

THE MARKETING MACHINE WORKS

HOW TO TURN YOUR FIRST MARKETING HIRE INTO YOUR HEAD OF MARKETING

A GUIDE FOR BUSINESS OWNERS AND COMPANY DIRECTORS





For most small businesses, their first marketing hire is usually a Graduate, Marketing Administrator or Apprentice.

It's a logical choice for a first hire because so much of the marketing activity in a small business is administrative in nature. For a business under £1m turnover, it doesn't usually make financial sense to hire a highly experienced marketing professional since most of their marketing work will involve updating the website, collecting data, writing emails, and creating content and social media posts.

And the hope is that, over time, your Marketer will grow as the business does. They'll become more knowledgeable about marketing and, eventually, they'll be able to make strategic decisions about how to best market your business.

One day, they'll become your Head of Marketing, managing the marketing team of your medium-sized business, delivering measurable results for your marketing investment.

But what are the steps to develop your Apprentice or Marketing Administrator into a Head of Marketing? And what milestones and skill markers are there along the way that show whether they're on track?

The Marketing Apprenticeship

Many people get their first taste of marketing as a Marketing Apprenticeship. This is quite a hard role to outline as it's one which grows as the apprentice's skills, knowledge and confidence grow. However, they'll mostly be responsible for a lot of the admin and some of the implementation tasks.

With an average starting salary of around £15-20k, they often feel like the most financially viable choice to bring into your team as a small business but it's important to remember that this low salary reflects the additional training and support they'll need in the first 18 months in the role.

Remember that an apprenticeship doesn't necessarily mean "straight out of school". Many people choose an apprenticeship after a degree or as a way to change careers, which may mean they have transferable skills from their previous experience.

How to start building a marketing team

When you're growing the business, you want to build a strong, loyal marketing team that shares your values and your commitment to the company. You want to make sure that you're getting the best return on your investment in your team members and start seeing results as soon as possible. But in order to get this great return, what are the main roles you want to fill and when?



The Marketing Executive

This is the person who does the majority of your implementation work. Tasks like updating your website, posting on social media, keeping your CRM up to date, writing and scheduling emails, and so on.

In big businesses where there are a lot of marketing tasks to get done every day, you'll find a large number of Marketing Executives, Marketing Administrators, Graduates and Marketing Apprentices. They'll all be supported by marketing specialists who have a lot of experience in areas like digital advertising, PR, SEO or copywriting. You can expect their starting salary to be between £22k and £27k as they should already have the skills to implement most if not all your marketing admin tasks with assistance and support from the Marketing Manager.

The Marketing Manager

The role of a Marketing Manager is to decide how your marketing plan is implemented. They manage all marketing projects, oversee the day-to-day running of the marketing team, liaise with suppliers, overseeing content, etc... In large businesses, you'll often find there's a couple of Marketing Managers who all work collaboratively but manage different teams. You might find a Head of Social, Head of Advertising or Brand Manager who all focus on a specific area of the marketing process but all report back to the Head of Marketing. You can expect a starting salary for a Marketing Manager to begin at around £40k which is why most small business owners tend to start off by hiring a Marketing Executive or Apprentice.

The Head of Marketing

The Head of Marketing (or Marketing Director perhaps) is responsible for setting the marketing strategy based on the business strategy.

They oversee the creation of your marketing plan, ensure the marketing team is well-briefed and supported, and make sure everyone is implementing the strategy consistently.

There's usually only one Head of Marketing in a business who oversees everything.

Going from a 0-person to a 20-person marketing team...

Now, it's easy to say "you need one Head of Marketing, a couple of managers and 10-20 Executives and Administrators". But how does this work for small businesses who want to recruit their first marketing hire?

As small businesses grow, they usually think, "most of my marketing work is administrative, so I'll start by hiring a marketing admin or apprentice". This sounds logical, but a marketing admin will struggle to deliver ROI if they don't have a strategy and plan to work from. A marketing admin or apprentice won't have the skills or experience to create a strategy and plan, and they shouldn't be expected to. It's like asking your

Office Manager or Accounts Administrator to create a full cash flow forecast for your business.

However, if you have a good strategy and plan in place, a marketing admin will be a perfect first marketing hire. As your business grows, you may get a second marketing admin, and move your first marketing admin up to manage them. Over time, as your first marketing hire develops their skills and experience, they can eventually be promoted to your Head of Marketing. By this time, they should be able to plan and implement your strategy across all your marketing channels.





So, what actually is the role of the Head of Marketing in a small business?

To use the cliché, in a smaller business, a Head of Marketing will wear many hats. Their key roles will still involve management of the team, budget and projects, but they'll also have more of a hands-on approach in...

- Turning the business's strategy and goals into a marketing strategy and plan for the business.
- Managing your marketing team.
- Preparing and allocating budgets and marketing resources within the team.

- Brand management and ensuring consistency in your messaging.
- Deeply understanding your ideal customer and analysing their behaviours.
- Testing and measuring the success of each marketing activity.
- Market research.

