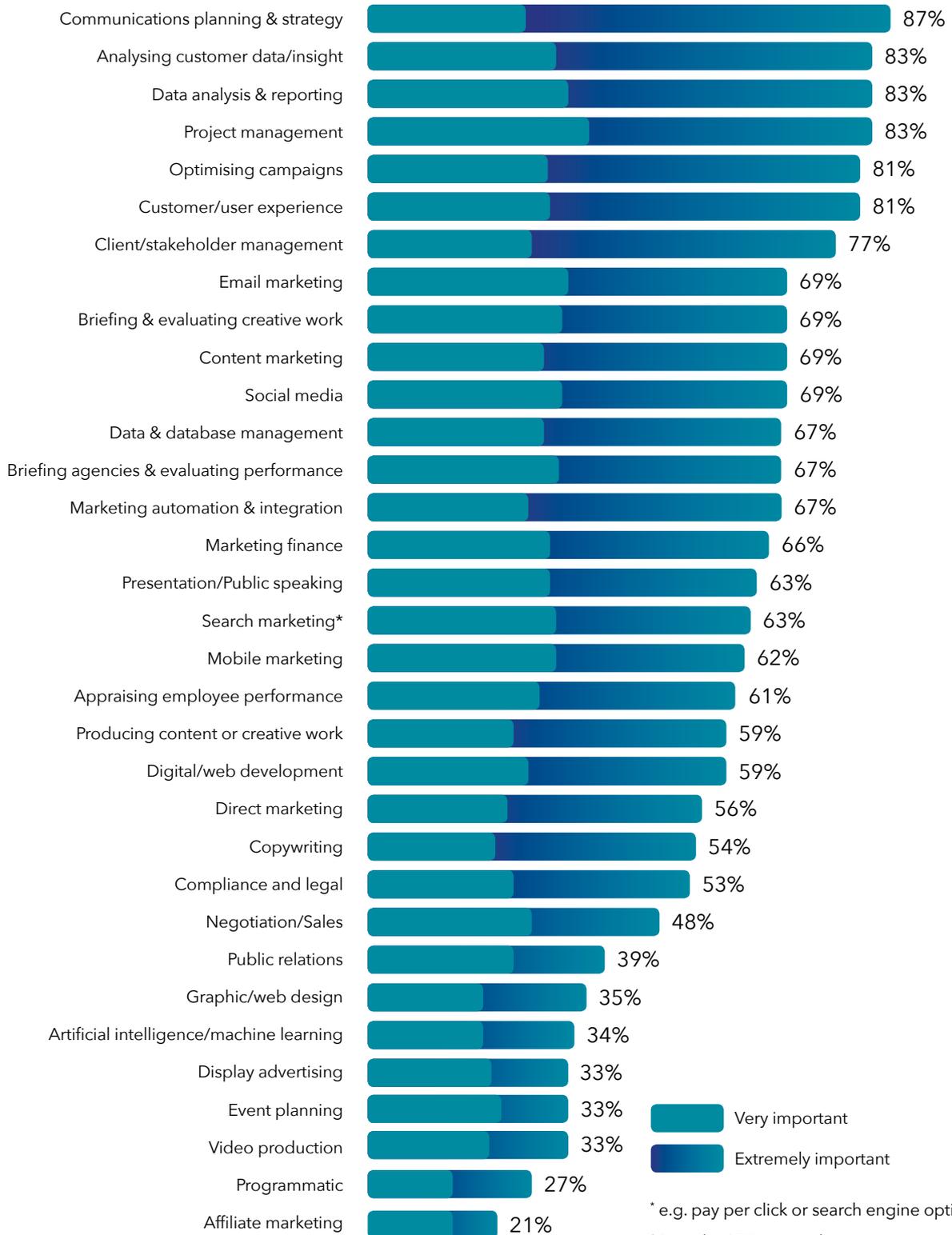
Next, the respondents were asked how important the skills for career progression were: either to achieve a promotion or adapt to the rapid pace of change and new challenges in the marketing industry.

It's notable that the percentage of respondents rating skills as very or extremely important has increased in most areas. This signals that marketers feel they need to improve their existing competencies, get training in emerging areas, and anticipate having to use a bigger portfolio of skills to progress in their careers and remain competitive.

When asked to look forward in their careers, *Analysing Customer Data/Insight* moved up the ranks significantly to the number two position, with 83% of respondents rating it as very or extremely important. Its sister skill *Data Analysis and Reporting*, also at 83%, has improved its position to number three, whilst *Optimising Campaigns*, which heavily relies on data, entered the Top 5 with 81%.



**% of responses 'very important' or 'extremely important'<sup>†</sup>**



Very important

Extremely important

\* e.g. pay per click or search engine optimisation

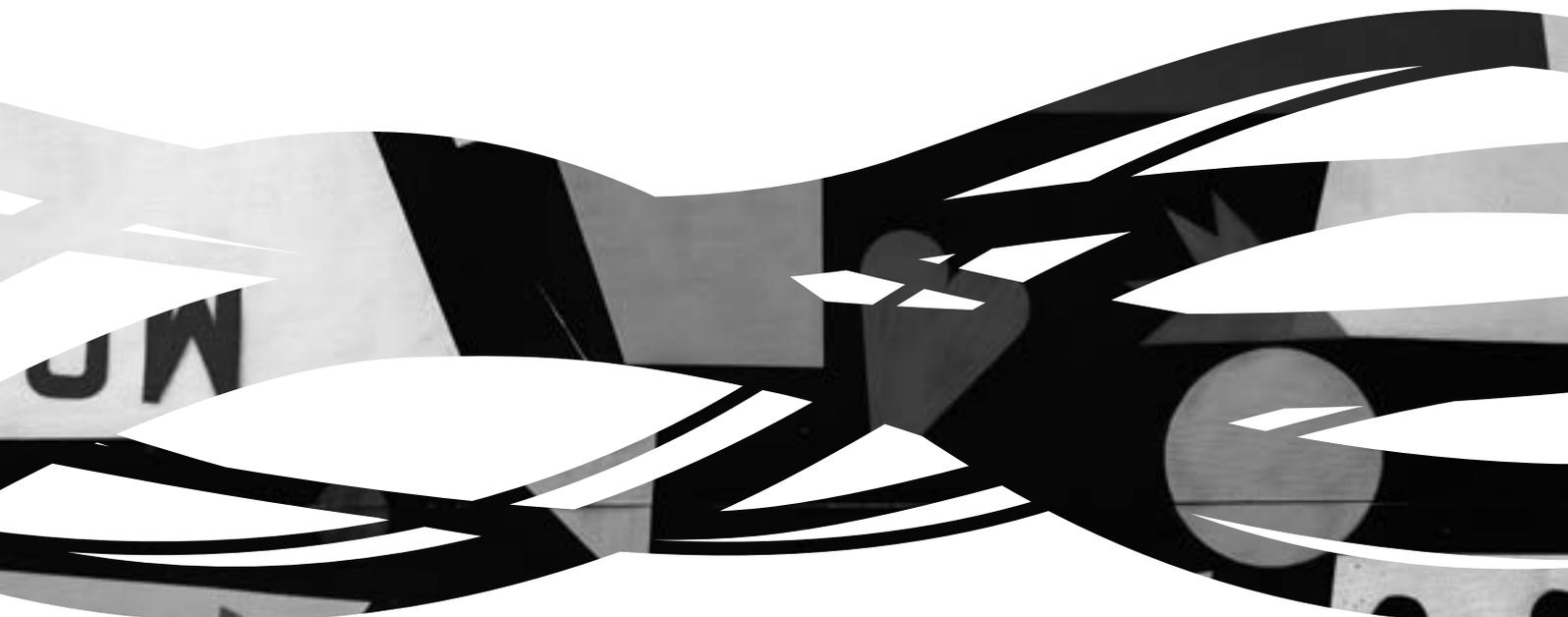
<sup>†</sup> Sample: 377 respondents

## SKILLS RANKING IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE\* IN RESPONDENTS' CURRENT ROLES, FOR CAREER PROGRESSION, AND CHANGE IN RANK

Comparing current to future importance and their choices also allows us to examine the change in skills' ranking order. With mobile now accounting for 43% of all digital ad spend and driving most of the growth in the industry (Source: IAB H1 2017 Ad Spend Report), Mobile Marketing skills area was one of the two biggest improvers in ranking, moving up six positions to no.18.



Other biggest gainers are data competencies, digital marketing areas, which heavily rely on data, and management or 'soft' skills - all important skills to have in the era of Artificial Intelligence and automation. Employers need to urgently invest in training staff in these areas to harness innovation in the industry.



