

KAPITEL 10 / CHAPTER 10¹⁰

T-SHAPED MARKETING: A NEW FRAMEWORK FOR “HYBRID JOB” IN MODERN MARKETING

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Introduction

Digitization, without excluding all spheres of social life, causes significant socio-economic consequences of a systemic nature. In particular, the most important ones concern the content and organization of work, employment structure, social and labor relations, personnel training, etc. [1, p. 6]. One of the most principal aspects of the considered changes is the radical shifts in the labor market and the emergence of so-called hybrid jobs.

It is worth noting that the term “hybrid job” has not been established yet, and can be used to denote a combination of remote and office work. However, the definition is also widespread as combining sets of skills that never used to be found in the same job, such as marketing and statistical analysis, or design and programming. Certain skills are acting as hybridizing forces, spreading across different roles [2, p. 6].

The combination of work skills that are different in nature and basic training is due to the development of cyber-physical systems, that is, the unity of physical and digital reality, which is characteristic of the modern stage of the industrial revolution. There is a change in the principles of the division and cooperation of labor, as the need to form end-to-end, supra-professional competencies (communicability, non-standard and critical thinking, the ability to work with modern digital technologies, etc.) comes first, as opposed to narrowly professional training [1, p. 69–70].

10.1. Challenges and Changes in Marketing

According to Burning Glass Technologies's study, hybrid jobs demand four important new sets of skills. There are the following [2]:

The first set concerns skills in digital tools and digital technology. Humankind is being “augmented” by machines, so our ability to learn, configure and customize cutting-edge technologies that can significantly differ from customary ones is getting

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critical.

The second set involves dealing with analytics and data, including interpretation, visualization, and communication information.

The third set comprises understanding the fundamentals of business and management. One in three IT jobs now requires management and business skills. A total of 57 % of engineering positions now require business and leadership skills.

The fourth set involves design thinking and creativity. More than half (54 %) of all IT jobs now require some form of digital design. More than one-quarter (26 %) of technology jobs now require design.

Since Burning Glass Technologies (BGT) first identified the hybrid trend in 2015 the pace of hybridization has only increased, with significant implications for workers, educators, employers, and society as a whole [2]. Pandemic Covid-19 facilitated this trend. And nowadays, it is difficult to point out any job that is not affected by digital technologies.

One of the fields most affected by digital technologies is business, in particular, marketing. As BGT notes, marketing is now a highly data-driven field, with data skills widely in demand for Marketing Managers and Analysts as they try to more tightly target customers and identify the best tactics. It is more impressive, if we take into account the fact that marketing had little to do with statistics and programming before. For the time being, marketing has acquired absolutely new distinctive features and involved new directions of marketing activities that are united under the title “digital marketing”, i.e. Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Pay-Per-Click (PPC), Social Media Marketing, Content Marketing, Email Marketing, Mobile Marketing, Marketing Analytics, and Affiliate Marketing.

Given the relevant changes, one can summarize the challenges that modern marketing faces:

- how to combine traditional and digital marketing;
- how to develop or tailor a marketing strategy for providing its effectiveness;
- way of thinking because digital marketing is not about only using digital tools;
- how to build the work of the marketing team (department) in the company;
- exactly what skills to train personnel and in which ways.

Acting in the digital world requires specific skills and abilities from marketers that can be depicted as being digital-first in their thinking, digital-native in their execution, and digital-savvy when it comes to marketing technology. In other words, here’s the motto for marketers: think digital, act digital, measure digital [3].



Based on the main directions of digital marketing, the most in-demand digital marketing jobs can have been highlighted (tab. 1).

