

## Mid-Year Market Update: Sales & Marketing - 2025

As we hit the halfway mark of 2025, it's clear the sales and marketing landscape is anything but static. If you were expecting a straightforward year-on-year comparison, think again. Hiring activity in this sector continues to follow a more rhythmic, seasonal pattern with peak periods tied to strategic calendar moments: January, April, and September remain the key start dates that shape hiring behaviour.

What's emerging this year is a deeper shift, not just in demand volumes, but in the type of talent brands are seeking, and what candidates are demanding in return.

### Where demand is heating up

Over the past 12 to 18 months, we've seen a steady uptick in demand for talent within e-commerce channels, driven by a clear priority for brands to strengthen their online presence. This isn't just a pandemic hangover, it's now a strategic imperative. As a result, digital commerce roles continue to gain traction, although not necessarily in title, more in function and influence.

Simultaneously, there's been a notable increase in hiring at NAM (National Account Manager) and SNAM (Senior National Account Manager) level within the Top 4 grocery accounts, suggesting that while new channels are on the rise, the old guard isn't going anywhere just yet.

### The rise of the commercial all-rounder

There's a marked preference for commercial all-rounders over "pure sellers." Today's successful FMCG sales professional isn't just closing deals, they're influencing marketing, informing NPD, and shaping strategy.

Brands are seeking individuals who marry commercial acumen with data fluency, especially those confident using tools like Kantar to tell a compelling story back to the retailer. It's no longer enough to know your product; you need to know your numbers and know how to communicate them.

### Office expectations

Hybrid working remains at the forefront. The standard expectation is three days a week in the office, with a mix of set and flexible days. There's also flexibility within the day, core hours are typically 10am-4pm, giving teams breathing room to design their workday.

Interestingly, there's a definite nudge toward greater in-office presence, especially for roles tied to team collaboration, digital strategy, and client-facing responsibilities.



## Salary expectations

On the compensation front, base salaries have seen a modest lift, around £5K higher than three years ago, but it's the perks and long-term incentives that are increasingly sealing the deal.

- Private medical insurance is moving from “nice to have” to “must-have”.
- EMI share schemes are becoming standard for senior hires in smaller, high-growth organisations, offering a real sense of ownership and long-term value.

Clients looking to secure top talent are being advised to get creative and competitive, not just with salary, but with the full value proposition.

## Experience still wins... but agility matters

While potential and agility are certainly on the radar, when it comes to final-stage decisions, it's still category experience that wins the day. Candidates with deep knowledge of specific channels or sectors are frequently edging out those with broader but less targeted backgrounds.

This emphasis on “been there, done that” experience is also leading to increased counteroffers and multiple-offer scenarios, making the closing phase more competitive than ever. Simply put: if you like someone, move fast, and bring your A-game.

## Candidates in the driving seat

Today's candidates are savvier and more selective. They're asking sharper questions, comparing cultures, and evaluating leadership as much as they are compensation. We're seeing a clear trend: clients need to sell the opportunity as much as candidates sell themselves.

And here's the kicker, cultural fit and flexibility are often the deciding factors. Candidates are not just looking at the job, they're looking at the bigger picture: values, vision, and how they'll be treated when the novelty of the first 90 days wears off.

## Be proactive, be persuasive, be prepared

If 2024 was the year of cautious optimism, 2025 is shaping up to be the year of strategic selectivity. Clients are being more deliberate about who they hire, but so too are candidates about where they go.

**For hiring managers:** think beyond the job spec. What makes your brand the place to grow?

**For candidates:** polish your story. Experience matters, but how you present it is what seals the deal.

At Henderson Scott, we're at the heart of these conversations, working closely with both businesses and candidates to navigate the evolving sales and marketing terrain. We're plugged into the market in real time, turning first-hand insight into forward-thinking strategies that keep our clients ahead of the curve.

Want deeper insight into where the market's heading and how you can stay ahead? We're here to share what we know, **[get in touch](#)** and we can help you act on it.

