Full-Time Marketing Talent vs. Boutique Agency

2026 North American salary benchmarks and planning assumptions

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> This resource is a planning aid. It is not an employment offer, tax opinion, legal opinion, or guarantee of compensation or savings. The U.S. figures are national starting-compensation benchmarks in USD. The Canadian figures are Canada-wide wage benchmarks in CAD, annualized from hourly data. Employers hiring in a specific U.S. city, Canadian province, or Canadian city should localize the numbers before making a decision.

The short answer

A full-time marketing hire costs more than base salary alone. The role, geography, experience, benefits plan, recruiting process, payroll taxes, equipment, bonuses, and ramp-up all matter. The comparison tool now lets visitors switch between U.S. and Canada rather than presenting one currency as if it represented all of North America. For quick planning, the tool uses each published mid-point as the average and displays a transparent ±5% band around it. This band is a planning convention, not a statistical confidence interval.

United States (USD)

Role used in the comparison tool	Benchmark mapping	Low	Mid	High
Marketing Manager	Robert Half Marketing Manager	$90,250	$108,000	$127,500
Sr. Demand Generation Manager	Robert Half Demand Generation Manager	$89,000	$105,250	$126,250
Sr. Paid Media Specialist	Robert Half Paid Search Specialist	$63,000	$75,000	$85,000
Sr. Paid Media Strategist / Team Lead	Robert Half Digital Strategist	$93,000	$109,500	$129,000

Canada (CAD)

Role used in the comparison tool	Official benchmark mapping	Low	Median	High
Marketing Manager	Job Bank NOC 10022: Advertising, marketing and public relations managers	CA$72,010	CA$115,003	CA$186,659
Sr. Demand Generation Manager	Job Bank NOC 11202: Professional occupations in advertising, marketing and public relations; closest official proxy	CA$42,640	CA$74,006	CA$119,475
Sr. Paid Media Specialist	Job Bank NOC 11202; closest official proxy for digital marketing and media coordination	CA$42,640	CA$74,006	CA$119,475
Sr. Paid Media Strategist / Team Lead	Job Bank NOC 11202; closest official proxy for digital marketing consulting and campaign strategy	CA$42,640	CA$74,006	CA$119,475

Robert Half describes its U.S. figures as national starting-compensation levels. The Government of Canada Job Bank reports Canada-wide hourly low, median, and high wages using a 2023–2024 reference period; the calculator annualizes those hourly figures at 2,080 hours. The Canadian professional-occupation data is a proxy because public labor statistics do not publish a separate national category for every modern paid-media title.[1] [7]

Average planning estimate and ±5% band

For each role, the calculator treats the published mid-point as the planning average. It then calculates a simple band as average × 0.95 through average × 1.05. This makes the page useful for early budgeting while keeping the underlying source range visible.

Role	U.S. average	U.S. planning band	Canada average	Canada planning band
Marketing Manager	$108,000	$102,600–113,400	CA$115,003	CA$109,253–CA$120,753
Sr. Demand Generation Manager	$105,250	$99,988–110,513	CA$74,006	CA$70,306–CA$77,706
Sr. Paid Media Specialist	$75,000	$71,250–78,750	CA$74,006	CA$70,306–CA$77,706
Sr. Paid Media Strategist / Team Lead	$109,500	$104,025–114,975	CA$74,006	CA$70,306–CA$77,706

Itemized first-year employer cost

The calculator now shows a numeric planning model rather than a generic “varies” label. Each total starts with the selected salary midpoint, then adds the line items below. The result is a budgeting estimate, not a payroll quote, tax opinion, or guarantee. The ±5% band is a simple planning range applied to the calculated subtotal.

United States itemization

For the U.S., statutory and benefit percentages use the BLS March 2026 private-industry median cost relationships: paid leave $2.24, insurance$3.51, retirement $0.82, legallyrequiredbenefits$2.75, and supplemental pay $1.31per$24.15 of wages.[11] Recruiting uses the existing SHRM $4,700cost - per - hirereference.[4]Equipment/softwareisanexplicit$3/hour × 2,080 hours planning assumption. Ramp-up is explicit: eight weeks × a 50% productivity gap.

