

Manpower Update Report

Media and Communications Industry

2026



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Media and Communications Training Board (MCTB) would like to express its gratitude to the focus group members for their valuable time and insights regarding the manpower landscape in the Media and Communications industry. The perspectives shared by focus group members, alongside the insights from MCTB members and key recruitment platforms, have been instrumental in shaping the findings presented in this report.

Contents

Introduction	1
Background	
Objectives	
Methodology	3
Overview	
Focus Group Meeting	
Desk Research	
Data Analysis	
Limitations	
Findings	4
Latest Trend and Development of the Media and Communications Industry	
Manpower Demand	
Training Needs	
Recruitment Challenges and Potential Suggestions	
Recommendations	22
Strengthen Industry-relevant and Practical Training	
Develop Interdisciplinary and Hybrid Capabilities	
Promote Responsible Use of AI	
Integrate ESG into Industry Training	
Strengthen Cross-cultural and Chinese Mainland Market Competencies	
Facilitate Continuous Learning and Upskilling	
Support Flexible Workforce and Career Development	
Foster Collaboration between Stakeholders	
Support Talent Attraction and Industry Development	

Introduction

Background

The Media and Communications Training Board (MCTB) of the Vocational Training Council (VTC) is responsible for determining manpower demand of the industry, assessing whether the manpower supply matches manpower

demand, and recommending the development of vocational and professional education and training (VPET) to meet the assessed training needs.

To better capture workforce dynamics, MCTB conducts a comprehensive

quantitative manpower survey every four years, complemented by two manpower updates focused on qualitative insights. This manpower update follows the manpower survey that was completed in 2023.

This manpower update report consists of:

(a) insights from a focus group of industry experts covering recent industry developments, workforce demand, recruitment difficulties, training needs, and recommended measures to address the challenges the industry faces; and

(b) desk research and analysis of recruitment information obtained from major recruitment platforms.

Objectives

The objectives of the manpower update are:

- (i) to examine the latest trends and developments of the industries;
- (ii) to explore the job market situation and recruitment challenges;
- (iii) to identify the training needs; and
- (iv) to recommend measures to meet the training needs and ease the manpower shortage problem.

Methodology

Overview

This manpower update report aims to provide the latest development of the media and communications industry through views collected from a focus group meeting, supplemented by desk research on job advertisements from major recruitment platforms.

Focus Group Meeting

The focus group members are representatives from the following sectors of the media and communications industry:

Journalism Sector

1. Newspaper
2. Magazine
3. News and Information department in radio / television (TV) stations

Digital / new media Sector

4. Digital / new media

Advertising, PR and Marketing Communications Sector

5. Public relation (PR) service suppliers
6. Advertising companies, agencies and other advertising services

7. Corporate communications / PR / advertising / marketing department in companies / institutions

Media Production Sector

8. Production Companies

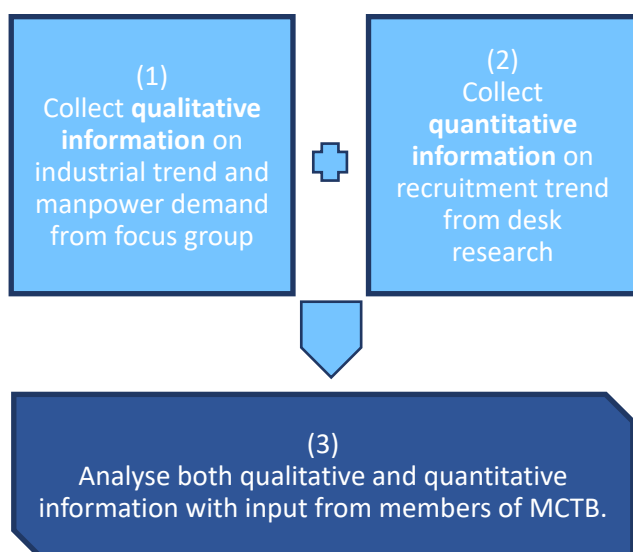
Three focus group meetings were conducted on 11, 13 and 26 February 2026 and the topics discussed were supported by the MCTB. The discussions at the focus group meetings were recorded and transcribed to facilitate analysis.

