



**MARKETING  
CREATIVE  
INDUSTRY**

**SALARY SURVEY**  
**2022 EDITION**

**JEFFERSON TALENT GROUP**

# FOREWARD

I think it fair to say with 2020 being one of the most volatile years in my living memory. No one could really predict what 2021 could have had in store.

With the threat of the consumer markets being hit hard and brands showing caution when committing to spend. One sector though bucked the trend right from the very start and that sector was B2B.

In 2021 the B2B marketing sector started strong and kept building momentum throughout the year at an incredible rate. This was partially down to the high demand in talent with ABM experience. This part didn't surprise us as whenever the economy feels a squeeze, marketers tend to lean on channels that can show a clear ROI. And with ABM being one of the most popular disciplines right now, it was always going to be a safe bet.

The other interesting fact that came to light at the start of 2021, across all our divisions, was the significant number of "new hire" briefs rather than replacement hires. However, as the year progressed, and businesses continued to grow there was a natural knock-on effect, which was an inevitable shortage of relevant talent. As a result, with the rise in head hunting and counter offers, we soon saw "replacement hire" briefs match the demand for new hires.

It also wasn't until mid 2021 did we start to see all our other divisions bounce back. With PR, media and then B2C finally returning to some form of normality.

From a freelance perspective, this was a very odd year. What we predicted would have been a busy year for our contractors, we not only saw a drop in demand but oddly a sharp rise in freelancers moving across to perm. This may of course be in response to the market and the implementation of IR35. However, as we eventually transition back to normality over the following 12 months, we anticipate the freelance market to rise again. This time though with demand out stripping available talent.

As we look forward to 2022 and all the joys and challenges that it will bring. Based on activity already secured across all our services, we are very optimistic about what's ahead and our clients seem to reflect that same spirit.

I wish each and every one of you a very prosperous year ahead.



Tom Howe  
CEO

The background of the page is a dark, night-time landscape with silhouettes of trees and hills. The word "CONTENT" is written in large, glowing, light-painted letters across the upper half of the image. The letters are composed of multiple overlapping, colorful lines (red, orange, yellow, green, blue) that create a sense of motion and depth. The word "CONTENT" is positioned in the upper left quadrant of the page.

# CONTENT

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# METHODOLOGY

The Jefferson Talent Group salary insights report takes real vacancy data from the marketing and creative jobs arena and reports it with minimal filtration and no adjustment.

Jefferson Talent Group is a specialist business transformation consultancy that focuses on Talent Acquisition, Merger & Acquisitions, Business Strategy, Change Management and Mental Health & Wellbeing.

Within in our day to day activity we work with businesses of all shapes and sizes and introduce talent at all levels and disciplines within the marketing, media, PR and creative space.

Based on their current needs, each client provides us with a salary banding to work to. As well as insight into whether this is a new or replacement hire, the approximate value of business they will be working on and which sectors they will cover.

Naturally this may vary dependent on size of agency and role responsibilities.

It's this data, and this data alone, that is used to produce the salary benchmark report and help give us the insight into where the market might be going over the next 12 months.

We have taken vacancy data from the last 3 years – more than 4,000 recorded vacancies in total – and collated it according to seniority and specific specialism. We use this data to produce the charts and accompanying analysis in the following pages.

\*Certain values in the report are not shown: this is the result of incomplete or non-existent data.

**UK'S CREATIVE INDUSTRIES  
CONTRIBUTES ALMOST  
£13 MILLION TO THE  
UK ECONOMY  
EVERY HOUR**



# OVERVIEW

## PAY INCREASES

Over the past 3 years the marketing, media, PR and creative sectors have witnessed some of the biggest pay increases we've seen in over a decade. This has never been more apparent than over the past 12 months with talent shortages and counteroffers fuelling the fire.

The highest pay rises we've seen over the past 24 months were within planning and mid-level client service positions. All receiving pay rises over 15%, which is way above the national average of 3.6%. The lowest pay rises still fall within the B2B creative arena with an average of 6%.

Salaries within the creative arena remain stable but haven't seen the same increases as their colleagues within other disciplines. One of the core reasons, unlike other departments, is that studios tend to rely more so on the freelance market for either fresh concept teams or to handle overflow projects.

