

# ARE YOU A SUCKER?

Last time The Drum undertook its wide-reaching salary survey it was apparent that the Midlands and the North West were the regions to be in to demand top lolly. Times have, however, changed – even MP's can't afford to pay for their moats to be cleaned. Some salaries have plummeted while others have risen surprisingly. But are you getting what you're worth or being taken for a ride? For the full salary survey report visit [www.marketingindustrynetwork.com](http://www.marketingindustrynetwork.com)





**D**o you get that sinking feeling everytime you get your wage packet or do you scratch your head and wonder how the hell you are going to spend such a huge monthly salary? Chances are you'll fall into the first category. There are few people who think they get paid enough for the job they do – even our MP's have started upping their pay packets, claiming for tins of catfood and to have their moats cleaned at the taxpayer's expense.

But how do you know if you're being taken for a ride by your gaffer? You take a look at The Drum's 'Are You Getting What You're Worth' survey... if you dare.

It's roughly 18 months since The Drum last published a review of industry salaries and, perhaps not surprisingly, there have been some noticeable changes to regional incomes. The current state of the economy has obviously played its part in this, but some regions, some sectors and some job titles have managed to buck the current economic trends. Others, well, you'll see.

August 2007 last saw us delve into the sensitive subject of money – who earns it and who yearns for it – and some of the more established trends that had been prevalent up until then have since been turned on their heads.

Using the same format as previous years, the review again surveyed six separate geographical regions and 49 different roles across the creative industries. A selection of recruitment specialists – AF Selection, The Recruitment Business, Quantum People, Denholm Associates, Steve Cooper Recruitment, Moves Recruitment, Nigel Wright Recruitment and Ad Lib – provided salary figures which were averaged across each separate role and location, working out a standard salary for each.

Expectedly, salaries vary greatly both by region and sector. Unexpectedly, regions once frontrunners for remuneration are not as rewarding as they once were.

Region wise, the 2007 review sang the praises of the Midlands and North West as the UK's salary leaders outside of London. Yorkshire and Scotland were, on the other hand, worst off.

This year, however, the Midlands and the North West both fared badly for current average salaries. Recording some of the lowest rates in the UK, entry level positions in the Midlands are particularly unrewarded, as are most account handling jobs. Creative director positions, both design and advertising, are two job titles resisting this trend, though and are actually significantly higher than counterparts elsewhere in the UK.

The other sector seeing some proper remuneration in the Midlands is digital and senior digital positions here consistently experience monetary elevation. The North West is particularly good at rewarding digital and creative rolls.

Scottish employees working in the industry tend to do well for themselves – surprisingly considering previous polls. Low points seen here are in studio work and PR – a PR account director in Scotland for example will take home £28,000 whereas the average we've found to be £36,000 and some regions see £43,000 on their payslip for the same job.

In-house is a different story all together for Scotland as it is here that pockets get filled. Almost completely

across the in-house board Scotland cleans up and takes home the lions share.

And if you think that you're not getting the money you deserve, then perhaps a move to Yorkshire might do the trick – a Yorkshire postcode will see you get top dollar for a whole host of jobs including senior art director, managing director (advertising, design or PR), senior artworker, production director, account director... the list goes on. The only sector not to benefit from a Yorkshire base is digital – most digital positions there actually see a smaller wage than most of the UK.

The job title with the highest recorded salary was for an advertising managing director. It was also the job title with the biggest regional variation. The average salary for this position was impressive enough at £69,000, but doing this from a desk in Yorkshire could net you £84,000, whereas a considerably less, but by no means to be sniffed at, £53,000 is expected in the Midlands.

At the other end of this spectrum is the lowly PR account executive who does not fair well in any of our regions. Once again it is in the Midlands that lowest wages are recorded, £16,000, but with the average at £17,000 there is little regional differentiation. And an in-house PR executive at a blue chip company in the North East sees the survey's lowest wage, taking home a scant £15,000.

