



# THE MFA GUIDE

Everything you need to know  
about the media agency industry.



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**ROLES**

**Everything you need to know about the media agency industry.**

# Imogen Hewitt

CEO, Spark Foundry



## What is your job title and what does it mean?

CEO, Chief Executive Officer. It means I am responsible for the people, product, positioning and commercial success of the agency. It also means, if it's broken, I need to fix it. Probably the most important aspect of my job to me is the responsibility to create a culture and environment where exceptional people thrive.

## What is your role and the role of your team at your agency?

My direct team is our agency leadership team. They are the most senior specialists and leaders in our agency. It is crucial that they are aligned and excited about the direction of the agency and that they share ownership of the strategies and the tactics to realise our vision. It is essential that I understand my leadership team as individuals so that I can ensure they feel understood, appreciated and motivated. I set the example as to how we engage with teams across the agency, irrespective of seniority, and I take that responsibility extremely seriously. My leadership team are responsible for delivering their craft areas with excellence and supporting their teams in the same way I support them. Together we aim for consistent agency leadership, valued staff and a drive at every level to live up to our agency values.

## What are your main responsibilities?

Setting the vision, positioning and agenda for the agency, exceptional and consistent staff and client happiness, the commercial success of the company through P&L management and the ambition and realisation of growth through business development.

## How did you get into the industry and how did you get to your current role?

While still at school I completed several work experience placements in agencies and in publishing, hedging my bets between agency life and journalism. After completing a BA Communications at UTS, I landed my first gig as the PA to the Media Director at FCB. This led to a move into a media assistant role, setting me on the course I continue on today.

## What has been your most inspiring moment in the industry so far?

The way the agency community came together to try to weather the Covid storm last year was inspiring. The industry has a reputation, fair or otherwise, of infighting and rather brutal competitiveness. When the human cost was potentially so high last year, the industry pulled together initiatives focused on collective support for the many terrific people impacted. It was a moment that signalled what is possible in this community of agencies and I hope we take forward in terms of camaraderie and collective focus into the years to come.

## Most challenging task?

Working out which challenging task to tackle first is always the most challenging task.

## What do you enjoy most about your role?

I love the adrenalin of running a million miles an hour, having to constantly think fast and laterally about solutions and satisfaction of producing work that tangibly impacts client business for the better. But the best thing about it all is seeing wonderful people propelled forward – be that in their day, their capability in their career, or all of the above.

# Jack Graham

Senior Strategy Director, UM Australia



## What is your job title and what does it mean?

Senior Strategy Director. I lead the strategic communications and media output for a select group of clients within UM.

## What is your role and the role of your team at your agency?

At UM, the strategy teams as a whole exists to identify, develop and oversee the implementation of unique and innovative strategies that deliver against our clients' challenges or desired results. What this means is that we're problem identifiers, problem solvers and if all goes well problem resolvers.

## What are your main responsibilities?

I'm responsible for creating strategic recommendations. Everything from audience identification, application of behavioural sciences, implementation of marketing science right through to ideas that drive growth for clients.

## How did you get into the industry and how did you get to your current role?

I got into the industry by accident. I'd done a social science degree and fell in love my first day – constantly trying to understand motivation and behaviour. And since then I've stuck my hand up to do anything and everything that interests me at work. Hopefully my expertise has caught up to my enthusiasm, and over time my focus and interest have evolved into my everyday role.

## What has been your most inspiring moment in the industry so far?

Seeing the impacts of my work come to life in the real world. It doesn't matter how many campaigns I work on, I still get a sense of pride and accomplishment when I see my plans come to life in person. Whether it's seeing them discussed on Gruen or walking past a street poster. It reinforces why we spend our days interrogating where, when and why we're placing advertising to impact people's lives because there is a decision behind every placement.

## Most challenging task?

I work heavily for inbound tourism, so COVID restrictions to international borders have heavily impacted the ability for how advertising and communications can support the industry through international tourists. Building plans to support and shift domestic tourism behaviours while in changing travel restrictions has only added more complexities.

