

Career Opportunities in Advertising

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Advertising is a creative, fast-paced, high-profile business. The main function of an advertising agency is to use both imagination and strategic planning to develop memorable advertisements that promote sales for the client company. As a result, the advertising field utilizes professionals with a wide variety of talents and skills in order to develop, implement, and manage ad campaigns that will influence consumer behavior. There are seven main advertising areas in which people find their niche are: Account Management, Account Planning, Creative, Media, Market Research, Interactive, and Production & Traffic. Advertising professionals may also work in-house for a company.

Account Management

Account Management is the division of an advertising agency responsible for overseeing the execution of all aspects of an advertising campaign. This group coordinates the other agency divisions as they work together to develop campaigns. Account Managers are also responsible for managing the firm's relationship with clients, which includes soliciting new business for the agency and ensuring that the agency meets the clients' needs as it develops each campaign.

Assistant Account Executive

As an Assistant AE, you will assist the Account Executive with all of his or her duties. You will work directly with your supervisor to develop campaign strategies, communicate client needs to the Creative, Media, and Market Research teams, and conduct analyses of advertising spending and consumer habits. Working with different members of the other advertising departments will help you learn how to manage clients and their accounts, plan advertising strategies and obtain information. As part of the Account Management group you will be helping your firm to develop successful advertising strategies and oversee important accounts. Your contributions will include:

- Talking with different departments (e.g. Creative, Market Research) to keep the AE informed on all account activities.
- Obtaining and verifying information regarding the client company and its products.
- Attending meetings with clients and internal account team members.
- Analyzing advertising spending of various competitors, reviewing consumer spending trends, and researching advertising strategies of other firms.
- Performing clerical work, including answering phones, copying, sorting and typing memos, preparing documents, etc.

Account Planning

Account Planning focuses on ensuring that the consumer's perspective is fully considered when advertising is developed. Account planners play a central role on the agency team by constantly monitoring strategies to assess that the consumer's needs and interests are being met. Account planners spend a lot of time researching consumer psychology and behavior, competitive sales, demographics, etc. in an effort to study how consumers use marketing communications and to devise new ways of pitching information. There is not a clear career path to this position. Some people come from a marketing research background, while others enter from outside of advertising. The ability to interpret and synthesize information, create new insights and communicate findings in a useful manner is required skills for this position.

Creative

The Creative department is responsible for translating the business needs and strategies (developed by the client company and Account Management) into creative advertisements for the client's products. The Creative team is comprised of Art Directors (who design the visual aspects of each ad) and Copywriters (who write the slogans and text within an ad). Once the client approves their ideas, the Creative team develops and produces all the elements of the advertisement.

Junior Art Director

As a Junior Art Director, you will be a member of the Creative division of an advertising firm and responsible for assisting the Art Director with all the visual aspects of an ad campaign. By shadowing your direct superior, you will be exposed to the entire creative process. You will learn to draft and sketch clever concepts and ideas for advertisements through a collaborative team effort, and to coordinate the artists needed for implementing the finished product. Although your work will involve a great deal of ingenuity and creative imagination, you will be required to meet the same strict business deadlines as the rest of the team. As a Junior Art Director your contributions will include:

- Putting together story boards for presentations.
- Sketching advertisement ideas.
- Collecting photos and illustrations for use in campaigns.
- Assisting at photo sessions and commercial shoots.
- Helping to develop design concepts and graphic layout.
- Coordinating the final production of all creative pieces.

Assistant Copywriter

As an Assistant Copywriter, you will be a valuable member of the Creative team. You will be assigned to several accounts and will be responsible for assisting senior Copywriters in writing material for specific campaigns. Your hands-on experience will enable you to learn how to write effectively for advertisements, which can be far more challenging than it may appear. Conveying corporate

images and product positioning exactly as the client wants them can be difficult, therefore flexible writing skills are a must. As an Assistant Copywriter our contributions will include:

- Editing and proofreading advertisement copy.
- Writing material for established campaigns.
- Developing sales promotion or merchandising materials.
- Suggesting concepts or ideas for accounts.
- Reviewing and revising old account slogans.