## ADVERTISING & DESIGN

A strong brand has always been important, but no more so than now as competition for consumers heightens. Many agencies, however, have been affected by prudence on the side of clients, and advertising and design budgets continue to be slashed with the consequence of recruitment significantly slowing down. As such, designers with traditional skills in pure design/artwork for print and advertising are taking a hit right now.

The market has seen a distinct shift from being candidate driven to one where agencies are calling the shots. In comparison with the same period last year, agencies currently have a far wider choice of candidates to choose from and therefore find themselves in particularly strong negotiating positions when it comes to salaries and benefits.

Simon Pettigrew at AF Selection comments on this shift in power, saying: "The availability of candidates has continued to rise which is obviously due to the rising number of redundancies and fewer new job opportunities becoming available. There is a shift in bargaining power towards employers which means average salaries have been declining for quite a few months."

"One of the worst hit disciplines has been design, particularly at a senior level where we have received a very high volume of applications for a limited number of opportunities.

At the more junior end of the scale it is probably going to be a very tough time for recently qualified graduates with limited years of industry experience who are seeking opportunities in the creative sectors due to the lack of job opportunities."

Despite the knock taken by the advertising and design sector, the highest salaries recorded in our review were found here – the job title with the highest recorded salary (as noted above) is for an advertising managing director.

## DIGITAL

We continue to see impressive growth throughout the digital sector and, although a slowdown for 2009 is anticipated, the digital channel will almost certainly bear up well.

With the reduction in clients' marketing budgets, the need for skilled digital staff increases further as online continues to offer increased opportunities over traditional marketing outlets.

Steve Cooper sums this up when he says: "Digital, digital, digital... There has been a noticeable shift towards digital/online roles through last year and this.

"Agencies are now asking for candidates with proven skills in web design, web development, SEO, digital project management and digital account management. Smaller organisations appear to be looking for more for multi skilled candidates – therefore keeping costs down by getting one person to do many skills."

These sentiments are echoed by Justin Moore at The Recruitment Business who notes the digital/new media field as still being a very candidate driven market. "Skilled candidates in these specialised areas are more sought after and so salaries can increase to be more competitive with the current market. Digital/new media generally continues to grow with the need for experienced digital staff increasingly acutely.

"There is an ever-increasing amount of business moving online, as technology and capability transforms the way we live and work. Inevitably there is a skill gap developing as the digital workforce strives to keep up with the constantly evolving environment."

Indeed, while it seems that the rest of the industry is facing recruitment freezes, the hire of digital candidates still remains business critical.

Frank Hutton at Ad Lib comments that digital will prove resilient, design and build especially: "Digital marketing has even been affected. However, the technical side (developers, testing etc) are still in demand and short supply. Technical/back end web work, new business people and direct marketing/data people are all in demand".

This growth in digital is likely to continue, but not at the rate of previous years due to marketing budget restraints.

Our study found that the regions giving best remuneration for digital jobs are the Midlands and the South West. The North West is lowest paid. The highest salary in this sector was seen for a business development director who takes home an average of £46,000, rising to £55,000 in the Midlands and South West.

The lowest average salary was for a digital designer who earns £24,000. This can be as low as £19,000 in the North East or as high as £27,000 from a Midlands or South West base.

Senior roles as well as developer, SEO and online marketing roles are all similarly in demand and well paid.

## PUBLIC RELATIONS

We saw a considerable shift in PR recruitment. The second half of 2008 saw a switch from the candidate driven market which had been in place for several years, to one more governed by client demand.

