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JOB SEEKERS:

**94%**

OF COMPANIES  
SCREEN JOB  
CANDIDATES ON  
SOCIAL MEDIA

ACCORDING TO  
CAREERBUILDER: BY  
2020 DIGITAL  
EMPLOYMENT IS SET  
TO GROW BY

**5.4%**



# HOW TO GET A JOB IN DIGITAL PR

WRITTEN BY LEANNE ROSS

THE STUDENTS' ULTIMATE GUIDE TO BUILDING YOUR BRAND INTO SOMETHING, AND SOMEONE, THE PR AGENCIES, DIGITAL MARKETING CONSULTANCIES AND GLOBAL BRANDS WILL BE QUEUING UP TO HIRE:

FROM SOMEONE WHO MADE IT.

THE LONG, HARD WAY...

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# The 5 Most Popular Digital Roles

## Digital Marketing Manager

Overseeing a company's marketing strategy from social to digital channels, both paid and earned; Digital PR is a fundamental element of the Digital Marketing mix.

## Content Marketing Manager

This one's for the writers. The ability to spend your days creating content is a dream come true, and Digital PR is often the tactic used to place the content for optimum exposure.

## Social Media Manager

This is one for the Snapchat fans: curating cool content, engaging audiences and managing customer service across channels is the "Public" part of PR.

## Community Manager

This role merges Content and Social Media Management mixed with other comms tactics like email marketing, newsletters, media relations, events and other PR activities.

## Blogger

A chosen few make it big blogging so that it becomes their full-time job. For many others though, the work of brand content writing falls to freelance copywriters and part-time bloggers.

**Degree**

**Digital  
Diploma**

**Masters**

# Certifications



**There's a lot of debate in the UK industry about qualifications.**

On the one hand the professional bodies are working to standardise the skills and encourage **Continuous Professional Development (CPD)**. Organisations like the CIPR want more of us to be Chartered while urging **Academia** to ensure more relevant theory in teaching.

Add to that the fact that many in-house employers will often ask for tick-box qualifications which actually don't teach you to do the job.

I have a CAM degree and a Digital Diploma module. I reached Accredited Practitioner status through 2 years CPD as a member of the CIPR.

**None of it taught me to win awards the way on-the-job experience did.**

When you're starting out, that's worth more in the competitive job market.



# Build Your Knowledge

It's vitally important in a Digital career of any kind, but especially in PR, that you are as much a **consumer of media** as a creator. It will help you understand how to influence the news agenda, empathise with bloggers before engaging with them, learn to write like journalists to create better pitches and become familiar with the media consumption habits of the general public.

Read a range of media across various channels to see how they communicate with different audiences. Cover areas from broadsheet like the Guardian to mainstream sites like BuzzFeed, down to your local newspaper and bloggers.

Follow **Digital trends** with blogs like Moz, Buzzsumo, Social Media Examiner.

Stay on top of **PR trends** with blogs like Wadds, PR Examples, Spin Sucks.

Follow **icons** like @JayBaer @GaryVee @RandFish @iSocialFanz and @NeilPatel



# Build Your Technical Skills

Many of us in the industry today are self-taught. Facebook didn't even exist when I graduated in 2006 (ssh, it wasn't that long ago!)

As you gain experience through volunteering, work experience or entry level roles, you're not always going to get access to the technical experience you need.

So build it yourself!

**Moz 2015  
Most In Demand Skills:**

- 1. Social Media**
- 2. Digital Marketing**
- 3. Search Engine Optimisation**
- 4. Google Analytics**
- 5. Content Marketing**
- 6. PPC**

**You need to create something.**

Whatever you're into, whatever you want to specialise in - take it and run with it.

Start a **blog** to hone your writing/SEO skills.  
Or build an **Instagram** channel for photography.  
Or YouTube channel for **video** editing.  
Or try your hand at Facebook/Google **ads**.

Showcase your creativity and initiative!

**I know, networking is horrible. Meeting strangers. Elevator pitches. Yuck.**

But the thing is, it's kind of crucial in PR, even in the Digital world. So you may never like it. But you'd better get good at it.

Digital networking is a massive help in this area because you can grow a community around you on **Twitter** while you maintain relationships with those you work with along the way on **LinkedIn**.

