Marketing & Sales

Improving Communication and Connections

The modernized National Career Clusters Framework comprises 14 industry-oriented, sector-specific Career Clusters and 72 Sub-Clusters. Industry sector profiles serve as a resource for each Career Cluster. Each profile provides a Cluster overview, details the Sub-Clusters, and contains labor market data, occupational data, and relative skills.

Each industry sector profile was developed through an analysis of quantitative and economic data organized by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), Standard Occupation Classification (SOC) codes, as well as national labor market data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and other federal sources. The Career Cluster title and caption, full definition, and Sub-Clusters

with definitions are part of the official Framework and informed by input from sector-focused Industry Advisory Groups convened.

The Industry Sector Profiles can be used in a variety of ways, including to:

- understand the breadth and depth of each Cluster;
- identify skills, competencies, and careers that can be incorporated into curriculum and program design;
- create connections and opportunities for work-based learning;
- assist learners in career exploration and advising;

...and many other possible uses!

Overview: Marketing & Sales Career Cluster

The Marketing & Sales Career Cluster highlights a range of career opportunities that center on enhancing and executing the communication and messaging needed for effective connection with a client or customer base. Skills developed from programs in this Cluster lead learners to work for advertising agencies, marketing organizations, and consulting firms, or as a marketing or sales professional in any number of more specific industry areas.

Contextualized across the Career Clusters, this Cross-Cutting Cluster can be a value add for a wide variety of different industries where business, sales and technical knowledge of that particular industry area are all required. This Cluster falls within the "Connecting and Supporting Success" Cluster Grouping, recognizing learners' passions for illustrating the additional specialized functions each industry requires outside their sector area to succeed. For more information about the interdisciplinary nature of the Career Clusters, including the application of the Cross-Cutting Career Clusters read the Interdisciplinary Elements explainer resource. This profile is not exhaustive of the breadth and depth of opportunities in this Career Cluster.

The Marketing & Sales Career Cluster focuses on promoting products, understanding consumer needs, engaging with communities, and driving sales. It integrates digital marketing, data analysis, brand promotion, customer relationship management, strategic communications, human-centered design, and retail strategies to build strong customer connections and support business growth. This Cluster is essential in all industries for creating value, effectively reaching and engaging target audiences, and achieving commercial success in a competitive marketplace. For more information on changes within this Cluster, see Appendix A.

Marketing & Advertising

Market Research, Analytics, & Ethics

Retail & Customer Experience

Strategic Sales

Marketing & Sales

Career Clusters
Pathways to College & Career Readiness

Sub-Clusters, Definitions, & Example Programs of Study

Market Research, Analytics, & Ethics

Careers focused on gathering, analyzing, and interpreting market data and consumer behaviors to inform strategic decisions and enhance business relationships. Professionals in this field use data analysis to understand market trends, competition, and customer interactions. This field aims to optimize customer retention and drive sales growth through informed strategies while maintaining awareness of ethical advertising practices, particularly those affecting the health and financial well-being of underserved populations.

Example Programs of Study

Marketing Research
Social Media & Analytics

Marketing & Advertising

Careers focused on using digital technologies and traditional strategies to promote products and services to engage customers and maintain brand identity. This Sub-Cluster includes leveraging online platforms, social media, and email marketing to communicate with audiences digitally. Professionals in this field design and manage brand advertising campaigns and promotions to enhance brand image and market position.

Example Programs of Study

Marketing
Marketing Management

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Retail & Customer Experience

Careers focused on the essentials of retail operations and the delivery of outstanding customer experiences. This Sub-Cluster covers both physical and online store management, visual merchandising, inventory strategies, and customer service enhancement. Professionals in this field are prepared to drive retail success and customer satisfaction by creating engaging and personalized shopping experiences and enhance customer protection by educating consumers on correct product usage and unfair practices in the marketplace.

Example Programs of Study

Merchandising

Strategic Sales

Careers that help businesses grow and achieve goals. This field covers setting targets, refining sales processes, leading teams, and prioritizing excellent customer service in direct sales. Professionals in this field specialize in business development, partnership building, and customer engagement, adapting to the dynamic demands of today's marketplace.