Media

The Media department determines where, when, and how to place an ad so it reaches the intended audience at the lowest cost. Media Planners devise programs for ads by deciding which television shows, radio time slots, or magazines will effectively reach the most buyers of a product. Media Buyers negotiate with specific media outlets (such as *Details Magazine* or MTV) for the lowest price to place the ads based on the Media Planner's strategy. Media Researchers analyze every type of communication vehicle (e.g., newspapers, talk radio, internet) to interpret who is watching or listening to different types of messages.

Media Analyst

Media Analysts work within the Media department under the guidance of senior Media Planners and Media Buyers. Media Analysts generally have excellent analytical and math skills, and are generally given one or two accounts to monitor. By analyzing data regarding ad placement and strategic planning, you will learn how to buy advertising space in the most cost-efficient manner while maximizing target audience exposure. As a Media Analyst, your contributions will include:

- Acting as a liaison between the agency and media outlets (including TV and radio stations).
- Reviewing ratings guides, publication rate cards and broadcasting yearbooks which document the costs of placing ads in specific magazines or during specific television time slots.
- Entering data into spreadsheets for analysis.
- Collecting, collating and analyzing data.
- Forecasting and projecting the potential impact of altering a campaign program.
- Monitoring competitor media strategies.

Market Research

Advertising firms need data to back up their ideas and promotional strategies. The Market Research department specializes in understanding consumer behavior. They gather data about purchasing habits and demographics, and use that information to advise the other agency departments and clients on how to best target an ad to effectively reach a specific audience. Market Researchers combine quantitative analysis with a practical knowledge of how to influence human behavior in order to help the agency develop successful ads for its clients.

Assistant Market Researcher

Entry-level positions in Market Research often involve administrative work, such as proofreading questionnaires and data entry, but you will play an important role in helping the Research team develop strategies for the agency's campaigns. Throughout the first year you will be involved in developing questionnaires for surveys, analyzing data ("number crunching"), organizing studies, and writing reports to communicate your findings. Undergraduate degrees in math, psychology, sociology, communication, and business make the transition to Market Research relatively easy. This position is very analytical in nature, and requires an aptitude for numbers and data analysis. The Market Research team is vital to the success of any advertising effort because it provides insight into consumer trends and customer purchasing habits. As an Assistant Market Researcher, your contributions will include:

- Designing consumer tests and administering questionnaires.
- Making predictions about the likely success or failure of a given advertising strategy.
- Drawing general conclusions about a campaign.
- Monitoring competitor products and advertising techniques.
- Collecting, coding, and tabulating data to track consumer trends.
- Orchestrating focus groups.
- Recommending courses of action to the other divisions of the firm.

Interactive

As more people gain access to computers and information technology, advertisers are looking to the Internet and the World Wide Web for advertising opportunities. Many companies today have web sites dedicated to providing information about the company and its products. Others use the Internet as a niche advertising tool, placing targeted ads on sites known to be accessed by a desired audience. Many of the larger ad agencies have rushed to establish *Interactive Media* departments which offer extensive opportunities for new professionals with web design, maintenance, promotion, marketing, and programming capabilities.

Production and Traffic

Professionals in the print and broadcast production areas are the people who do the actual detail work of production. *Print production* staff evaluate cost-effectiveness, develop production budgets and work with outside professionals to negotiate prices and ensure quality. *Traffic production* staff schedule and coordinate every print production job, which entails keeping everyone informed of deadlines and making sure that each stage of a project is approved. *Broadcast production* staff create the television or radio spots and manage the process from beginning to end, including developing budgets, casting actors, booking the location and supervising editing and distribution. People who have a high level of attention to detail, the ability to handle complex scheduling matters and experience with either printing or broadcasting, particularly digital editing, are well-suited for this area and start out as production assistants.