Tab.1 - The top 10 digital marketing jobs [4]

№	Title of occupation	Content
1	Digital marketing manager	to oversee and implement digital campaigns, to be responsible for laying out a project creating a timeline setting milestones, and managing budgets among other tasks
2	Content strategist	to be responsible for developing content that is tailored to a company's objectives and target audience; they use analytical tools to find topics that engage the audience and drive traffic to the company's digital media
3	Virtual reality developer	to design, test and develop of virtual or augmented reality software; this is suitable for those with strong backgrounds in technology and creative arts
4	SEO and SEM specialist	to know how to create content that ensures a company's website gets seen by the target audience; businesses need to rank highly on search engine result pages in order to get maximum traffic to their websites
5	UX/UI designer	to develop websites products and apps that keep customers engaged with the platform; UX designers not only have strong backgrounds in technology and design but also have a firm grasp of human behavior
6	Data analysts	with the rise of AI and the Internet of Things (IoT) enormous amounts of data are collected every day; data analysts create systems to organize and examine the data so that companies can leverage it for their digital marketing campaigns
7	Email Marketing Specialist	to be responsible for creating and launching email campaigns; they also maintain customer databases; this job is suited for those with strong writing and editing skills
8	Internet of Things (IoT) marketing specialist	to use the data collected from these devices, which people use tablets, smartphones, smartwatches, and other devices for various web-based activities, to create effective digital marketing campaigns
9	Bot developer	to know how to create and program chatbots to enhance the user experience and encourage customers to complete a safe purchase
10	Social media marketer	to help companies communicate with their customers across various social media platforms they use.

10.2. The framework of a T-Shaped Marketer profile

The aforementioned changes raise new challenges in terms of creating an effective marketing team. In other words, how can organizations build their marketing teams to get the best results from both the digital and physical worlds? How to combine traditional functions of marketing and new digital marketing tools properly?

According to experts, there are some essential areas of expertise in the current marketing model, such as [5]:



– Insights & Analytics: provide market, customer, product and channel insights across marketing and sales to drive analytically based decision making.

– Customer Experience & Marketing Innovation: responsible for identifying customer segments, customer experience strategies and customer-focused marketing innovation to advocate for “customer-first” marketing.

– Marketing Strategy & Planning: responsible for setting the marketing strategy, annual marketing plan, annual budgets and a high-level campaign calendar based on prioritization.

– Marketing Operations: the marketing execution arm that provides cross-functional program management, agency management, marketing tools management, process excellence, print and fulfillment, and reporting.

– Marketing technology: the increasing technical complexity of digital marketing requires expertise that spans both marketing and marketing technology.

However, certain threats arise in such kind of division of functional areas in marketing activity. One of the biggest challenges facing businesses today is the issue of silos, which lead to multifarious tactics and mini-strategies that do not work in a coherent way.

A solution to this is T-shaped marketers who have a broad knowledge of a few digital tactics, with an in-depth specialism in one or two. T-shaped marketers can be regarded as a type of hybrid job in marketing. This can be achieved by either hiring the right new recruits or training and upskilling talent in-house. This can be particularly effective for employees who are results-focused and effective collaborators.

One more advantage of T-shaped marketers is their ability to develop and implement cohesive marketing strategies that join the digital and physical worlds. At the same time, T-shaped marketers ensure seamless passing through new Customer Value Journeys (CVJ). For instance, in modern marketing, the ability to run digital channels (like SEO, funnels, social media, influencer campaigns, etc.) aimed at creating the perfect strategy for a company and a seamless experience for a customer becomes crucial.

T-shaped marketers create and maintain that perfect flow between all of the different facets of marketing [6]. It is important to note that building a marketing team under current circumstances involves two types of combining. The first one covers the adjustment of different digital tools, and the second one – matches traditional marketing knowledge (or basic knowledge) and digital marketing. The joint “umbrella” for these two types of combining is the marketing strategy. All possible combining

should align with the marketing strategy.

The framework of a T-Shaped Marketer profile is considered to comprise horizontal and vertical parts [6, 7]. The horizontal part of the “T” is the broad knowledge of marketing. It’s all of the other facets that a marketer is familiar with, but not necessarily an absolute expert in. Then, the vertical part of the “T” (“I” section) shows the singular depth of knowledge on one subject. It’s the marketing facet that the marketer is an absolute expert on. For instance, you may be an expert in SEO marketing (this would be your “I” section) but you also have a good understanding of Content Marketing, PPC, Social Media Marketing, and Email Marketing (these skills form your “T” section) [7] (fig. 1).