Desk Research

An information system was developed to capture relevant recruitment data from major online recruitment portals, covering the period between Quarter 1 and Quarter 4 of 2025. Collected information was mapped against the list of companies related to the media and communications industry under the Hong Kong Standard Industrial Classification devised by the Census and Statistics Department. After mapping and removal of duplicated records, a total of 19,581 recruitment records were collected during the research period and served as indicative information of the job market trend.

Data Analysis

The analysis consists of the following three steps:



Limitations

As this is not a full manpower survey, the findings and recommendations of the focus group meetings are more qualitative in nature and the report focuses mainly on the manpower trends. The information of job advertisements was collected from major recruitment portals and the Labour Department. Other channels, such as recruitment through human resources vendors and referrals, were not covered. Since the data does not reference to any historical data, this can only serve as supplementary information to the findings of the focus group meeting.

Findings

Latest Trend and Development of the Media and Communications Industry

Media Landscape Transformation

The media and communications industry has undergone significant transformation since the post-pandemic recovery period, with the shift towards digital ecosystems becoming more pronounced and structurally embedded across all sectors. While the transition to digital platforms was already evident in previous years, the industry has moved beyond a broad “digital-first” approach towards a **content-driven, platform-specific ecosystem**,

where increasing fragmentation of media touchpoints requires tailored strategies for different platforms and audience behaviours. The concept of “one creative fits all channels” has largely diminished, giving way to highly customised content strategies designed for individual platforms and audience behaviours.

Widespread Adoption of AI in Industry Workflows

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as one of the most significant drivers of change in the industry, moving rapidly from experimentation to widespread adoption across daily workflows.

AI tools are now commonly used in:

- content creation and development
- data analysis and reporting
- campaign optimisation
- workflow automation

More advanced applications, such as AI-driven agents and automated processes, are beginning to transform how organisations manage routine tasks and internal operations.

This shift has contributed to a redefinition of job roles, with routine and execution-based tasks increasingly supported or replaced by AI. At the same time, the importance of human judgement, creativity and strategic thinking remains critical, particularly in areas such as storytelling, stakeholder engagement and decision-making.

Integration of Content, Experience and Commerce

Another major development is the increasing integration of content, experiential engagement and commercial activities.

Organisations are placing greater emphasis on delivering interactive and measurable engagement, combining both online and offline channels. The demand for immersive and interactive engagement formats has increased following the resumption of physical activities, with companies seeking to strengthen direct connection with audiences.

At the same time, communication activities are more closely linked to business activities such as customer acquisition, engagement and sales conversion. Digital platforms are increasingly functioning as both content distribution channels and transactional spaces, blurring the boundaries between marketing and commerce.

Data-driven and Performance-oriented Communication

Communication strategies are becoming more data-driven and performance-oriented, with increasing expectations for measurable outcomes.

Data analytics is widely used to:

- understand audience behaviour
- optimise campaign performance
- evaluate return on investment

This has led to a shift from exposure-based metrics to outcome-based evaluation, where communication activities are assessed based on engagement, conversion and business impact.

As a result, marketing, branding and sales functions are becoming more closely integrated, requiring a more analytical and results-focused approach to communication.

Expansion of Experiential and Event-driven Engagement

There has been a notable increase in demand for experiential and event-based marketing, particularly following the resumption of physical activities.

Organisations are allocating more resources towards:

- large-scale events and sponsorship activities
- experiential campaigns that enable direct interaction with audiences
- on-ground activation such as sampling and pop-up experiences

This development is partly driven by:

- the need to reconnect with consumers through physical engagement
- the emphasis on measurable outcomes such as foot traffic, participation and sales conversion
- broader initiatives promoting a vibrant event economy

Event-led activities are increasingly integrated with digital strategies, forming part of a broader omnichannel communication approach. Campaigns are no longer limited to standalone advertising but combine online promotion, physical experience, and post-event content amplification.

As a result, the role of events has evolved from a supporting marketing function to a core component of brand engagement and customer acquisition strategies.

Chinese Mainland Integration and Cross-border Influence

The development of the Greater Bay Area (GBA) and the increasing integration with Chinese Mainland markets continue to reshape industry practices.

There is a growing emphasis on:

- engaging Chinese Mainland audiences through relevant platforms and content formats
- supporting Chinese Mainland enterprises in expanding internationally
- addressing the needs of new Hong Kong residents with Chinese Mainland backgrounds

Chinese Mainland digital platforms, such as Xiaohongshu and WeChat, play an increasingly significant role in communication strategies, introducing different content formats and engagement models.

