



Planning ahead for Q4

Hot Jobs & Salary Trends

for Marketing & Advertising in Q4 2026



The clearest hiring trend heading into Q4 2026 is the growing importance of specialized skills. Demand is shifting across marketing and advertising, and the roles that matter most today may not be the same ones you needed a year ago, reflecting the direction of the industry.

From AI-informed workflows to stronger demand for content, brand, media, and analytics expertise, employers are focusing on the skills that help teams work smarter and deliver measurable results. We can help you find the people with the skills that move your business forward.

HOT SKILLS FOR Q4 2026

1	AI Expertise
2	Data Literacy & Analytics
3	Performance Marketing
4	Lead Generation
5	Social Media

HOT JOBS FOR Q4 2026

1	Lifecycle Marketer
2	Media, Media, Media
3	Growth & Performance Marketer
4	Digital Designer
5	AI Expert & Implementation Lead

Lifecycle Marketing

Lifecycle marketers, especially those focused on loyalty, CRM, SMS, and email, are in highest demand in Q4 as brands double-down on retention over acquisition. With acquisition costs rising and privacy rules restricting targeting, companies are shifting investment toward channels they own. Email remains the highest-ROI, most stable performer, with 83% of teams citing it as their most reliable channel.

And lifecycle marketing has leveled up. AI-powered personalization, behavior-based triggers, and predictive segmentation are transforming email and loyalty programs into true revenue drivers. Marketers are no longer just running campaigns; they're orchestrating real-time decisions, fine-tuning messaging, and ideally, creating lift.

Brands need marketers who can convert customer data into smarter journeys, higher retention, and measurable revenue impact. That's why lifecycle roles are mission-critical in Q4 2026 and leading into 2027.

Media, Media, Media

Q4 2026 continues to belong to the media pros who can turn strategy and data into real-time performance — driving growth by fine-tuning targets without sacrificing scale — as well as the digital creatives producing the content for static ads, banners, websites, and social campaigns.

Paid media, performance media, and digital media roles are leading job demand because brands are doubling-down on measurable growth. As AI transforms targeting, bidding, and optimization, companies need talent that can translate complex data signals into real business outcomes. Marketers are expected to seamlessly connect strategy, analytics, and automation — skills that have become increasingly rare and increasingly valuable.

Meanwhile, rapid shifts in consumer behavior and platforms are raising the bar for digital expertise. Teams need specialists who can navigate omnichannel journeys, optimize full-funnel performance, and adapt in real time as platforms evolve.



Growth & Performance Marketing

Growth and performance marketers and creatives — especially those who excel in search — stay in extraordinary demand for Q4 as they're at the center of efficient, measurable, and revenue-driving growth.

Companies are prioritizing roles that directly convert data, intent, and analytics into profit. They need opportunity-finders and energy-amplifiers. Growth and performance marketers can turn uncertainty into predictable, profitable outcomes, all in an increasingly noisy world ruled by algorithms and shrinking attention spans. They help brands show up and connect with consumers in ways that feel genuine, and guide that connection toward meaningful growth.

Digital Design

Companies have shifted from product-first to experience-first thinking. A polished, intuitive digital experience converts better, retains users longer, and builds loyalty faster than traditional marketing levers can. Great design doesn't just look good. It drives higher conversion and elevates brand credibility, making digital designers essential contributors to growth.

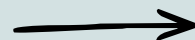
AI Expertise & Implementation

AI literacy remains the #1 most in-demand capability for marketers and creatives today. Across disciplines, they must understand how to apply AI for content creation, data synthesis, campaign optimization, chatbots, predictive analytics, and automation workflows.

It doesn't replace human judgment, creativity, and proactive ideation — it amplifies it by speeding up analysis, uncovering insights, and removing the busy work so teams can focus on what actually moves the business forward.

As we often advise candidates, many factors impact where you may find yourself within the ranges on the next few pages. Entry-level candidates may even find themselves below these average ranges. Talk to your Freeman+Leonard recruiter for advice.