Being a T-shaped marketer means that you can help clients with their marketing strategy from A-Z. While the company is running marketing on the operation level (like SEO, social media, paid ads, or community building), it is also important to be able to create winning strategies amongst other marketing facets by collaborating within a marketing team.

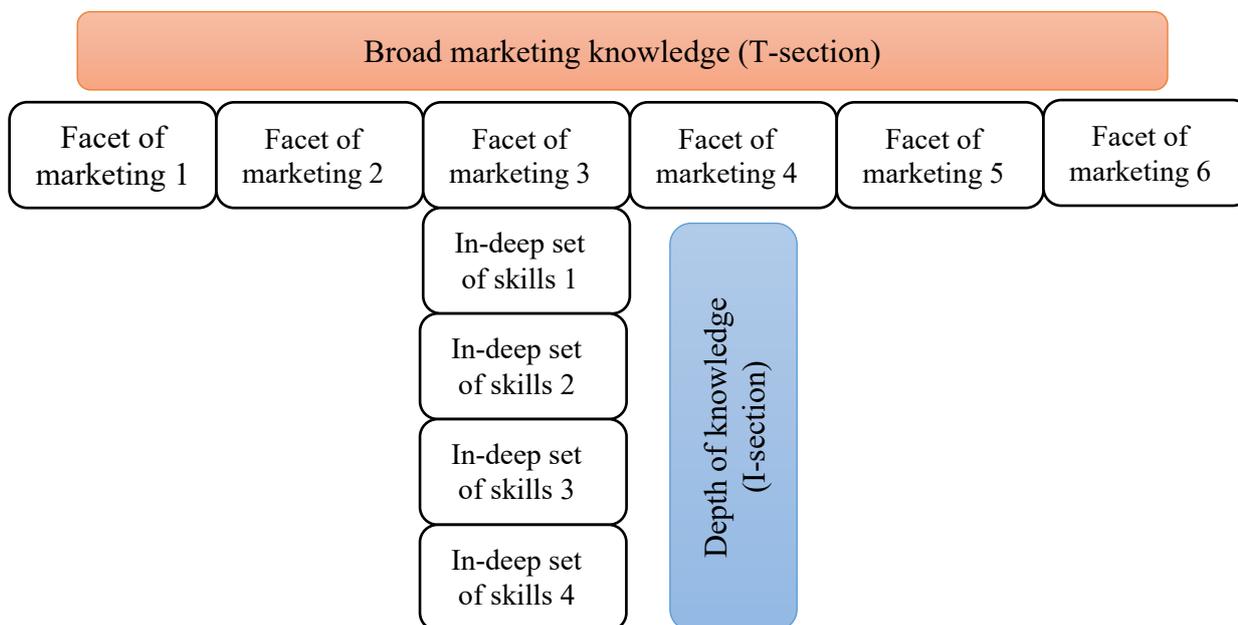


Fig. 1. The fundamental framework of the T-shaped marketer profile

One can take a broader look at the framework of a T-Shaped Marketer profile (fig. 2) [7].

The first row embraces general or base that refers to non-marketing subjects [7].