\* % of responses 'very important' or 'extremely important' from a sample of 377 respondents

Current Role Rank	Career Progression Rank	Skills	Change in Importance
1	1	Communications planning & strategy	+ 1
2	2	Analysing customer data/insight	+ 4
3	3	Data analysis & reporting	+ 2
4	4	Project management	- 3
5	5	Optimising campaigns	+ 2
6	6	Customer/user experience	- 3
7	7	Client/stakeholder management	+ 1
8	8	Briefing & evaluating creative work	+ 2
9	9	Email marketing	- 5
10	10	Content marketing	+ 2
11	11	Social media	- 2
12	12	Data & database management	+ 3
13	13	Briefing agencies & evaluating performance	+ 3
14	14	Marketing automation & integration	+ 3
15	15	Marketing finance	+ 3
16	16	Presentation/Public speaking	+ 6
17	17	Search marketing	+ 4
18	18	Mobile marketing	+ 6
19	19	Appraising employee performance	+ 4
20	20	Producing content or creative work	- 7
21	21	Digital/web development	- 1
22	22	Direct marketing	- 11
23	23	Copywriting	- 9
24	24	Compliance and legal	- 5
25	25	Negotiation/Sales	+ 1
26	26	Public relations	+ 2
27	27	Graphic/web design	+ 0
28	28	Artificial intelligence/machine learning	+ 5
29	29	Display advertising	+ 0
30	30	Event planning	- 5
31	31	Video production	- 1
32	32	Programmatic	- 1
33	33	Affiliate marketing	- 1

# SKILLS GAP ANALYSIS

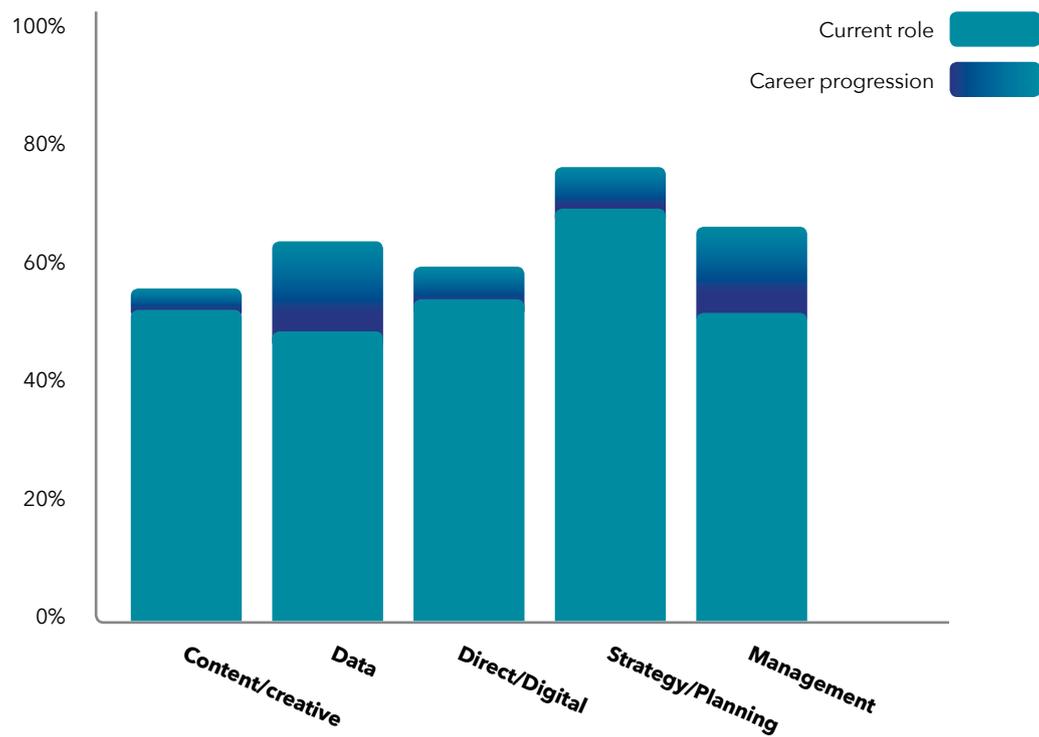
**Skills gap analysis helps employers and marketers identify areas, where they need to invest time and money in order to innovate, remain competitive, address challenges and take advantage of future opportunities. By looking at the differences in the importance of skills in our survey for the respondents' career progression vs. current roles, we can see where the biggest perceived skill gaps lie.**

All five categories show skills gaps, meaning that marketers believe they need to build skills to advance their careers. Data and Management present the biggest gaps of 13% and 10% respectively. Strategy/Planning has

a smaller gap of 6%, but remains the most important area overall in both, current roles and career progression.



## Skills importance\* for career progression vs. current role, and skills gaps by category



\* % of responses 'very important' or 'extremely important' from a sample of 377 respondents



## SKILLS GAP ANALYSIS CONTINUED

**Looking at each of the skill areas in detail. All but six of the 33 skills in the survey show a gap between perceived importance of skills for career progression and current roles.**

Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) are driving the 4th industrial revolution, which is already resulting in a rise in jobs requiring different skills. According to 2017 analysis from jobs site Indeed, the number of roles in AI has risen by 485% in the UK since 2014, and there

are twice as many jobs requiring AI/ML skills as there are applicants. Our survey shows that Artificial Intelligence /Machine Learning has the biggest gap with 25% difference between perceived importance for career progression and current roles.

The six skills which don't show a gap in perceived importance are those that are already well-established: Direct Marketing, Email Marketing, Copywriting, Producing Content or Creative Work, Event Planning and Compliance and Legal.



Current role

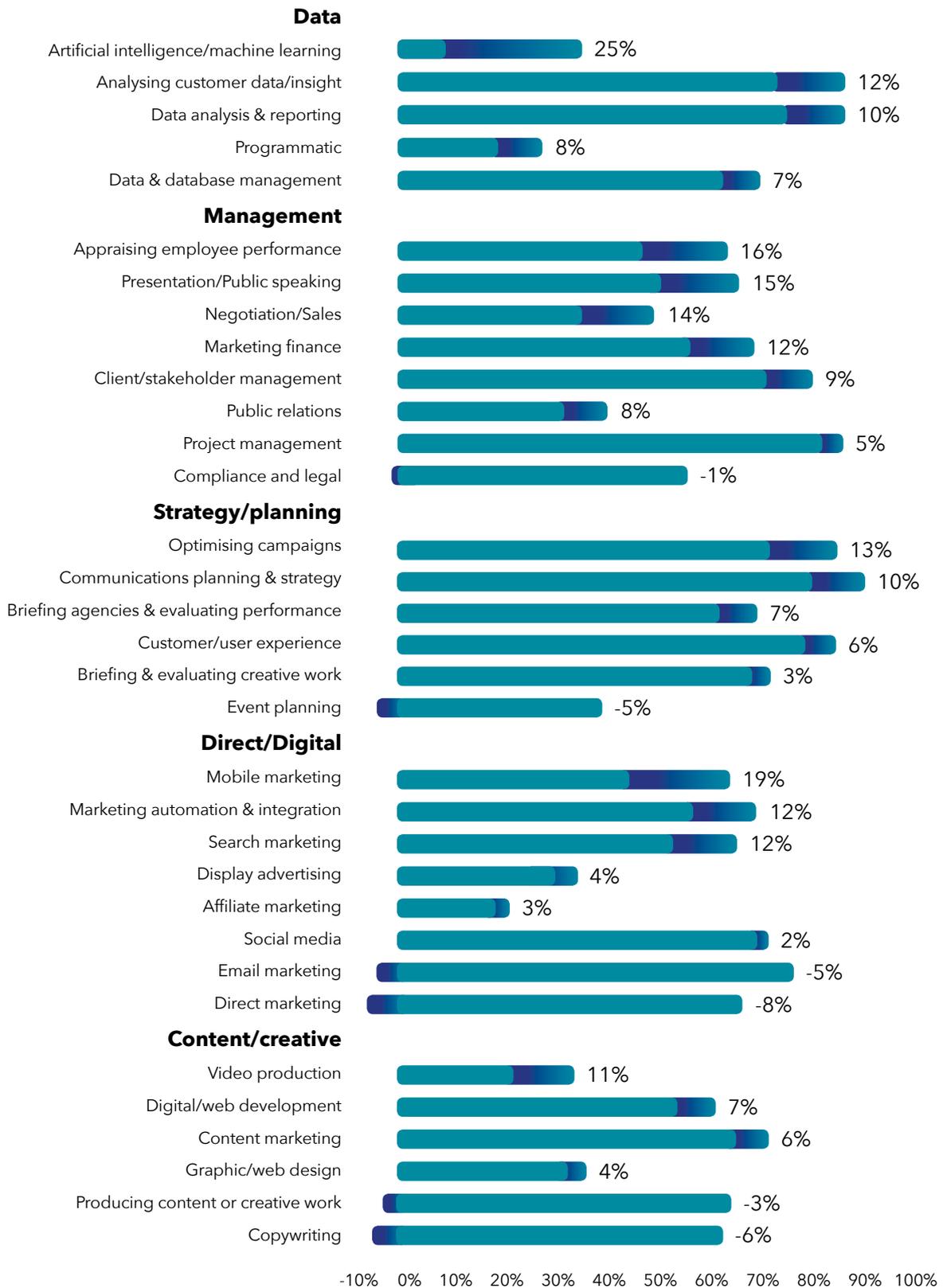


Career progression

\* % of responses 'very important' or 'extremely important' from a sample of 377 respondents