## CREATIVE

	Scotland	Midlands	North West	Yorkshire	South West	North East
Designer	23,000	21,000	21,000	23,000	23,000	19,000
Senior Designer	32,000	31,000	29,000	30,000	33,000	35,000
Creative Director (Design)	48,000	61,000	48,000	48,000	55,000	43,000
Copywriter	30,000	25,000	23,000	27,000	26,000	20,000
Art Director	30,000	36,000	34,000	26,000	38,000	26,000
Senior Copywriter	36,000	27,000	25,000	36,000	26,000	39,000
Senior Art Director	36,000	38,000	36,000	43,000	37,000	41,000
Creative Director (Advertising)	46,000	61,000	48,000	55,000	58,000	46,000

## ACCOUNT HANDLING/NEW BUSINESS

	Scotland	Midlands	North West	Yorkshire	South West	North East
Account Executive	18,000	17,000	18,000	18,000	19,000	19,000
Account Manager	27,000	26,000	25,000	23,000	27,000	28,000
Account Director	38,000	37,000	33,000	36,000	40,000	36,000
Client Services Director	53,000	54,000	43,000	48,000	55,000	45,000
Business Development Manager	35,000	36,000	30,000	31,000	33,000	35,000
Business Development Director	48,000	43,000	44,000	43,000	47,000	53,000
Managing Director (design)	58,000	53,000	73,000	73,000	n/a	68,000
Managing Director (advertising)	63,000	53,000	75,000	84,000	n/a	68,000

## DIGITAL

	Scotland	Midlands	North West	Yorkshire	South West	North East
Developer	26,000	25,000	24,000	22,000	29,000	22,000
Senior Developer	31,000	36,000	32,000	29,000	39,000	31,000
Designer	23,000	27,000	23,000	23,000	27,000	19,000
Senior Designer	33,000	29,000	27,000	32,000	32,000	25,000
Account Executive	20,000	18,000	19,000	18,000	19,000	19,000
Account Manager	27,000	27,000	25,000	26,000	27,000	28,000
Account Director	37,000	41,000	36,000	35,000	48,000	40,000
Business Development Director	48,000	55,000	35,000	40,000	55,000	45,000
Online Marketing Manager	38,000	43,000	26,000	39,000	38,000	35,000
SEO Manager	29,000	30,000	29,000	33,000	34,000	35,000

With more caution and consideration when hiring, candidates are working harder for job offers. And gone are the days of over inflating salaries – little or no increase is being seen in salaries at most levels.

Yorkshire tops the poll for wages in PR. A managing director, for example, will receive £70,000 for doing the same job as someone in the Midlands or North East who would be pocketing a much less £50,000.

Scotland proves particularly poor paying for PR roles, falling well below average for most positions. The biggest shortcoming here being for the role of account director – Scotland offering an average £28,000 per annum when the regional average is £36,000 and a Yorkshire account director earning £43,000.

## IN-HOUSE

Increasingly, and worryingly in the current climate, client-side marketing roles are experiencing a notable slow down.

Joanna Douglas at Nigel Wright Recruitment has attributed this decrease to the opinion held by clients of marketing.

"This is due to it being seen as a luxury rather than

a necessity by some companies and therefore not something they can currently afford," says Douglas.

One region resisting this trend and still enjoying in-house remuneration is Scotland.

Almost completely across the in-house board Scotland cleans up and takes home the lions share – a PR executive at a blue chip company for example will pocket £26,000 compared to the average £20,000 and the marketing director at a blue chip company will earn £79,000 – about £11,000 more than average and £19,000 more than their North East equal.

In-house was also where our lowest salary was found – an in-house, blue chip PR executive in the North East could expect to receive an average of £15,000 compared to the overall average of £20,000 and Scotland's £26,000.

The North East fared worst for most in-house positions, with the Midlands doing almost as bad. There were, at least, salaries returned for these regions.

Of all the specialists providing numerical responses for the North West, none were able to give a hint as to in-house incomes – perhaps an indicator of the plight faced there?

## DEMOGRAPHICS

The overall average salary, across all sectors, job titles and regions was £35,000.