VIEW SALARY RANGES



Agency Salaries

Account Service

ROLE	SALARY RANGE
Social Strategy Coordinator	\$55,000 – \$75,000
Account Executive	\$55,000 – \$70,000
Sr. Account Executive	\$65,000 – \$80,000
Project Manager	\$65,000 – \$85,000
Sr. Project Manager	\$75,000 – \$125,000
Data Analyst	\$95,000 – \$150,000
Account Supervisor	\$90,000 – \$120,000
Account Director	\$110,000 – \$160,000
Sr. Account Director	\$120,000 – \$170,000
VP Client Services/GAD	\$185,000 – \$270,000
SVP, Client Services	\$190,000 – \$295,000

Media

ROLE	SALARY RANGE
Media Planner/Buyer	\$60,000 – \$100,000
SEM Specialist	\$75,000 – \$95,000
SEO Specialist	\$75,000 – \$95,000
Paid Social Manager	\$80,000 – \$100,000
Digital Media Specialist	\$80,000 – \$135,000
Digital Analyst	\$90,000 – \$125,000
Paid Search/Digital Media Manager	\$90,000 – \$130,000
SEM Manager	\$100,000 – \$120,000
SEO Manager	\$100,000 – \$120,000
Integrated Media Director	\$125,000 – \$165,000
Performance Media Director	\$150,000 – \$200,000

Sources: Payscale, Salary.com, CareerBuilder, Freeman+Leonard proprietary data

Agency Salaries

Creative & Strategy

ROLE	SALARY RANGE
Graphic Artist/Graphic Designer	\$45,000 – \$70,000
Sr. Designer	\$85,000 – \$125,000
Art Director	\$60,000 – \$125,000
Motion Designer/Modeler	\$80,000 – \$130,000
Mobile Designer	\$75,000 – \$125,500
UX Designer	\$90,000 – \$175,000
UI Designer	\$90,000 – \$150,000
Email Developer	\$90,000 – \$125,000
Copywriter	\$65,000 – \$85,000
Sr. Copywriter/Content Strategist	\$85,000 – \$135,000
eCommerce Marketing Manager	\$95,000 – \$140,000
Strategist/Account Planner	\$95,000 – \$140,000
Brand Planner/Strategist	\$95,000 – \$200,000
Director of Strategy	\$150,000 – \$200,000
VP Strategy	\$185,000 – \$250,000
Associate Creative Director	\$100,000 – \$135,000
Creative Director	\$125,000 – \$200,000
Creative Director, Video	\$140,000 – \$185,000
Group Creative Director	\$160,000 – \$250,000
Executive Creative Director	\$200,000 – \$300,000

Sources: Payscale, Salary.com, CareerBuilder, Freeman+Leonard proprietary data

Corporate Salaries

Marketing & Growth

ROLE	SALARY RANGE
Social Strategy Coordinator	\$65,000 – \$85,000
Account and Trade Manager	\$60,000 – \$90,000
Marketing Communications Manager	\$75,000 – \$95,000
Project Manager	\$65,000 – \$95,000
Sr. Project Manager	\$75,000 – \$135,000
Brand Manager	\$90,000 – \$130,000
Marketing Manager	\$80,000 – \$135,000
Loyalty Marketing Manager	\$90,000 – \$120,000
Lifecycle Marketing Manager	\$95,000 – \$115,000
Email Marketing Manager	\$100,000 – \$130,000
Performance Marketing Manager	\$100,000 – \$150,000
Product Marketing Manager	\$100,000 – \$150,000
Growth Marketing Manager	\$100,000 – \$150,000
Lead Generation Manager	\$110,000 – \$140,000
Data Analyst	\$110,000 – \$175,000
Marketing Director	\$115,000 – \$175,000
Lifecycle Marketing Director	\$120,000 – \$150,000
VP Marketing	\$200,000 – \$300,000