## What do you enjoy most about your role?

The people. We're a team of dreamers, thinkers and doers who go out of their way to help create things that make positive impact in people's lives.

# Shivani Maharaj

National Head of Content & Partnerships, Wavemaker



## What is your job title and what does it mean?

National Head of Content & Partnerships at Wavemaker Australia. My role is about bringing creativity to media in the form of content, branded partnerships, influencer marketing, branded entertainment, product placement and integration, as well as sports partnerships, IP/licensing and more. My job in Content & Partnerships is to tell the story of our clients' brands in entertaining, educational and informative ways that go well beyond media spots. People think that 'creatives' only sit at a creative agency, but that's just not the case.

## What is your role and the role of your team at your agency?

My role involves leading a team who are at the forefront of culture – it is our job to know what content audiences are passionate about, what they love, what they need, what they connect with, what their pain points are, as well as what drives action. We then help our clients tap into that culture, build that culture or even create it. Content & Partnerships is Wavemaker's cultural pulse. It's our role to make consumers FEEL something.

## What are your main responsibilities?

- 1. Have the best black book in town.** We have the relationships beyond media vendors, which open up doors for our clients. For example, exclusive access, first-to-market opportunities, last-minute (and cost-effective solutions). This is down to the people we have in our business. They have experience, knowledge, expertise and relationships like no one else and can tap into production houses like Endemol Shine, Freemantle, Warner Bros, Hsqquared, Eastern Media, Seven, Nine, Ten and Foxtel, to name a few. Our people have personal relationships with EPs, Heads of Programming, Content and Partnerships leads at media vendors, sporting codes and rights holders, sport teams/clubs and stadiums. They know writers of shows and movies, have contacts with the biggest movie distributors in the country as well as music houses and distributors. They know talent agents, influencer networks, licensing companies and techstart ups.
- 2. Creative Strategy** – Be great at coming up with ideas quickly.
- 3. Not being afraid to be provocative and challenging the status quo.**
- 4. Lead a team with best-in-class project management skills and meticulous attention to detail.**
- 5. Client leadership.**

## How did you get into the industry and how did you get to your current role?

I began my career at ACP Magazines (since rebranded to ARE Media) where I started as an intern at Shop Til You Drop Magazine. I was exposed to 'media agencies' there and moved over to the only agency in the country (MediaCom) with a female CEO at the time (Anne Parsons). My foundations were laid there as I learnt media buying, planning, strategy etc. I was fortunate enough to be surrounded by great leaders and mentors who pushed me to where I am today and put me on accounts that allowed my creativity to shine. 15 years at GroupM, 3 agencies (MediaCom, Maxus, Wavemaker) and a merger later, I've built my career in creating brand experiences for clients like airbnb, Netflix, KFC, Audi, VW, Jeep, Colgate-Palmolive, ALDI and Hungry Jack's. I'm passionate about how consumers feel a brand.

# Shivani Maharaj

National Head of Content & Partnerships, Wavemaker



## What has been your most inspiring moment in the industry so far?

My most inspiring moment was when I went to Cannes in 2017. A place like the Cannes Festival of Creativity truly makes you realise what a remarkable industry we work in and it inspires you to do better work. I remember being at the awards ceremony and Gatorade's Epic Farewell to Derek Jeter, the most loved Yankee of all time, came up on the big screen. I cried at that moment. That's the power of great content! I also realised that Australia punches above its weight and that we truly do innovate and lead creativity across the world.



<https://youtu.be/Vxd9W0RVgFY>

My most rewarding experience to date would have to be starting the content and partnerships discipline at Wavemaker and bringing creativity to media. I LOVE what I do and love coming into work every day to do it with the amazing brands we work with. It's easy to tell a story. It's harder to tell a brand story that connects with consumers. I love that challenge and love seeing work that works.

