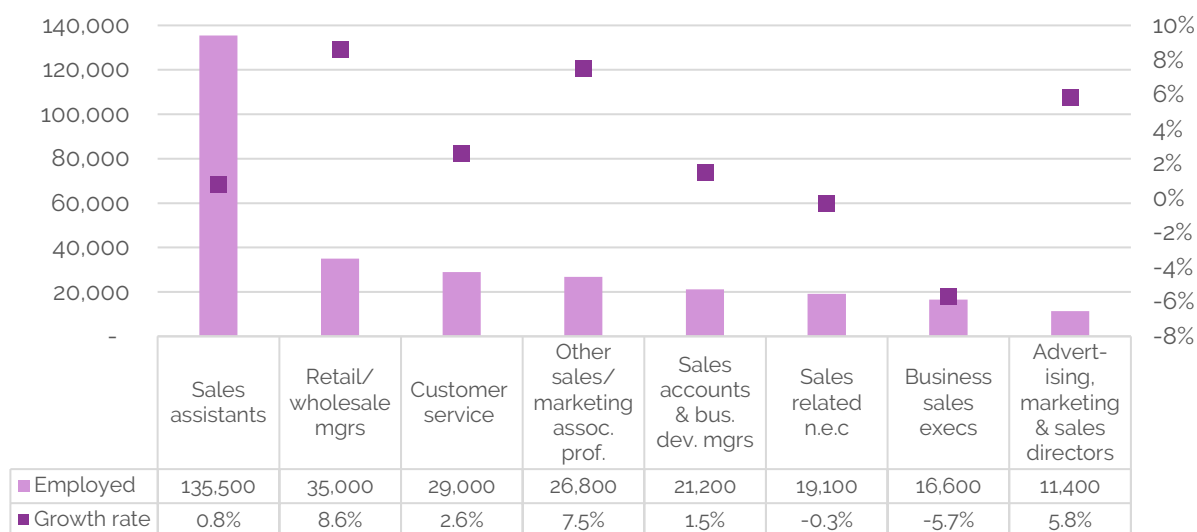


## 10.15 Sales, Marketing and Customer Service Occupations

Figure 10.15 Annual Average Employment (2022) & Annual Average Growth Rates (2017-2022)



<b>Overall employment</b>	<b>294,500</b>
<b>Share of total workforce</b>	11.6%
<b>Main sectors of employment</b>	69% - Wholesale & retail 6% - Industry 6% - ICT
<b>Employment growth</b>	+27,000 between 2017 and 2022 +1.9% on average annually (compared to +3.0% for total workforce)

2022	% Female Q4	% Full-time Q4	% Aged 55 years & over Q4	% Irish citizens Q4	% Third level graduates Q4	Number of new employment permits	Recruitment Agency Survey
Advertising, marketing & sales directors	...	97%	...	84%	80%	73	✓
Managers & directors in retail & wholesale	42%	94%	[21%]	71%	51%	11	
Business sales executives	...	89%	...	72%	66%	511	✓
Sales accounts & bus. dev. managers	44%	97%	...	81%	79%	228	✓
Other sales and marketing assoc. prof.	56%	84%	...	82%	72%	797	✓
Sales assistants	66%	42%	12%	87%	19%	1	
Sales related n.e.c.	[46%]	81%	...	83%	[40%]		✓
Customer service	64%	78%	...	72%	47%	196	✓
<b>Overall total</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>1,817</b>	

Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO (LFS) data, DETE, and SLMRU Recruitment Agency Survey (RAS)

Numbers in square brackets should be treated with caution; an ellipsis (...) denotes numbers too small to report

## Overall Outlook for these Occupations

Despite the lower than average annual employment growth over the five-year period, employment numbers have been increasing since 2020. The wholesale and retail sector accounts for by far the largest share of employment, at 69%, although the employment permits data points to issues with sourcing certain sales roles (particularly those with language skills) in the ICT sector, which accounts for just 6% of employment. High levels of inflation and changing consumer behaviour patterns will likely further impact on the future demand for these occupations.

The data from Enterprise Ireland's Spotlight on Skills programme highlights the increasingly sophisticated nature of skills required for many sales and marketing roles across a range of sectors, including manufacturing (including food), ICT and finance. Roles involving customer relationship management (e.g. business sales activities) and customer service increasingly require, not just sales skills, but also the ability to strategically manage and maintain existing customer bases. Furthermore, the skills mix required in business-to-business (B2B) sales activities in particular have undergone significant change in recent years, not least due to the impact of COVID-19, which accelerated earlier developments in omnichannel selling, tech-enabled sales and e-commerce. Other skills in demand for sales/marketing roles included market research (including international markets), and business analysis.