These developments have increased the need for cross-cultural understanding, platform knowledge and market-specific strategies, particularly in brand marketing, PR and tourism-related sectors.

ESG as an Industry Requirement

Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) considerations are becoming a baseline requirement, particularly in corporate communications, branding and operational execution.

They are increasingly reflected in:

- tender and project requirements
- stakeholder communication and brand positioning
- campaign design and event planning

For example, organisations may be required to adopt sustainable practices in event execution, demonstrate responsible sourcing, or align communication with broader ESG objectives.

While ESG is not yet a primary driver of transformation compared with technological developments, it is becoming a baseline requirement influencing both operational practices and communication strategies.

Core Manpower Themes Identified from Focus Groups

Across different sectors represented in the focus groups, several consistent manpower-related themes are

observed:

AI as a Baseline Competency

The ability to use AI tools is increasingly regarded as a basic expectation across roles.

Employees are expected to:

- apply AI tools to improve productivity
- integrate AI into daily workflows
- ensure outputs are accurate and relevant

At the same time, human oversight remains essential in areas such as content quality, ethical considerations and strategic decision-making.

Transformation of Digital and Content Skill Requirements

Demand for digital skills continues to evolve, with greater emphasis on content-driven capability.

Practitioners are expected to:

- create and adapt content across multiple formats and platforms
- support short-form and real-time communication
- respond to changing platform dynamics

Short-form video, social media content, and real-time engagement have become core elements of communication strategies, requiring more agile and multidisciplinary capabilities.

Importance of Soft Skills

Employers consistently identified **soft skills as the most critical competency gap** among new entrants.

Key areas of concern include:

- problem-solving and critical thinking
- communication and collaboration
- Proactiveness and sense of ownership

It was noted that while technical tasks can increasingly be supported by AI, the ability to assess situations, make decisions and collaborate effectively remains essential and cannot be easily substituted.

Changing Profile of Junior Talent

Focus group participants noted an evolving profile of entry-level talent. Employers reported challenges including:

- high turnover among junior staff
- resilience and adaptability to be strengthened
- tendency to rely on guidance rather than independent thinking

While younger employees often demonstrate familiarity with digital tools and platforms, there is a need to further strengthen workplace readiness and applied capability.

Manpower Demand

Desk Research

A total of 19,581 job advertisements were collected between January and December 2025 on major recruitment portals. The distribution of job advertisements indicates that a significant proportion (approximately 76%) originates from corporate communications, marketing and related functions, with smaller shares contributed by advertising agencies, PR services, media organisations and digital platforms. This distribution should be taken into consideration when interpreting the findings, as it may influence the prominence of certain job roles and skill requirements. (See Appendix for detailed distribution of job advertisements by sector)

The top five hot jobs on demand are listed in Table 1.

Table 1 Hot Jobs on Demand

Top 5 Jobs (2025)	Top 5 Jobs (2022)
1. Marketing Executive	1. Marketing Executive
2. Marketing Manager	2. Marketing Officer
3. Marketing Officer, Marketing Specialist	3. Marketing Manager
4. Designer	4. Designer
5. Marketing Assistant	5. Assistant Marketing Manager
50.6% of all job advertisements	51.0% of all job advertisements

Table 2 presents the top skills in demand in 2025 based on an analysis of job advertisements, reflecting the evolving manpower requirements of the media and communications industry. The findings indicate that content production and multi-platform content creation emerge as the most dominant capability, appearing in 78.8% of job postings, followed by social media and platform execution (56.6%) and data and analytics capability (56.0%). This pattern is consistent with the shifting manpower demand towards roles that require both creative execution and data-driven decision-making, as organisations increasingly operate in platform-centric and performance-oriented environments.

In addition, the growing presence of AI and automation capability (36.4%) and structured customer engagement skills (37.1%) highlights the increasing demand for talent who can support technology-enabled workflows and manage integrated customer experiences across channels. These findings reinforce the earlier observation that employers are seeking hybrid talent capable of operating across marketing, data and technology functions.

