



Sourcing With Skills

Where Companies Should Hire Marketing,
PR, and Sales Talent

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In today's tight labor market, we know all too well how difficult it can be for companies to hire qualified talent.

But many of these talent acquisition conversations tend to focus on key tech and product development roles, like data scientists, software developers, and UX designers. In other words, the jobs commonly associated with building critical products and services. These are well-paying, in-demand roles and the economy can never seem to get its fill of them.

To find such talent, companies typically look for grads with STEM degrees. As a result, the heavy emphasis on STEM among pretty much everyone (employers, educators, policymakers, families, etc). is higher than ever and continues to dominate the jobs narrative.

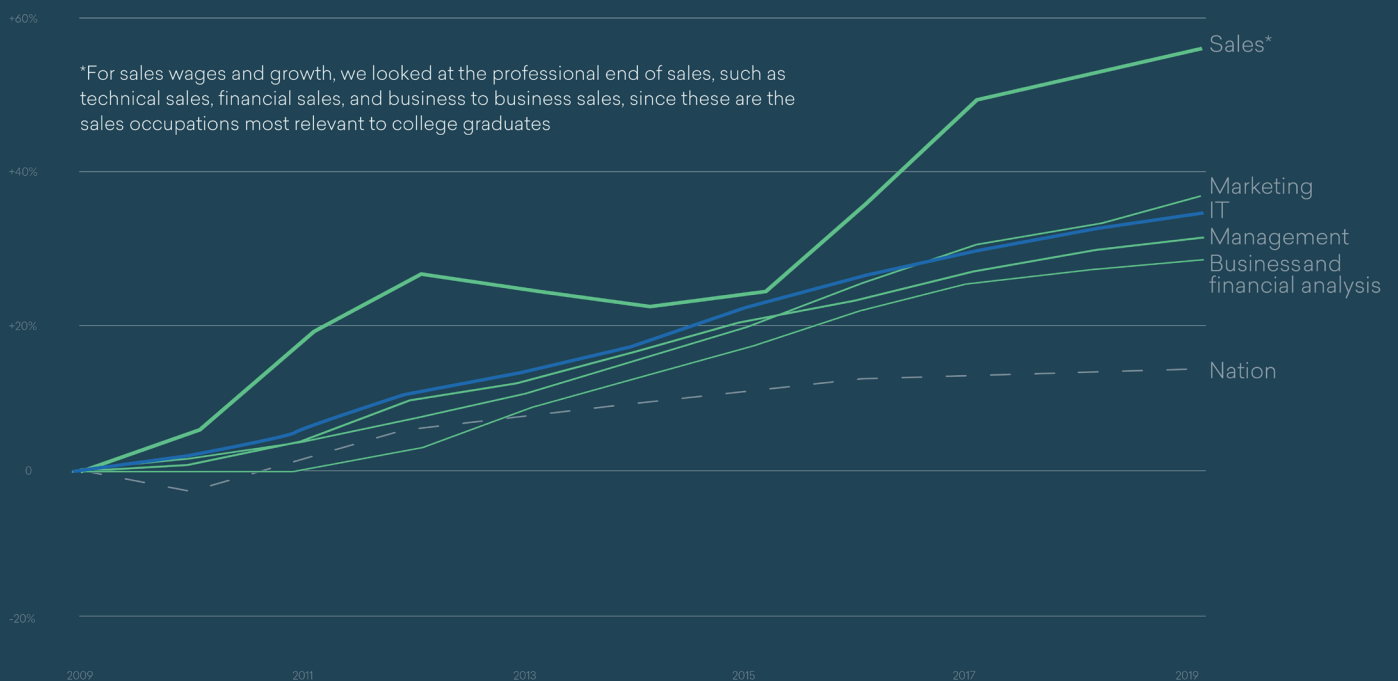
However...

Many of these talent conversations fail to consider key business roles in operations, management, marketing, and sales. Like IT roles, these positions (and the skills associated with them) can make or break a company. They are responsible for selling, distributing, and managing the products, resources, and people that make these companies successful.

Such business-related roles have grown significantly over the last decade, rivaling the demand we see in IT roles. Since 2009, we've seen over 710,000 new sales jobs, over 504,000 new marketing jobs, and 1.8 million-plus management jobs hit the market.

