

So you want to be a marketing executive...

Marketing executives play a critical role in a company because they are responsible for finding new pathways for growth. They need to discover what customers want, develop strategies that uniquely meet customer needs, and execute strategies so their companies can profit.

Individuals in marketing roles need deep functional and industry knowledge and the leadership skills to get things done. The types of skills people need to thrive change over time. Functional skills and expertise dominate at the start of a career, whereas strategic thinking and leadership skills become more important as one progresses to the role of Chief Marketing Officer. The suggested second-year courses listed below are based on survey research and recommendations from recruiters, second-year students, and alumni.

Functional Knowledge

A study on the roles and responsibilities of CMOs found nearly all were responsible for the following three areas: Consumer and Competitive Insight, Marketing Strategy, and Marketing Implementation. You should try to develop broad expertise in these areas, taking as much of an enterprise view as possible. As such, many courses outside the marketing area will help you develop these critical skills and competencies. Consider taking a few courses from each of the following three groupings.



Consumer and Competitive Insight

Understanding what consumers want by designing experiments and surveys and analyzing market data is essential. One study suggested that 83% of CMOs are responsible for analyzing and measuring the effectiveness of their marketing spending and 72% are responsible for conducting marketing research.

- 7500 Innovation, Design, and Entrepreneurship in Action (IDEA)
- 7600 Data Visualization and Analytics
- 8015 Behavioral Decision Making
- 8125 Storytelling with Data
- 8334 Consumer Insights in a Data-Driven World
- 8496 Data Science in Business



Strategy

CMOs also need to think and act strategically by understanding what consumers want and finding unique market positions for their companies to capture. 94% of CMOs are primarily responsible for developing their company's marketing strategy and 83% their brand strategy.

- 7994 Strategic Analysis and Consulting
- 8067 Managing Innovation
- 8205 Marketing and Society
- 8464 Hot Topics in Marketing
- 8650 Cases in Global Strategy Seminar
- 8758 Strategy in the Digital Age



Implementation

As a manager with functional responsibility, it is important for marketing executives to know how to get things done. One study suggested 93% of CMOs are responsible for implementing their company's marketing strategy and 78% for their marketing communications and media plan.

- 8033 Digital Marketing
- 8047 Pricing
- 8130 Prototyping and Product Development I
- 8170 Managerial Finance



Implementation Cont.

- 8320 Leadership Communication During Times of Disruption and Transformation
- 8400 General Managers Taking Action
- 8621 Project Management
- 8757 Pricing Analytics



Specialty Knowledge

In addition to the general areas listed above, you want to think about how you can get off to a fast start by developing industry-specific knowledge and skills. For example, if you want a marketing career in health care, you might consider some of the following electives:

- 8030 Challenges in Health Care: A System Overview
- 8500C Solutions and Innovations in Health Care

Alternatively, if you are considering a marketing career in the technology sector, you might start as a product manager and consider taking a few of the following courses:

- 8632 Software Design
- 8633 Coding with GPT
- 8636 Digital Product Management
- 8640 Digital Capstone†

The technology-career elective guide can help you develop a more comprehensive point of view.

Interpersonal Skills



Personal Development and Leadership (very important for later in career)

Senior Marketing Executives emphasize the importance of leadership and interpersonal skills. One survey of marketing recruiters suggested leadership and communication skills were both hard-to-find and highly desired by companies. It also indicated that the ability to work collaboratively was critical.

Darden offers a wide variety of second-year electives that help support your development as a leader and effective team member. Here is a short list of courses cited by recent graduates. There are many more from which to choose. Marketing Leadership might be particularly relevant, but many of the previously listed marketing courses will help you develop leadership skills too.

Your choices should reflect your needs for personal growth. Consider taking a few from the list:

- 7605 Strategic Communication
- 7612 Speaking About Business
- 7619 Paths to Power
- 8019 Defining Moments
- 8052 Marketing Leadership
- 8476 Collaboration Lab
- 8500ZZZ CEO Leadership in the 21st Century
- 8619 Leading Teams
- 8706 Leadership, Diversity and Leveraging Difference
- 8707 Leadership Coaching
- 8930 Negotiations

† These courses have prerequisite requirements.