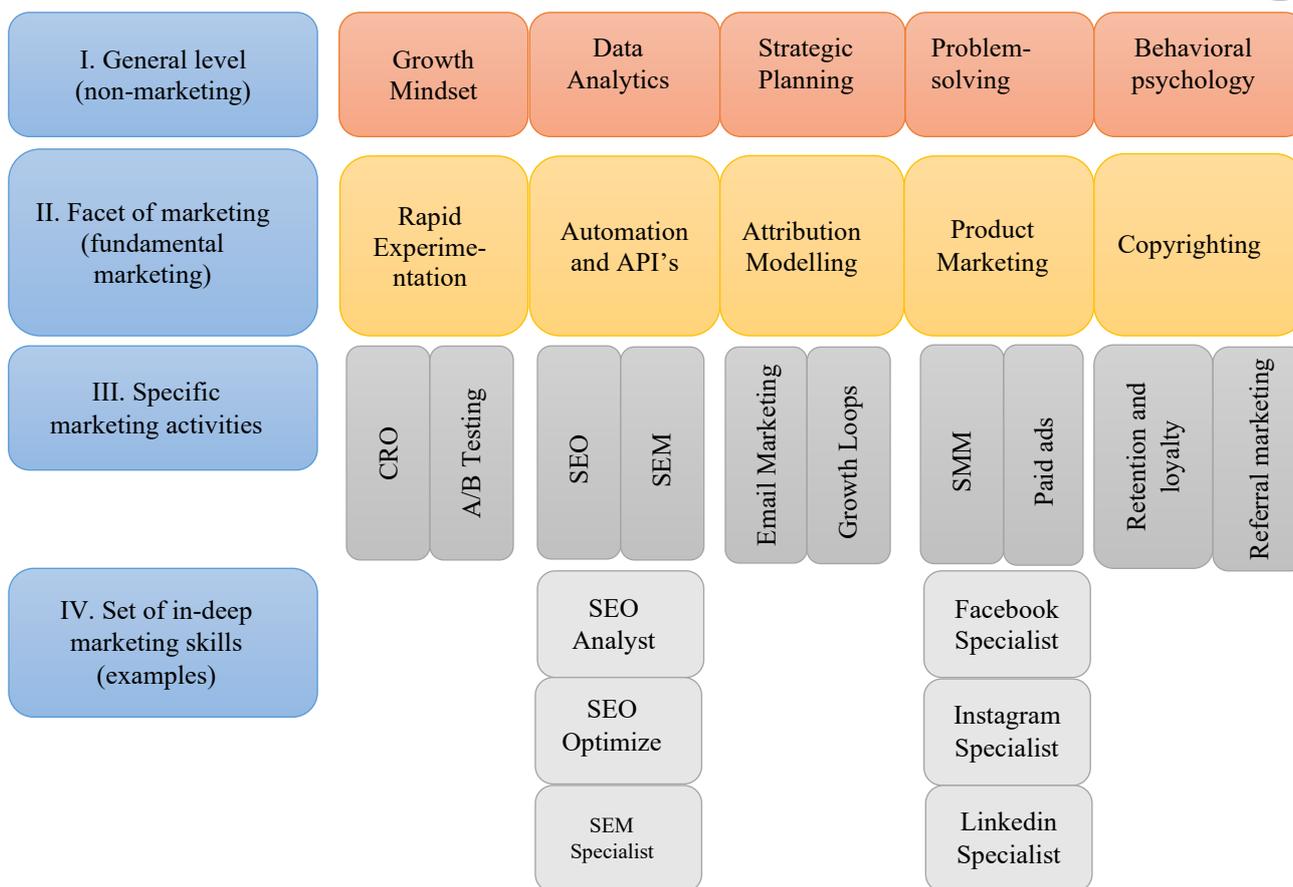


Fig. 2. Model of T-shaped marketing (based on Growthtribe's model [7])

Growth Mindset. It is the opposite of a fixed mindset. Having a growth mindset is believing that you can cultivate and improve your skills and abilities through practice and effort, unlike a fixed mindset. This mindset shift allows marketers to become more collaborative rather than competitive, big-picture thinking makes marketers more innovative and overall, more trustworthy to both colleagues and employers.

Data Analytics. It is the process of taking raw data and translating it into actionable conclusions. Appear first as incomprehensible numbers, data are then organized, analyzed, and transformed into knowledge that helps drive business decisions and strategies. There are 4 types of data analytics: descriptive, diagnostic, predictive, and prescriptive analytics.

Strategic Planning. It helps teams to work towards a common and clear goal. Strategic planning is another example of promoting collaboration, and structure and revealing individual talent within an organization.

Problem-solving. It is an invaluable skill when it comes to digital marketing. Mainly because the digital landscape is constantly evolving which in turn, presents new challenges in reaching and engaging audiences. This is all about being able to identify,



understand and present solutions to problems.

Behavioral Psychology. A great deal of time and effort is dedicated to understanding what drives consumers to take action. Behavioral psychology is a vast and excruciatingly complex field but in marketing terms, it can be applied to virtually every customer touchpoint. Marketers use this knowledge to create stress-free, intuitive, and pleasurable customer experiences.