## Most challenging task?

When program producers say no to what you want to do and you need to make it a yes for your clients.

## What do you enjoy most about your role?

Coming up with ideas and seeing them come to life.

# Sujen Selva

Digital & Tech Director, Carat



## What is your job title and what does it mean?

My job title is Digital & Tech Director, which means I lead and consult in all things digital and technology for my client and agency.

## What is your role and the role of your team at your agency?

As the digital and tech strategy lead, my role is to establish strategy and framework for the client's digital transformation across paid media, commerce and CX and supporting/consulting them to accelerate their adoption in these areas. My team of specialists across Search, Social and Programmatic are pivotal to ensure that we meet and deliver the client's digital transformation goals.

## What are your main responsibilities?

My main responsibility is ensuring that we meet operational excellence in delivering against clients' digital marketing strategy. This includes consulting with the client's CMO team and brand marketing team to ensure we are at the forefront of innovation in paid media, commerce and CX. Other than that, I'm responsible for the governance of existing digital platforms and adoption of new platforms and tools within my team.

## How did you get into the industry and how did you get to your current role?

I studied marketing communication at university and landed my first role at Adconion in Melbourne, where I had the best mentors and experienced the first of many media social party hangovers. After working across a few companies and multiple roles at Dentsu spanning across programmatic trading, Data & Investment, to Commercial, I had the opportunity to join Carat to lead the digital team for a global beauty account.

## What has been your most inspiring moment in the industry so far?

Witnessing my team kicking goals and continuing to challenge themselves on a daily basis inspires me to be a better leader.

## Most challenging task?

There have been many along the way, but working on a fast-paced global beauty client account has been challenging yet rewarding to see the relationship grow and solidify in the past 18 months.

## What do you enjoy most about your role?

The ability to apply my skills and knowledge in successfully solving client challenges and constantly learning new things on digital marketing.

# Timalee Cashman

Partnerships Director, UM Australia



## What is your job title and what does it mean?

As a Partnerships Director I am responsible for overseeing the creation and execution of Implementation recommendations (in simple terms, where a client should invest their advertising budget). I lead the wider team in planning and executing optimal connections plans to deliver on client business outcomes across all channels (paid, owned, earned, and shared).

## What is your role and the role of your team at your agency?

My role sits within the Partnerships craft at UM. The Partnerships team is centred around Investment; we build and bring to life connection plans, develop exciting partnerships with media partners, and deliver value for clients.

## What are your main responsibilities?

My key responsibility is overseeing the Investment output of an extremely talented team, from channel recommendation (the detail of 'where' – for paid think Television, Social and Outdoor amongst others) through to Investment execution. This can take many forms, from negotiating and implementing paid media, to orchestrating shared assets between stakeholders, editorial briefings and even sponsorship of the highest rating Television programs.

## How did you get into the industry and how did you get to your current role?

I studied Marketing & Economics at Uni and like so many, I had no idea the media industry existed. A friend of mine with a foot in the door convinced me to apply and I've worked my way up from there!

## What has been your most inspiring moment in the industry so far?

I'm inspired every day by the representation of women in leadership positions across the industry – I'm very lucky to work with some of the best.

## Most challenging task?

Simplifying everything; the industry is so fast-paced with new technology, formats and ways of thinking – you need to be able to uncomplicate.

## What do you enjoy most about your role?

Collaboration; working with different people each day (from my team, to creative agencies, media partners and clients) to create something meaningful that then tangibly exists in the world. It's always fun seeing an execution out in the wild and knowing you put it there.



# Marianne Hawkins

## Cultural Insights & Analytics Director, Initiative



### What is your job title and what does it mean?

Cultural Insights and Analytics (CIA) Director. Note the word ‘cultural’ – not something you would naturally associate with the world of data, but at Initiative we believe in culture as a quantifiable connector of people, brands and business growth. My role is to identify and interpret those connections in an actionable way for our clients.