We do anticipate though in 2022 that the creative sector will see a noteworthy pay increase as demand in perm talent continues to rise.

## RESIGNATIONS

In the past, the reason people were leaving their jobs was due to remuneration and/or career progress. However, again over these past 3 years we have witnessed a shift in motivation for candidates reporting reasons for why they are seeking out new opportunities. These notably being salary, culture and agency politics.

As a society we are increasingly becoming more and more focused on mental health and wellbeing within the working environment. This in turn has meant we have seen a shift in priorities when candidates commence their job searches.

This has never been more poignant due the impact Covid has had. Plus with the huge increase in job opportunities available, it's definitely a candidate driven market for now, where there are plenty of opportunities and therefore choice.

## BENEFITS

Again, this will come as no surprise but the need for a better work/life balance has topped the charts and becoming even more desirable. Especially the option to work from home from time to time being the most sought-after benefit.

Oddly the recent pandemic has highlighted that working from home isn't all sunshine and light. In fact more so now than ever when walking candidates through the job offer stage more and more people are asking for regular access to an office environment.

The second most requested benefit was usually additional pension contributions. However, and perhaps on reflection it comes as no surprise again, the request for health and life insurance has increased ten fold.

## COVID-19 IMPACT

The below chart illustrates the proportion of permanent new starters placed by the Jefferson Talent Group per quarter over the past three full years.

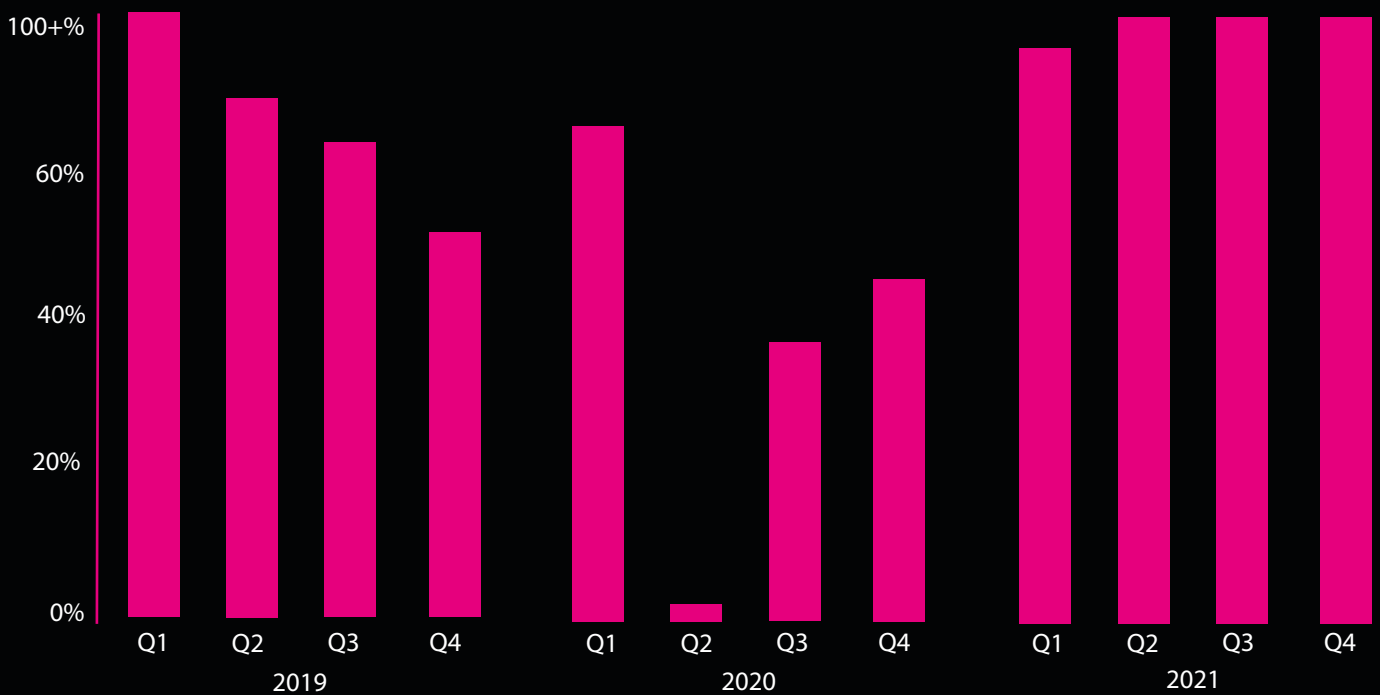
Basing 2019 as a typical year, where the market was buoyant and activity high you will see that in Q1/19 we had the usual high number of starters with the remainder of the year gradually decreasing.