In bigger businesses you need lots of specialists in lots of different areas of marketing like social media, SEO, website design, etc... In smaller businesses though, you need someone who's more of a generalist. Someone who's flexible, versatile and excited by the prospect that no two days will ever be the same.

They ideally need to understand and have experience in all areas of the strategy and buyer journey. This means that it's often actually better for a small business to train their marketer up to become Head of Marketing than to wait and hire someone with more experience.

What's the difference between small and big business marketing?

Is there a difference? To put it simply, yes! There's LOADS of ways that small business marketing differs from bigger businesses. In fact, at times, your approach to marketing a small business may be the complete opposite of how you'd approach it if you were marketing a big business.

For example, most Marketing Graduates will spend at least a term (if not a year) learning how to carry out market research. This is because market research is essential in big business marketing because few people (if any) in the marketing team actually deal directly with customers. That's usually the job of the sales and customer services teams. This means the marketing team has to carry out HUGE amounts of market research in order to really understand their ideal customer and what they want. In fact, it's so important to get this right that a significant proportion of their annual budget will be set aside for market research alone.

Now, if your business is anything like mine and my clients', this huge investment into market research just isn't feasible. And it's not actually necessary...

You probably speak to your customers every day, or at least a few times a week.

I'm sure you could probably tell me more about your ideal customer than any market researcher could. So instead of wasting a lot of time and money on market research, it's far more effective for small businesses to adopt an agile approach in their marketing.

This is something to be aware of if you've taken on a Marketing Graduate or someone with previous marketing experience in a big business. Small business marketing is rarely taught in marketing degrees, and not in any real detail.



'Agile' Marketing

In engineering, there's a methodology called "Agile". Every engineer knows about it (and you might already know about it!) because it's all about delivering value to customers faster, with fewer problems.

Instead of beavering away for years and then having a big product launch, engineers will start small, delivering work regularly, and evaluating and improving all the time.

Agile marketing is a systematic process of incrementally improving your marketing by testing and measuring each cog in your marketing machine.

You need to have a basic specification to start with, but that doesn't have to take long to make.

Think of it like batch cooking your marketing decisions. Once you have a strategy in place, the vast majority of your marketing becomes easy because you (or your marketer) don't have to think through every little decision. Those decisions have already been made and are based on logical, robust rationale.

You know what to post on social media because you know who you want to talk to and what they're thinking about at the moment.

You know where to advertise and what

to say. And when someone calls you (or your marketer) with a "great marketing opportunity" you'll be able to quickly decide if it fits in with the rest of your marketing and will deliver a return on your investment, or if it'll actually be a complete waste of time and money.

It takes me a couple of hours on a Sunday afternoon to batch cook all my meals for the week. It's a bit of a time investment, but if I made all my meals from scratch every evening the total amount of time I'd spend on cooking would be two or three times as much.

In the same way, it takes time to set the strategy and make a plan, but it makes all the rest of my marketing much more efficient.

Another benefit of batch cooking is that I can make sure my family has a healthy balanced diet, instead of realising too late that we're eating pasta for the third night in a row because I've been too busy and wasn't thinking. By having a strategy in place I can also make sure I have a balance of different marketing activities going on, and I don't forget an important ingredient when other urgent tasks are stealing my time and attention.

In my business, this also gives me the confidence to hand over tasks to Katie when I'm busy with clients as I know that she has a clear process and specification to work to that creates a consistent and effective outcome.



Creating an implementation toolkit for your marketer...

Whether you've already taken on your first marketing hire or you're just thinking about it, it's important to have a marketing specification for your business.

But what does a marketing specification need to include for it to actually be useful for you and your marketer?

Katie and I have spent a lot of time fine tuning this since she first joined my business. So, below I've included a checklist of all the marketing tools and documents that we both use on a regular basis that help to ensure every piece of work we produce is consistent, on brand and aligned with our marketing goals...



Marketing tools checklist...

How many of these do you already have in your business?

- A document outlining your business's vision, mission and values.
.....
- A set of brand guidelines that your marketer can stick to, ensuring consistency across the board.
.....
- An overarching marketing strategy created by the business owner or Marketing Director that includes the following...
 - An ideal customer persona mapped out with their concerns, pain points, beliefs and influencers.
.....
 - Your value proposition.
.....
 - A “map” of your buyer journey or a diagram of your marketing and sales process.
.....
- A prioritised marketing plan that is built around your strategy.
.....
- Clear goals and objectives that you all agree on.
.....
- A test and measure document to track the results of your marketing activities.
.....

If you're missing any of the above already in your business, book a free Clarity Call with me today at <https://info.rosconkie.com/apply> for help getting started.

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5 steps to upskilling your Marketing Administrator

Growth is essential to success, both for a business and for everyone inside it. If we as individuals stop learning and growing, we stagnate and fail to find new ways to achieve our goals.

When you hire your first marketer, it's essential that you have clear processes in place for them to follow to ensure that everything they're doing is feeding into your overall marketing strategy. This will not only give them a working knowledge of how your strategy works within your business, but will also help them gain confidence in their skillset and gradually take on more responsibility.