### What is your role and the role of your team at your agency?

I sit within the CIA team, working across the national Initiative portfolio, which includes supporting global clients at a local market level. I specialise in econometric modelling and geospatial analytics, meaning I get to work on answering the “what” and “when” for data-driven investment decisions, and also the “where” for optimal deployment of media and marketing strategies. The best part is that all clients across all industries can benefit from capitalising on data effectively, so I get to immerse and collaborate with some remarkable people and many exciting brands.

### What are your main responsibilities?

I’m a bit of an all-rounder, and while I obsess with data, I love taking a lateral approach to solutions. I have plenty of technical exposure, but my strength comes through the interpretation and translation of modelling results into an “aha” moment that can be actioned. I thrive off client engagement, but am just as content getting my hands dirty on data manipulation and modelling. I often lead projects end to end as the main client point of contact.

### How did you get into the industry and how did you get to your current role?

I moved from a country town called Wagga Wagga, bringing my husband and three kids to the city in search of excitement and opportunity in the analytics space. Media was the best place to capitalise on fast-paced exposure to a lot of varying data, and within five minutes of my first interview I knew this was the perfect fit for my skill set. I joined Initiative more than two years ago now, and haven’t looked back since. The culture, expertise and calibre of clients and colleagues are what drive me to deliver cutting edge outcomes into the future.

### What has been your most inspiring moment in the industry so far?

It actually has happened quite recently. In true 2020 fashion, I was dialled into the tail end of an all staffer meeting while driving my daughter to her dance lesson. As I thought the content of the session was over, I hopped into the car thinking there was only wrap-up to go. Little did I know I was about to be announced as the recipient of Initiative’s first ever CEO award. My 12-year-old daughter got to hear my CEO speak highly of my performance in what has been a challenging year for us all, and the look on her face as she realised that it was referencing me – just wow – it still makes me smile every time I think about it.

### Most challenging task?

Hands down, data joins. It sometimes feels like solving a jigsaw blindfolded. But the satisfaction at the other end of the project is just too juicy to resist.

### What do you enjoy most about your role?

Collaborating with my colleagues. It’s often perceived that analytics attracts more of a solo mentality, but it couldn’t be further from the truth in this industry. No one is an island when working on such varied and complex data, and without each of us in CIA owning our craft, we could not deliver the quality of work we pride ourselves on.

# Jade Watson

**Client Success Manager, Xaxis Melbourne**

**What is your job title and what does it mean?**

I'm a client success manager at Xaxis. We look after the programmatic campaigns for GroupM, Australia's leading media agency group.

**What is your role and the role of your team at your agency?**

I help implement and plan programmatic campaigns – which are digital campaigns bought using technology with real-time bidding (like eBay for adverts).

**What are your main responsibilities?**

I have to ensure that my team and I meet all of the (many, many) KPIs we say we'll deliver for our advertisers.

**How did you get into the industry and how did you get to your current role?**

I fell into it after failing to get into the industry my degree was in (public relations) and a friend said I'd be great in media sales (I wasn't). I then made the change and have been agency side/programmatic for the past six years.

**What has been your most inspiring moment in the industry so far?**

Not just one moment, but I'm always impressed by how well people look after each other and how much we care about mental health.

**Most challenging task?**

I had to fly to Adelaide after three weeks in a role and present to a whole agency team after my manager was very unwell. I learned how well you can think on your feet sometimes!

**What do you enjoy most about your role?**

We have the best team, it really makes a difference – especially when we've all been having to adapt to a work from home life!

# Andrew Sarkis

## Digital Account Executive, This is Flow



### What is your job title and what does it mean?

My title is Digital Account Executive. A Digital Account Executive works closely with the Digital Account Manager to help bring the client's digital media strategy to life. This is someone who enjoys data as much as they love setting up digital campaigns.

### What is your role and the role of your team at your agency?

My role as a Digital Account Executive is to support the team in the planning, execution and management of a range of digital campaigns. Our teams work with a range of clients across the Telecommunications and Fitness & Pharmaceutical industries to deliver impactful campaigns across the entire media landscape.