Looking at 2020, these numbers won't come as any surprise due to the impact of Covid-19.

Q1/20 was showing signs of a strong start with a high number of starters in January and February. However, as Covid took grip in March we saw the immediate impact. Not just in the UK but in the US as well with hiring freezes implemented straight away across the board. Due to this Q2 was devastating for everyone. What did surprise us though the bounce back in Q3

and Q4. This was primarily driven by the B2B division, which started to see unprecedented number of new briefs land. This set the scene for 2021.

Without question 2021 has broken all previous records with demand on talent at an all time high in both the UK and US regions. And with the look at live activity in Q1 and Q2 for 2022, this year is already set to surpass 2021 number of total starters.





# CLIENT SERVICES

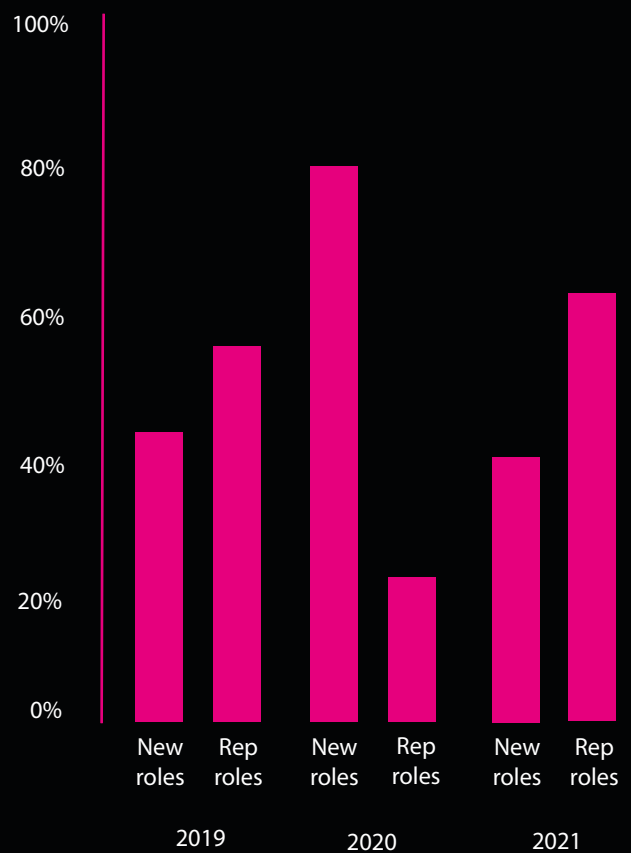
A few years prior to 2020 we saw the demand in client services increase with a steady rise in senior level hires. With about 42% of overall client service vacancies being new hires due to business growth, rather than replacement.

Junior to mid-level client service roles have seen the biggest rise in salaries in over a decade. With Account Manager salaries averaging out at £35k, compared to £28k back in 2009, where it had remained for a number of years prior.

However, the same can't be said for more senior level roles. Although we had seen a significant increase in demand, the salary levels have plateaued and, in some cases, dipped at the very top level.

Then the year 2020 stepped in and said, "hold my beer". With recruitment pretty much on hold from March, it was client services to first bounce back with a vengeance in late Q3, rolling into Q4. Its then we started to see an unprecedented demand in mid to senior level hires and with the furlough scheme underway talent felt vulnerable so were open to conversation.

As a result we saw the highest number of placement within client services in Q1 of 2021. This was down to a combination of growth opportunities and replacement hires due to the level of resignations. This in turn paved the way for the war on counter offers as businesses struggled to keep hold of their talent.





