

# Why brands need apprenticeships to widen access to marketing careers

*As young people demand more varied, vocational routes into marketing, could apprenticeships be the answer to drive greater diversity and equality?*

By [Charlotte Rogers](#) 5 Mar 2018 5:00 am



In an uncertain world where employment is far from secure, young people are increasingly demanding practical and employment-focused ways of learning. As a result, apprenticeships are proving a popular way to learn skills on the job and forgo the rocketing expense of university education, which costs up to £9,250 a year.

In April 2017, the Government committed to create three million new apprentices by 2020 with the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy. Yet when it comes to standardised apprenticeship schemes, until recently marketing has been largely ignored. The 0.5% levy applies to employers in England with an annual pay bill of more than £3m. The money raised goes into a digital account run by HM Revenue and Customs to fund the training of apprentices who work for at least 50% of their time in England.

But with the focus of apprenticeships being placed on roles in sectors such as retail, engineering, manufacturing and tech, the fear is that the limited number of routes into marketing could have a damaging effect on the socio-economic diversity of future marketing teams.

Research released in 2016 by Goldsmiths, the London School of Economics and the University of Manchester analysing the 2014 British Labour Force Survey found that the advertising and marketing sector was 51.7% male, 92.6% white and 65.5% had a university degree or higher.

Four years on, organisations and employers are putting a renewed focus on establishing marketing apprenticeships in a bid to open the profession up to young people from a wider variety of backgrounds.

Instrumental to this is The Marketing Academy Foundation. It aims to enable young adults from challenging backgrounds to begin a career in marketing by finding and funding jobs, including year-long apprenticeships.

Chief executive Daryl Fielding acknowledges that the cost of student loans is giving many young people pause for thought about the value of certain degrees, whereas apprenticeships could offer a debt-free alternative

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In May and July last year, The Marketing Academy Foundation placed two apprentices with the Prince's Trust. One is a digital marketing apprentice, the other a marketing apprentice and both are paid "significantly above" the minimum wage.

To be accepted as an apprentice, young people do not need any qualifications. However, if they want to gain a government statutory apprenticeship qualification they will need to obtain a GCSE grade 9 to 4 (A\* to C) in maths and English, or the equivalent, which they can study during their apprenticeship.

The Foundation's aim is to have 10 apprentices start work this summer, with a view to doubling this figure each year. The team are looking for bright individuals who have a great attitude, interest in marketing and a real aptitude, but who are not interested in going to university.

"There is a confluence of factors bringing this to the fore – the fear of student debt, the government Apprenticeship Levy legislation encouraging businesses to create apprenticeships and the ad business having a broader debate around diversity," says Fielding.