Table 2 Hot Skills on Demand

	Hot Skills (2025)	% of jobs	Key Interpretation	Change vs 2022
1.	Content Production & Multi-platform Content	78.8%	Content creation has become a core requirement across most roles, particularly short-form and multi-platform content production.	NEW dominant skill (previously less emphasised)
2.	Social Media & Platform Execution	56.6%	Platform-native content execution and management are baseline requirements across marketing and communication roles.	Stable (remains highly demanded)
3.	Data & Analytics Capability	56.0%	Data-driven decision-making, including tracking, reporting and campaign optimisation, is embedded across a majority of roles.	Increased importance
4.	Structured Customer Engagement	37.1%	Structured engagement capabilities, such as customer journey management and personalisation, are required in a growing proportion of roles.	Shift from broad engagement to structured capability

	Hot Skills (2025)	% of jobs	Key Interpretation	Change vs 2022
5.	AI & Automation	36.4%	The use of AI tools and automation is increasingly integrated into workflows, reflecting industry-wide adoption.	NEW emerging priority

Note: Percentages are derived from keyword-based analysis of job advertisements. The comparison with 2022 reflects changes in skill emphasis, with a shift from general descriptors to more structured and technical capabilities.

Focus group

The focus group discussions revealed that manpower demand in the media and communications industry is becoming increasingly **diversified, hybridised, and context-driven**, reflecting the rapidly evolving media landscape and business expectations described in the previous section.

While a number of core competencies are broadly required across the industry, the demand for talent varies by sector and role, with several **strong and emerging trends** shaping manpower needs.

Strong Themes in Manpower Demand

Demand for Hybrid and Cross-disciplinary Talent

A key trend identified across multiple sectors is the growing demand for **hybrid talent with cross-functional capabilities**, particularly those who can operate across marketing, data and business functions.

Employers are increasingly seeking individuals who can:

- integrate marketing, content creation and data analysis
- understand both business objectives and user behaviour
- translate business needs into actionable digital or technological solutions

In particular, there is demand for

individuals who can **operate across marketing, data and business functions to support end-to-end communication strategies**, similar to a business analyst role, especially in areas involving AI deployment and data-driven initiatives.

This reflects a shift away from highly specialised roles towards **multi-skilled professionals capable of operating across the entire communication value chain**.

Demand for Platform-specific Content and Social Media Expertise

Employers highlighted the growing need for talent with **deep understanding of platform-specific ecosystems**, as media consumption becomes increasingly fragmented.

Rather than general digital marketing capabilities, organisations now require individuals who:

- understand the algorithms and user behaviour of specific platforms (e.g. Instagram, TikTok, Xiaohongshu)
- can tailor content formats and messaging accordingly
- are capable of producing high-frequency, short-form content

This demand is particularly strong in:

- brand marketing teams
- digital agencies
- PR and social media firms

The ability to **translate brand messaging into platform-native content** has become a key

differentiator in talent demand.

Demand for Experiential and Event-driven Marketing

The growing importance of experiential marketing and event-driven engagement have led to increased demand for talent in event planning, activation and integrated campaign delivery.

Employers are seeking professionals who can:

- manage end-to-end event execution
- design and deliver experiential campaigns
- integrate physical and digital engagement channels
- coordinate stakeholders, vendors and partners, requiring strong communication and coordination skills
- measure engagement and business outcomes

In PR and event agencies, roles have expanded beyond traditional event management to combine:

- event execution
- content creation and amplification
- influencer engagement

This reflects a broader shift towards **integrated campaign delivery and measurable audience engagement**, rather than standalone event activities.

However, several challenges were identified:

- shortage of talent with both **operational and strategic capabilities**
- increasing reliance on **freelance and project-based workforce** due to fluctuating demand
- added complexity arising from **ESG requirements in event planning and execution**

These challenges may affect project quality, operational efficiency and the scalability of experiential marketing initiatives.

Demand for Chinese Mainland Market and Cross-border Capabilities

Across several sectors, there is a notable demand for talent capable of navigating Chinese **Mainland markets and platforms**, driven by the increasing integration with the Greater Bay Area.

Employers are seeking individuals who:

- understand Chinese Mainland social media platforms and content practices
- can engage Chinese Mainland audiences effectively
- possess cross-cultural awareness and sensitivity

At the same time, there is a demand for professionals who can support:

- Chinese Mainland enterprises expanding internationally
- Hong Kong brands targeting Chinese Mainland visitors and new residents

This has created a need for talent with both **local and cross-border perspectives**, especially in marketing and PR roles.