**FOR THOSE THAT LEAVE:**



Job title	Minimum salary	Maximum salary	Average salary <small>(Jefferson)</small>
Client Services Director	£90,000	£120,000	£100,000
Client Partner	£70,000	£100,000	£85,000
Business Director	£70,000	£85,000	£80,000
Group Account Director	£65,000	£75,000	£70,000
Senior Account Director	£65,000	£70,000	£62,500
Account Director	£50,000	£65,000	£55,000
Senior Account Manager	£40,000	£48,000	£44,000
Account Manager	£32,000	£40,000	£36,000
Senior Account Executive	£26,000	£30,000	£28,000
Account executive	£24,000	£28,000	£26,000

# CREATIVE & ARTWORK

The range of salaries offered for creative roles has slowly increased since 2019.

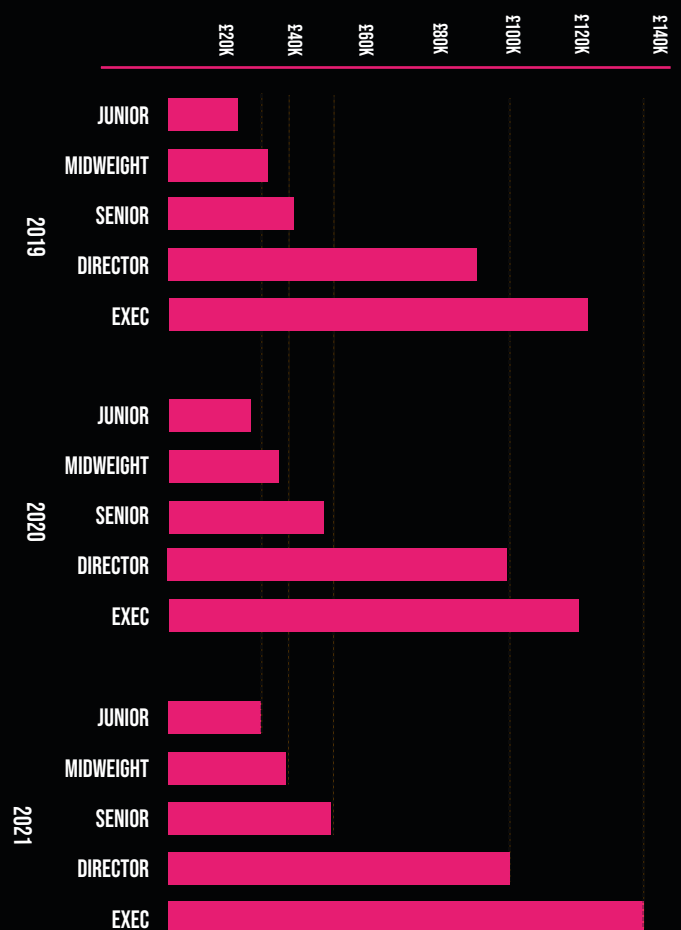
Within mid sized businesses especially, the top end of the range surpassed £120,000 in 2020. – a significant increase (see table). Average salaries at all levels also increased over the same period – an effect most pronounced at senior level (+18%).

Traditionally creative and production roles tend to see one of the highest turnover rates as they tend to seek out new challenges every 2-3 years, unless their current employer rotates them onto different accounts, offering variety.

However, 2020 seemed to have changed that. Whereas in other disciplines we saw a very high movement rate, creative especially saw the lowest turnover. In fact the briefs that came in throughout 2020 and 2021 were more new hires rather than replacement hires.

It is also worth noting that we also witnessed a strong decline in freelance creative assignments throughout 2021. This led to a rise in traditional freelancers opting to take the plunge and return to full time employment as employees. This sudden surplus of talent may have reduced the impact on head hunting from competitors. Therefore reducing the volume of counter offers.

Whether this continues deep into 2022 is another matter. We may in fact see a forced shift when the freelance market picks back up again and talent decides to revert back to freelance status. Only time will tell.