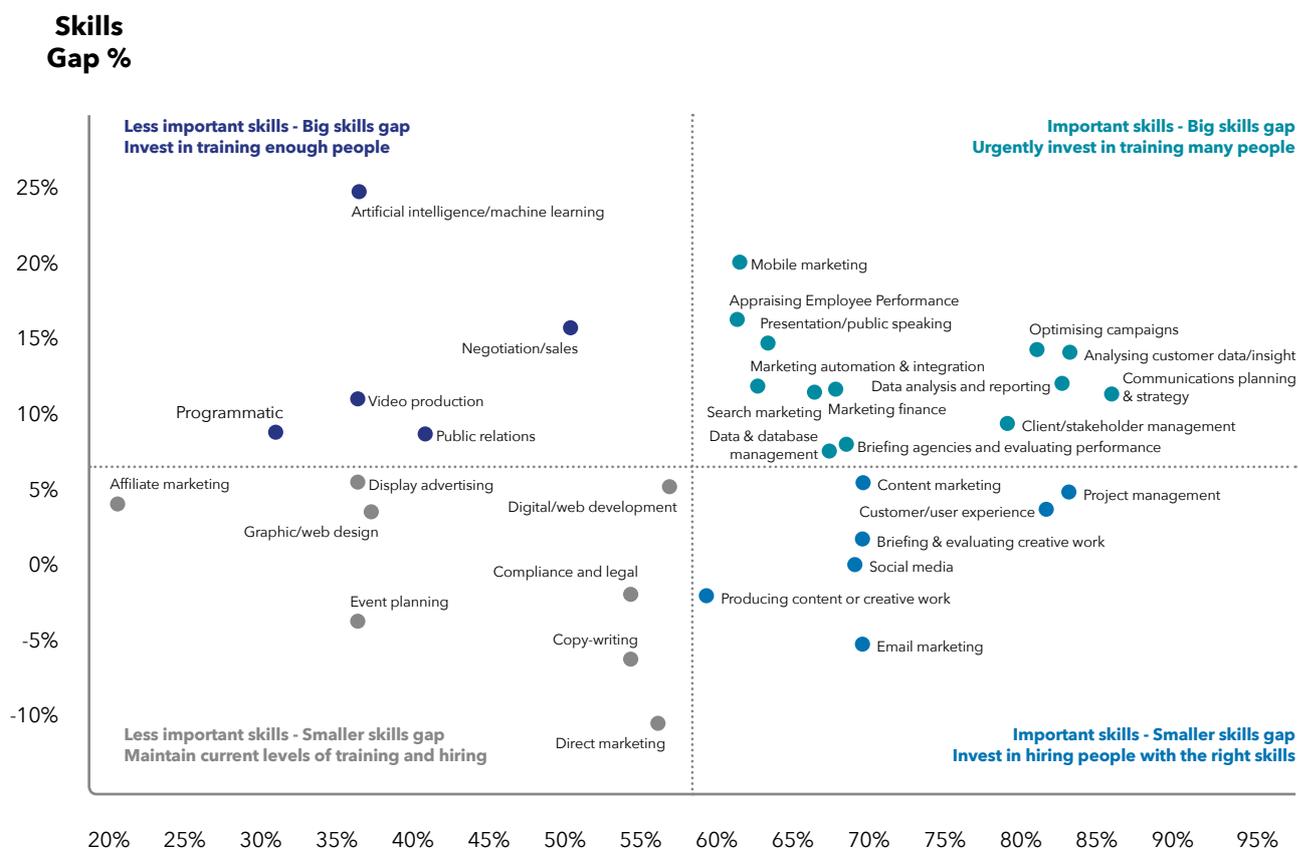


**Skills importance\* for career progression vs. current role, and skills gaps**



# SKILLS GAP ANALYSIS CONTINUED

## Skills Matrix: % Importance for Career Progression and Skills Gap



### Skills Importance for Career Progression ("very important" + "extremely important")

With 27 of the 33 skills showing a gap in perceived importance for career progression and current roles, it might be difficult for employers and marketers to prioritise the most immediate and

important areas. The 'Skills Matrix' above maps skills that are important for career progression (% "very important" + "extremely important") vs. skills gap.



## Top Priority Skills

The top-right quadrant, where the skills are highly important for career progression and skills gap is the biggest, presents the most immediate opportunity. Employers need to invest urgently in training large numbers of marketers in 13 out of 33 skills in four different areas:

### Direct/Digital skills

- Mobile marketing
- Marketing automation & integration
- Search marketing

### Data skills

- Analysing customer data/insight
- Data analysis and reporting
- Data & database management

### Management skills

- Appraising Employee Performance
- Client/stakeholder management
- Presentation/public speaking
- Marketing finance

### Strategy/planning

- Optimising campaigns
- Communications strategy & planning
- Briefing agencies and evaluating performance

## Second Priority Skills

A set of skills in the top-left quadrant are the next priority. Whilst there is a big skills gap, these skills are deemed important by fewer marketers:

- Artificial intelligence/machine learning
- Programmatic
- Video production
- Negotiation/sales
- Public relations

## Third Priority Skills

Competencies in the bottom-right quadrant are highly important but the gap is either small or non-existent, meaning that organisations need to concentrate on hiring, developing and retaining employees with these skills.

## Low Priority Skills

The bottom-left quadrant is the lowest priority, with skills that are perceived as less important for career progression and small or non-existent skills gap. Marketers feel that there are either enough people with these skills in the market, that they are not used in senior positions or that they will diminish in importance in the future. Employers can afford to maintain the current levels of hiring and training employees with these skills.

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# TRAINING

Regular training is essential in allowing marketers to perform to the best of their ability in current roles and equipping them with necessary skills for career progression. The IDM Skills Census looked at whether marketers had any training in any of the 33 skills, listed in the survey, in the last 12 months. More than a third (38%) had no training in any of the skills.

## Have you had any training in these areas within the last 12 months?

Sample: 377 respondents



Marketers that have been with their current company for two years or less are most likely to have had training in the last 12 months. Less than 1 in 2 (47%) of the respondents with over five years' tenure in their current company have had training in any of the 33 skills. It is important that employers and

marketers recognise that in the fast-changing environment upskilling is important for even highly experienced staff, especially when it comes to digital or managerial skills.



### Percentage of respondents who had any training in any of the 33 skills, by tenure in the current company



0-2 years  
**79%**



2-5 years  
**69%**



5+  
**47%**

Sample: 377 respondents

The vast majority of marketers who took a training course did so in order to increase the knowledge base and/or help career progression, with 91% and 71% respectively (see below). This is not surprising given extensive gaps, identified in this survey, between skills used in current roles and those needed for career progression.

### What was your aim when you decided to take a course or training? Please select all that apply



**91%**  
To increase my know-ledge base



**71%**  
To help progress my career



**42%**  
To add to my CV



**24%**  
To demonstrate my knowledge to my employer



**3%**  
Other

Sample: 207 respondents, filtered on question: "Have you ever had any training during/as part of your employment?"

## TRAINING CONTINUED

Face-to-face courses were the most prevalent mode of training with 85% of respondents who had training over the course of their career. Training either online or remotely, which provides a convenient way to participate in training, was also prevalent with 51%.

The data also shows that employers are willing to pay for staff training: 81% of marketers received a face-to-face course funded by their workplace and 37% had online/remote training paid for by their employer. Marketers are keen to learn new skills so much that they are also willing to fund courses themselves, with 1 in 3 respondents (33%) who had training having paid for it themselves on at least one occasion.

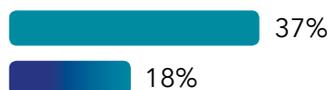
**Thinking about the types of professional training you've had over the course of your career, who funded this training? (Select all that apply)**

### Training Mode

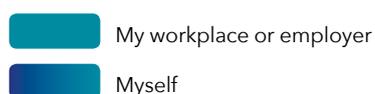
#### Face-to-face 85%



#### Online/Remote 51%



#### Other 4%

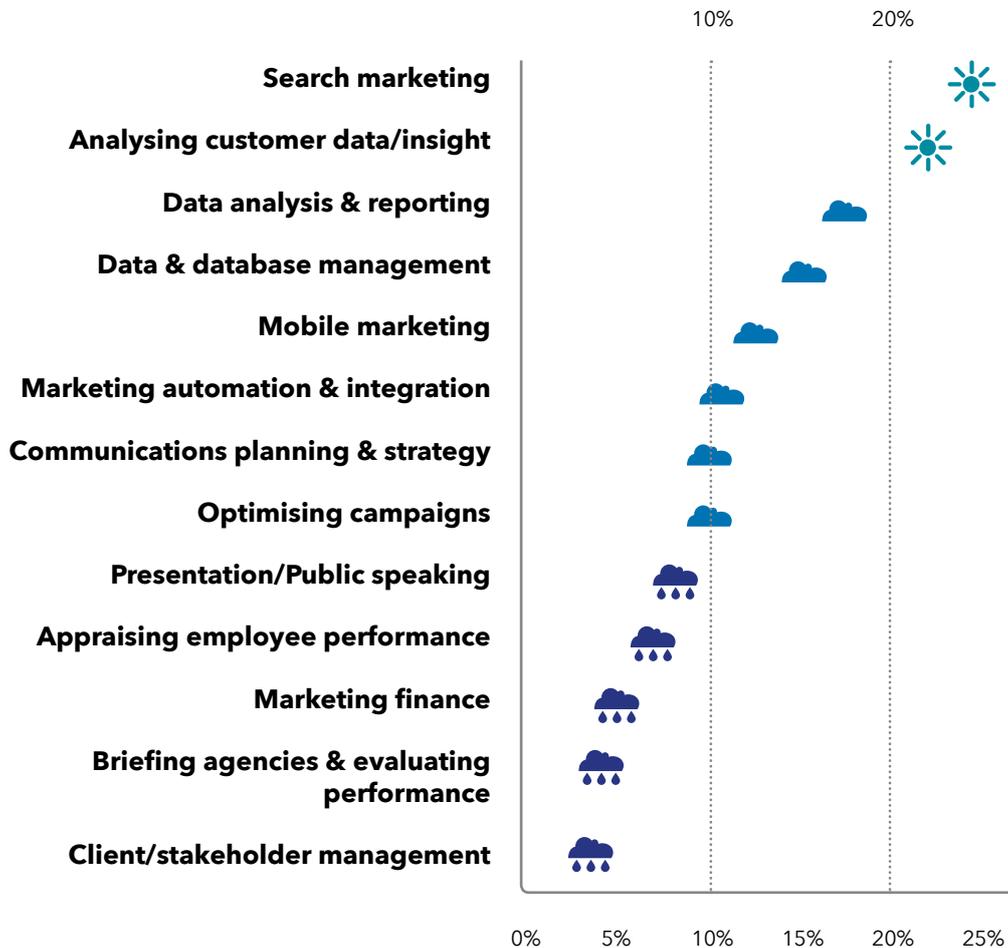


Sample: 207 respondents, filtered on question: "Have you ever had any training during/as part of your employment?"

