

Ogilvy's continued investment in young talent drives industry transformation

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This June, Ogilvy South Africa celebrates the youth of our industry, who have grown within our corridors, solidifying our reputation as the 'University of Advertising'; dedicated to actively empowering and nurturing the next generation of talent.



The advertising and creative industry thrives on youthful energy that keeps it fresh, inventive, and resonant. However, attracting and retaining young talent in a meaningful way remains a formidable challenge. Ogilvy South Africa addresses this, while paving the way for transformative change through its ground-breaking Ogilvy Graduate Programme.

Anchored on purpose and impact, Ogilvy's Graduate Programme has produced 127 successful alumni and a current cohort of 27 talented individuals, over the past eight years. The programme has absorbed an impressive 76% of its graduates into permanent roles at Ogilvy, with 82% of them being black talent, showcasing the significant impact of youth on the business.

“Ogilvy has helped produce an incredible number of industry giants, and that is why we’re often referred to as the University of advertising,” says the CEO & Creative Chairman of Ogilvy South Africa Pete Case. “It’s a legacy that we fully embrace, and as result we’ve invested more than R10 million in our industry’s next generation of talent. Graduates have helped us shape iconic work for brands such as KFC, AB InBev, DStv and many more – fearlessly challenging media conventions and messaging norms, ensuring that our impact is both long-lasting and meaningful.”

In the face of South Africa's unemployment crisis, with a shocking 46.5% of people between 15 and 34 without work, Ogilvy has created a cyclical business model, which targets particular deliverables, such as job creation, youth development, sustainability and successful business practice.

Another Ogilvy initiative, the Mo Thulo graduate programme, has seen young talent getting invaluable hands-on experience across diverse disciplines. “Working alongside the industry's brightest minds, has helped our young people access an unparalleled range of opportunities, which help to fast-track their career progression,” says chief of people at Ogilvy South Africa, Angela Madlala.

The cyclical business model, with its focus on key business goals, aims to create a symbiotic relationship between these components, fostering a virtuous cycle of growth commercially and for talent.

"I gained invaluable client experience with iconic South African brands and grew as a professional," says OG graduate alumni Qamani Nyewe, who is currently a senior strategist at Ogilvy. "Surrounded by talented mentors, I developed a passion for impactful marketing strategies."

While some OG alumni explore opportunities outside of Ogilvy after graduating from the programme, the business implements an annual Boomerang Recruitment Campaign, aimed at attracting them back into the business. Nyewe is one of these Ogilvy returnees.

"What drew me back? Ogilvy's pursuit of excellence and commitment to pushing boundaries align perfectly with my personal drive for growth," she says. "Working with incredibly smart and talented people in the country is one of the main reasons I returned to the company."

The Ogilvy Graduate Programme is built on purpose, which extends far beyond individual success stories. The programme has enabled young creatives to flourish in the advertising industry, while impacting the growth of the business at every stage and supporting the growth of South Africa's marketing sector as a whole.

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