### By region this was:

Scotland	£35,000
Midlands	£34,000
North West	£32,000
Yorkshire	£36,000
South West	£34,000
North East	£34,000

### By sector:

Creative	£36,000
Account handling	£43,000
Studio	£29,000
PR	£31,000
In-house Blue chip	£36,000
In-house SME	£40,000
Digital	£31,000

Highest average salary was £69,000 for an advertising managing director. Lowest average salary was £17,000 for a PR account executive.

### Highest salary by region was:

Scotland	£79,000
Midlands	£62,000
North West	£75,000
Yorkshire	£84,000
South West	£63,000
North East	£68,000

### Lowest by region was:

Scotland	£17,000
Midlands	£16,000
North West	£18,000
Yorkshire	£17,000
South West	£18,000
North East	£15,000

## INSIDER'S PERSPECTIVE

As well as gathering numerical responses from recruitment agencies to bring our readers a more comprehensive salary rubric, we also sought an insider's perspective on the goings on in the recruitment market. The views were many and mixed, but there was also a lot of agreeing. Here are some of our findings.

Application wise, our commentators were split into two camps. On one hand recruitment firms are reporting a tendency among candidates to spend more time in one role to heighten the chances of job security. There is a propensity to put off searching for new positions for fear that in a new company a policy of 'last in, first out' might come into play. Traditional candidate movement is therefore affected.

At the same time a high number of redundancies have been reported and vacancies are receiving far higher numbers of applications as a result. The standard of these applications have been equally varied – from over qualified candidates, willingly contemplating wage reduction to secure employment, to an increasing number of inappropriate applicants desperately applying for anything.

This desperation is being exploited by recruiters

as, across the industry as a whole, starting salaries are being frozen, and in some cases reduced. The laws of supply and demand mean that it is a buyers market for clients; opportunities are decreasing while the number of talented and experienced individuals available for work is on the increase.

"As you would expect there is a considerable change in the jobs market within the agency and in-house sectors," says Simon Pettigrew of AF Selection. "The demand for permanent and temporary staff has been declining since October of last year and there is no sign of this changing for the immediate future. The availability of candidates has also continued to rise which is obviously due to the rising number of redundancies and fewer new job opportunities becoming available."

Types of contracts being offered also seem to be affected and it has been observed that agencies are seeking shorter contracts for their staff.

With permanent contracts cautiously guarded, Claire Summerfield, account handling consultant at Blue Skies Marketing Recruitment, has seen a "sway towards contract and temporary-to-permanent placements to cover skills gaps while clients wait to commit".

Clients are well aware of how important recruitment decisions are and how costly they can be if done wrong. There has been increased numbers of candidates invited for first interviews; and there are often third and fourth stage interviews. That said, agencies do not hold all the power and deliberating too long on decisions will see them missing out on some of the more exceptional candidates, who will still invariably be receiving more than one offer.

Frank Hutton at Ad Lib has seen "a larger number of people accepting jobs and then turning round before or soon after start date to take another job. People are keeping their interviews rolling even though they are being offered a role".

## CONFIDENCE

While the total uncertainty and unpredictability of the economy makes it difficult to predict what is going to happen, many of the specialists we spoke to expect at the end of the year that confidence will return to the market.

Biding your time might well be the best option as, according to Justin Moore at The Recruitment Business, "based on direct feedback from our clients they are anticipating the second half of the year to be much more robust".

Simon Pettigrew suggests that if you can't wait for conditions to better then a bit of tractability might help as "candidates are becoming more prepared to be flexible on salary and we are seeing more candidates being prepared to relocate in order to take up a new job opportunity."

### Recruitment agencies who helped with the survey are:

- AF Selection
- The Recruitment Business
- Quantum People
- Blue Skies Marketing Recruitment
- Denholm Associates
- Steve Cooper Recruitment
- Moves Recruitment
- Nigel Wright Recruitment
- Ad Lib

For the full report, visit the Marketing Industry Network Website:

[www.marketingindustrynetwork.com](http://www.marketingindustrynetwork.com)