

WORKING CONDITIONS

Marketing Research Analyst

Like economists, marketing research analysts have structured work schedules, often working alone, writing reports, preparing statistical charts, and using computers. But some job settings require the marketing research analyst to work as a part of a research team.

The work involves pressure of deadlines and tight schedules, and often there are overtime hours involved.

Marketing, Sales, and Public Relations Manager

Marketing, sales, and public relations managers are provided with offices close to top managers. Long hours, including evenings and weekends, are common. Working under pressure is unavoidable as schedules change, problems arise, and deadlines and goals must be met.

Marketing, advertising, and public relations managers meet frequently with other managers; some meet with the public and government officials. Substantial travel may be involved. For example, attendance at meetings sponsored by associations or industries is often mandatory. Sales managers travel to national, regional, and local offices and to various dealers and distributors. Advertising and promotion managers may travel to meet with clients or representatives of communications media. Public relations managers may travel to meet with special-interest groups or government officials. Job transfers between headquarters and regional offices are common, particularly among sales managers, and may disrupt family life.

THE QUALIFICATIONS YOU'LL NEED

Marketing Research Analyst

Whether working in government, industry, research organizations, marketing, or consulting firms, economists and marketing research analysts who have a graduate degree usually qualify for more responsible research and administrative positions. A Ph.D. is necessary for top economist or marketing positions in many organizations. Many corporation and government executives have a strong background in economics or marketing.

Graduate training is required for most private sector marketing research analyst jobs and for advancement to more responsible positions. Marketing research analysts may earn advanced degrees in economics, business administration, marketing, statistics, or some closely related discipline.

Experience is an important plus to add to your resume. Some schools help graduate students find internships or part-time employment in government agencies, economic consulting firms, financial institutions, or marketing research firms prior to graduation.

A bachelor's degree with a major in economics or marketing is generally not sufficient to obtain a position as a marketing analyst but is excellent preparation for many entry-level positions, including research assistant, administrative or management trainee, marketing interviewer, or any of a number of professional sales jobs.

Aspiring marketing research analysts should gain experience gathering and analyzing data, conducting interviews or surveys, and writing reports on their findings while in college. This experience can prove invaluable later in obtaining a full-time position in the field, since much of their work, in the beginning, may center around these duties. Experience with database, spreadsheet, and statistical software is also very important.

Strong communications skills are also essential for positions of this sort. Students interested in this type of career are encouraged to develop strong skills in both written and oral communication.

With experience, marketing research analysts eventually are assigned their own research projects. Those considering careers as marketing research analysts should be able to work accurately, because much time is spent on data analysis. Patience and persistence are necessary qualities, since marketing research analysts must spend long hours on independent study and problem solving. At the same time, they must work well with others; marketing research analysts often oversee interviews for a wide variety of individuals.

Marketing research analysts must be able to present their findings, both orally and in writing, in a clear, meaningful way.

Marketing, Sales, and Public Relations Manager

A wide range of educational backgrounds are suitable for entry into marketing, sales, and public relations managerial jobs, but many employers prefer a broad liberal arts background. A bachelor's degree in economics, sociology, psychology, literature, or philosophy, among other subjects, is acceptable. However, requirements vary depending upon the particular job.

For marketing and sales management positions, some employers prefer a bachelor's or master's degree in business administration with an emphasis on marketing. Courses in economics, business law, accounting, finance, mathematics, and statistics are also highly recommended.

In highly technical industries, such as computer and electronics manufacturing, a bachelor's degree in engineering or science combined with a master's degree in business administration may be preferred.

For public relations management positions, some employers prefer a bachelor's or master's degree in public relations or journalism. The individual's curriculum should include courses in advertising, business administration, public affairs, political science, and creative and technical writing. For all these specialties, courses in management and completion of an internship while in school are highly recommended. Familiarity with computerized word-processing and database applications also are important for many marketing and public relations management positions.

Most marketing, sales, and public relations management positions are filled by promoting experienced staff or related professional or technical personnel, such as sales representatives, purchasing agents, buyers, product or brand specialists, advertising specialists, promotion specialists, and public relations specialists.

In small firms, where the number of positions is limited, advancement to a management position may come slowly. In large firms, promotion may occur more quickly.

Although experience, ability, and leadership are emphasized for promotion, advancement may be accelerated by participation in management training programs conducted by many large firms. Many firms also provide their employees with continuing education opportunities, either in-house or at local colleges and universities, and encourage employee participation in seminars and conferences, often provided by professional societies. Often in collaboration with colleges and universities, numerous marketing and related associations sponsor national or local management training programs. Courses include brand and product management, international marketing, sales management evaluation, telemarketing and direct sales, promotion, marketing communication, market research, organizational communication, and data-processing systems procedures and management. Many firms pay all or part of the cost for those who successfully complete courses.

Some associations (listed in Appendix A) offer certification programs for marketing, advertising, and public relations managers. Certification is a sign of competence and achievement that is particularly important in a competitive job market. While relatively few marketing, sales, and public relations managers currently are certified, the number of managers seeking certification is expected to grow. For example, Sales and Marketing Executives International offers a management certification program based on education and job performance. The Public Relations Society of America offers an accreditation program for public relations practitioners based on years of experience and an examination. The American Marketing Association is developing a certification program for marketing managers.

People interested in becoming marketing, sales, and public relations managers should be mature, creative, highly motivated, resistant to stress, and

flexible yet decisive. The ability to communicate persuasively, both orally and in writing, with other managers, staff, and the public is vital.

Marketing, sales, and public relations managers also need tact, good judgment, and exceptional ability to establish and maintain effective personal relationships with supervisory and professional staff members and client firms.

Because of the importance and high visibility of their jobs, marketing, sales, and public relations managers often are prime candidates for advancement. Well-trained, experienced, successful managers may be promoted to higher positions in their own or other firms. Some become top executives. Managers with extensive experience and sufficient capital may open their own businesses.

CAREER OUTLOOK

Marketing Research Analyst

Employment of marketing research analysts is expected to grow about as fast as the average for all occupations through 2006. Most job openings, however, are likely to result from the need to replace experienced workers who transfer to other occupations, retire, or leave the labor force for other reasons.

Demand for qualified marketing research analysts should be strong due to an increasingly competitive economy. Marketing research provides organizations with valuable feedback from purchasers, allowing companies to evaluate consumer satisfaction and more effectively plan for the future.

With companies seeking to expand their market and consumers become better informed, the need for marketing professionals is increasing. Opportunities for marketing research analysts with graduate degrees should be good in a wide range of employment settings, particularly in marketing research firms, as companies find it more profitable to contract out for marketing research services rather than support their own marketing department.

Other organizations, including financial services organizations, health care institutions, advertising firms, manufacturing firms producing consumer goods, and insurance companies, may offer job opportunities for marketing research analysts.

A strong background in marketing, mathematics, statistics, and economics provides the basis for acquiring any specialty within the field. Those skilled in quantitative techniques and their application to marketing research using computers should have the best job opportunities.

Like economists, marketing research graduates with related work experience in a closely related business field or industry should have the best job opportunities.