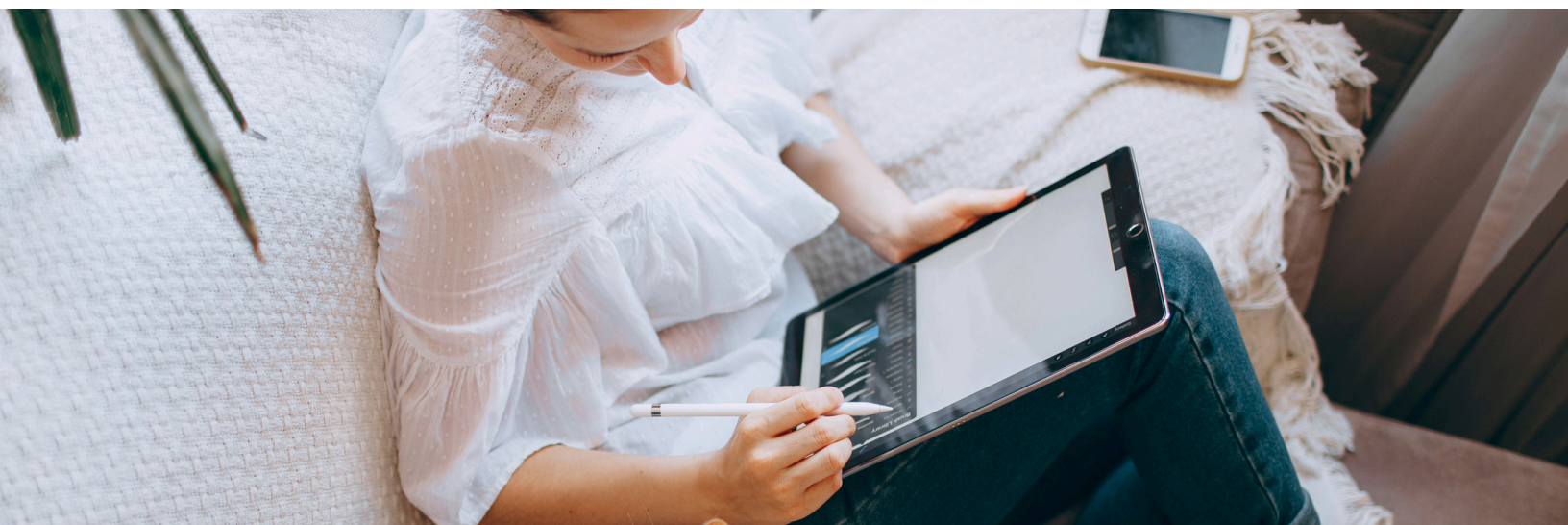
Sources: Payscale, Salary.com, CareerBuilder, Freeman+Leonard proprietary data

Corporate Salaries

Creative

ROLE	SALARY RANGE
Graphic Artist/Graphic Designer	\$60,000 – \$78,000
Digital Content Creator	\$68,000 – \$90,000
Copywriter	\$75,000 – \$90,000
Video Producer	\$80,000 – \$140,000
Mobile Designer	\$85,000 – \$135,000
UX Designer	\$85,000 – \$175,000
Email Developer	\$90,000 – \$115,000
Senior Designer	\$90,000 – \$135,000
Sr. Copywriter/Content Strategist	\$90,000 – \$145,000
Product Designer	\$100,000 – \$160,000
Innovation Strategist	\$130,000 – \$175,000
Director of Customer Experience	\$130,000 – \$200,000
Creative Director	\$135,000 – \$165,000
Creative Director, Video	\$135,000 – \$175,000
Executive Creative Director	\$200,000 – \$320,000

Sources: Payscale, Salary.com, CareerBuilder, Freeman+Leonard proprietary data



Get More Job Market & Compensation Insights

The full 2026 Marketing & Advertising Trends & Salary Guide from Freeman+Leonard is complete with the latest job market trends and insights for both candidates and employers. Download your copy today.

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From direct hire and contract placements to flexible, on-demand teams, freelancers, and consultants, Freeman+Leonard offers a full suite of staffing solutions for both companies and agencies — and the flexibility to scale your staff up or down easily and efficiently.

Whether you need marketing execution, expertise, or ingenuity, we have the person for the job. Our network of 4,000+ professionals across the U.S. span all marketing disciplines, including advertising, digital, promotion, shopper marketing, public relations, corporate communications, and much more. Freeman+Leonard has the people you need, as you need them, and not when you don't.

Get in touch today.

Reach out to a member of our team for a free, no-strings-attached consultation. Call 800-278-7782, send an email to contact@freemanleonard.com, or click below.

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