Emerging Themes in Manpower Demand

Emergence of AI-enabled Roles and Workflow Specialists

With the increasing adoption of AI, new manpower requirements are emerging around **AI-enabled workflows and implementation**.

Some organisations have begun to require talent who can:

- design and implement AI-driven processes (e.g. AI agents)
- manage and structure data for AI applications
- identify and develop use cases for automation

These roles focus on designing and implementing AI-enabled workflows and automation processes within organisations. They are still evolving, with no standardised job titles.

While still relatively nascent, this trend suggests a future demand for **AI-savvy professionals beyond basic tool usage**, particularly in larger organisations and more advanced teams.

Rise of End-to-end Content Production Roles

Beyond platform-specific content knowledge, some roles are evolving into consolidated end-to-end production functions, particularly in social media and short-form content creation.

It was identified that roles in which a single individual is responsible for:

- ideation and scripting
- video shooting and editing
- content publishing and optimisation

These roles are especially common in:

- social media teams
- influencer marketing
- IP/content-driven campaigns

This reflects the increasing need for **agility and speed in content production**, driven by platform algorithms and audience expectations.

Increase in Freelance and Flexible Talent

There is also increasing reliance on freelance and project-based talent to support flexible and project-driven work requirements, as discussed further in the Recruitment Challenges section.

Training Needs

The focus group discussions indicate that training needs in the media and communications industry are evolving rapidly, driven by technological advancement, changing business expectations, and increasing integration of new operational requirements such as ESG.

There is a clear shift from function-specific skills towards **integrated capability development**, combining technology, data, and human competencies. The key training priorities are summarised below.

AI Application, Automation and Responsible Usage

The widespread adoption of artificial intelligence has led to a strong demand for training in **practical AI application** across all job functions.

Practitioners are expected to:

- incorporate AI tools into daily work processes
- enhance productivity through automation of routine tasks
- apply AI in content creation, data analysis and campaign optimisation

Beyond basic usage, there is an increasing need for training in:

- prompt design and workflow integration
- development of AI-enabled processes and automation systems
- evaluation and validation of AI-generated outputs

Training should also address **ethical and responsible use**, including data privacy, accuracy and compliance, ensuring AI is used to support, rather than replace, professional judgement.

Data and Performance-driven Competencies

With increasing emphasis on measurable outcomes, there is a growing need for **data literacy across roles**.

Training should focus on:

- interpreting and analysing campaign and audience data
- applying insights to decision-making and optimisation
- using analytics tools and dashboards

There is also a need to strengthen the ability to translate data into **actionable business insights**.

Platform-specific Marketing and Content Capabilities

With the increasing fragmentation of media platforms, training should focus on **platform-specific knowledge and execution skills**, rather than general digital familiarity.

Practitioners are expected to:

- understand the mechanics and algorithms of different platforms
- develop content tailored to platform-specific user behaviour
- manage high-frequency content production across formats (e.g. short-form video, social posts)

Training areas include:

- social media content strategy and planning
- short-form video production and editing
- influencer and community management
- integration of content with e-commerce and customer engagement

This reflects the industry shift towards **content-led, platform-driven communication strategies**.

ESG Application and Communication

With ESG becoming an increasingly important requirement across industries, there is a growing need for training in **the practical application of ESG in media and communications work**.

Focus group discussions indicate that ESG is increasingly integrated into:

- corporate communications and branding
- campaign planning and messaging
- campaign design and operational execution

- stakeholder engagement and partnerships

Training should therefore focus on the following areas:

Practical ESG Implementation

Practitioners need to understand how ESG considerations apply to operational work, including:

- incorporating sustainability into events and campaigns
- adopting environmentally and socially responsible practices
- meeting ESG-related requirements in tenders and projects

ESG Communication and Content Development

Communication professionals are increasingly required to:

- translate ESG initiatives into clear and credible narratives
- communicate sustainability efforts effectively to stakeholders
- avoid misleading or superficial ESG claims

Training should include **case-based learning and content development exercises** to strengthen credibility and accuracy in ESG communication.

Stakeholder Engagement and Collaboration

ESG-related work often involves collaboration with NGOs, community partners and regulatory stakeholders.

Practitioners need training in, requiring strong communication and coordination skills.