Example Programs of Study

Business Communications

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Occupations, Employment Contexts, Credentials, & Skills

Designing intentional and labor market-aligned pathways requires understanding the occupations and skills that are in demand and commanding family-sustaining wages in your context. Building a deeper understanding of employment trends, including wage potential, a clear picture of the types of employment contexts or businesses this sector offers, and the knowledge and skills needed for success are all important aspects of a learner's journey through their pathway and into the world of work. Leaders can use the data below to inform pathway design at the state or local levels or by advisors and learners as they plot paths to the future. The skills and occupations below were validated using real-time labor market information from 2023 and 2024 from online job postings, which provided the frequency with which skills were mentioned in digital job postings.

Top Occupations

The following table (Figure 1) displays the top occupations within this Cluster. Occupations are listed in order of typical entry-level education required for the position, beginning with a bachelor's degree and then moving through an associate degree, a Postsecondary nondegree award, and a High School Diploma to demonstrate the potential occupational pathways available in this Cluster. Data points for each occupation include five-year job projections, 2023 hires, average annual job openings, 10th percentile hourly earnings (as a proxy for entry-level wages), median hourly earnings, and required entry-level education. The table is reflective of national data and was pulled in 2024. Users should be mindful that the data in this table will not be updated, so the percentages and numbers are subject to change in real-time. For updated state-level occupation projection data, please visit O*NET's Projection Central.

FIGURE 1

*To contextualize this data, educators are encouraged to identify and share their hourly living wage by family size for their state, county, or region at the MIT Living Wage Calculator or other source of living wage data.

Occupation Title	2024 Jobs	2029 Jobs	% Change	2023 Hires	Avg. Annual Openings	10th Percentile Hourly	Median Hourly	Typical Entry Level Education
Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	940,085	1,043,286	11%	512,903	109,457	$18.83	$35.62	Bachelor's degree
Sales Managers	608,211	643,691	6%	240,047	52,428	$30.04	$64.56	Bachelor's degree
Buyers and Purchasing Agents	507,197	509,738	1%	229,817	48,168	$20.51	$34.31	Bachelor's degree
Marketing Managers	410,563	442,763	8%	173,647	39,745	$36.39	$73.47	Bachelor's degree
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Technical and Scientific Products	332,543	355,132	7%	132,199	35,150	$22.90	$47.74	Bachelor's degree
Data Scientists	210,406	252,257	20%	96,477	21,865	$28.90	$51.68	Bachelor's degree
Sales Engineers	62,245	66,454	7%	27,513	6,709	$32.26	$56.05	Bachelor's degree
Advertisin and Promotions Mana ers	24,623	26,265	7%	11,562	2,588	$27.25	$60.34	Bachelor's de ree
Computer, Automated Teller, and Office Machine Repairers	93,173	91,321	-2%	41,278	9,500	$15.55	$21.63	Some college, no degree
Customer Service Representatives	2,980,836	3,029,703	2%	2,385,569	422,799	$14.13	$19.06	High school diploma or equivalent
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	1,384,584	1,437,669	4%	571,866	137,195	$17.58	$31.38	High school diploma or equivalent
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	1,368,862	1,393,045	2%	661,727	143,014	$13.23	$21.80	High school diploma or equivalent
Sales Representatives of Services, Except Advertising, Insurance, Financial Services, and Travel	1,221,783	1,298,459	6%	772,247	133,023	$17.32	$30.96	High school diploma or equivalent
First-Line Supervisors of Non-Retail Sales Workers	324,557	335,356	3%	97,890	29,853	$14.43	$36.71	High school diploma or equivalent

Top Industry-Recognized Credentials

- Certified Pharmacy Technician

- Property And Casualty Insurance License

- Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) Certification

- Cosmetology License

- Insurance License

- Project Management Professional Certification

- Commercial Driver's License (CDL)

- Real Estate Salesperson License

- Certified Information Systems Security Professional

- Epic EMR Certification

These credentials are commonly requested by employers for the occupations listed on page 6 and were identified using national real-time labor market information from 2024. As a Cross-Cutting Cluster, Marketing and Sales roles connect to all other Career Clusters. This list of commonly requested certifications reflects these connections.