**FOR THOSE THAT LEAVE:**



Job title	Minimum salary	Maximum salary	Average salary <small>(Jefferson)</small>
Executive Creative Director	£100,000	£140,000	£120,000
Creative Director	£80,000	£110,000	£95,000
Head of Design	£65,000	£75,000	£70,000
Senior Art Director	£50,000	£70,000	£60,000
Art Director	£50,000	£60,000	£55,000
Senior Designer	£45,000	£55,000	£50,000
Midweight Designer	£30,000	£40,000	£38,000
Junior Designer	£24,000	£28,000	£26,000
Senior Creative Team	£100,000	£120,000	£110,000
Midweight Creative Team	£80,000	£100,000	£90,000
Junior Creative Team	£60,000	£70,000	£65,000
Senior Artworker	£40,000	£50,000	£45,000
Artworker	£30,000	£40,000	£35,000



# PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Average salaries in project management have slowly improved against industry averages. Particularly at senior levels, agency production employees are offered more competitive salaries as traffic management gets more complex with new disciplines.

Salary ranges have also grown in project management and production vacancies. Production roles, once the domain of middleweight and senior professionals, have opened up to more junior job seekers too.

2020 was the first year that we saw significant demand for technical project management. Modern web design, mobile and build projects are more complicated and technically intricate than ever before – the result of advances in technology and user demands.

Specialist technical project managers with the ability to manage complex development teams and objectives are becoming an ever-more valuable asset to agency teams.

The demand for project managers is still very strong across agencies and increasingly in brands too. However, clients with fixed salary budgets often lose out when hiring talented individuals due to stiff competition from other prospective employers.

We're also seeing an increasingly aggressive approach to talent retention – counter offers are common.

The freelance production and project management market is still buoyant – if candidates are on the market and available for work, there are always assignments available.

As always, the key to securing the best talent is an open mind on salary levels, and a quick interview process. The most decisive and flexible businesses tend to secure the best talent. Combining a cautious and rigorous approach to hiring the right people can be combined with overall speed – it requires hard work and coordination.

**FOR THOSE THAT LEAVE:**



Job title	Minimum salary	Maximum salary	Average salary <small>(Jefferson)</small>
Operations Director	£70,000	£110,000	£90,000
Head of Project Management	£70,000	£90,000	£80,000
Creative Services Director	£60,000	£90,000	£75,000
Production Director	£60,000	£80,000	£70,000
Senior Project Manager/Producer	£45,000	£65,000	£55,000
Senior Traffic Manager/Studio	£50,000	£60,000	£55,000
Traffic Manager/Studio	£35,000	£55,000	£45,000
Mid Project Manager/Producer	£35,000	£45,000	£38,000
Junior Project Manager/Producer	£28,000	£32,000	£30,000
Studio Executive	£25,000	£30,000	£28,000



# STRATEGY

This is one of the toughest disciplines to recruit for with demand continually high and the lack of talent available. This is also one of the most competitive markets within the agency sector.

Research, Insight and Strategy roles tend to have wide-ranging influence within an agency. The output of professionals in these areas can impact on multiple teams, guide the business as a whole, and profoundly affect profitability.

The levels of experience required – particularly in strategic planning roles – are demonstrated by the consistently high salaries offered. These vacancies are not as common as some others. However, what these roles have in common with the rest of the industry is competition for the very best talent.

Someone with an established track record, sector knowledge and proven ability will be a desirable prospect for a range of agencies.

Agencies are relying more and more on strategic talent that comes with industry specific insight with the aim of increasing profitability. Therefore we are anticipating a very noticeable increase in not just demand but also pay rises for junior and mid-level talent as agencies look to keep hold of these crucial players.

# 68%

**OF RESPONDENTS  
REPORTED THAT THEY  
ARE VERY SATISFIED /  
SATISFIED IN THEIR JOB**

**FOR THOSE THAT LEAVE:**



<b>Job title</b>	<b>Minimum salary</b>	<b>Maximum salary</b>	<b>Average salary</b> <small>(Jefferson)</small>
Chief Strategy Officer	£130,000	£180,000	£150,000
Head of Strategy	£90,000	£120,000	£100,000
Strategy Director	£75,000	£100,000	£85,000
Senior Strategist	£65,000	£80,000	£75,000
Data Planner/Scientist	£50,000	£80,000	£70,000
Social Media Strategist	£45,000	£75,000	£60,000
Content Strategist	£50,000	£60,000	£55,000
Mid Weight Strategist	£50,000	£60,000	£55,000
Research Manager	£40,000	£60,000	£50,000
Media Planner	£35,000	£55,000	£45,000
Junior Strategist	£30,000	£40,000	£35,000



# CONTENT & SOCIAL

This will come as no surprise but the agency arena continues to embrace and come up with new and inventive ways to engage with its target audience through digital channels. Content and social has been the most stable and consistent growth market for us. Albeit compared to client services, the volume of roles is lower overall but nevertheless we are still seeing a consistent demand.