Awareness of ESG Standards and Accountability

While deep technical expertise may not be required at entry level, practitioners should have:

- a basic understanding of ESG principles and expectations
- awareness of accountability and risk in communication
- understanding of how ESG relates to organisational reputation

This ensures ESG is integrated into **professional practice rather than treated as a standalone requirement.**

Experiential and Event-related Competencies

Training programmes should include components relevant to **event and experiential marketing**, particularly in:

- event planning and project management
- integration of events with digital and content strategies
- stakeholder and vendor coordination
- capture and amplification of event content through social media

In addition, training should cover **practical ESG applications in event execution**, including sustainable materials, responsible sourcing and

compliance with client requirements.

Integrated and Cross-disciplinary Skill Development

Given the increasing demand for hybrid talent, training programmes should support **cross-functional collaboration across marketing, data and technology domains.**

Practitioners should be equipped to:

- understand end-to-end campaign workflows
- collaborate effectively across different functions (e.g. marketing, IT, data teams)
- integrate technology solutions into communication strategies

Particular emphasis should be placed on developing **“bridge capabilities”**, whereby individuals can translate between business needs and technical solutions, creative ideas and execution feasibility.

Language and Cross-cultural Competencies

With increasing cross-border collaboration and integration with Chinese Mainland markets, there is a growing need for:

- bilingual or trilingual communication (English, Cantonese and Putonghua)
- cross-cultural understanding and sensitivity

- adaptation of messaging for different cultural contexts

Training should also address the ability to:

- communicate effectively with diverse audiences
- interpret cultural nuances in content and campaigns

This is critical for supporting regional integration and global communication strategies.

Professional and Foundational Competencies

Emphasis was also placed on the importance of strengthening **core professional skills**, particularly for new entrants.

Training should develop:

- problem-solving and critical thinking
- communication and interpersonal skills
- ability to work collaboratively across functions

In addition, practitioners should be equipped with:

- research and information processing skills
- adaptability and continuous learning capability

Training delivery should adopt **flexible and modular formats**, enabling professionals to upgrade skills alongside work commitments.

Recruitment Challenges and Potential Suggestions

Junior Talent Instability and High Turnover

One of the key challenges faced by employers is the **frequent job changes and short tenure among junior staff**. This is particularly evident in agency environments, where work intensity and project cycles are demanding.

Frequent turnover may affect team continuity and increase onboarding and supervision needs. To address this issue, focus group participants suggested the need to enhance **employee engagement and retention strategies**, including providing clearer career pathways, structured mentorship programmes, and more flexible working arrangements that align with the expectations of younger talent.

Skills Mismatch: AI Usage versus Critical Thinking

Another significant challenge lies in the **skills mismatch between apparent capability and actual workplace readiness**, particularly in the context of AI adoption.

While many candidates are able to utilise AI tools to generate outputs such as written content or visual materials, employers observed that some lack the underlying **critical thinking and independent judgement when evaluating AI-generated outputs**.

This mismatch may affect productivity and quality of work, especially in roles requiring independent thinking, effective stakeholder communication, and real-time decision-making.

Employers suggested that recruitment and training processes should place greater emphasis on **assessing reasoning ability and decision-making capability**, as well as training practitioners to use AI as a support tool rather than a substitute for judgement.

Shortage of Hybrid and Cross-disciplinary Talent

The industry is experiencing a shortage of talent with **integrated skill sets that combine marketing, data, technology and business understanding**.

As communication strategies become increasingly data-driven and technology-enabled, employers require individuals who can bridge the gap between business objectives and technical implementation. However, such hybrid talent remains limited in the local market.

The absence of these capabilities may slow down digital transformation, create inefficiencies between teams, and limit the organisation's ability to leverage data and AI effectively in decision-making.

To address this gap, there is a need to develop **interdisciplinary training pathways** and encourage early exposure to cross-functional roles, enabling practitioners to acquire both technical and business-oriented competencies.

Platform-specific Skills Gap

Despite general familiarity with digital tools, employers highlighted a gap in **deep, platform-specific execution capabilities**, particularly in relation to social media content and short-form formats.

Organisations require talent who understands the unique characteristics of each platform, including user behaviour, content formats, and algorithm-driven engagement mechanisms. However, it was observed that some practitioners lack the depth of knowledge required to develop effective platform-specific strategies.