Percentage growth of business function jobs, 2009-2019

Emsi OCCUPATION DATA, 2019



Clearly, the demand is there. But what does the supply look like?

If companies typically look to STEM degrees to find the next great software developer or information security analyst, where do they look for their next rockstar account manager or digital marketer? Where do they find their future stand-out people manager or operations specialist?

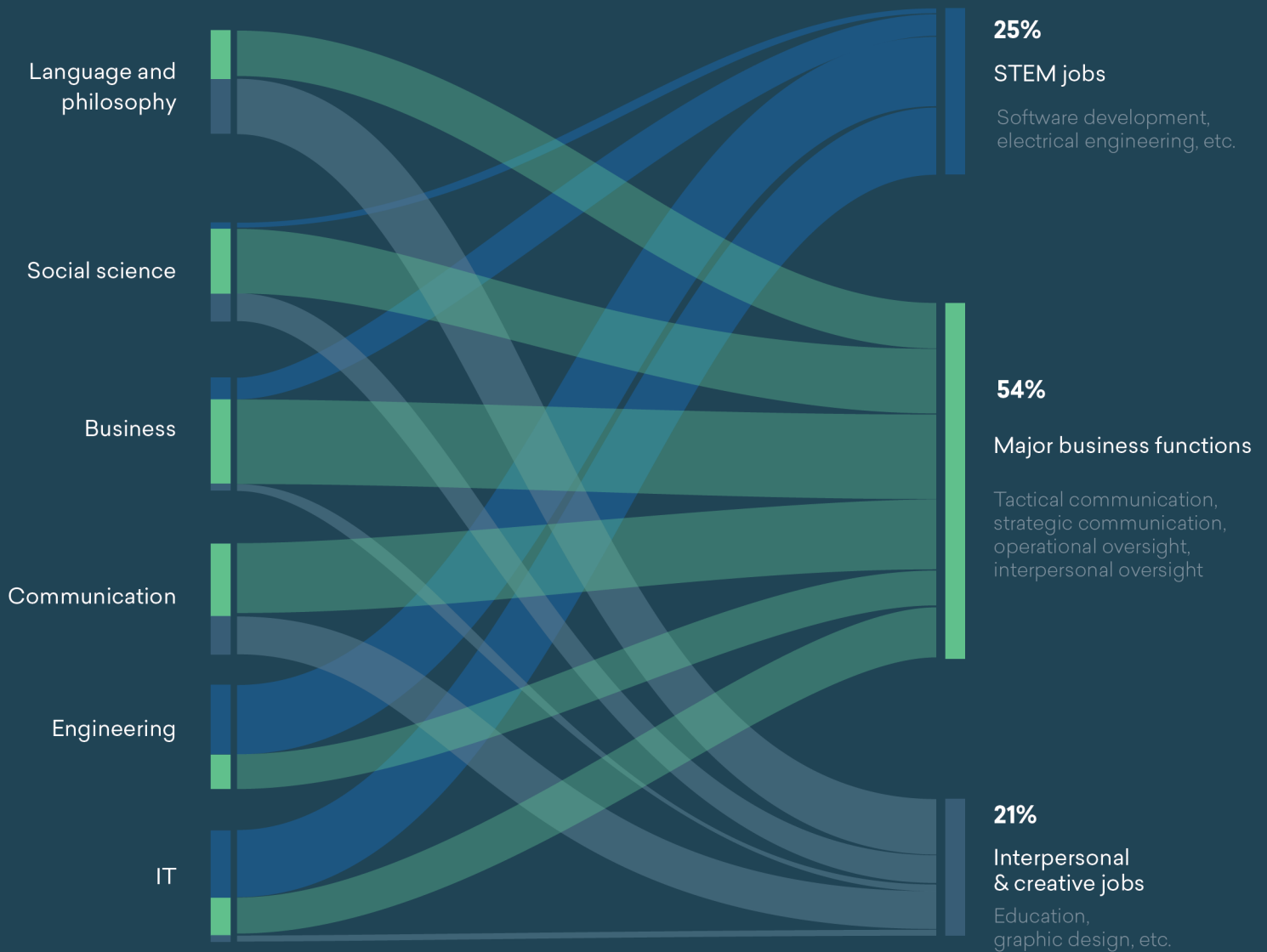
Most would probably assume they'd look at business or communications degrees. And while that's certainly a safe bet, it leaves out plenty of other possibilities.