More importantly the demand comes in the fashion of sector knowledge, whereby clients prefer to hone in on talent that has relevant experience within their chosen space.

One of the key challenges though is the high turnover of employees with relevant social and content experience. This being a combination of competitor agencies constantly head-hunting rising superstars with relevant sector insight but also due to the lack of opportunity to progress their careers. Plus, there is no getting away from the fact that as the demand increases so will the salary levels.

It is also worth keeping in mind that because of the above, employers are finding themselves in the position of having to counter offer in house talent in order for them to stay. In some case's I am sure reluctantly.

Research shows that approximately 48% of employees in this space are looking to leave within the next 12 months.

However you look at it, this is one area worth tracking over the next few years.

# 48%

**ARE LOOKING TO LEAVE  
THEIR ROLE WITHIN THE  
NEXT 12 MONTHS**



## FOR THOSE THAT LEAVE:



Job title	Minimum salary	Maximum salary	Average salary <small>(Jefferson)</small>
Head of Social/Content	£70,000	£100,000	£90,000
Social Media Manager	£35,000	£45,000	£40,000
Community Manager	£35,000	£45,000	£40,000
Content Manager	£30,000	£45,000	£40,000
Head of Copy	£60,000	£90,000	£80,000
Senior Copywriter	£50,000	£65,000	£60,000
Mid level Copywriter	£35,000	£45,000	£40,000
Junior Copywriter	£26,000	£30,000	£28,000
Editor	£35,000	£45,000	£40,000
Proofreader	£25,000	£35,000	£30,000



# BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Average salaries in business development reflect the importance of the role for clients. Business development can make or break a proposition, so it's no surprise that the average salaries in the space are above normal industry levels. This effect is at its most pronounced at senior levels where salaries are well above industry averages - £85k by 2020.

With the industry becoming ever more commercially focused, the range of salaries offered to business development professionals has also increased steadily since 2018.

The top rate of pay has gone from around £75k in 2018, to £120k in 2020. As the agency sector seeks out more and more commercial talent, employers are casting their nets further and broader than before.

There's a clear premium given to the most experienced talent - professionals with proven track record operating at senior levels are in high demand.

In 2020 we saw a steep rise in new briefs for Marketing Manager's to help drive the business development function. Either by working directly with agency founders or in larger organisations, supporting Business Development Directors.

In particular Digital Marketing Managers who have a proven track record in marketing businesses via social media channels. And ideally marketers who are experienced in content creation.

Where these marketing roles used to be basic salary only, we are now seeing financial incentives being introduced in the form of bonuses and training.

# 70/30

**RATIO SPLIT BETWEEN MEN  
AND WOMEN IN BUSINESS  
DEVELOPMENT**

**FOR THOSE THAT LEAVE:**



Job title	Minimum salary	Maximum salary	Average salary <small>(Jefferson)</small>
Head of Business Development	£80,000	£120,000	£95,000
Business Development Director	£55,000	£90,000	£70,000
Snr Business Development Manager	£45,000	£55,000	£50,000
Business Development Manager	£35,000	£45,000	£40,000
Business Development Executive	£24,000	£30,000	£28,000
New Business Market Researcher	£25,000	£30,000	£28,000
Senior Marketing Manager	£45,000	£55,000	£50,000
Marketing Manager	£35,000	£45,000	£40,000
Marketing Executive	£28,000	£35,000	£30,000

# DIGITAL/UX

IA and UX positions are highly-specialised. As a result, average salaries for these vacancies are higher than industry norms. Especially when competing against client side opportunities and contract rates.