### What are your main responsibilities?

*The key day-to-day responsibilities as a Digital Account Executive include:*

- Planning and implementing a range of digital campaigns across channels such as Facebook, Google, Snapchat, LinkedIn & TikTok.
- Coordinating the execution of a range of digital activities across content partners, affiliates and programmatic publishers.
- Monitoring and optimising the performance of campaigns to ensure we are meeting the clients KPIs and business objectives
- Analysing the data and providing regular performance reports and insights to our clients.

### How did you get into the industry and how did you get to your current role?

My move into media was never clearcut. While I studied physiotherapy for two years, I always found myself drawn to an advertisement. I was engaged by the fact that an ad could bring about emotion – whether it was humour, joy or sadness. It was relatable and memorable. While studying marketing and innovation, I completed three internships and then eventually moved onto my first role as a Digital Marketing Coordinator. Fast-track four years, I landed the exciting role at This Is Flow.

### What has been your most inspiring moment in the industry so far?

Being recognised as an AdNews 'Young Gun' was a key highlight in my career. It has really pushed me to always want more from my career.

### Most challenging task?

Navigating the consistently changing digital world. For example, the recent IOS changes across Facebook have impacted the way we understand attribution. In particular, certain campaigns – such as an App-driven campaign – are now delivering, quite different results. Adapting to this change, along with the many others that come along in the digital world can be a challenge. Particularly, when we strive to deliver the best results for our clients.

### What do you enjoy most about your role?

Every day is different. Whether it is the clients or the campaigns or the platforms, there are so many moving parts to the digital landscape. It can be really rewarding as you are always learning new skills and tackling better ways of doing things.

# Will Ridley

Performance Director, Atomic 212

**What is your job title and what does it mean?**

I'm a Performance Director, which means I work with digital ads across the internet.

**What is your role and the role of your team at your agency?**

My team and I publish online ads on behalf of our clients and measure the performance and impact of those ads on our clients businesses. A lot of the online ads you're familiar with seeing on various websites such as Facebook, IG and YouTube make up a specific subset of marketing called performance media. Our team looks after any performance media that our clients might want to use.

**What are your main responsibilities?**

One of my main responsibilities is hitting our clients' KPI targets. Because our ads are published online, we're able to track a lot of information about them. This means that a big part of my job is measuring and reporting on the performance of the ads we publish, and using this data to optimise them. This then flows on to making budget recommendations based on what types of ads are performing well so that we're always spending on the best performing ads and hitting targets.

**How did you get into the industry and how did you get to your current role?**

Before I was in media, I was in energy. One of the things I noticed while I was there was how well one of our competitors, Origin Energy, was doing at the time. I was so impressed with their marketing that when it came time for me to leave that role, I did some research and reached out to key people and managed to land an interview at Atomic212. Atomic was the media agency that partnered with Origin to deliver the campaign I liked so much. The rest is history as they say! I've been with Atomic for three years, starting as Executive, promoted to Manager, and now Director. Because I'm good at what I do, and clients like what I do for them, Atomic has helped progress me in my career.

**What has been your most inspiring moment in the industry so far?**

Definitely working with people who are just starting out their careers. Showing them the ropes, and seeing them develop into marketing experts themselves is a really inspiring thing to see and is definitely one of the most rewarding things you can do. If you've got the drive to succeed, you'll go far in media.

**What's been your most challenging task to date?**

Responding to and then executing a very demanding brief with lofty performance targets for a key client on my own for the first time. That was a really tough piece of work, but I'm so glad I did it because it helped me become a better marketer.

**What do you enjoy most about your role?**

Seeing a client's business grow as a direct result of the work you do is really satisfying, and because digital is really measurable it's really easy to see when you're contributing to that success! There's nothing better than presenting the excellent results of a job well done back to a client, especially when you can demonstrate your contribution to the bottom line.

