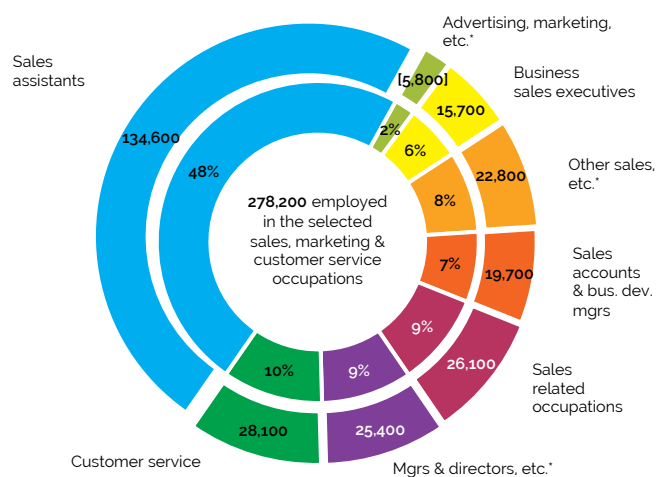


9.15 Sales, Marketing and Customer Service Occupations

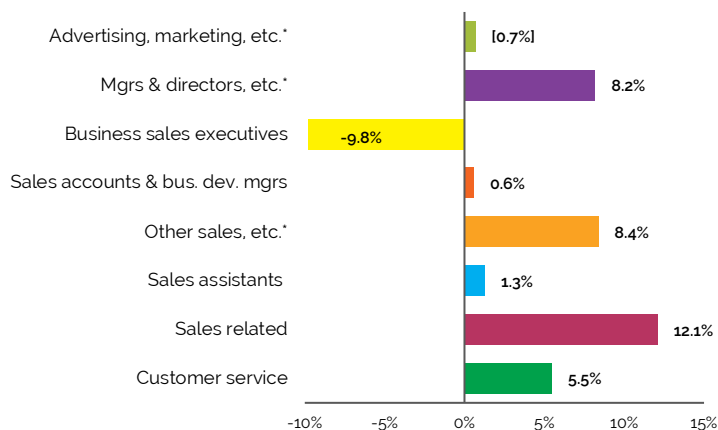
Overall employment: Approximately 278,000 persons (55% female) were employed in the selected sales, marketing and customer service occupations, representing 12% of the national workforce.

- **Sector:** 65% of overall employment was concentrated in the wholesale/retail sector, with ICT, industry and the administrative services sectors combined accounting for a further 18%
- **Employment growth (5-year):** Between 2014 and 2019, overall employment increased by 32,500 (2.5% on average annually compared to 3.2% nationally). The strongest rate of employment growth was observed for sales related occupations (12.1%) during the period
- **Age:** The 25-54-year age group accounted for the majority of persons employed, at 65%. The share of employees aged under 25 years was 23%, significantly above the national average of 11%
- **Education:** The share of persons employed in the selected sales, marketing and customer service occupations who had attained higher secondary/FET qualifications was 49%, well above the national average share of 38%. Those who had attained third level qualifications (37%) was below the national average share (48%)
- **Full-time/part-time:** Over 69% of sales, marketing and customer service workers were in full-time employment
- **Nationality:** The share of non-Irish workers was broadly in line with the national average of 17%, while 82% of workers were Irish nationals.

Numbers employed, 2019 (annual average)



Average growth rates (%) 2014-2019



Between 2014 and 2019, overall employment increased by 32,500 (2.5% on average annually compared to 3.2% nationally).

Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO data

*See detailed occupation description in table below

Numbers in square brackets are small and should be treated with caution

Overall Outlook for these Occupations

Employment over the five-year period was growing at a rate below the national average. COVID-19 restrictions have had a significant impact on employment numbers for this occupational group; as such, employment is forecast to be approximately 12% lower (34,000 persons) in 2020 on average annually when compared to the previous year. Although all occupations within this group may see some decline in employment numbers as a result of COVID-19, the fall is expected to be most significant for those employed in the wholesale and retail sector, primarily sales assistants. A move to online shopping, social distancing requirements and the closure of many retail outlets would indicate that a return to the employment levels seen in 2019 is unlikely, particularly in the short-term.

| Occupation | Economic summary |
|--|--|
| Advertising, marketing & sales directors | Numbers employed in this occupation were too small to allow for any analysis. |
| Managers & directors in retail & wholesale | Employment grew at a stronger rate than the national average over the five-year period. While it is expected that those outside the grocery sub-sector were significantly impacted by COVID-19 restrictions, the overall effect on employment numbers is not expected to have been as severe as for sales assistants. |
| Business sales executives | The numbers employed in this occupation have been declining in recent years, although demand for specific skills, particularly in relation to language skills, persisted in 2019, as is evident in the employment permit figures. Those employed in the wholesale/retail sector (approximately 40%) may have been impacted by COVID-19 restrictions; those employed in other sectors, although smaller in number, may see demand for skills persist. |
| Sales accounts & bus. dev. Managers | There was almost no employment growth in this occupation over the five-year period. Any demand for these skills is likely to relate to those employed in the ICT sector, although the numbers involved may be small. While work practices for this occupation may have changed as a result of COVID-19, there is no evidence to date that employment numbers have been impacted. |
| Other sales & marketing assoc. professionals | Employment grew strongly in this occupation over the five-year period. With employment spread across all sectors of the economy, the impact of COVID-19 may have been less severe when compared to other sales related roles. |
| Sales assistants | Employment growth in this occupation was below the national average over the five-year period. Over half (54%) of those employed in 2019 were in part-time positions. There were over 50,000 recent job hires in 2019, indicating that a significant level of job churn was occurring. The restrictions due to COVID-19 have had a significant impact on employment levels in this occupation outside the grocery sub-sector; recovery will be hampered by factors such as staff cuts, the closure of number of stores, social distancing requirements for shoppers and staff, and the accelerated move to online shopping. |
| Customer service occupations | Employment growth was above the five-year national average, with growth particularly strong in the period between 2018 and 2019. New employment permits issued in 2019 for this occupation often stated language skills requirements, particularly for the Japanese market. Recent job hires outweighed employment growth indicating that job churn is an issue for this occupation. This occupation has also been identified as being at risk of automation. The nature of many customer service occupations, particularly those based in call centres, means that the impact of COVID-19 on employment levels was most likely limited. |
| Sales related occupations n.e.c. | This occupation experienced strong employment growth over the five-year period, particularly between 2018 and 2019. This group is very varied (e.g. window dressers, street traders and debt collectors); therefore, the outlook as a result of COVID-19 is difficult to determine, although it is likely to be in line with wholesale/retail trade. |

*For detailed table see Appendix A