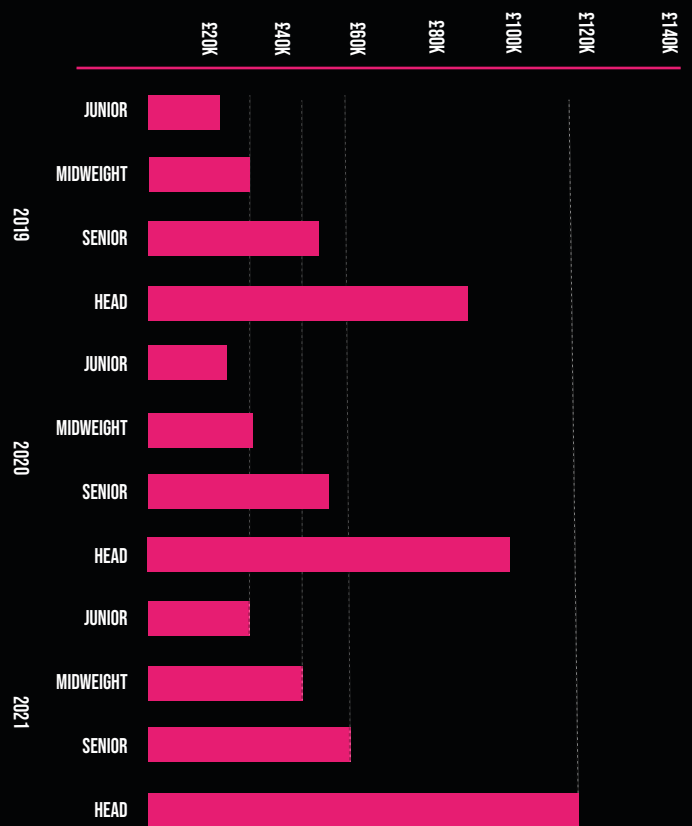
Demand has steadily grown up until 2019 to a position in line with industry-wide averages. Then in 2020 and 2021 especially, this was one of the biggest growth areas. Of the two disciplines, User Experience has the best established structure of salary levels – four tiers of seniority, as per most agency models (see sector salaries chart).

There has been more fragmented demand in IA – notable demand for juniors in 2019 but not since, for example. The range of salaries offered for Information Architecture vacancies is also narrow (see sector salaries chart).

The most senior roles in UX have shown significant salary increases in the last 3 years – from an average of £80,000 in 2019 to £120,000 in 2021.

Salaries for midweight talent have also seen sustained growth during the same period.

With the rise in interest surrounding the “metaverse” (or variations of) and long term planning involved, we already anticipate that not only with the demand in VR/AR/UX to increase dramatically, that we will also soon start to see a knock on effect when it comes to salaries, counter offers and increased day rates.



**FOR THOSE THAT LEAVE:**



Job title	Minimum salary	Maximum salary	Average salary <small>(Jefferson)</small>
Head of UX	£80,000	£140,000	£120,000
Digital Director	£70,000	£95,000	£85,000
Head of Motion	£60,000	£90,000	£75,000
Senior Back end developer	£50,000	£65,000	£58,000
Back end development Manager	£35,000	£50,000	£45,000
Senior Front end developer	£40,000	£50,000	£45,000
Back end developer	£35,000	£40,000	£38,000
Senior UX Designer	£50,000	£65,000	£58,000
Midweight UX Designer	£35,000	£45,000	£40,000
Junior UX Designer	£25,000	£35,000	£30,000



# LEADERSHIP

Looking back in stark contrast to 2020, last year was a welcomed breath of fresh air for the marketing and creative industry. Where some businesses faced mass furloughs in 2020, it seemed that 2021 was the complete opposite. In fact the biggest challenges business leaders seem to have was sourcing and keeping hold of talent.

Again, it is the B2B sector that continues holding up rather well compared to other markets. With most agencies within the top 100 reporting continued growth throughout 2021. When asking various agency leaders on their projections for 2022, the vast majority were very optimistic about the future and seemed comfortable with investing over the next 12-24 months, with employee retention being a primary directive.

With regards to leadership salaries over the past 12 months. Although we haven't seen the same percentage salary increases as we have for more middle management roles, there still has been a small increase. Also depending on what side of the fence you sit, there has been an increase in leadership job opportunities over the past 12 months. However, unlike in 2020 there hasn't been as much available talent around. Which would suggest, unlike the

recession of 2007, senior talent weren't being made redundant as much.

