



# Advertising

There are more than 650 advertising agencies in Hong Kong, ranging from small local companies to large multinational firms. Despite the current economic climate, advertising remains crucial to businesses, thus advertising agencies will still require staff. While the number of positions available may decrease somewhat, the industry will continue to recruit graduates for a variety of positions.

### POSITIONS

A well-established advertising agency usually consists of account services, creative, media, production, market research and accounting & administration. Each department requires advertising staff with different skills for a variety of duties.



The clients of an advertising agency are referred to as 'accounts', and as the name suggests, the account services department is responsible for direct contact and liaison with the clients. Graduates usually enter this field as account executives, and a promotion to senior account executive or account manager requires 3-5 years of field experience.

Account executives are normally responsible for several accounts, helping to plan each client's campaign, monitoring production and communicating continually with the client. They must inspire confidence in their clients, maintain good relationships with them and coordinate the work of the agency's various departments.

The creative department is usually made up of copywriters and graphic or multimedia designers, and it is their responsibility to convert raw ideas into finished advertisements, based on product information and marketing objectives.

Copywriters are responsible for the writing of advertising text. The larger agencies often have two chief copywriters – one each for English and Chinese advertisements. Graphic or multimedia designers are responsible for visually presenting the words of the copywriter and the production of artwork. Promotion opportunities are also possible within the creative department.

The media department is responsible for planning and buying the appropriate advertising space and time for a product or service. Graduates usually enter the department as media executives, working as planners or buyers. Planning involves advising on the most effective media to convey a particular message to the target audience and scheduling media buys. Buying involves the actual purchase of space in publications or airtime on radio and television.



The studio and production department is responsible for preparing the advertisement in its final form for printing or broadcasting. Most graduates begin as production assistants in this department.

The market research department conducts surveys, runs focus groups, collects information on the popularity of advertisements or consumer products, analyses the findings and advises on the advertising strategy. A graduate normally begins in this department as a market research executive.

The accounting and administration department is concerned with all the accounting and administrative duties of an agency, with particular emphasis on cost control.

There are also a number of opportunities in the advertising field outside advertising agencies, including jobs with the advertisers themselves; with the mass media and with specialist services, which provide support services for advertisement production. Additionally, some large companies have their own in-house department for promoting and publicising their products and services.

### EDUCATION & REQUIREMENTS

For most positions in advertising, a degree in mass communication or broadcasting is preferable. For graphic designers, formal training in art and design is required. Copywriters also need imagination and originality, and should understand people and their motivations to buy. Excellent communication skills are necessary.

Other important qualities are initiative, a pleasant personality, tact and the ability to establish good relationships with people.

### SALARY & BENEFITS

Account executives can expect starting salaries of around \$9,000-\$11,000 per month plus commission. Copywriters start at around \$8,000-\$9,000, while graphic and multimedia designers earn around \$10,000-\$12,000. Media executives earn about \$9,000, while a production assistant earns around \$9,000-\$10,000.

Salaries for market research executives and those employed in the administration department ranges between \$7,000-\$13,000 depending on the size of the agency and responsibility.

Advertising personnel usually work beyond the regular 9 to 5; the working hours, especially for staff in the creative department, are often very long when deadlines approach. It is a fast-paced, ever-changing scene that demands flexibility and a good deal of mental agility.

### FURTHER TRAINING

On-the-job training is usually provided for new recruits in many well-established agencies.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

The best way for graduates to find out job openings in advertising is to contact advertising agencies directly or serve in summer internships. Information about agencies and professional advice can be obtained from the Association of Accredited Advertising Agents of Hong Kong (The 4As). The association can be contacted at:

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