Skills gap analysis identified 13 skills that were top priority: they have above the average importance for career progression and above the average skills gap. Only 1 in 2 (51%) marketers surveyed had training in any of the top priority skills.

Only Search Marketing and Analysing Customer Data/Insight had above 20% of marketers trained in these skills. Less than 10% of marketers who responded to the survey had training in top priority managerial skills, highly relevant for marketers of any specialism: Communications Planning & Strategy, Presentation/Public Speaking, Appraising Employee Performance, Marketing Finance or Client/Stakeholder Management.

### Have you had any training in these areas within the last 12 months? (Select all that apply)



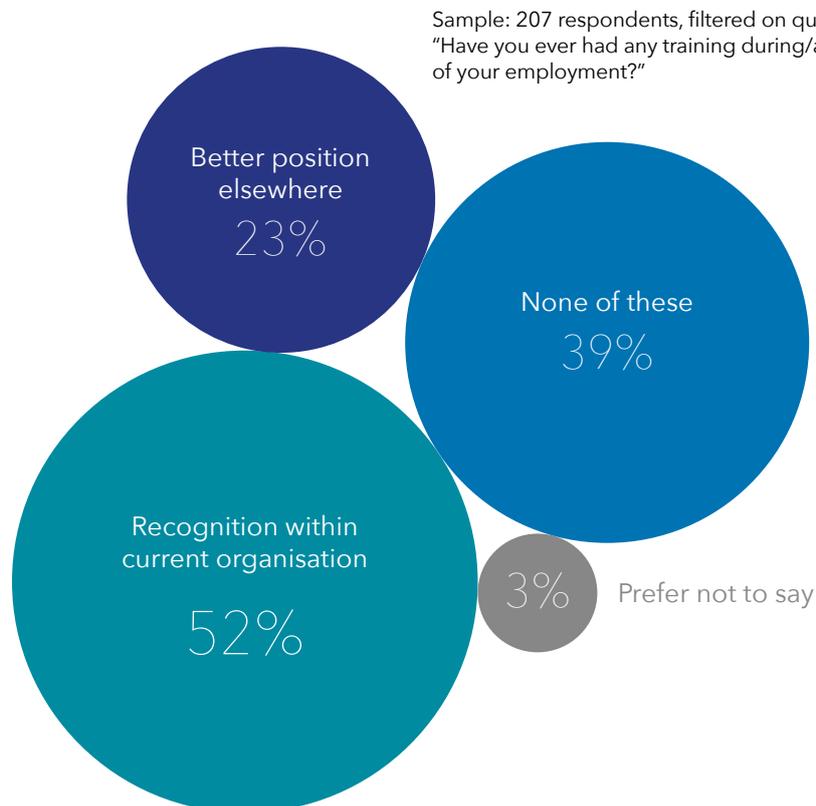
Sample: 377 respondents

## TRAINING CONTINUED

Training is essential for closing skills gaps and boosting employee productivity and engagement. In order for a training course to be effective and deliver a return on investment, it is important to define training outcomes, how and where

new skills will be applied, and choose a course that is assessed or certified. The IDM Skills Census survey reveals that for 4 out of 10 (39%) respondents training did not result in any outcome.

### Since your training, have any of the following happened? (Select all that apply)



Nevertheless, investing in professional training courses for employees does payoff: for the majority of respondents (52%), taking a course led to recognition within their existing organisation with 28% receiving a promotion. Less than

a quarter of the respondents (23%) took their newly acquired skills elsewhere, which sometimes could be due to the lack of opportunities to apply those skills and insufficient recognition from current employer.

# CHANGING MARKETING ROLES

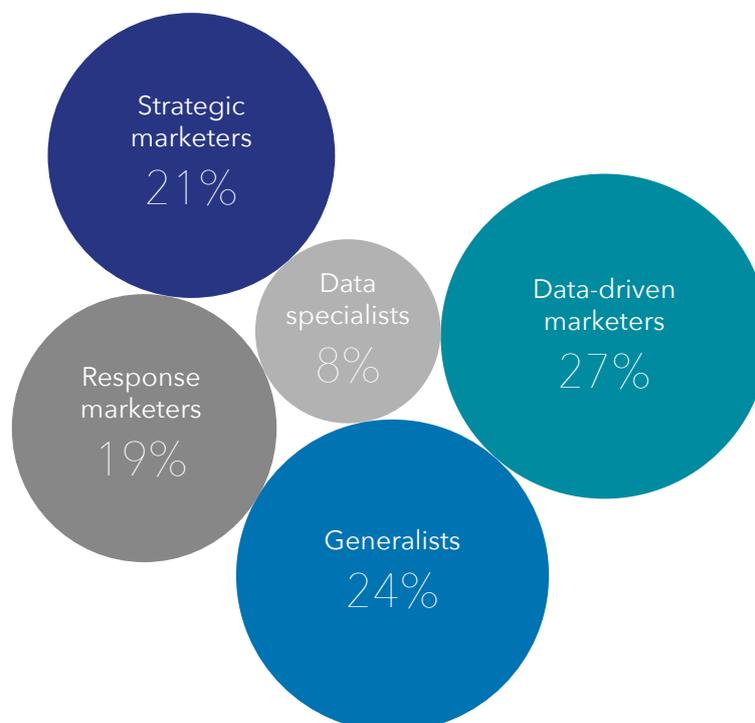
The confluence of rapidly advancing technology, big data, the proliferation of choice, increasingly savvy consumers, and pressures to prove ROI means that the role of marketing is evolving like never before. This presents marketers with challenges and opportunities for continuous learning, perpetual professional growth and needing to constantly re-invent their roles.

In order to understand how marketers see their roles evolving, we have split survey respondents into five different segments. The process involved two stages. Initially, survey respondents made up 140 segments based on three characteristics:

- **Department**
- **Role seniority**
- **Skills used in the current role by category**

The initial segments were then combined into five by taking into account the rank of importance of skills used in the current role. The resulting segments and their relative sizes are presented below.

## Five segments of marketers



Sample: 377 respondents

## DATA SPECIALISTS

Constituting just 8% of all respondents, the Data Specialists segment is the most niche of all. Their responsibilities in marketing range from conducting consumer research and campaign evaluation to building predictive models, recommendation algorithms and data warehouses, from data analytics to business intelligence.

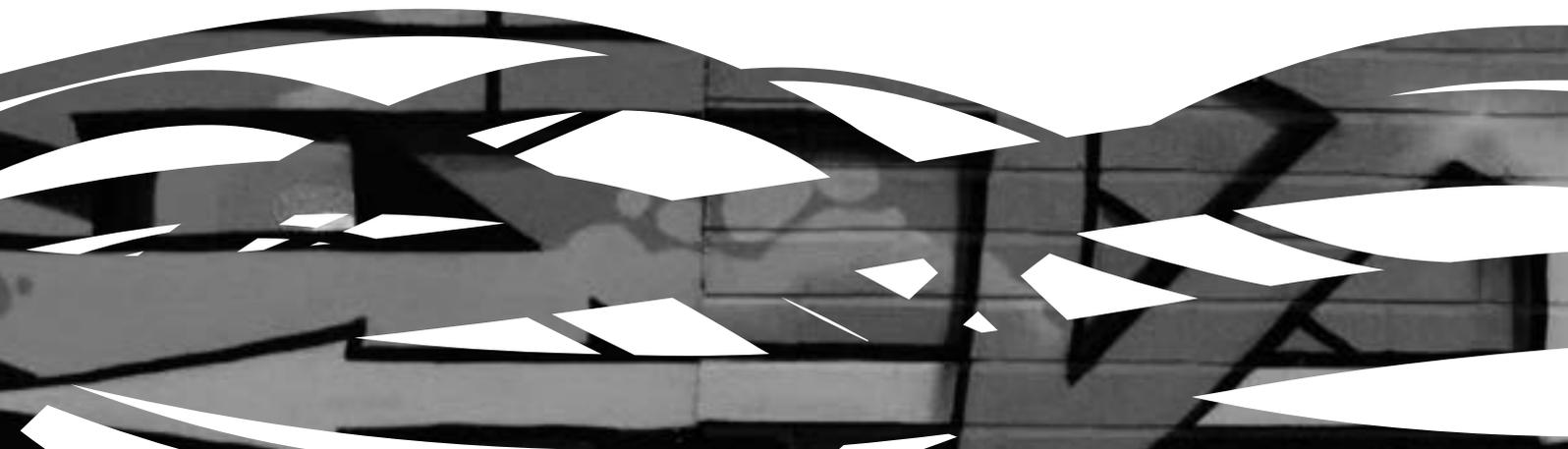
Examples of Data Specialist roles include: Data Analyst, Web Analyst, Marketing Analyst, BI Analyst, Data Planner, Market Researcher, Insight Planner, Consumer Insight Manager, Data Scientist, Data Engineer, and Database Administrator.

