

Mar 16, 2022

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What are the Most Important Digital Skills and Job Trends in 2022 & Beyond?

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by **Clodagh O'Brien**
Posted on Mar 16, 2022



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Customers have come to rely on online channels and technologies to browse, find information, and purchase. This has resulted in brands needing marketers with [in-demand and transferable digital skills](#) and knowledge.



That has also created global demand as companies seek digital talent that can help them stand out from the competition and implement [strategies for the new customer journey](#) to drive leads and revenue.



So, [what does this mean for you as a marketer in 2022](#) and how is the job market shifting as a result of the increased need for digital know-how? Let's look at the most important digital marketing skills and job trends this year.

- [Remote, hybrid & nomad marketers](#)
- [More competition for digital talent](#)
- The marketing gig economy is booming
- Stay relevant by upskilling

1. Remote, Hybrid & Nomad Marketers Want More from Employers

We all know that the [Covid-19 pandemic](#) transformed the way people work. With employees no longer able to travel or work in offices, [working from home](#) became a way of life.

For many, that change shifted the way people thought about work and highlighted the need for a better work/life balance. For others, it made them reassess what they

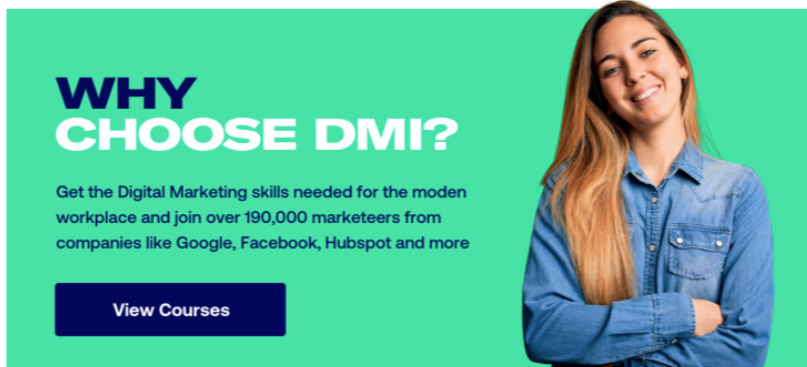
wanted from their careers and resulted in a total career change or move to a more flexible role.

2022 is going to be an interesting year for the sector as many marketers figure out a way of working that suits them. Ultimately, it's shifted the control to the employee as increased demand for skills offers more choice on how and where they work.

Orla Stack, HR Director at the Digital Marketing Institute (DMI) believes that candidates are in the driving seat in 2022. "The world of working has changed the way we look at how candidates and employees view the market, and how employers view it as well. It's painting that picture of what it's like to work in a remote environment, and what's available to an employee, and the supports that are there if you have a hybrid environment, what that looks like."

Plus, it's not just about salary or perks anymore. "For candidates looking at roles, they're looking at opportunities outside of salary and benefits. They want flexibility and career opportunities. It's going to be a very challenging year for employers. But for candidates or anybody looking for a change, they've got such a choice," states Stack.

What does this mean for marketing professionals? Think about what you want from your career and how you want to work. Do you want to become a digital [specialist in search marketing](#) or [social media marketing](#) or do you want to [become a digital marketing manager](#)? Think about your career path and see what working options would suit your professional and personal life.



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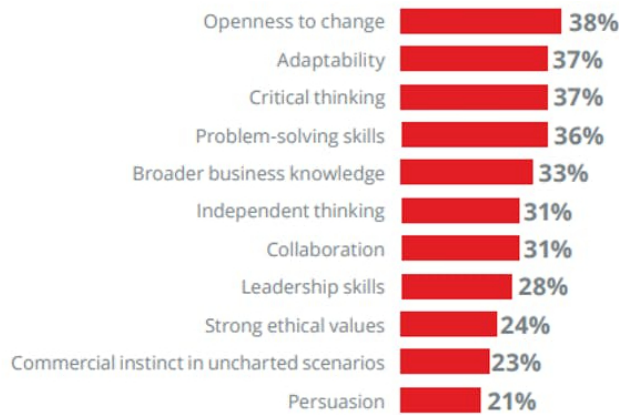
2. There's Intense Competition for Digital Talent

We've been saying for years that the demand for digital skills is on the rise, and 2022 is no different. However, this year there are key skills that companies are looking for to drive digital transformation and engage customers on the digital channels they use.

In DMI's recent whitepaper '[Perpetual Evolution - the interplay of talent and technology in the future of marketing](#)', we analyzed the future skills required in the marketplace over the next five years. As you can see, the top hard and [essential soft skills](#) for marketers are technology, creativity, analytical thinking, marketing, and openness to change.

FIGURE 8: FUTURE SKILLS NEEDED





What makes this finding interesting is that these aren't the skills you normally associate with a marketing professional. It means that in 2022 the role of a marketer is evolving to become nuanced with a broader and more complex skillset.

That being said, companies also want solid and applicable marketing skills such as paid search, social media, analytics, [website optimization](#) and content marketing. The acceleration in online browsing and purchasing has shown that the skills in an organization need to match audience behavior and needs.

And it's these skills alongside the future skills named above that are difficult to find. This makes for fierce competition in companies of all sizes for skilled marketers with digital skills. But there's a flip side for candidates, the most desirable jobs are also the most sought after.