Business professionals come from a variety of degree programs

Contrary to what we might expect, it's not just business and communications majors that move into essential business roles.

Of the graduates we analyzed in our latest report, Degrees at Work, from popular degrees like language and philosophy, social sciences, business, communications, IT, and engineering, **54% actually end up in major business functions.**

This includes tactical communication (sales roles), strategic communication (marketing roles), operational oversight (business operations), and interpersonal oversight (management roles).



54% of top outcomes are in major business functions

SOURCE: EMSI PROFILE ANALYTICS, 2019

We pulled this data from Emsi's vast database of resumes and profiles to better understand what people actually do once they complete their degrees. Then, we tracked graduates of these programs through their first three jobs to find out how they move in the labor market.

The conclusion? **The education-to-career pathway is non-linear, and these critical business roles are filled by people from a diverse array of degrees. Knowing this, companies can better source this talent with broader, more inclusive searches.**

For example, 12% of social science graduates we tracked went into sales in their first jobs. That's only six percentage points behind business. And 10% of language and philosophy graduates went into sales in their first jobs.

Moreover, students from both language and philosophy and social sciences tend to increasingly move into, and stay, in sales and marketing roles the longer they spend in the labor force. These types of jobs have a gravitational pull for such grads. Much of it likely relates to their ability to thrive and excel in tactical (sales) and strategic (marketing) communications roles.

So if a hiring manager is struggling to fill sales positions, they should consider looking beyond the typical business or communications major. The data shows that graduates from language and philosophy, social science, and even IT and engineering, do move into business roles like sales, marketing, and management. So while it may not seem intuitive, the data supports this strategy.

More importantly, companies should place a higher emphasis on skills.

Skills data is the secret to success

Even more than academic programs, skills are the secret sauce to any human resources or hiring manager's success. Skills give us a granular look at what graduates can actually do, not just what we think they can do based on the program they completed.

For example, businesses may be especially successful finding talent from the pool of non-STEM degrees if the role in question has a strong digital marketing component. Language and philosophy, social science, business, and communications graduates who enter marketing all show a strong concentration in the theme of digital marketing.

Social science grads are particularly strong in search engine optimization, social media, and Google Analytics. Liberal arts graduates gravitate towards email marketing, online advertising, and graphic design.