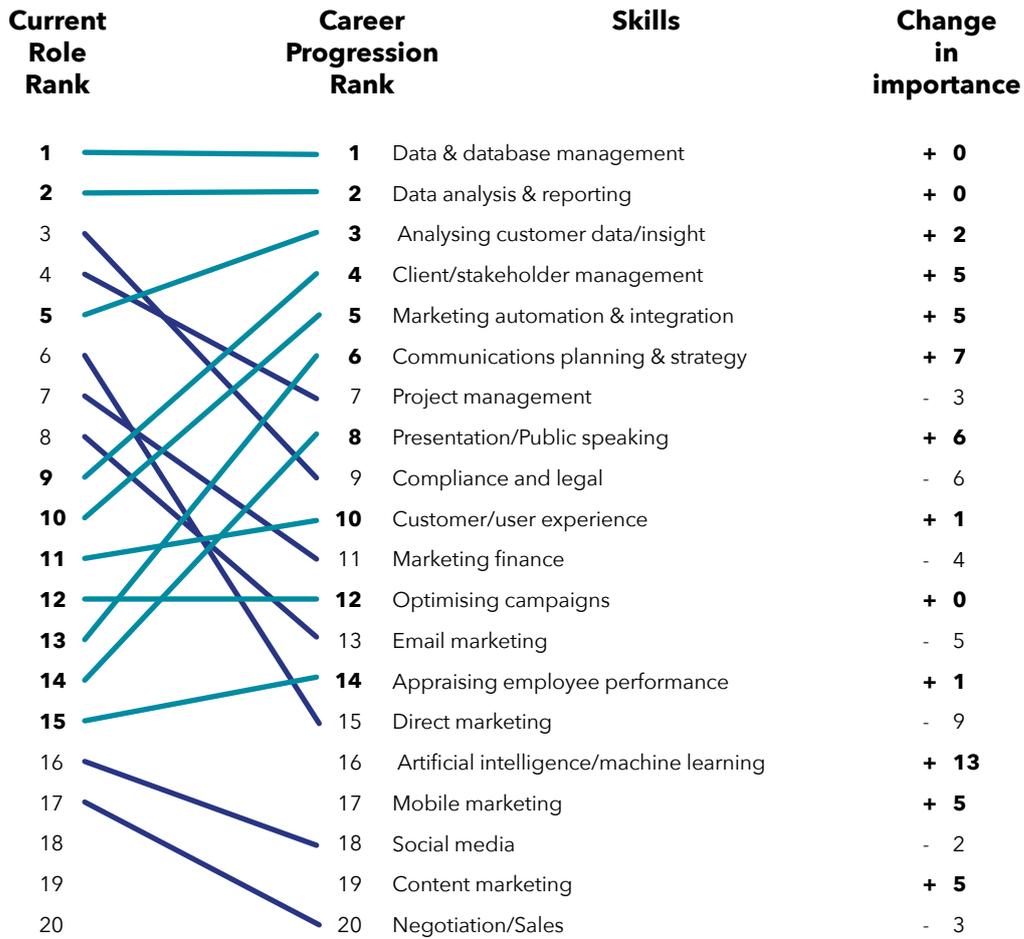
Data Specialists' current top 5 most important skills are: Data & Database Management, Data Analysis & Reporting, Compliance & Legal, Project Management and Analysing Customer Data & Insight.

Data Specialists see Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning as the biggest growth area in their arsenal of skills, going up the ranks by 13 places. They also see Search Marketing, Communications Planning & Strategy and Marketing Automation as the disciplines where they would increasingly apply their data skills.

As data increasingly permeates all areas of marketing, Data Specialists recognise the growing need to be able to communicate insight to a wide range of stakeholders. Therefore, they place a greater importance on skills in the management category for career progression, with Presentation/Public Speaking and Client/Stakeholder Management going up in rankings.

**Data Specialists' skills ranking in order of importance\*, and change in rank for career progression vs. current role**





Sample: 61 respondents, filtered on "very important" + "extremely important"



## DATA-DRIVEN MARKETERS

Data-driven Marketers are the largest segment with 27% of all respondents, revealing a sign of things to come. They do not specialise in data, but use data skills or Data Specialists' outputs extensively. Currently, Data-driven Marketers are predominantly responsible for digital channels. They also include senior direct marketers, who have to combine data from mobile and social channels in addition to traditional consumer touchpoints.

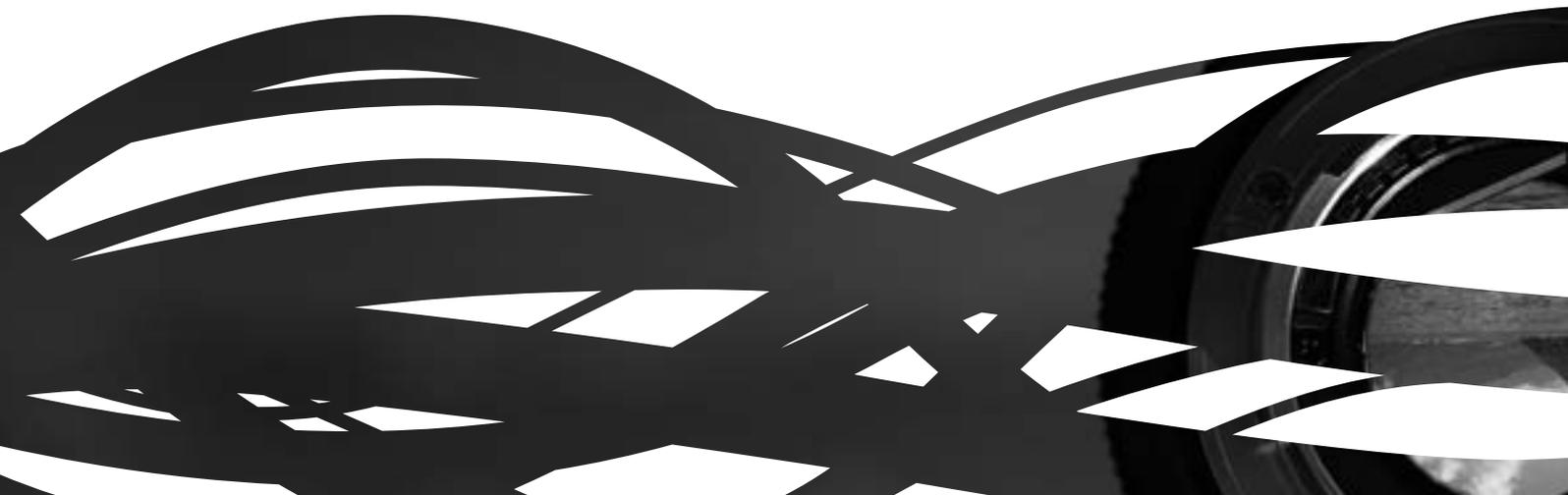
Examples of Data-driven Marketer roles include: Digital Marketing Manager, Digital Campaign Manager, Social Media Manager, Mobile Marketing Manager, Search Marketing Manager, Media Planner, Campaign Optimisation Manager, Fundraising Marketing Manager, Head of Consumer Relationship Marketing, and Head of Direct Marketing.

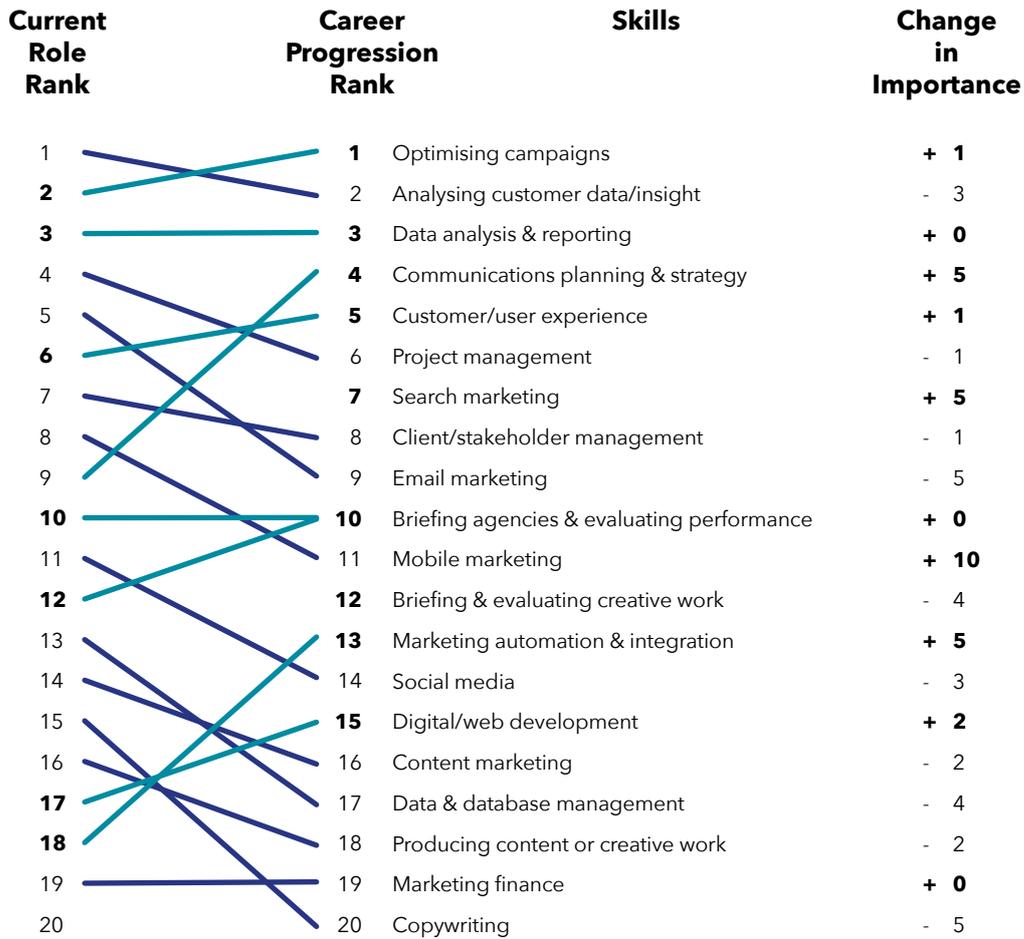
Data-driven Marketers' top 5 most important skills in their current roles are: Analysing Customer Data & Insight, Optimising Campaigns, Data Analysis & Reporting, Project Management and Email Marketing.