Occupation	Economic summary
Advertising, marketing & sales directors	Employment grew strongly for this occupation between 2021 and 2022, resulting in an above average annual growth rate for the five-year period. In the CSO Census data for 2022, marketing and sales directors accounted for 52% of employment in this occupation, purchasing managers/directors for 41%, and advertising and public relations directors for 8%. The difficult-to-fill mentions in the Recruitment Agency Survey related to procurement managers. Employers (Skills for Growth and Spotlight on Skills) have pointed to difficulties in recruiting marketing managers, with digital marketing (including social media), communication and leadership skills in particular demand. Employment permits were primarily issued for sales/marketing directors in ICT, and procurement and supply chain managers/directors across various sectors. However, the number of advertisements in the OVATE data declined for this occupation between 2021 and 2022. Demand is likely to persist, particularly for those with digital advertising/marketing and sales skills, although the restructuring currently taking place in the broad ICT sector may dampen future growth.
Managers & directors in retail & wholesale	Employment grew strongly for this occupation, particularly between 2021 and 2022, with an additional 7,800 persons employed. This growth is in line with the recent employment growth in the wholesale/retail sector. The share of non-Irish citizens, at 29%, was higher than the national average of 19%. The number of jobs advertised online (OVATE) grew strongly (10%) for this occupation in the year to 2022, although the fall in adverts in the most recent quarterly data suggests a slowdown in demand.
Business sales executives	The negative growth rate for this occupation can be primarily attributed to changes to the LFS in 2017; employment levels have remained relatively unchanged in recent years. The wholesale and retail sector accounts for the highest share of employment for this occupation, at 44%. Despite this, most of the employment permits issued were for the ICT sector, many requiring language skills. German, Spanish, French, and Dutch were the most frequently mentioned languages in the online job adverts; the postings for this occupation increased slightly (2%) in the year to 2022 but fell in the most recent quarter. Employers (through Spotlight on Skills) highlighted the need for e-commerce skills (i.e. selling via digital platforms) and technical knowledge. The data suggests that demand for business sales executive roles is particularly related to the ICT sector; however, as the ICT sector enters a restructuring phase, future demand for these roles is uncertain.
Sales accounts & bus. dev. managers	Employment levels remained unchanged between 2021 and 2022 for this occupation. Employment was spread across many sectors with none large enough to report. Like business sales executives, the ICT sector appears to be the main beneficiary of employment permits issued in 2022 for this occupation. The difficult-to-fill mentions in the Recruitment Agency Survey related to sales/marketing managers and lead category managers. Employers (Skills for Growth and Spotlight on Skills) identified sales account managers, key account managers and business development managers as being difficult to fill; key skills in demand included project management, relationship management and presentation skills. Nonetheless, the number of job adverts has fallen. Although employment levels remained stable, digitalisation and new business processes are likely to impact on the skills mix required for these roles.

Other sales & marketing assoc. professionals	<p>Despite a strong employment growth rate for this occupation, employment levels fell between 2021 and 2022. Employment is spread across a number of roles including marketing associate professionals, buyers &amp; procurement officers, conference/expo managers and estate agents. Employment permits issued in 2022 were primarily for roles in the ICT sector such as digital marketing and accounts managers with language skills required for some. The Recruitment Agency Survey highlighted issues in sourcing candidates for procurement roles. The number of job adverts for this role grew in 2022, driven by increases for buyers/procurement officers and conference organisers etc. In addition, procurement/tendering documentation skills were not confined to this occupation, but were also in demand outside of sales roles, albeit in small numbers.</p>
Sales assistants	<p>Despite a below average growth rate, employment for sales assistants grew by 8,700 persons between 2021 and 2022 in line with the recovery in the wholesale and retail sector. However, recent job hires far exceeded any growth in employment pointing to significant job churn for this occupation. This is likely to be related to the young profile of workers in this occupation (44% were aged 15-24 years) and the majority (58%) being in part-time roles. There was a large volume of vacancies advertised through DSP Jobs Ireland and OVATE. Job opportunities are likely to continue to arise for this occupation given its large size and the volume of turnover.</p>
Customer service occupations	<p>Employment growth was slightly above the national average for this occupation although employment levels have changed very little since 2019. At 28%, the share of non-Irish citizens employed was above average. Employment permits issued in 2022 related primarily to the ICT sector, with language skills a requirement for some. The number of online job postings for customer service occupations fell by nearly 5% in 2022. Despite this, there was a high level of recent job hires for this occupation pointing to significant job churn. Data from employers (Skills for Growth and Spotlight on Skills) and the Recruitment Agency Survey shows that, outside of the ICT sector, some customer service occupations remain difficult to fill; demand was evident in the retail and financial sectors, and for skills such as digital, relationship management, and customer service. Demand for customer service occupations has likely been dampened somewhat by the ICT sector restructuring; nonetheless, job opportunities will arise for those with strong people &amp; customer service skills, especially outside the ICT sector.</p>
Sales related occupations n.e.c.	<p>There was a large fall in employment levels between 2021 and 2022, declining by over 9,000 persons. Employment for this occupation is across a number of roles (e.g. sales supervisors, window dressers, street traders and debt collectors). A shift in business models, particularly to online selling, may reduce the demand for in-person sales related activities (e.g. van sales persons or window dressers) in the coming years.</p>