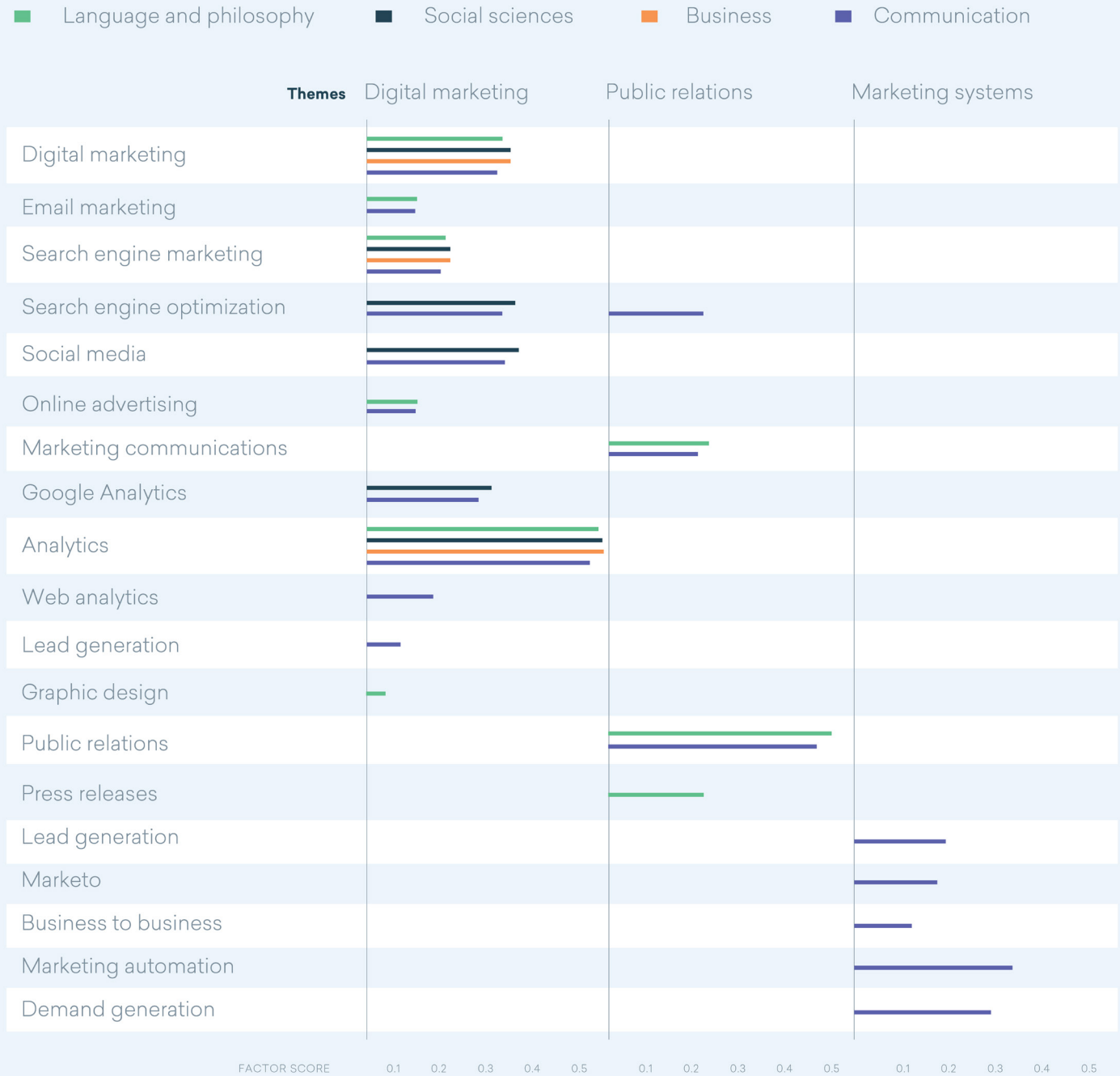
In other words, social science graduates excel in the analytics involved in digital marketing, while language and philosophy graduates tend to the creative side: creating the graphics, content, and campaigns. Interestingly, language and philosophy graduates are the only ones whose digital marketing skills include CSS, which means they might be an undiscovered resource for web developer roles.

Both communications and language and philosophy graduates have public relations skills, while marketing systems are dominated by business and language and philosophy graduates. In fact, across marketing, language and philosophy graduates might be the single most versatile group.

Knowing all of this, hiring managers should make sure they don't discount non-business or communications grads who apply for marketing positions—especially if it involves digital marketing.

Further, they should actively pursue them and develop internships and other opportunities to help them move into these areas of work. After all, according to our data, by the third job many of these grads will be in these roles anyway. Employers who start those conversations early will see better retention.

Top skills of graduates from language and philosophy, social sciences, business, and communication programs



SOURCE: Emsi profile analytics, 2019

How to apply this research to talent acquisition

So what does all of this mean for companies?

In general, this data will help companies find great talent and avoid the high costs of unfilled positions. Knowing where candidates for key business roles come from in regards to education, skills, and previous roles allows hiring managers to be more strategic and efficient with sourcing talent.

Here are three ways to use career outcomes data for talent acquisition:

1. Broaden your college recruiting strategy

When forming your college recruiting strategy, don't get too locked into specific degrees. For instance, if you are looking for new graduates for sales, don't look only at the schools that offer sales training and management programs. In reality, great sales talent has been found across various degree programs.

The same could be said for entry-level marketing and communications positions. By broadening your reach into non-business degree programs like the social sciences, you may find great talent in a less competitive environment. So look for great individuals with the core skills you need in any program.

2. Expand your search parameters beyond specific degrees

For experienced talent, be skeptical of requiring a specific degree or education level without solid evidence that it is needed. Again, focus on the skills and aptitudes needed for a particular job. That way, you won't unintentionally put up barriers that might deter great candidates because they don't meet a specific education requirement.

3. Define your positions by core skill requirements vs. just experience and education

By understanding the skills needed to do a specific job, you can create pathways to that position for employees from diverse educational and experiential backgrounds. This will enable far more robust internal career pathways for employees, and allow you to leverage the talent already inside your organization.

CONCLUSION

The ideal candidate for any given position should not be defined only by the degree they earned or the school they attended. Talent acquisition professionals can use career outcomes and skills data to look beyond degrees and take a more well-rounded approach to hiring.