"It's a candidate's market, but getting the most desirable jobs will always be competitive," states Orla Stack, DMI's HR Director. So, what should people do to give themselves the best chance of landing the job they want?

Stack believes marketers need to "sit back and think about where they see their career going and look at where the opportunities are in the market. The digital space is huge and is going to keep growing, so look at where their current skillset lies. Are they looking for a change, and if so, how can they upskill?"

3. The Gig Economy is Booming for Marketers

This new way of working has created a booming gig economy (a labor market for short-term contracts and freelancers). It's now more than possible to [become a freelance digital marketer](#) and earn a good living in 2022.

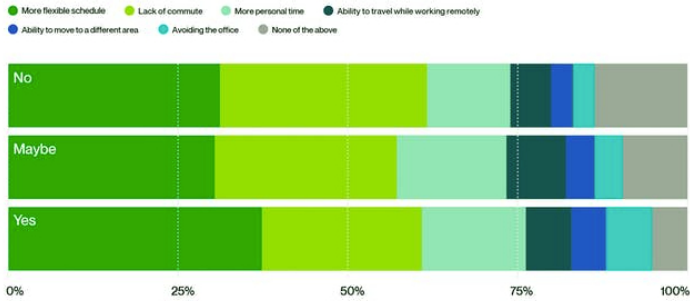
In fact, in 2021, [Upwork's 2021 Freelance Forward survey](#) reported that freelancers contributed \$1.3 trillion to the U.S. economy, up \$100 million from the previous year.

[A study of U.S professionals](#) by Upwork found that 20 percent (10 million people) are considering leaving full-time work to freelance. Out of that, 73 percent cite remote working and flexibility as the key reason for that decision.

The same report dug into other benefits of becoming a freelancer such as a lack of a commute, a more flexible schedule, and increased personal time. This confirms what we talked about above in relation to employees now valuing flexibility and a work/life balance above salary and other perks.

**Would you consider becoming
a freelancer/self-employed in order**

a freelancer/self-employed in order to continue to work remotely?



Along with a boom in freelance jobs, there's also an emergence of companies to support those roles. "You can see businesses sprouting up such as Patreon, Substack and Lili, which is a bank that supports freelancers. They assess their credit risk not in the traditional way that banks do but look at income and average it out using a different credit risk model," says **Mischa McInerney, Marketing Director of DMI**.

Another route for skilled marketers is becoming a digital nomad. This offers the flexibility of a freelance job with the bonus of moving from city to city, or country to country, while you work. Many [digital nomads report earning more money](#) than they did in a traditional 9-5 job. That's food for thought if you have in-demand digital skills and want to change your lifestyle this year.

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4. Marketers Must Upskill to Stay Relevant

As you can see there are huge opportunities out there for marketers with relevant and up-to-date digital skills. The problem for many marketers is that they don't have the skills companies need to grow and succeed in the digital space.

"When you look at the top in-demand marketing jobs, they're all digital skills-based. So it's important to upskill and stay on top of not only new things but ensure you're up to speed on all aspects of digital marketing. It's only getting bigger and more important as a discipline, and being up-to-date is really important," states **Ken Fitzpatrick, CEO of DMI**.

Whether you're just [starting your digital marketing career](#) or an experienced digital marketer, here are five key tips to keep your skills up-to-date:

1. Look for [digital marketing influencers](#) in an area you're interested in such as social media or search marketing
2. Subscribe to expert blogs or podcasts - like the [DMI blog](#) and [DMI podcast](#) - to keep an eye on trends and developments

3. Enroll in a [digital marketing course](#) - short or intensive depending on the skills you need
4. If you're in a job currently, ask about in-house training or if there's a training fund so you can outsource
5. Connect with professionals on networks such as LinkedIn and [improve your LinkedIn profile](#) to get found and connected

It can take time and effort to learn new skills or keep current, but it will be worth it when you land that dream job (remote or otherwise) or get that promotion you've been looking for.

If you're wondering where to start, [Alison Battsby](#), **Social Media Consultant at Avocado Social** has some advice. "Many professionals are looking to enhance their knowledge around things like social media ROI, social media advertising, and content creation. Those are the three areas where a lot of people feel they need to upskill, and that's where the demand is in digital marketing."

Digital Job Trends for 2022: Flexibility is here to stay & digital skills are crucial

The speed at which the marketing landscape is changing is tied to evolving digital technologies, changing consumer behavior, and the digital marketing requirements of brands - big and small.

There's a lot of scope for success as a digital marketer and many routes you can take. The best way to figure out the next step for your career in 2022 is to think about what you want and see how you can act on that.

Is the life of a freelancer or nomad attractive? Do you want to move into management? Or, do you simply want to upskill in the in-demand areas so you can start or advance your marketing career. Whatever you choose, the future is bright for talented digital marketers.

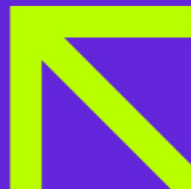
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Clodagh O'Brien is a content creator and strategist. Over the last 12 years, she has created and managed content for many SMEs and global brands. She's passionate about digital marketing and the impact of technology on culture and society. You can find her on [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#).

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