Data-driven Marketers see Mobile Marketing, Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning, Marketing Automation & Integration, Search and Communications Planning & Strategy as the skills gaining most in importance for future career development vs. current role.



**Data-driven Marketers' skills ranking in order of importance\*, and change in rank for career progression vs. current role**





Sample: 61 respondents, filtered on "very important" + "extremely important"



## GENERALISTS

Generalists, who account for 24% of the survey respondents, perform roles that might be most commonly associated with marketing. Mid-level managers, they oversee brand plans and campaigns. Generalists liaise with specialist internal marketing teams, and manage creative, media and PR agencies, commissioning multi-channel advertising and content.

Examples of Generalist roles include: Brand Manager, Brand Development Manager, Marketing Manager, Media Manager, Campaign Manager, Advertising Manager, Content Marketing Manager, PR Manager, and Trade Marketing Manager.

The top 5 most important skills used by Generalists in their current roles are: Communications Planning & Strategy, Project Management, Content Marketing, Email Marketing and Customer/User Experience.

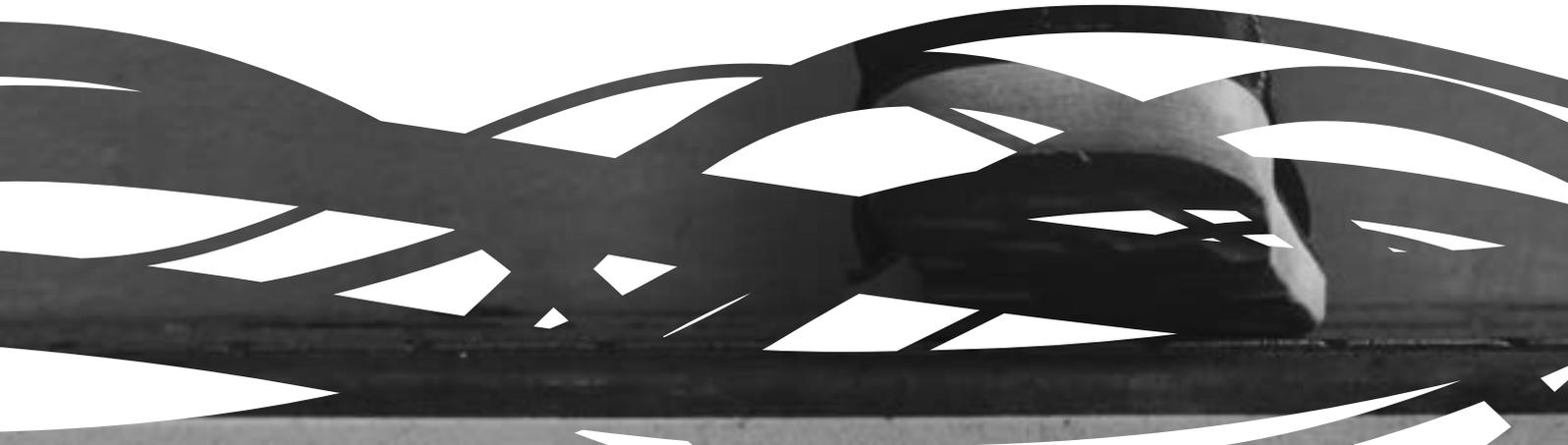
Whilst they continue placing immense importance on Communications Planning & Strategy, Generalists see data-based skills, such as analysing data and evaluating campaign performance, as helping them progress in their career. Generalists also place a greater importance on Mobile Marketing, as the fastest growing channel, and Presentation/Public Speaking for getting ahead in their careers. This signals that they would like to progress to data-driven and digital marketing roles, as well as senior marketing management positions.

### **Generalist marketers' skills - change in ranking order of importance\* for career progression vs. current role**



Current Role Rank	Career Progression Rank	Skills	Change in Importance
1	1	Communications planning & strategy	+ 0
2	2	Project management	+ 0
3	3	Data analysis & reporting	+ 9
4	4	Optimising campaigns	+ 2
5	5	Analysing customer data/insight	+ 11
6	6	Client/stakeholder management	+ 1
7	7	Content marketing	- 4
8	8	Customer/user experience	- 3
9	9	Briefing & evaluating creative work	+ 2
10	10	Briefing agencies & evaluating performance	+ 9
11	11	Producing content or creative work	- 3
12	12	Presentation/Public speaking	+ 11
13	13	Digital/web development	+ 1
14	14	Email marketing	- 10
15	15	Social media	- 6
16	16	Marketing finance	- 1
17	17	Marketing automation & integration	+ 0
18	18	Mobile marketing	+ 10
19	19	Appraising employee performance	+ 5
20	20	Data & database management	+ 1

Sample: 61 respondents, filtered on "very important" + "extremely important"



## RESPONSE MARKETERS

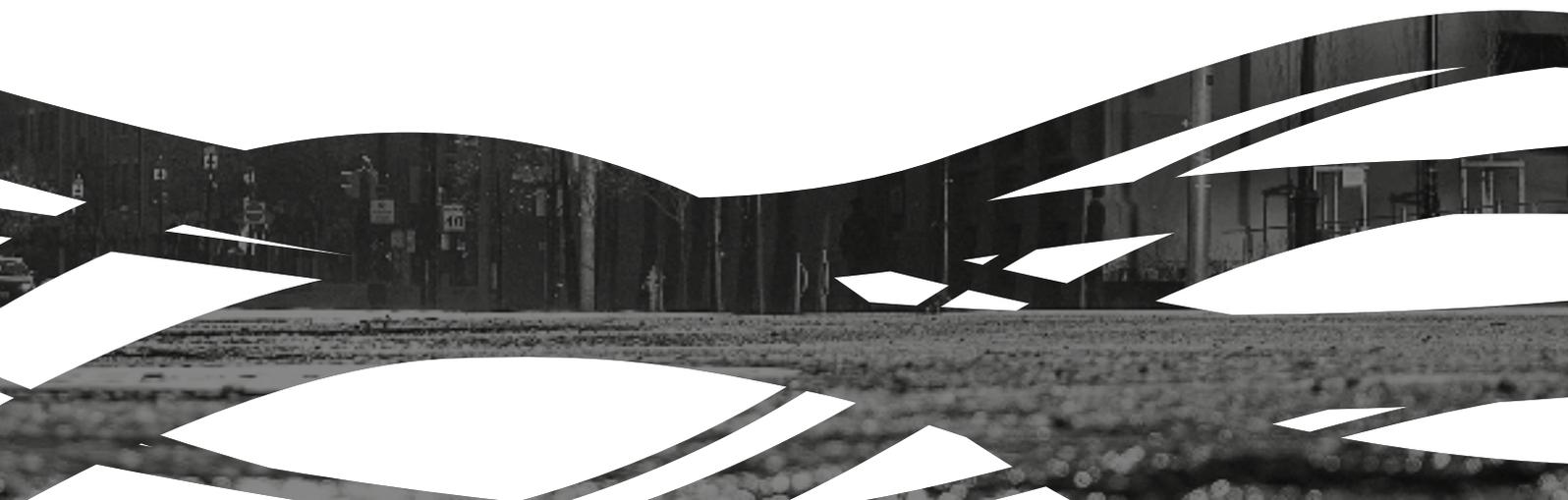
Response Marketers account for 19% of the survey respondents and are the most junior cohort of all. They are currently responsible for direct communications with customers, increasingly via multiple channels, ensuring cost-effective consumer response and retention.

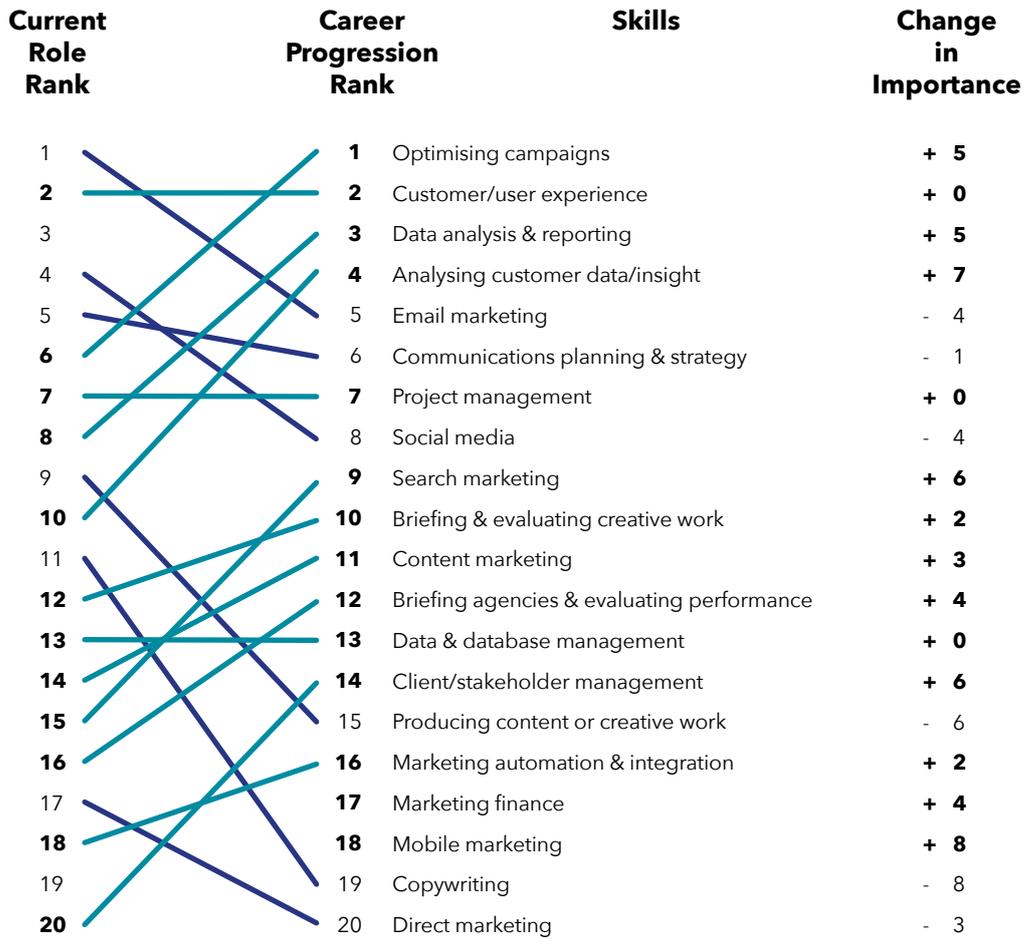
Examples of Response Marketer roles include: Direct Response Coordinator, Direct Marketing Specialist, Email Marketing Executive, Audience Development Executive, PPC Marketing Manager, Ad Ops Specialist, Sales Marketing Executive, Commercial Marketing Executive, and Performance Marketing Manager.