HIGH-DEMAND SKILLS

- **Customer Relationship Management**
- **Sales Prospecting**
- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**
- **Sales Management**
- **Selling Techniques**
- **Marketing**
- **Product Knowledge**

- **Cash Register**
- **Cash Handling**
- **Point of Sale**
- **Stocking Merchandise**

- **Inventory Management**
- **Merchandising**
- **Loss Prevention**
- **Purchasing**
- **Retail Operations**

- **Business To Business**
- **Business Development**
- **Project Management**
- **Valid Driver's License**

HIGH-DEMAND SOFTWARE SKILLS

Access, Office, Excel, Google Workspace, Microsoft Word, Outlook, PowerPoint, SharePoint, Spreadsheets, Zoom

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Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Software
HubSpot CRM
Inventory Management System
Operating Systems
Salesforce

SAP Applications
Dashboard
Google Analytics
SQL
Tableau

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Sample Occupations & Emerging Occupations

These tables list sample occupations, emerging occupations, and sample places of work based on quantitative industry data validated by Industry Advisory Groups.

Sample Occupations

- Account Manager
- Advertising Analyst
- Advertising Producer
- Brand Strategist
- Business Developer Manager
- Client Relations Specialist
- Inside Salesperson
- Loss Prevention Specialist
- Market Researcher
- Media Buyer
- Outside Salesperson
- Retail Buyer
- Retail Operations Manager
- Sales Director
- SEO Specialist
- Store Manager
- Technical Salesperson

Emerging Occupations

- AI-Based Marketing Content Creator
- Communications Director
- Content Marketer
- Customer Experience Officer
- E-commerce Analyst
- Influencer Marketing Specialist
- Sales Engineer
- Social Media Manager, Marketer

Sample Places of Work

- Advertising Agencies
- Almost all companies hire marketing & sales professionals
- Business-to-Business (B2B) Companies
- Digital Advertising Platforms
- E-commerce & Online Retailers
- Market Research Companies
- Marketing Agencies
- Outdoor Advertising Companies
- Retail Locations
- Self-Employed, Entrepreneur
- Small Businesses

Acknowledgements

About Advance CTE

Advance CTE is the longest-standing national non-profit that represents State Directors and state leaders responsible for secondary, postsecondary, and adult Career Technical Education (CTE) across all 50 states and U.S. territories. Established in 1920, Advance CTE supports state CTE leadership to advance high-quality CTE policies, programs, and pathways that ensure career and college success for each learner. Advance CTE is the steward of the National Career Clusters Framework.

ADVANCE >> CTE
State Leaders Connecting Learning to Work

Visit the Career Clusters resources to access the full Framework and to explore the complete methodology that informed its modernization.

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Appendix A: Cluster Changes

This appendix provides additional context about the change from the 2002 National Career Clusters Framework to the modernized National Career Clusters Framework released in 2024.

The National Career Clusters Framework, originally developed in 2002, provided the first consistent national organizing structure for CTE programs and was mostly aligned with education taxonomy and structure. The modernized Framework, centers industry taxonomy and structure to reflect the full world of work. More information about the modernization process can be found on the [Advancing the Framework](#) initiative page.

Marketing & Sales is one of three Cross-Cutting Clusters, which are defined as Clusters based on sector-specific and contextualized functions instead of purely discrete industry sectors. They serve as both a standalone Career Cluster and have specialized applications within each of the other Career Clusters, with the potential for programs of study to be contextualized within each Career Cluster. Cross-cutting jobs are found across all industries and are characterized by broad applicability and universal needs. In the original Framework, this sector served as a standalone Marketing Cluster. Sales was added to the title of this Cross-Cutting Cluster in recognition of the significant number of sales-oriented careers, specifically those that require technical knowledge of a separate industry sector, and the use of research and analysis that drives effective selling of a product or idea.

Sub-Cluster Content

The inclusion of "Ethics" within the "Market Research, Analytics & Ethics" Sub-Cluster is a deliberate and forward-thinking decision, underscoring the evolving landscape of marketing in the digital age. When analyzing job postings over the last year, Lightcast Job Posting Analytics identified 101,752 unique job postings nationwide that mentioned ethics and marketing.