

CAREER

A career in DIGITAL MARKETING

Is it worth it in 2024?

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Today, it's impossible to be on social media without coming across a reel, TikTok, or LinkedIn post from a self-proclaimed millionaire stating that digital marketing helped them "escape the matrix". As far as these millionaires are concerned, digital marketing is seemingly the key to taking 16-year-old high school dropouts and churning out big ballers blinging out in Dubai. Not to mention, it is allegedly a "straightforward and cheap" skill to learn.

In layman's terms, digital marketing is advertising and marketing through a digital medium using electronic technologies. From SEO optimisation to static banner ads, sponsored reels, and even affiliate news content, digital marketing uses many tools to capture customer attention. Thanks to the widespread prevalence of smart devices and social media usage, digital marketing is becoming ubiquitous with marketing as a whole. Having websites and social media pages is a must for businesses these days. Companies increasingly use viral marketing to generate more engagement and sales, resulting in the PizzaBurg rage bait memes and the unhinged Duolingo reels we know and love.

However, despite its adoption into the mainstream, digital marketing still has a few key differences from traditional advertising.

"Although generally a part of the marketing sphere, digital marketing offers a more extensive scope for experimentation and quick execution," says Maisha Tasnim*, a content marketing executive at a local marketing agency. "For instance, if something is trending at the moment, digital marketing allows you to jump on that trend almost instantly."

Now, why should you learn digital marketing? When asked how learning digital marketing benefits students, Ehfaz Nowman, a lecturer at the Department of Marketing and International Business at North South University, says, "Students gain hands-on experience by creating and managing real digital campaigns. They learn to use platforms and tools like Google Ads, social media platforms, and web analytics, all of which are used by companies worldwide."

Besides, learning digital marketing additionally encompasses learning data analytics, a key skill in the data-driven world we live in today.

So, let's cut to the chase – you've researched digital media and can't wait to start your digital marketing journey, but where do you start? All jobs have specific requirements, and digital marketing is no exception. Even though it should go unsaid, digital marketing requires foundational marketing knowledge. However, that does not mean you can't enter the field from other academic backgrounds.

"Picking up digital marketing from scratch is extremely easy," Ehfaz says. "There are plenty of free resources online and on YouTube. If you want a more structured education in digital marketing, browse Udemy, MasterClass, or Google Skillshop."

Ehfaz also explains how these courses and

certifications come with the added benefit of helping you brand yourself to potential employers.

Digital marketing careers are considerably more hands-on and demanding than other marketing jobs, always keeping marketers on their toes. Hence, individuals with good time management skills, negotiation, and multitasking abilities have the upper hand in this field. In terms of functional roles, digital marketing has many responsibilities, depending on your job role.

"You might be writing copies or captions, working with visuals, managing clients, handling social media, and so on," elaborates Minhaz Badhon, a former marketing executive at a local digital marketing agency.

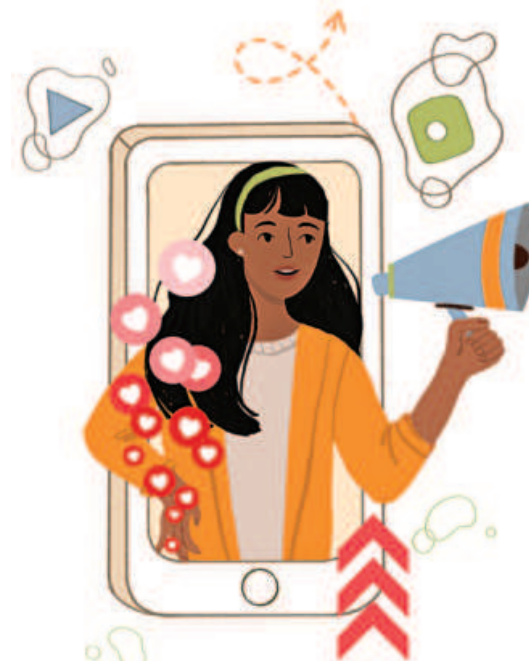


ILLUSTRATION: FAISAL BIN IQBAL

However, being such a dynamic and evolving field, digital marketing demands much more than being book-smart. Having ideation and visualisation skills and keeping up and adapting to current trends are vital skills required to thrive.

"If a challenge or a dance is viral on TikTok, and you're not strategising or building a marketing campaign around it instantly, you'll miss out on a lot of attention for the brand you're working with," explains Maisha. In a nutshell, you can say that digital marketing, emphasising social media management, entails being chronically online and addicted to the internet.

An important thing to note about this field is that you can embark on multiple career routes. The most common career route is through marketing agencies, which can either be traditional agencies or ones that specialise in digital advertising. These agencies act as third parties for large corporate clients and undertake most aspects of the client's digital marketing and branding activities. Agencies are generally very dynamic, dealing with a diverse roster of clients and projects, leading to exposure to an often chaotic yet

free-spirited working environment.

"You can't specialise at agencies for a specific product or company. Whatever comes your way, you must work with them accordingly," states Minhaz. Hence, working for an agency can entail extensive research into the client's branding and image.

On the other hand, in-house digital marketing jobs are much more streamlined and to the point.

"Unless the company is launching a new product, in-house marketing requires less research and adjustment since the brand voice is usually the same throughout all campaigns," says Minhaz. While lacking the adventurous flair of agency jobs, in-house marketing jobs are found in every corporate sector, from MNCs to telcos and pharmaceuticals, making them no less lucrative, at least financially speaking.

So, what about the local job prospects of digital marketing? Bangladesh has over 130 million internet users, and social media usage across all platforms averages 50 million active users, translating to prime real estate and tremendous untapped potential in pursuing a career in digital marketing. In recent years, many digital marketing startups, such as ADA and HypeScout, have dominated the sector, overshadowing many established industry veterans and reflecting the high local demand for digital advertising.

"Having worked in digital agencies myself, I remember spending hours convincing a brand manager of the benefits of using digital media and platforms. Now, brand managers look for agencies with digital marketing capabilities before working with them," says Ehfaz. Digital advertisements have also started evolving past static banners, becoming more dynamic and fluid with new technology, such as computer-generated imagery.

"There's a lot of potential, especially with all the new AR/VR technology we're seeing these days," says Maisha.

But, as with any innovation, bugs remain left to iron out, and implementing cutting-edge technology into people's daily lives is easier said than done. When asked, Maisha says, "Even though there will be a sincere effort to integrate these new technologies, assuming that agencies in Bangladesh can execute them easily would be wrong."

So, is a career in digital marketing worth it?

Short answer – yes. Long answer – yes, since you're already chronically online, you may as well monetise your screen time.

However, while it is a fulfilling and fun career route, it has a fair share of challenges, requiring considerable commitment and dedication. So, even if it doesn't make you a clickbait-y influencer, spending beyond your means, digital marketing is a future-proofed career path, reflecting evolving marketing practices and consumer behaviour patterns, with numerous current prospects and even more to come.

*Names have been changed upon request for privacy

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