The top 5 most important skills currently used by Response Marketers are: Email Marketing, Customer/User Experience, Direct Marketing, Social Media and Communications Planning & Strategy.

Being relatively junior, Response Marketers identify management skills, such as Marketing Finance and Client/Stakeholder Management, as more important for career progression vs. their current roles. Data and data-based marketing skills also rise in importance for career progression, hinting at the data-driven future direction for both the marketing industry as a whole and Response Marketers specifically.

**Response Marketers' skills ranking in order of importance\*, and change in rank for career progression vs. current role**





Sample: 61 respondents, filtered on "very important" + "extremely important"



## STRATEGIC MARKETERS

The Strategic Marketers segment accounts for 21% of the survey respondents and comprises managerial marketing roles. They are responsible for setting marketing, brand and consumer engagement strategies. Strategic Marketers liaise with other departments and ensure marketing plans align with business objectives. They manage people, budgets and are responsible for delivering marketing ROI.

Examples of Strategic Marketer roles include: Head of Marketing, Senior Marketing Manager, Strategic Marketing Manager, Marketing Strategist, Brand Strategist, Head of Audience Engagement, Head of CRM, and CRM Manager.

Out of the list of 33 skills, the top 5 picked by Strategic Marketers in their current roles are: Communications Planning & Strategy, Customer/User Experience, Project Management, Client/Stakeholder Management and Direct Marketing.

Strategic Marketers have few changes at the very top of skills' ranking for career progression vs. current roles, as they would like to maintain the general direction of their career path. As they rise up the ladder, Strategic Marketers know that managerial skills will be even more important. Marketing Finance, Presentation/Public Speaking, Appraising Employee Performance and Negotiation/Sales skills, all improve in rankings of importance for career progression. In line with the industry, data skills also gain in importance. Pressures on marketing budgets, ROI and rapidly-growing number of channels mean that Strategic Marketers see themselves needing to be more involved in campaign optimisation in the future.

**Strategic Marketers' skills ranking in order of importance\*, and change in rank for career progression vs. current role**



Current Role Rank	Career Progression Rank	Skills	Change in Importance
1	1	Communications planning & strategy	+ 0
2	2	Customer/user experience	+ 0
3	3	Project management	+ 0
4	4	Analysing customer data/insight	+ 2
5	5	Client/stakeholder management	- 1
6	6	Data analysis & reporting	+ 2
7	7	Marketing finance	+ 5
8	8	Social media	+ 5
9	9	Direct marketing	- 4
10	10	Appraising employee performance	+ 5
11	11	Optimising campaigns	+ 12
12	12	Briefing & evaluating creative work	- 5
13	13	Presentation/Public speaking	+ 6
14	14	Content marketing	- 3
15	15	Briefing agencies & evaluating performance	- 1
16	16	Negotiation/Sales	+ 5
17	17	Data & database management	+ 0
18	18	Email marketing	- 9
19	19	Marketing automation & integration	+ 3
20	20	Compliance and legal	- 2

Sample: 79 respondents, filtered on "very important" + "extremely important"



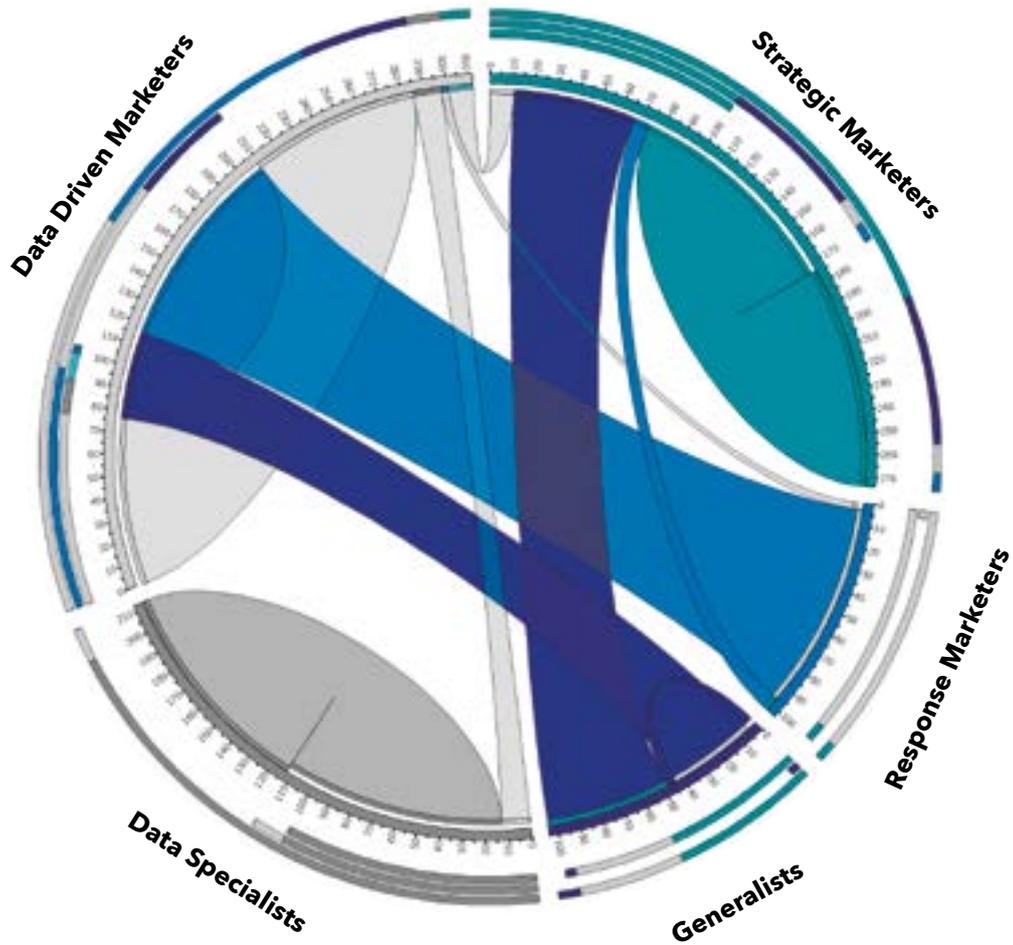
## ROLE PROGRESSION

Based on the importance of skills for career progression vis-à-vis current roles, we have mapped the likely career paths for the five segments. Analysis predicts that Data Specialists and Strategic Marketers are staying put in their functions, going up in seniority and adapting their skills to the changing market environment. Most Data-driven Marketers also want to continue in their current category, but some would like to train to become Data Specialists, and some see themselves as future Strategic Marketers.

The biggest shifts can be seen among current Generalists and Response Marketers. Most Generalists would like to either acquire the skills and responsibilities of Data-driven Marketers or progress to Strategic Marketing, with only some remaining in their current category. The majority of those currently in the Response Marketers segment would like to gain the roles of Data-driven Marketers, and some see themselves as future Strategic Marketers. This is not to say that Response Marketers and Generalists will cease existing, but rather that marketing roles will become more data-driven and strategic in their nature.

**Role Progression: career progression paths as seen by the respondents in different segments, based on the importance of skills for career progression**





Sample: 377 respondents

The constantly growing number of consumer touch-points, each of which generates copious quantities of data, micro-targeting and measurability opportunities created by digital channels and a shortage of data specialists means that marketers need to be able to navigate metrics and analytics with confidence. This conflation of roles and skills goes in both directions. Not only

must marketers think more like data professionals but data professionals must think more like marketers too. Whilst navigating the new brave world of AI, they need to gain skills in stakeholder management, communicating with impact and business acumen.



# METHODOLOGY

## SURVEY RESPONDENTS

The survey generated 377 complete responses across various sectors, departments and roles.

### Data collection and reporting

**The IDM Skills Census was conducted by the IDM and the DMA Group's PR & Insight department. An online survey containing 41 questions was emailed to the IDM/DMA and Smart Insights members databases. Thank you if you participated.**

The IDM Skills Census Survey looked into 33 skills grouped into five categories: Content/Creative, Data, Direct/Digital, Management and Strategy/Planning. The approach was to ask marketers themselves how important they thought the skills were in their current roles and for career progression. The skills gaps were calculated based on the percentage difference between how important the skills were for the respondents' career progression vs. current roles.