U.S. line item	Formula used	Example for Sr. Demand Generation Manager
Average salary	Selected midpoint	$105,250
Paid leave / PTO	Salary × 2.24 ÷ 24.15	$9,762
Employer insurance benefits	Salary × 3.51 ÷ 24.15	$15,297
Retirement and savings	Salary × 0.82 ÷ 24.15	$3,574
Legally required benefits	Salary × 2.75 ÷ 24.15	$11,985
Supplemental pay	Salary × 1.31 ÷ 24.15	$5,709
Recruiting and setup	$4,700 per hire	$4,700
Equipment, software and overhead	$3/hour × 2,080 hours	$6,240
Ramp-up productivity	Salary × $^{8}/_{52}$ × 50%	$8,096
Calculated first-year subtotal	**Sum of all line items**	**$170,614**
±5% planning band	**Subtotal × 0.95 to 1.05**	$162,083$–**179,144**

Canada itemization

For Canada, the model separately calculates 2026 CPP, CPP2, and federal EI using CRA rates and caps.[12] Health and supplemental benefits use an explicit 8% planning assumption; paid leave uses 15 paid days; retirement uses 3%; equipment/software uses CA$3/hour \times 2,080 hours; recruiting uses a clearly labeled CA$4,700 placeholder pending local recruiting data; and ramp-up uses eight weeks × a 50% productivity gap. These non-statutory assumptions are visible so an employer can replace them.

Canada line item	Formula used	Example for Sr. Paid Media Specialist
Average salary	Selected Job Bank midpoint	CA$74,006
Employer CPP	min(max(Salary − CA $3,500,0), CA$71,100) × 5.95%	CA$4,195
Employer CPP2	max(Salary − CA$74,600,0) × 4	CA$0
Employer EI	min(Salary × 1.63%, CA$1,572.30)	CA$1,206
Health and supplemental benefits	Salary × 8%	CA$5,920
Paid leave / PTO	15 days × 8 hours ÷ 2,080 × Salary	CA$4,270
Retirement contribution	Salary × 3%	CA$2,220
Recruiting and setup	CA$4,700 planning reference	CA$4,700
Equipment, software and overhead	CA$3/hour × 2,080 hours	CA$6,240
Ramp-up productivity	Salary × $^{8}/_{52}$ × 50%	CA$5,693
Calculated first-year subtotal	**Sum of all line items**	**CA$108,450**
±5% planning band	**Subtotal × 0.95 to 1.05**	**CA**$103,028$–$**CA$113,873**

The calculator applies these same formulas to every selected role. For reference, calculated average totals are U.S.: Marketing Manager $174,786$; $Sr. Demand Generation Manager$ 170,614; Sr. Paid Media Specialist $124,722$; $and Sr. Paid Media Strategist/Team Lead$ 176,394. Canada: Marketing Manager CA$160,293$; $Sr. Demand Generation Manager CA$ 108,450; Sr. Paid Media Specialist CA$108,450$; $and Sr. Paid Media Strategist/Team Lead CA$ 108,450. These totals include explicit planning assumptions and should be localized before hiring.

What the sources actually support

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports a May 2025 median annual wage of $166,790 for marketing managers. That is useful context, but it is not a direct substitute for every digital marketing role and should not be presented as a universal salary.[5] Robert Half's role-specific starting ranges are therefore used in U.S. mode. Canadian mode uses the Government of Canada Job Bank's Canada-wide NOC 10022 and NOC 11202 wage tables.[6]

KFF's 2025 Employer Health Benefits Survey reports average annual employer contributions of approximately $7,885 for single coverage and 20,143 for family coverage, calculated from the reported premiums and worker contributions. The actual employer contribution depends on the plan and worker coverage.[2]

The IRS states that the employer share of Social Security tax is 6.2% and the employer share of Medicare tax is 1.45%. The Social Security wage base is $184,500 for 2026; Medicare has no wage base limit.[3]

SHRM's published recruitment benchmark says the average cost per hire was nearly $4,700 in the cited 2022 article. Because this is an older reference, the calculator labels it clearly rather than presenting it as a current universal price.[4]

How to use this comparison

Use the salary range as a starting point, not as a promise. Select the closest role, review the low-to-high range, and then add the employer costs that are real for your company. Compare that internal plan with a written agency scope that states deliverables, measurement, access, fees, and renewal terms.

For North American planning, localize the estimate for the employee's city or province/state, the company's benefits plan, employment classification, expected seniority, currency, and the actual scope of paid-media and demand-generation work. Canadian mode uses CRA payroll rates and caps, while benefits, paid leave, retirement, recruiting, equipment, and ramp-up are explicit planning assumptions with numeric formulas shown in the calculator. The U.S. mode uses BLS private-industry median benefit relationships plus explicit recruiting, equipment, and ramp-up assumptions. A "senior paid media specialist" may be a hands-on campaign operator in one company and a strategy lead with team responsibility in another.

References