# Tom Curtain

## Search & Affiliates Manager, Half Dome



### What is your job title and what does it mean?

Search & Affiliates Manager at Half Dome. I am responsible for the planning and implementation of all paid Search & Affiliates campaigns within my client set, which includes a large Australian retailer.

### What is your role and the role of your team at your agency?

I am responsible for the activation of Paid Search & Affiliates campaigns that align with the client's strategy and objectives. This involves overseeing a team that creates the campaigns in self-serve platforms such as Google and Bing, and monitoring and optimising their performance. My role also means I am the main day-to-day contact with clients for any campaigns, projects-related matters, or questions as they relate to Paid Search & Affiliates. At Half Dome, I work within a wider client team that activates other digital channels like Paid Social and Programmatic, as well as a Planning & Strategy team, where we work collaboratively to deliver the best results for clients.

### What are your main responsibilities?

- Campaign implementation to ensure our clients are visible when users land on the search result pages across Google & Bing.
- Strategic delivery and relationship management with clients and external partners (like Google) to address any upcoming and existing campaigns or tests.
- In addition to the management of my direct reports, managing their training and development to help them progress in their role and remain challenged.

### How did you get into the industry and how did you get to your current role?

I got into the industry through a bit of luck. Coming out of university, I was applying for all type of jobs within the marketing/media industry and was fortunate enough to get a job as a Search Analyst. I found my role rewarding, challenging and loved the advancements in digital technology that presented opportunities to increase my knowledge and help our clients.

### What has been your most inspiring moment in the industry so far?

Working across big brands inspires you to do great work, day in day out, and to be innovative within the marketing industry through trialling new ad formats and tech platforms. In saying that, when working on retail clients, there's a big thrill on key sale days – such as Black Friday and Boxing Day – with significant planning and optimisation on the day to ensure they're successful. This has been particularly rewarding in recent years as my responsibilities with these events has increased and the performance results have been fantastic.

### Most challenging task?

Like anything, the continued need to innovate and become creative for the next big idea can be a challenge, but is also really rewarding at the same time. At Half Dome, we pride ourselves on blowing things up and never standing still, so we are constantly on the lookout for new ideas to test and implement. This is particularly necessary within digital media, where new technology becomes available or new opportunities present themselves, meaning we need to adapt quickly and work with clients closely to keep them up to date with the latest best practice.

### What do you enjoy most about your role?

Similar to the above, while the constant need to innovate to change is a challenge, it is also the most enjoyable. Coming into work and seeing if a new strategy has worked can be a thrill. It gives me a sense of achievement that makes me want to come in the next day and go even better.

# Georgia Trevaskis

Account Coordinator, Zenith

**What is your job title and what does it mean?**

I'm an Account Coordinator, which is an entry-level role in the industry, so I get to see and learn all aspects of a media agency.

**What is your role and the role of your team at your agency?**

I work in a client team. That means I'm a middleman between clients and the media owners, helping my team plan and buy advertisements online and offline.

**What are your main responsibilities?**

To assist the team wherever needed – it's a very dynamic role! We do a lot of post-campaign reporting, which helps us understand how and why the team plans and buys campaigns.

**How did you get into the industry and how did you get to your current role?**

I had a close friend who worked in sales for a TV network and that's where I started. I moved to a media agency to work more closely with clients.

**What has been your most inspiring moment in the industry so far?**

Having the opportunity to work on Tik Tok with a client I love and am passionate about. Also, all the teams at Zenith are incredibly inspiring because they are all so good at what they do and have fun while doing it. It's living the dream.

**Most challenging task?**

Transitioning to working from home when the Covid-19 pandemic began, after only three months at the agency. I think most people found this difficult, but I especially learn better face-to-face.

**What do you enjoy most about your role?**

Learning so many aspects of the industry. As an entry-level role, it's really great to be across such a broad range of tasks so I can see what I enjoy the most, like TV ad buying.