The second row embraces general marketing subjects. Marketing Foundation or Facets of Marketing.

This level can be built based on the main model of the marketing team (department) in a company. GrowthTribe provides the scheme of a marketing process of bringing a product to market and beyond. It comprises the following parts of a looped process [7]:

Rapid Experimentation. Through a looped process of testing, measuring and adapting; marketing teams edge closer to success with each iteration.

Automation and API's. It is fitting for repetitive tasks such as uploading a post to social media or sending out a follow-up email.

Attribution Modelling. It allows marketers to analyze and assign credit to specific touchpoints along the customer journey. In other words, they help us see which parts of a campaign have had a direct influence on the customer outcome taking into account the fact, that CVJ can be very convoluted and not as direct as the company expects.

Product Marketing. It is the process of creating a product, bringing it to market, promoting it, and selling it.

Copywriting. It is the art of using persuasive language that gets users to take the desired action. Copywriting is what connects the brand to the consumer.

The third row involves in-deep specific marketing activities that deploy each general marketing direction.

Growthtribe divides its general fields of marketing foundation into the following set of skills [7]:

- Conversion Rate Optimisation (CRO) & A/B Testing.
- Search Engine Optimization (SEO) & Search Engine Marketing (SEM).
- Email Marketing & Growth Loops.
- Social media marketing (SMM) & Paid social advertising.
- Retention and loyalty & Referral marketing.

The fourth row presents a set of specific skills that every specialist in a specific field of activity must possess. Deployment of SEO & SEM and SMM & Paid Ads is



given as an example of such kind of set of in-deep marketing skills.

It is important to note that, depending on the facet of marketing, absolutely opposite requirements regarding education may be put forward to the specialist. So, for example, an SEO specialist is expected to have an education in the field of programming, while for a copywriter it is important to be knowledgeable in the field of philology or journalism. In addition, certain skills can be learned only by attending special courses or devoting time to self-education but other skills cannot be mastered without special specialized education.

Conclusions

The development of the digital economy inevitably leads to a significant transformation of the labor market. We can argue that marketing is a sphere the most affected by the new world of digital and physical realities. Hybridization processes in the field of marketing acquire special features that can be summarized in the T-shaped marketer framework with the T-section (broad marketing knowledge) and I-section (depth of marketing knowledge). Not only does broad marketing knowledge involve enhancing the marketing sphere, but also non-marketing subjects such as Growth Mindset, Data Analytics, Strategic Planning, etc. The depth in the I-section envisages involving specialists in digital technologies in order to be able to run the operation level of marketing. This gave rise to a number of new jobs in marketing, i.e. Digital marketing manager, SEO and SEM specialist, Data analyst, etc. At the same time, the traditional skills of a marketer as an understanding of customer behavior as well as creating an effective marketing strategy are also on top required. Marketing strategy is considered to be a joint canvas for “sewing up” multi-directional efforts of marketers with different sets of skills.

As hybrid roles tend to be more sophisticated and more specialized, there are potential challenges raised for marketers as employees with required in-demand skills and employers as well as education and training institutions. At the same time, hybrid roles are high-potential jobs. Obviously, this situation creates challenges that were unfamiliar to employees and employers until today.

Implications for Employers. Training existing employees could be considered to be a much better solution for employers than seeking a handful of employees with highly in-demand but temporary skills. Also, it is related to creating a more focused,



effective corporate learning and development system as well as organizational culture. According to the requirement of achieving coordinated strategic efforts within the marketing team, it is also important to encourage marketing staff to carry an understanding of different skill sets.

Implications for Employees (Marketers). The main challenges for employees involve constantly observing the changes in the labor market to better understand what extra skills will be in demand in the nearest future and choosing appropriate behavior strategies to meet them. Because digital marketing is a multifaceted career, that requires marketers to continually educate themselves on new and emerging channels, this constant evolution has opened up a pathway for people that can meander between different marketing methods.

It is also important for Educators. In particular, for high education, the main challenge is the necessity of the development of curriculum flexibility in terms of adjusting current curricula to job market requirements that acquire permanent features. A lifelong learning approach can be regarded as one of the best practices for this.