Advertising

Skills

- Creativity
- Excellent written and oral communication skills
- Teamwork
- Design skills
- Motivation
- Analytical skills
- Good sense of humor
- Knowledge of popular culture, news, and media

What is Advertising?

Advertising is positioning and creating brands and persuading consumers to buy them through messages in mass media. The clothes you wear, the cars you drive, the food you eat and the soft drinks you consume are all brands. [Vault Career Guide to Advertising, 2004]

Each year, companies spend billions of dollars on advertisements to encourage consumers to buy their goods or services. Television commercials, radio spots, newspaper ads, promotional mailings, and banner ads have become part of our everyday experiences. In fact, the average American consumer sees more than 1,000 ads each day. It’s an advertising agency’s job to create and place these ads so that they capture the attention of consumers and encourage customers to purchase a client’s products.

Advertising agencies are typically organized into four major divisions: account management, creative, market research, and media. Each plays an important role in developing successful ad campaigns for their clients [Reprinted with permission from Experience.com]

How are Advertising Agencies Structured?

Full Service Agency
As the name implies full-service agencies provide clients with a wide range of services from ad creation and production to media planning, and buying to strategic development. In the past 10 years, advertising has witnessed considerable consolidation. Most major agencies are now owned by one of six holding companies.

Creative Boutique
Creative boutique firms provide a more limited range of services typically focused on ad creation and production. Often these firms are founded by established art directors or copywriters who have chosen to leave the “big” agency world. Clients may seek out these for more cutting-edge design, or to try to save money.

Media Agencies
Media agencies focus on media planning and buying, which is the management and purchasing of media time and space.
What types of positions are there within an agency?*

The majority of advertising firms are located in major cities. Careers in advertising agencies can cover a wide array of areas including:

**Account Services Department**
Positions in account services include: assistant account executive, account executive, senior account executive, accounts supervisor/accounts manager.
- Advocates for client with agency and for agency with client.
- Manages relationship with client, acting as a liaison between art department, production department and client.
- Responsible for keeping team motivated and on schedule.
- Must communicate well with different types of people, be detail-oriented and be knowledgeable about client/brand.

**Media Services Department**
Positions in media include: assistant media buyer/planner, media buyer/planner, associate media director, media director, and media manager.
- Planners strategize where and when to buy media space, buyers negotiate the purchase of that space.
- Applies statistical models to audience, circulation, and cost figures to minimize media cost and maximize media effectiveness.
- Manages the purchase and control of large blocks of media time/space, recommends and allocates this space among clients according to campaign requirements.
- Must be analytical, detail oriented, able to draw conclusions from research and data, able to negotiate and sell ideas.

**Account Planning/Research Department**
Positions in research include: research project director, research account executive, associate research director, advertising research director and research department manager.
- Research focuses on quantitative analysis; researchers serve as experts in statistical applications, mathematical modeling, project design, and methodology.
- Account planning involves qualitative evaluation of consumers including focus groups, telephone interviews, surveys, etc.
- These areas may be separate or combined areas depending on the needs of the agency.

**Creative Department – Art Direction**
Positions in art direction include: assistant art director, junior art director, art director, and senior art director.
- Requires knowledge of advertising trends and strong visual communication skills.
- Develops and recommends visual strategy and oversee creation of final campaign.
- Oversees progression of campaign from rough sketches through final production.

**Creative Department – Copywriting**
Positions in copywriting include: junior copywriter, copywriter, senior copywriter, copy chief.
- Responsible for writing ad and promotional copy and developing concepts for campaigns.
- Requires knowledge of advertising trends and a strong writing ability, works closely with art director.

**Creative Department – Production**
Positions in production include: layout worker, graphic artist, production manager.
- Artists and layout workers create the visual impact of the ad by selecting photographs, drawing illustrations, choosing print size and type, and sketching scenes for commercials to accompany the copy.
- Designs packages and creates logos, trademarks and symbols.
- Production managers oversee the actual printing of ads, filming of commercials, and/or recording of radio spots.

**Business Development**
- Focus on acquiring new accounts, usually a small department.

**Traffic**
- Responsible for guaranteeing that departments meet deadlines, get approvals from all departments.
- Must be organized, detail-oriented and able to work under pressure.

*NOTE: Most entry-level positions are found in Account Services*
Advertising Job Posting, Research, and Industry Trends Websites:

**AAF Triad** http://aaftriad.org

**Ad Club of Metropolitan Washington** dcadclub.com
Website of the Advertising Club of Metropolitan Washington, a chapter of the American Advertising Federation. Hosts local professional development, educational and networking events. Maintains a job bank.

**Ad Forum** www.adforum.com
Includes a search engine to locate agencies by location, client and/or business sector. Site also displays top company website hits, and provides portfolios of select advertising firms. Includes information on over 18,000 agencies and 50,000 ads.