As per our statement at the end of 2020 regarding senior leadership talent, our prediction was that we wouldn't see mass resignations or redundancies throughout 2021. This we believe was more down to personal decisions to batten down the hatches and ride the storm before proactively making and key decisions on career moves.

As we close 2021 and look forward to 2022 we now anticipate a change in stance where we now believe we will start to see businesses not only investing more in senior leadership positions but also witness a above average rise in senior leaders resigning to seek out new challenges.

**FOR THOSE THAT LEAVE:**



Job title	Minimum salary	Maximum salary	Average salary <small>(Jefferson)</small>
CEO	£120,000	£240,000	£180,000
Managing Director	£110,000	£160,000	£130,000
Deputy Managing Director	£90,000	£110,000	£100,000
HR Director	£70,000	£90,000	£80,000
Finance Director	£75,000	£120,000	£90,000
Commerical Director	£80,000	£120,000	£100,000
IT Director	£80,000	£120,000	£100,000



# CONCLUSION

Up until 2020, the agency sector in particular had seen steady growth. In fact we could pretty much predict each year as it unfolded. Then Covid decided to step in and we had to throw out all our predictions and ride the wave like everyone else.

However, what was a surprise, which no doubt if you've opted to read this survey from cover to cover. 2020, for the marketing and creative arena, wasn't quite as bad as first thought.

Yes pretty much the entire agency sector put a freeze on recruitment in Q2/20. However, at the start of Q3/20 we saw the B2B sector pick up again first and build rapid momentum. This was shortly followed by the vast majority of our clients within the B2C space in early 2021.

With the recruitment market at its most buoyant in 2021 this paved the way for some very interesting challenges for all of us. I'd go so far as to say it has been a defining period in our industry.

With lockdowns came the pressing need for businesses to adapt to a work from home model. This in turn gave employees a taste of what true flexible working could look like and what could be achieved. And on the whole it was successful. However, this period of time

also highlighted the importance of mental health within the workplace and gave businesses the opportunity to step up and offer much more personal support and understanding.

It's also worth noting that although many employees had been campaigning for more flexible working for many years prior to Covid, what was a surprise was when given this opportunity the reality wasn't always as attractive. Yes we saw a rise in demand for flexible working at application stage but we also saw an underlining request to ensure they could have regular access to an office and more importantly other people.

It's our belief that flexible working will be here to stay long after Covid has done its thing. However unlike other industries, the marketing and creative agency arena relies or should I say thrives very much on personal and emotional interactions as this plays a very integral part in the creative process. This can't be achieved via a Zoom or Slack.

Due to this blip in mid 2020 combined with employees having the time to evaluate what was important to them,



we saw a rapid rise in candidate applications, which is reflected in our own activity throughout 2020 and 2021. However as much as we saw mass resignations, we also saw the rise in counter offers.

Yes agencies were facing their own growing pains and the need to facilitate new business wins and increased client spend. What they hadn't quite planned for was the rise in resignations. To combat the need to hold onto talent, counter offers were flying left, right and centre. And as a knock on effect this fuelled the recent wave in salary increases throughout the agency landscape. With client services and strategy being the most sort after.

In addition to this, with agency confidence at a high, the demand in freelancers dropped significantly and in response we saw a rise in freelance applications for permanent roles. Which did help take some of the short term pressure for perm hires.

As we look forwards into 2022 and beyond, we predict more changes to come with the war on talent still being one of the biggest challenges for most businesses. Especially the bone of contention on how to balance demand for talent with new salary expectations.

We will also predict that with the rise in interest and conversation surrounding the "Metaverse", agencies will soon, if not already, been looking at ways to bring this channel into their portfolio, giving way to a new rise in talent to cater for this eventuality.

# MARKETING CREATIVE INDUSTRY

We partner with marketing, media, PR and creative businesses to help them manage and implement organisational change and effective growth strategy through people centric solutions.

## ABOUT THIS SURVEY

The survey was compiled by the Jefferson Talent Group using data collected from over 4,000 respondents combined with insight gathered from our Talent Partners.

The tables under each section represents an overview of job levels and salary averages in all listed disciplines. Should you require further information on any roles not listed within this survey then get in touch with us at the following:

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