But, once they become confident in these processes, how can you help them develop their skills so that both you and they are comfortable with them taking on more responsibility?

Here are the 5 steps I recommend when upskilling your Marketing Apprentice...





1. Make sure you have a really clear strategy and plan for your marketer to follow

Launching your marketing without a clear strategy in place is like setting sail without a map. You might get somewhere but it may not be where you wanted to go.

When I was 18 I sailed across the Atlantic in the Tall Ships Race. Now, we could have just shown up on the day and followed our gut, or maybe followed everyone else and hope we ended up in the right place in the end. Of course, we didn't do that. Our Skipper carefully planned our route by looking at various charts, weather forecasts and taking advice from other salty people. He also made sure everyone on board was clear on our destination (can you imagine if we weren't?!) and how we planned to get there.

In business it's the same.

Without a clear strategy and plan, will you end up where you want to be?

Having a strategic plan in place makes a massive difference in any business, and if you've recently brought your first marketer on board, it's even more important. A strategic plan ensures their work reflects your business and your mission. It's never too late to create a strategic plan for your marketer, so book a free call with me if you need help getting started.



2. Set clear and realistic marketing goals and objectives for your Marketer

Most people work best with a clear goal to work towards. It's important your Apprentice or Marketing Administrator's goals align with your own, but they must be independently achievable. It'd be unfair to give my Apprentice a turnover or sales goal, since she doesn't control significant parts of the sales process.



Instead, Katie's goals focus on the things she can influence: number of leads generated through our marketing channels; content creation; campaign delivery and results. Katie's goals align with our tactical objectives, and support our strategic objectives. For that reason, we're careful about setting goals about marketing indicators such as social media followers, since lots of followers doesn't necessarily lead to lots of sales. If you're going to set indicator-based goals, make sure you also set conversion rate goals alongside them.

Make sure all goals are SMART and that they will directly support your sales and marketing outcomes.



3. Plan the training and support that you and your marketer will need to achieve your objectives.

Whether they're on an apprenticeship course, have recently graduated or have been in the role for a while now, there's always something new to learn in marketing. Whether it's a new social media platform, sales training, graphic design, copywriting or how to get the most out of a software... The list really is endless. Which is why it's so important to plan marketing training time into your own and your marketer's schedules.

An important thing to note here is that, as much as you want your marketer to implement your marketing strategy for you, you don't want them to take control of this. Even if they're in-house, don't place yourself in a vulnerable position. I see a lot of business owners where their marketer is controlling their strategy and the MD or CEO has no idea what's working and what's not.

In the same way that every business owner needs to understand how to manage the financial side of the business, you also need to understand the fundamentals of marketing strategy. This doesn't mean you have to be an expert in Facebook. It just means you need to understand how your marketing fits together and how each element is working to drive sales.



4. Test and measure - consistently!

The only way you can know how effective a marketing activity has been is to consistently test and measure. This means you can incrementally improve your marketing to get the best results. I have to admit that the “consistency” part is the bit I struggle with sometimes. It always starts off well when I’m enthused about a new 90-day plan but seems to dwindle off around weeks 5 and 6 when the honeymoon period has worn off.

If you’ve recently taken on a marketing hire, it’s crucial that both of you measure the results of your activities. Start with two or three key metrics (or however many you think you can measure without getting overwhelmed) and build up from there. You can always add complexity later.

It’s also important to focus on conversion, rather than the numbers themselves. For example, if you have a page on your website with a call to action on it (e.g. “Enter your email address to receive my free guide”) measure the number of people who visit the page and the number of people who sign up. With these two numbers you can calculate the percentage of people who sign up.

If your apprentice is working on improving the content of the page, you should see those improvements reflected in the conversion rate. Whenever they make changes, see if it has increased or decreased the conversion rate of the page. This will show you the effectiveness of their work, even if the number of people visiting the page is fluctuating.



5. Carry out regular 'strategic review and planning' sessions

I recommend small businesses review their strategy and plan every 90 days.

These planning sessions shouldn't just be about creating a marketing plan. Take this time to reflect on what’s worked, what hasn't and the reasons why. This

isn't a blame game: it's about learning. Your Marketer needs to be able to identify why an activity hasn't been successful as well as why another one has been, so that they can deliver good results for your business.

Ask questions like, "Knowing what you know now, what would you have done differently?" And "If we do this again, what would you change next time to get a better result?"

So, are you ready to transform your marketing hire into your next Head of Marketing?

By going through this process with them, your Apprentice or Marketing Administrator will become confident in planning and delivering successful marketing. They'll also be equipped to take on more responsibilities further down the road.

But this transformation from Apprentice to Marketing Superstar isn't going to happen overnight.

It takes time and effort to train a marketing superstar, to teach them about your business, to create and provide all the documents and processes they need to ensure they succeed. And, as a small business owner myself, I know that time can often be in short supply.

So, if you and your marketing hire would like some support kick-starting this process in your business, book your free Clarity Call with me at <https://info.rosconkie.com/apply>.





Interested in developing
your new hire into a
marketing superstar?

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