Role profiles were created by segmenting the respondents according to their department, role seniority, categories of skills used and rank of importance of individual skills in current roles.

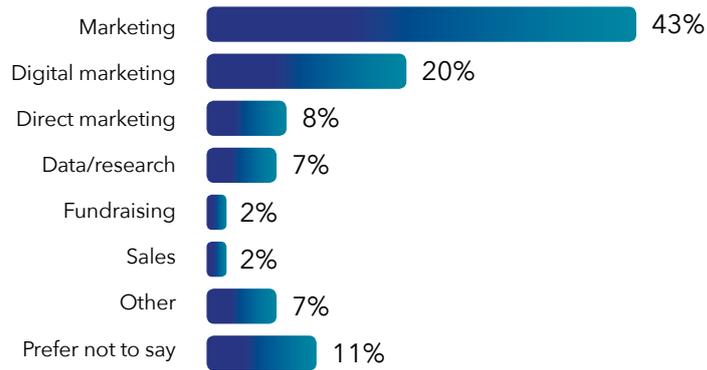
The data was collected between 19 October and 18 November 2017. Analysis and visualisation of survey results was performed using Tableau software.



### Sectors, % respondents

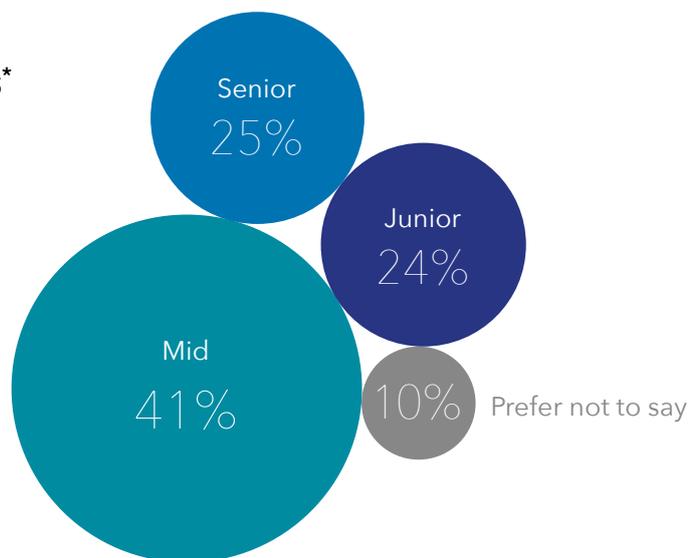


### Departments, % respondents\*

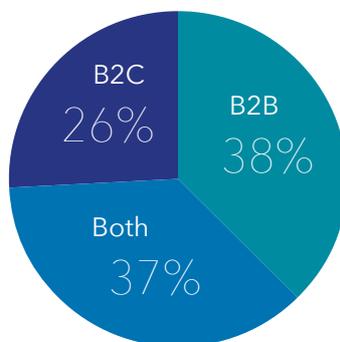


## METHODOLOGY CONTINUED

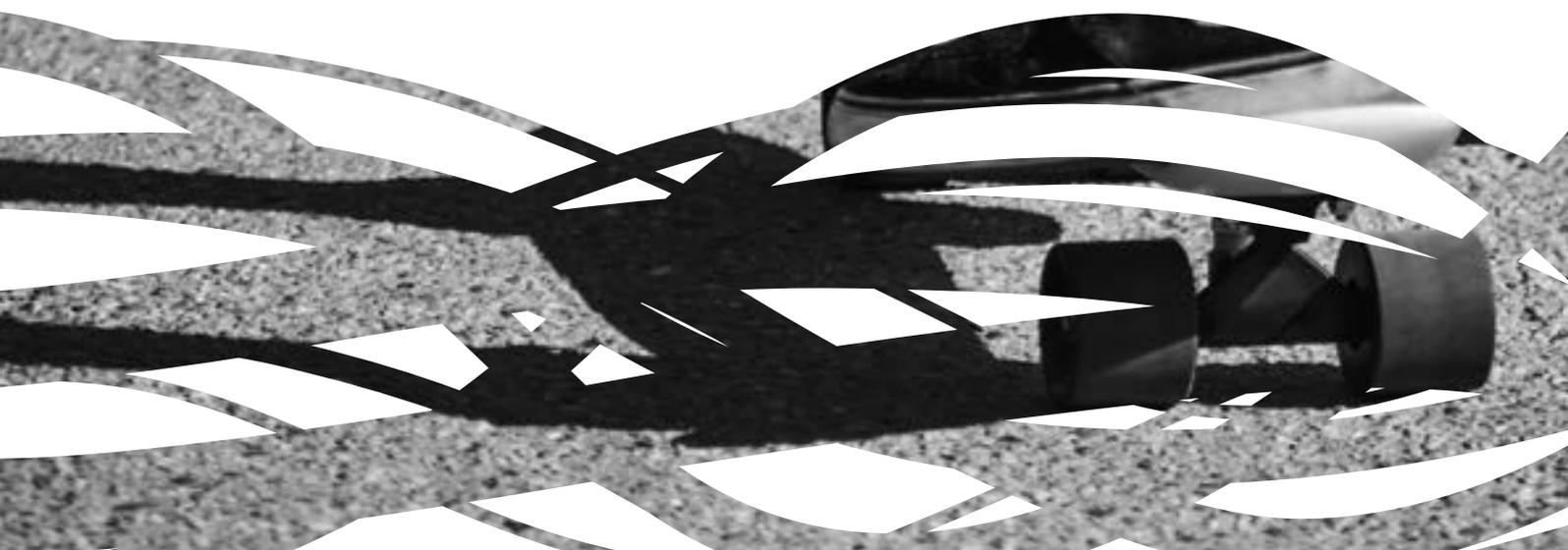
Role Seniority,  
% respondents\*



Role Seniority,  
% respondents

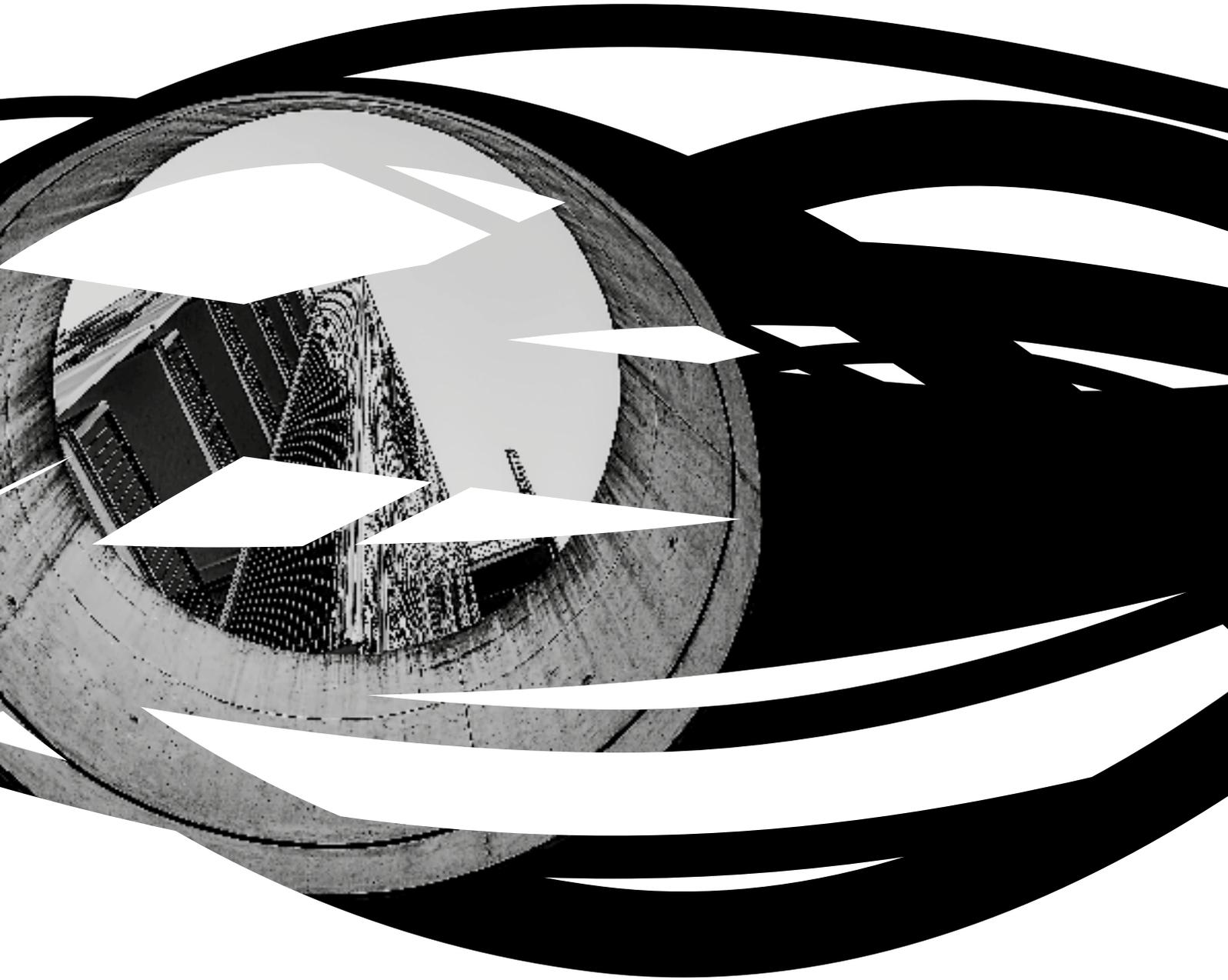


\*The survey generated 377 complete responses across various sectors, departments and roles.











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