

Media Planner

Introduction

Media Planners decide how digital, television, radio and other media can be used in advertising campaigns. They identify the best mix of media for delivering an advertising message, to the largest possible target group in the most cost-effective way.

Also known as

- Media Planner, Advertising
- Planner, Advertising Media



Work Activities

Media Planners work for advertising and marketing agencies. Their aim is to get across a client's advertising message to the largest number of targeted people in the most cost-effective way.

To do this, they need to weigh up a number of factors. One of these is deciding which mix of media is the best to use.

The planner can choose from a variety of media, including:

- digital media (including social networking sites, blogs and online communities)
- newspapers and magazines
- outdoor posters
- public transport, such as buses and underground stations and trains
- television and radio, including interactive TV and digital catch-up services
- cinema and entertainment venues
- sponsorship.

To be able to make a decision about which media to use, the planner needs to have in-depth knowledge of each medium that is available. This includes being aware of:

- which search engines people are using
- how people are using mobile phones
- how many people read a certain newspaper or magazine
- which websites are attracting large numbers of people
- where poster hoardings are sited
- which TV programmes are popular with different people
- how many people are watching catch-up TV.

Planners use specialist research statistics and reports to find this information.

Planners need to keep up to date with new forms of advertising media. For example, digital advertising on social networking sites is being used more and more, and some planners specialise in this area.

Being able to read, write and speak Welsh may be an advantage when you're looking for work in Wales.

Personal Qualities and Skills

As a Media Planner, you will need:

- To be able to work under pressure and make decisions quickly.
- A flexible approach; you should be prepared to change your plans at short notice.
- Research and analytical skills to gain knowledge of circulation and audience figures.
- Number skills to work out what advertising media the campaign can afford, within a given budget.
- Verbal communication skills.
- IT skills.
- Written communication skills to present your recommendations in report form.

Pay and Opportunities

Pay

The pay rates given below are approximate.

Media Planners earn in the range of £17,500 - £21,000 a year, rising to £26,000 - £33,000. Higher earners can make over £45,000 a year.

Hours of work

Media planners usually work a basic 39-hour week, Monday to Friday.

Where could I work?

Employers are advertising media agencies, full-service/integrated agencies and direct marketing agencies.

Opportunities for Media Planners occur in some towns and cities throughout the UK. However, most opportunities are found in London and the South East where there is a larger concentration of advertising agencies.

Where are vacancies advertised?

Vacancies are advertised in local/national newspapers, on job boards and employers' websites, on Universal Jobmatch and at Jobcentre Plus. Some vacancies are for planner/buyers.

Entry Routes and Training

Entry routes

Most people entering the profession are graduates. A degree in a subject such as business, media studies or marketing communications might be useful.

Applicants who have completed one or more work placements during their degree usually have a distinct advantage. The Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (IPA) runs a summer school for students which includes an agency placement, evening seminars and opportunities for recruitment. The summer school offers a Client Services and Planning programme.

If you don't have a degree, you will usually be expected to offer qualifications equal to those needed for entry to a degree course, along with relevant work experience.

Training

Training is usually provided on-the-job; the largest agencies might offer graduate training programmes.

You might be able to study for a qualification from the CAM Foundation. These include a:

- Diploma Marketing Communications.
- Diploma in Digital Marketing.
- Specialist Digital Unit Award
- Mobile Marketing in Practice Unit Award
- Web Analytics and Social Media Monitoring Unit Award
- Integrated Digital Media and Branding Unit Award

To apply for CAM registration, applicants need A levels (or equivalent) plus a degree, experience in a marketing communications role, or a relevant marketing qualification at level three or above.

The IPA offers its members the online Foundation and Advanced Certificates. The Foundation Certificate is for people in their first year in advertising work. The Advanced Certificate is for people with at least three years' experience in advertising. People with at least six years' experience working in member companies can take the IPA Excellence Diploma. The IPA also runs a career development programme.

There is a level 3 Diploma in Social Media for Business, with a marketing pathway.

Progression

Media planners can progress to senior planner or senior planner/buyer posts, and then to agency management and director positions.

Qualifications

For entry to a degree course in any subject, the usual minimum requirement is:

- 2/3 A levels
- GCSEs at grade C or above in 2/3 other subjects.

Depending on the course, you are likely to need GCSEs in English and Maths at grade C or above.

Alternatives to A levels include:

- Edexcel (BTEC) Level 3 National qualifications
- the International Baccalaureate Diploma.

However, course requirements vary so check prospectuses carefully.

Some universities accept the Welsh Baccalaureate as equivalent to 1 A-level.

Adult Opportunities

Age limits

It is illegal for any organisation to set age limits for entry to employment, education or training, unless they can show there is a real need to have these limits.

Skills/experience

Some entrants have developed relevant skills by working in marketing, for example, as a marketing assistant, or in advertising sales.

Access courses

If you don't have the qualifications needed to enter your chosen degree or HND course, a college or university Access course (for example, Access to Media) could be the way in.

These courses are designed for people who have not followed the usual routes into higher education. No formal qualifications are usually needed, but you should check this with individual colleges.

Distance learning

The CAM Foundation offers the Diploma in Marketing Communications and the Diploma in Digital Marketing, by distance learning.

There are degree and postgraduate courses in business and marketing available by distance learning.

Statistics

- 22% of people in occupations such as advertising media planning work part-time.
- 22% have flexible hours.
- 8% of employees work on a temporary basis.

Further Information

Professional institutions Professional institutions have the following roles:

- To support their members.
- To protect the public by keeping standards high in their professions.

For more information on the institution(s) relevant to this career, check out the contacts below.

Contacts

- **Creative Skillset**
Skills for the creative industries
Email: info@creativeskillset.org
Website: www.creativeskillset.org
- **Creative Choices**
Publisher: Creative & Cultural Skills
Email: info@creative-choices.co.uk
Website: www.creative-choices.co.uk
- **Creative & Cultural Skills**
Skills for craft, cultural heritage, design, literature, music, performing arts and visual arts
Email: london@ccskills.org.uk
Website: ccskills.org.uk
- **Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM)**
Address: Moor Hall, Cookham, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 9QH
Tel: 01628 427120
Website: www.cim.co.uk
- **CAM Foundation**
Communication, Advertising and Marketing education
Tel: 01628 427120
Website: www.camfoundation.com
- **Getin2marketing**
Website: www.getin2marketing.com
- **Advertising Association (AA)**
Address: 7th Floor North, Artillery House, 11-19 Artillery Row, London SW1P 1RT
Tel: 020 7340 1100
Email: aa@adassoc.org.uk
Website: www.adassoc.org.uk
- **Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (IPA)**
Address: 44 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8QS
Tel: 020 7235 7020
Email: web@ipa.co.uk
Website: www.ipa.co.uk
- **Institute of Advertising Practitioners in Ireland (IAPI)**
Irish enquiries
Address: 8 Upper Fitzwilliam Street, Dublin 2

Tel: 01 6765991
Email: info@iapi.com
Website: www.iapi.ie

- **AdMISSION**
Publisher: Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (IPA)
Email: admission@ipa.co.uk
Website: www.theadmission.co.uk

Related Careers

- Market Research Executive
- Marketing Manager
- Field Sales Executive
- Advertising Account Executive
- Advertising Art Director
- Copywriter
- Media Buyer
- Event Manager
- Export Sales Manager
- Market Research Analyst
- Marketing Executive
- Communications Manager
- Advertising Media Salesperson
- Bill Poster/Fixer
- Direct Marketing Manager
- Market Research Interviewer
- Sales Manager
- Model
- Account Manager
- Digital Marketing Executive
- Social Media Manager