

## Maddie Thomson Digital Marketing Manager at Greenlight



### *About the role*

#### 1. Can you give a brief overview of your career to date?

After graduating from QMUL with a Geography degree in 2014, I attended a week-long summer school run by the Institute of Digital Marketing (IDM). The summer school, gave recent graduates an insight into the world of digital marketing by visiting top agencies, networking with marketing professionals and tackling a live clients' brief. During the week, I had the chance to speak to representatives from Greenlight Digital who sponsored the week. Following this, I successfully secured a place in their graduate scheme, where I spent a year rotating around various departments in the company. The following year I was offered a position as Account Executive within the Client Services department and was promoted to Account Manager a year later.

#### 2. What does your current role involve?

As an Account Manager at Greenlight Digital, I handle the day to day management of client accounts across a variety of different channels such as SEO & Paid Media. SEO (Search Engine Optimisation) looks to improve the visibility of a website within the natural search results and Paid Media includes all the different adverts we see across the digital landscape. Each of the channels have various delivery teams who I work closely with to help deliver the most effective campaigns for our clients. I work mostly with ecommerce based clients who are looking to drive qualified traffic back to their site to help increase sales and revenue. The role is fast-paced but working across a wide range of clients, in a cutting edge industry is exciting.

#### 3. What attracted you to your job?

A lot of my friends seemed to have a clear idea of what they were going to do after their degree, but I didn't really know what I wanted to do when I left university. My mum and dad owned a fruit farm in Scotland and were trying to launch a new product for their business. I helped them out with the marketing and really enjoyed it. They used an agency to help with branding, which gave me a really useful insight into that side of things. I then looked into ways I could get more of a taste of marketing while I was at QM and ended up applying for a QProject (a work experience scheme run by QM Careers & Enterprise) which involved helping out with the marketing for a men's public health charity. This was a really good way to get some experience in marketing, and I liked the idea of helping out with a charity.

#### 4. What do you most enjoy about your current role?

Digital marketing is a fast-paced sector that is constantly changing as new technologies and trends develop, therefore the job is not repetitive and I am always learning new things. Also working within an agency is great fun, with liked-minded people around the same age. Most agencies have great benefits to ensure a great working culture such as beer Friday, flexible working hours or free gym memberships. I also enjoy going out to visit my clients which means I get to travel and do not always need to be in the office.

## 5. What do you find most challenging / least enjoy about your current role?

Sometimes clients want things that aren't possible to achieve or that would create an unmanageable workload for the internal teams I work with. So it can occasionally be difficult to keep everyone happy and give the clients what they would like whilst not overloading my colleagues. People management and interpersonal skills are very important in this role!

## 6. Do you have travel and / or work long hours in your role?

My job involves some travel to visit clients. My clients are all UK-based and not very far from the office, but it's possible to have clients who are based further afield or even overseas. So the travel really depends on who your clients are and where they're based. My role is usually contained within normal office hours, although I occasionally need to work overtime if I have a big deadline or presentation coming up.

### *Career and experiences to date*

## 7. What was the most useful thing you did before you graduated that you think helped you get your first job after university?

The QProjects experience was very useful, both in helping me work out whether marketing was the right thing for me, and enabling me to get some experience to put on my CV. Helping my parents market their new product was also a great way to get an insight into branding and build my experience.

I also attended a presentation skills workshop, run by QMUL, during my degree. This was really helpful as a big part of my role involves being able to put presentations together, deliver them effectively, and speak confidently in front of clients.

## 8. How has your Geography degree helped you get to where you are now?

A Geography degree was useful preparation for my current role as it teaches you to think critically and be analytical in the way you approach things. Also, although GIS is not a requirement for my job, learning this has helped me to be more 'tech-savvy' and feel more comfortable learning new software programmes. I also did quite a bit of teamwork during my degree, which helped me learn to interact with different people. This is useful as I need to work with all sorts of different characters in my role. Finally, I had to do some group presentations as part of my course, which helped me build my skills and confidence in this area.

### *Advice to students*

## 9. What tips would you give to current students wanting to get into your sector?

A general tip is to get some work experience which you can fit around your studies. Getting work experience on your CV is really important - so think creatively about how you can do this. For example, get a part-time job in the QMotion because it's on-campus so you don't have to travel far.

More specific tips for getting into this sector include:

1. **Be commercially aware!** Keep an eye out for different marketing campaigns and reflect on how you feel about them. A common question at interview is "what

campaigns have you seen from different brands that you like?", so it's important to be aware of what other brands are doing.

2. **Practice your presentation skills.** Attend workshops and be open to opportunities where you can practice and develop your presentation skills and grow your confidence in speaking in front of different audiences.
3. **Get some relevant experience.** This doesn't have to be a marketing internship or formal placement, just something that shows you're interested and have tried it out. Be proactive and creative. For example, if you're doing a waitressing job, ask if you can help out with their social media accounts. Marketing can be competitive to get into, so even building up small bits of experience will help.
4. **Attend the IDM summer school.** This is aimed at people who don't really know anything about digital marketing. You have the opportunity to visit different agencies and get given a task (such as a marketing campaign goal) by a real company, who becomes your client for the week. You then present your work to all the agencies you visited. After the summer school I contacted all the agencies involved to ask about job opportunities, which is how I found out about the Greenlight graduate scheme.

## Further information

### **Getting work experience:**

IDM summer school: <https://www.theidm.com/employability-schemes/for-students/idm-marketing-summer-school>

QProjects: [www.careers.qmul.ac.uk/qrecruit](http://www.careers.qmul.ac.uk/qrecruit) (for summer opportunities)

QConsult: [www.careers.qmul.ac.uk/qconsult](http://www.careers.qmul.ac.uk/qconsult)

Work experience opportunities in and around QM:  
[www.careers.qmul.ac.uk/workexperience](http://www.careers.qmul.ac.uk/workexperience)

### **Marketing and digital marketing information:**

Careers & Enterprise guide on 'Getting into marketing, advertising, PR & events':  
[www.careers.qmul.ac.uk/media/careers/docs/2015-16/MAPENove2015.pdf](http://www.careers.qmul.ac.uk/media/careers/docs/2015-16/MAPENove2015.pdf)

Institute of Digital Marketing: [www.theidm.com](http://www.theidm.com)

Greenlight Digital Careers: [www.greenlightdigital.com/careers/](http://www.greenlightdigital.com/careers/)

Digital Marketer job profile on the Prospects website: [www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/digital-marketer](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/digital-marketer)

Marketing Executive job profile on the Prospects website: [www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/marketing-executive](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/marketing-executive)

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