Training providers are therefore encouraged to place greater emphasis on **practical, platform-based learning**, supported by real-case applications and collaboration with industry partners.

Chinese Mainland Market and Cross-border Capability Gap

The growing importance of the Chinese Mainland market has created demand for talent with **cross-border capabilities**, including knowledge of Chinese Mainland platforms, audience behaviour, and cultural context.

While some organisations have access to talent with Chinese Mainland background, challenges remain in areas such as language proficiency, localisation of content, and understanding of local sensitivities. Conversely, local practitioners may lack exposure to Chinese Mainland digital ecosystems and communication practices.

Focus groups suggested strengthening **training in cross-cultural awareness, language proficiency, and Chinese Mainland platform knowledge**, as well as promoting exchange and collaboration opportunities within the GBA.

Reliance on Freelance and Flexible Workforce

The focus groups also observed an increasing reliance on **freelance and project-based workers**, particularly in creative, content production, and event-related functions.

This shift is driven by both employer demand for flexibility and cost control, as well as employee preference for autonomy and non-traditional career paths. While freelance arrangements can provide agility and access to specialised skills, they also present challenges in terms of team integration, knowledge retention, and consistency in work quality.

To address these issues, organisations may explore **hybrid workforce models** - building stable networks of trusted freelance collaborators, and providing opportunities for skill development and integration where appropriate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Addressing the evolving manpower challenges in the media and communications industry requires a **coordinated approach among the education system, employers, employees and the Government**. As the industry continues to evolve with AI adoption, platform transformation, cross-border integration and ESG requirements, it is important to align training and development with emerging needs.

Strengthen Industry-relevant and Practical Training

Training institutions should enhance the **industry's relevance of programmes**, focusing on practical application and real-world use cases.

Training should cover:

- application of AI tools in content creation, data analysis and workflow automation
- data analytics and performance measurement skills
- platform-specific marketing knowledge and content production
- practical ESG application in communication and campaign execution

Greater emphasis should also be placed on **project-based learning and internship** to improve workplace readiness.

Develop Interdisciplinary and Hybrid Capabilities

Given the demand for talent who can operate across marketing, data and technology, training should support **cross-functional capability development**.

Students and practitioners should be equipped to:

- understand end-to-end campaign processes
- apply digital tools to business problems
- interpret data and translate insights into strategies

Promote Responsible Use of AI

With the increasing use of AI and digital tools, there is a need to incorporate guidance on **responsible and appropriate use of AI**, in particular:

- data privacy and confidentiality
- ethical considerations in content and communication

- accuracy and accountability in the use of AI-generated outputs

Integrate ESG into Industry Training

ESG considerations are becoming increasingly incorporated into communication strategies, corporate positioning and operational practices.

Training institutions and employers should:

- enhance understanding of ESG principles and expectations
- promote practical application of ESG in campaigns and events
- strengthen capability in communicating ESG-related messages effectively

Strengthen Cross-cultural and Chinese Mainland Market Competencies

With growing integration with Chinese Mainland and international markets, there is a growing need for:

- understanding of Chinese Mainland platforms and audience behaviour
- language proficiency and communication skills
- cross-cultural awareness and sensitivity

Collaboration with enterprises in the Greater Bay Area can enhance exposure and practical understanding.

Facilitate Continuous Learning and Upskilling

The fast pace of technological advancement requires practitioners to continually update their knowledge and skills.

Employers and training providers should:

- offer flexible and modular training programmes
- support short courses and workshops for in-service practitioners
- encourage self-directed learning

Training opportunities should be designed to allow practitioners to upgrade skills alongside work commitments.

Support Flexible Workforce and Career Development

The rise of freelance and flexible work arrangements requires a balanced approach to workforce development.

Employers should:

- adopt flexible workforce strategies where appropriate
- provide clear career development pathways

- ensure knowledge transfer and team integration

Training institutions can also support freelancers by offering programmes that enhance **technical, business and self-management skills**.

Foster Collaboration between Stakeholders

Addressing manpower challenges requires closer collaboration among:

- training institutions
- employers
- industry bodies
- Government

Joint efforts can include:

- co-developed training programmes
- industry sharing sessions and workshops
- expanded internship and placement opportunities

Such collaboration will help ensure that training provision remains aligned with industry developments.