**ADWEEK** www.adweek.com
Weekly magazine covering advertising, marketing and media.

**Advertising Age** www.adage.com
Magazine of marketing, media and advertising, published weekly. Publishes helpful reports in its “data center.”

**Advertising Educational Foundation** www.aef.com
Non-profit supported by ad agencies, advertisers and media companies that serves to provide educational content to students and professors studying advertising. AEF sponsors conferences, provides curriculum and classroom resources, and provides career advice.

**Advertising Women of New York** www.awny.org
AWNY hosts over 40 events a year including an annual advertising career conference. Also includes job database.

**Advertising World** http://advertising.utexas.edu/world
Marketing communications directory.

**American Advertising Federation** www.aaf.org
Trade association representing advertising professionals. National network of professional advertising clubs as well as over 200 college- and university-based clubs.

**American Association of Advertising Agencies** www.aaaa.org
The national trade association representing advertising agencies. Provides roster of members with an agency search that includes a description of the agency; also has a client/brand search tool. Maintains a job search engine.


**Media Bistro** www.medibistro.com
Job search engine for creative positions.

Sign up for New York Times columnist Stuart Elliott’s weekly newsletters on advertising. Go to www.nytimes.com, search for “Stuart Elliott” and select “receive newsletter” from the box on the right.

**Occupational Outlook Handbook** (Advertising and Public Relations Services)
http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos019.htm

**Talent Zoo** www.talentzoo.com
Job search engine for communication industry.

**Vault, Career Insider Guides** http://www.wfu.edu/career (*must use your WFU email to access)
Vault, Career Insider – Vault Career Guide to Advertising
Vault, Career Insider – Vault Guide to Top Advertising and PR Employers

**Wetfeet Careers & Industries** http://wetfeet.com
Overview of the advertising industry and careers within the field.
**Getting Your Foot in the Door**
Most advertising insiders report that they found their jobs outside of the “official” processes. Here are their tips.

**Internships Are Crucial**
Internships get you in the door and help you win contacts, mentors, and maybe even a shot at a job. In this highly competitive field you must have previous experience (and the more the better!) to be considered for even entry-level positions.

**Make a Personal Contact**
A mass mailing of resumes and cover letters to agencies and people you don’t know is a waste of time. Use LinkedIn, internship mentors, professors, etc. to make personal contacts with people in the business. If you do decide to send some “cold turkey” resumes, send them to account managers, use Career Search, Reference USA, Advertising Age, or AdWeek to find names of specific account managers.

**Arrange Informational Interviews**
Finding a job is often a matter of being in the right place at the right time, and having someone on the inside keeping you informed of opportunities. One of the best ways to make inside contacts is by arranging informational interviews. This is a great chance to get input on your portfolio or writing samples, as well as some inside tips from experienced professionals. LinkedIn is a good place to start finding contacts.

**Prepare for the Interview**
Study the agency—preview their clients and their work. If possible, learn about the person you are to see. Schedule a mock interview with a career counselor to get prepared.

**Err on the Side of Initiative and Assertiveness**
You are competing for jobs that require assertiveness and initiative. Show that you want the job. If interviewers see that you’ll work hard to get in the door, they are more likely to believe you’ll work hard when you are hired.

**Maintain Your Network**
In this business (and most others), chances are you’ll be looking for a job a lot of times. Send notes of thanks and updates to all of your contacts—those who helped you get the position and those who may be of help next time around.

**Put Your Portfolio Online**
If you have any intention of working in the creative department of an ad agency, you’re going to want to get your book online. Include your URL in your cover letter.

**Take Any Job That’s Open**
Getting your foot in the door is often the hardest part of beginning a career in advertising. Be sure to let all your contacts know that you’re willing to pay your dues to get an opportunity to advance over time. Remember, internships (which are often unpaid) and even secretarial positions may open doors for you in the future.

*From Experience.com and “How to Get a Job in Advertising” by Jeremiah Brown, AEF representative.*

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**Advertising Programs/Schools**
Some advertising positions require that you have an advanced degree or training. Check out the following programs/schools for advertising and design:

- **Art Center College of Design** [www.artcenter.edu](http://www.artcenter.edu)
- **Brainco—Minneapolis School of Advertising** [www.braincomsa.com](http://www.braincomsa.com)
- **The Creative Circus** [www.creativcircus.com](http://www.creativcircus.com)
- **Miami Ad School** [www.adschool.edu](http://www.adschool.edu)
- **Portfolio Center** [www.portfoliocenter.com](http://www.portfoliocenter.com)
- **Savannah College of Art & Design** [www.scad.edu](http://www.scad.edu)
- **Texas Advertising** [http://advertising.utexas.edu](http://advertising.utexas.edu)
- **The VCU AdCenter** [www.adcenter.vcu.edu](http://www.adcenter.vcu.edu)