Granted, they may not be the social networks you want to hang out on. But Twitter is a major element in modern day journalism. It's where most media lists are now compiled and most media relationships are nurtured.

Likewise, LinkedIn can be off-putting when you feel like you haven't much to promote in your online CV. But LinkedIn is much more than that - you can use it to research job descriptions, follow business influencers, engage with potential employers and start to build an article catalogue of your own industry thoughts.



# Build Your Network



Attend **conferences** and local events: introduce yourself to industry people.

Search **LinkedIn groups** to join and get involved in.

Follow **Twitter chats** to engage in debate like **#PRchat** **#PRtalk** and **#ChatSnap**



Take your chosen username (a professionally-appropriate one!) across all **social media channels**, even those you don't intend to actively use.

Secure your **domain name** even if you don't intend to start a blog/website (although it's a good idea to consider building an online portfolio of your work..

You can still have personality online, but try to be **professional, useful and consistent**, with a view to future employers checking you out.

Keep the **branding imagery consistent** across all channels and make sure anything inappropriate is not visible - such as drunken party photos or Likes on political or humour pages/accounts, for example.

**PR yourself** - offer guest posts on the blogs/websites you follow in your industry. Regularly search the **#journorequest** hashtag for interview opportunities to increase your profile and online links portfolio.

**\*Keep your private life private, and your private channels on LOCK DOWN!**

# Build Your Personal Brand

Your personal brand is the online picture you paint of yourself; one that you nurture, protect and keep consistent in imagery and tone across all your social channels and online spaces like blogs. How well you promote it and protect it is a live portfolio to future employers.  
**(They will check!)**



**Volunteer!**

# Build Your Experience

Internships have got a bad rep over the years, adding as the unpaid ones do to the lack of diversity in the UK PR industry.

Unpaid internships are actually illegal in the UK - follow Sarah Stimson's work @GooRoo and @PRCareersUK for advice and paid internship opportunities.

I have found that gaining extra voluntary experience, even when I'm in paid jobs, has really helped me to improve my CV and skill set.

Find local openings on your nearest **Volunteer Now** website.

Or put a call out offer on **Twitter** and ask for charities to apply for your services.

You will often be given much more responsibility and scope for creativity in a volunteering role and, despite their lack of budgets, you can fit it easily around studies and any part-time work you do.

**Possible roles include photography, website content management, email marketing, social media management and PR media relations.**





# Build Your Online Footprint

Some people are so worried about negative or personal things being found online that they will avoid being there altogether.

If you want to work in Digital PR, that is simply not an option. A lack of social media profiles will hinder your ability to prove you are an expert user, as well as your own networking efforts.

Better yet, if you are trying to get ahead in your career and you're up against a candidate who has a solid blog or website platform with impressive social channels, and you don't. who do you think will get the job?

**So don't be afraid!**

Actively increase your footprint with elements like social profiles, guest articles, blog posts and podcast interviews. The more positivity you put online, the harder people will have to dig to find anything you want to hide!

**Your online footprint** is literally an imprint: it is the breadcrumb trail you leave online of every interaction you've had in the digital space.

Growing and managing it is important not only because that is what you will be claiming you can do for businesses, but because **94%** of recruiters will now screen job candidates online when they apply for jobs.

**What goes on Google stays there!**

# Buy My Book

Well now, would you take personal branding advice from someone who wasn't good at promoting themselves? No, you wouldn't.

And you shouldn't.

In 2016, I released a book. It was aimed at small businesses, teaching them to do their own Digital PR, hence the title "**Talk Is Cheap - The Digital PR Your Startup Needs But Can't Afford.**" Catchy. I know,

The book reached Number 5 on Amazon in the PR category, coming as it did on the back of a ten-year award-winning career in the Public Relations industry,

The book also contains the steps I would teach an intern or new recruit on my team.

My only regret is that I didn't implement a lot of the tactics in it sooner myself. My blog - [aCupOfLee.com](http://aCupOfLee.com) - is only 3 years old. As are my social media profiles. Imagine where I'd be with double that.

So I think it's a great addition to your toolkit as you start your career in the crazy-but-fun world of online PR.

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