

R&Y's millennial marketers make a difference



By [Pasqua Heard](#)

22 Jul 2016

The Red & Yellow School in Cape Town extended the usual 67 minutes dedicated to 'doing good' on Mandela Day to a 67 hour initiative, which involved all full-time R&Y students assisting 19 NGOs and SMEs in social media management and digital marketing strategies.

The breakdown

Red & Yellow made a public announcement inviting NGOs/SMEs to take part in their Mandela Day initiative and the respondents, amongst which were Ikamva Labantu, Amy Biehl Foundation and Gender Justice, were each paired with a group of six students, consisting of marketers, copywriters and designers.

The Mandela Day programme simulated that of the interaction between a client and agency in the way that the students were briefed by their respective NGO/SME on the organisation's services and key areas in need of marketing. The students had a week to work on the requests made by the NGO/SME before meeting with the organisation on Mandela Day.



The Red & Yellow school with NGOs and SMEs

"Red & Yellow really wanted to showcase our students' skills and our school's community-oriented spirit. Our students spent well over the collective 67 hours to provide full marketing strategies and creative collateral to those organisations with limited or no marketing budget or expertise," explained Kira Koopman, head of department: online delivery at Red & Yellow.

The students' feedback included how some of the NGOs could gain greater readership, strengthen their social media presence or re-design their logo so that it greater resembled the values of the organisation.

"Combined with a workshop on using digital marketing and social media to grow their organisations, the NGOs, NPOs and SMEs were really able to walk away from the day with skills and knowledge about how best to leverage their people, communities and donors to make a difference," said Koopman.

Social media, digital marketing advice to NGOs/SMEs

Below are some of the key points mentioned in the social media and digital marketing workshop facilitated by Robyn Hazekamp, instructional designer at Red & Yellow:

Create effective content

- Your content should be divided into thirds:
 - A third dedicated to appeals for donations
 - A third dedicated to informing viewers of recent news and upcoming events
 - A third dedicated to thanking donors
- The best content should either conjure emotion, be useful or be entertaining to the viewer (humour generally is the best form of engaging people with your product)
- Tell compelling stories by focusing on outcomes and emphasising your organisation's highlights
- Encourage engagement with your followers by asking questions, retweeting others and listing your sponsors somewhere visible, so others may also be inspired to give to your organisation

Types of stories worth telling

- Share local stories
- Stories that mention *who* you assisted and *how* you solved the issue at hand
- Discuss innovation by sharing how you are changing things
- Share something that happened behind the scenes or outside of working hours that your audience might find interesting

Successful email marketing

- Use an email template that is likely to capture your audience's attention (Google offers some helpful free templates)
- Make sure your emails are mobile-friendly
- Find out how much your target audience values your service/product through surveys sent via your email newsletters

The verdict

Many of the NGOs/SMEs that attended responded positively to the initiative.

Bradley Scholtz from the Community Health Intervention Programmes (CHIPS) at the Sport Science Institute said that the learners encouraged him and his colleague, Chiara Baajies, to try marketing tactics which they had never broached before. "We've been thinking inside-the-box with regards to what we can and can't do. We haven't pushed the boundaries when it comes to approaching other companies. I think we need to explore more options and ask if we can get sponsorships from a health insurance company, for example," said Scholtz.

"The LifeMatters Foundation really appreciated the time and energy the students put into working on the various marketing and design requests we made to them. They were well-prepared, polite and enthusiastic. We particularly appreciated their assessment of our online presence and [that they] gave practical suggestions on how we can improve both our exposure and engagement. Their feedback was innovative and positive, with easy to implement ideas. We would recommend this experience to other NGOs, but in particular those who are relatively new and need a bit more practical help on branding and marketing," said Alneré Tuck, executive director of The LifeMatters Foundation.

"It's great that the school does this. It's so important that we get involved in things like this, because a lot of the work we do is focused on marketing for big companies who have much to spend on their budget. However, NGOs don't have this, so it's a nice way to impart the knowledge we've learnt to them," said James Taylor, a Marketing, Advertising and Communications (MAC) student at Red & Yellow who assisted Homestretch Athletics.



Red & Yellow students at work

Taylor went on to make the point that the initiative gave the learners exposure to other career avenues they may choose, such as becoming marketers for NGOs.

“We look forward to growing this event even more significantly next year and in the years to come, as our school grows and we near our 100,000 student goal by 2020, with a minimum of 10% of those being educated for free,” concludes Koopman.

ABOUT PASQUA HEARD

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