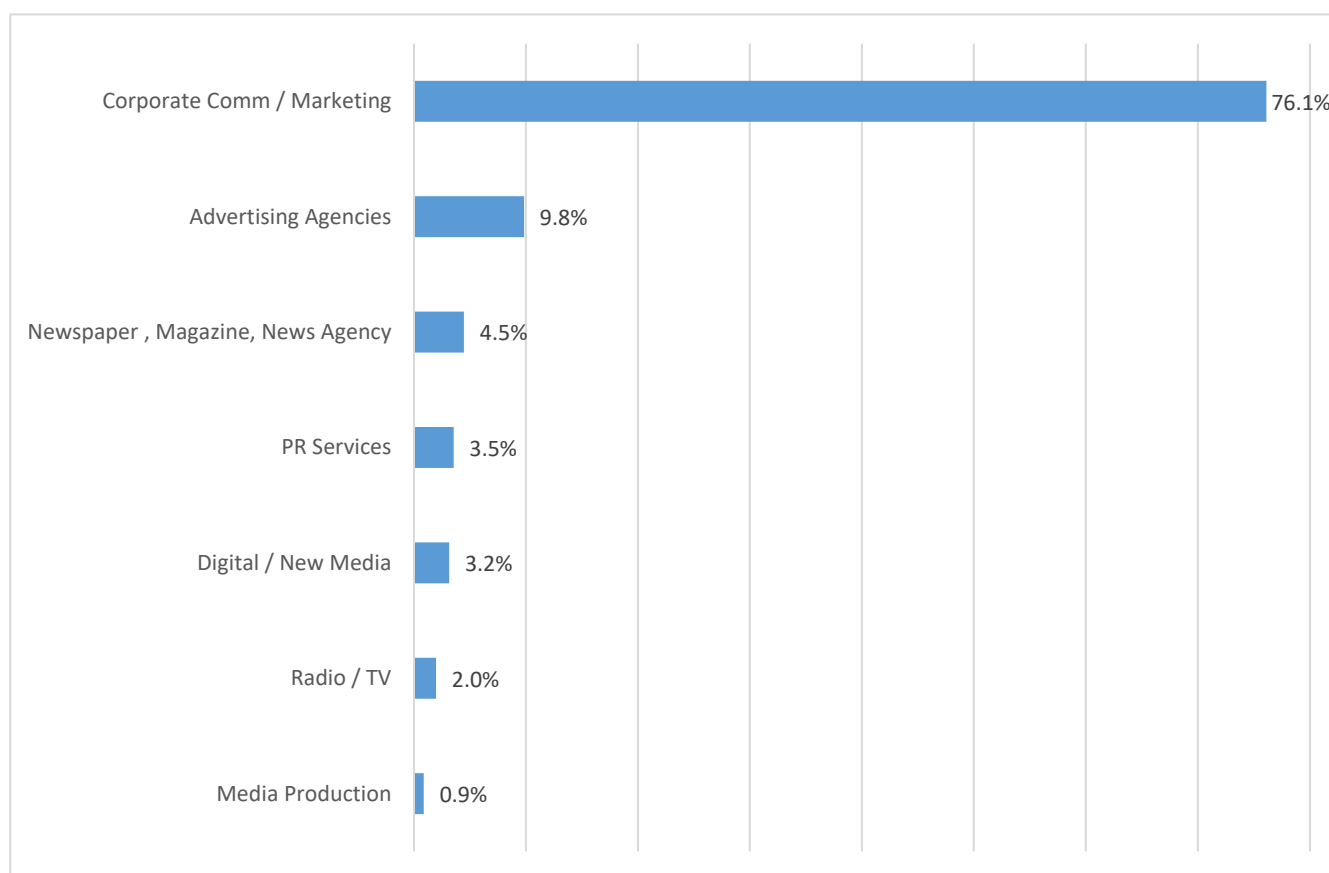
Support Talent Attraction and Industry Development

To enhance the attractiveness of the industry and ensure a sustainable talent pipeline, it is important to:

- promote a realistic understanding of career opportunities
- highlight pathways for progression and skill development
- support initiatives that encourage young people to join the industry

The Government can play a role by providing support for training, facilitating collaboration, and promoting long-term manpower development.

Appendix : Distribution of Job Advertisements by Sector (2025)



Note: The majority of job advertisements are concentrated in corporate communications and marketing functions, which should be considered when interpreting the overall findings.