

Where You Stand Depends on Where You Sit:

A Contextual Assessment of Marketing Challenges, Compensation, and Job Satisfaction

by Dihedral Group

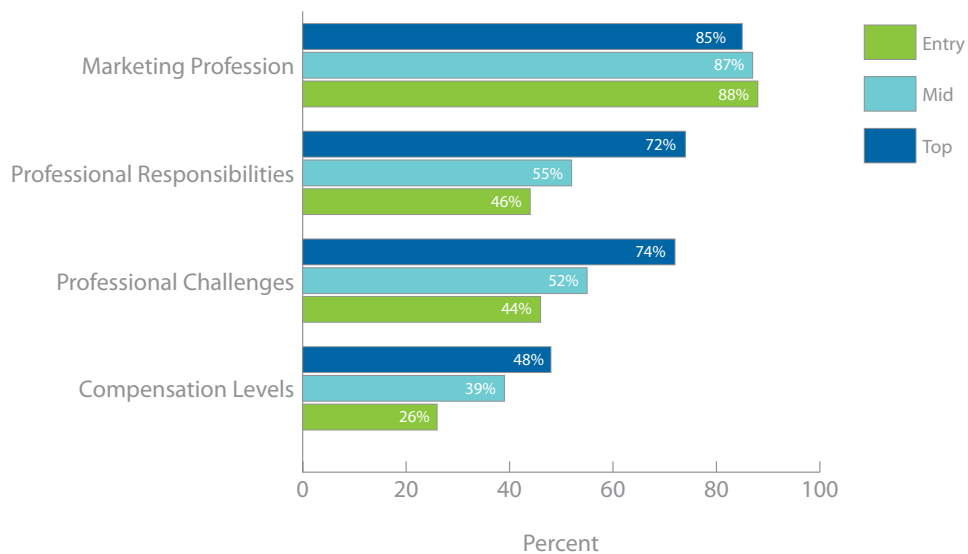
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It's not easy being in marketing management today. A dramatic shift in the marketing landscape—increased globalization, multiple media platforms, an explosion of market segments—has coincided with an uncertain economy and shifting organizational dynamics. Marketers at all levels of the organization are faced with enormous strategic and tactical challenges, but their views of these challenges are colored by where they stand along the marketing profession hierarchy. Not surprisingly, marketing professionals' sense of personal satisfaction with their job and their ensuing compensation, aligns directly with their level of achievement and tenure in the profession.

Satisfaction

In 2008, marketers at all levels of the organization were overwhelmingly satisfied with the profession of marketing (85.6% positive) with another 10.7% on the fence. Entry- and mid-level managers, who have yet to make their mark on an organization and have less control over their job functions, were largely less than satisfied with their own current responsibilities and the challenges afforded them through their work.

Favorable Satisfaction Percentages by Level of Position



Clearly, senior level marketers have had time to shape their professional landscape, which has led to increased job satisfaction over the years, while entry-level marketers may not yet know the full scope of the marketing opportunities available to them.

Marketing Challenges

While the correlations between compensation and satisfaction are expected, junior-level marketers need to understand the factors that drive their senior colleagues' perceptions of the marketing landscape and position themselves to respond accordingly.

Key Strategic Challenges (in the aggregate)

The following strategic initiatives have been framed from the substance of thousands of annual and triennial marketing plans either directly, or as an abstraction of related concepts. As noted in the chart below, “Quantifying and Measuring the Value of Marketing Programs/Investments” ranked highest across the entire spectrum of survey respondents.

Top 10 Highest-Ranked Strategic Initiatives



Key Strategic Challenges by Micro Segment

Drilling into the data and dissecting these challenges by micro-segments (such as by function, seniority/compensation levels, and size of organization) produces some statistically significant differences from the aggregate findings. Here, significant differences in perspective are evidenced over what the most important strategic challenges are for the coming year depending on where the marketer sits.

The chart, *A Contextual View of Strategic Marketing Challenges* (see Appendix I), juxtaposes these variances between what the respondents as a whole defined as strategic challenges for the coming year as compared to those that were identified specifically by top-level marketers- or what the chart refers to as the segment leaders.

For example, across four broad marketing functions—Advertising and Marcom, Corporate Communications, Product and Brand Management, and Marketing Leadership—and across nearly all organizational sizes, marketers on average ranked “Quantifying and Measuring the Value of Marketing Programs/Investments” as the highest priority while the segment leaders ranked something other than this as their primary strategic challenge for the year.

How Should Entry- And Mid-Level Marketers Respond To This Variance?

By understanding that organizational leaders will look to them to not only manage the issues most appropriate for their current set of responsibilities but also to see the bigger picture and help senior management execute the broader organizational mission. For marketers to professionally grow and increase work-related satisfaction (and yes, compensation), they should pay attention to how the most successful marketers not only react to their current professional circumstances but also proactively anticipate their organizational leaders' needs and their customers/clients wants in the context of their own professional aspirations.

APPENDIX I: A Contextual View of Strategic Marketing Challenges

To better understand how marketing strategies differ based on a marketers’ functional orientation level of seniority/ compensation and organizational size, the following model comprised of 24 sub-segments was developed. Industry sectors and a few other firmographic/demographic variables were examined for influence on this model and were subsequently deemed insignificant.

The resulting model juxtaposes the individual segment variances between the most common top-ranked challenges (Segment Average) and those challenges considered of greatest importance to the most senior (and highest-earning) marketers (Segment Leaders).

A Comparison of Strategic Marketing Challenges Between Segment Average and Leaders

MARKETING FUNCTIONS	VERY SMALL AND SMALL SIZED ORGANIZATIONS		MEDIUM SIZED ORGANIZATIONS		LARGE AND VERY LARGE SIZED ORGANIZATIONS	
	Segment Average	Segment Leaders	Segment Average	Segment Leaders	Segment Average	Segment Leaders
Advertising & Marcom	A	B	A	C	A	D
Corporate Communications	A	A	A	E	A	E
Product / Brand Management	A	E	A	C	A	B
Marketing Leadership	A	F	A	F	A	E
Interactive Marketing	G	G	A	A	A	A
Marketing (Other)	A	E	A	A	A	A
Marketing Research			G	G	G	G
R&D / NPD / Innovation					G	G

Top-Ranked Marketing Challenges

- A** Quantifying and measuring the value of marketing programs/investments
- B** Getting buy-in from relevant stake holders
- C** Testing and measuring message branding or marketing’s impact
- D** Upgrading the efficiency and effectiveness of marketing groups
- E** Developing cross-channel, cross-market, or new market opportunities
- F** Maintaining or enhancing customer satisfaction, experience, and/or loyalty
- G** Growing customer knowledge, insight, and conversations

APPENDIX II:

Defining Marketing Challenges: Tactical Problems

Beyond the strategic marketing challenges, The Dihedral Group examined marketers’ tactical challenges while also keeping an eye out for the influence that these severe daily problems have on their attitudes towards their places of work.

Note that nearly 90% of marketers that said they had a negative attitude towards their organization also articulated a severe problem from having “too few staff to properly execute strategy.” For perspective, this was the case for only 27% of those marketers that indicated a positive attitude towards their organization.

Severe Tactical Problems at Work Relative to Expressed Organizational Attitudes

