

Media academy spearheads on-the-job training to grow industry talent pool

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One of South Africa's leading digital marketing businesses - Mark1 has launched a first-of-its-kind in-house training programme that provides young creative minds with on-the-job training - a long-time industry need introduced to improve the calibre of ad graduates in the country.



Mark1 Media Academy 2018 interns

Launched in February, the Mark1 Media Academy (M1MA) is an internship programme that aims to upskill and train recent advertising graduates and equip them with an in-depth knowledge of the South African advertising landscape. In addition, it offers several candidates employment in the process. The three-month course, monitored by an intern mentor and supervisor is divided into four components: ad operations, sales, strategy and digital design. While South Africa is making great strides with regard to training and upskilling in the digital marketing space - ad operations in particular, this programme's primary focus is not something students can study for at university, instead it requires on-the-job training.

"On-the-job training is always highly beneficial since it gives candidates the opportunity to apply their theoretical knowledge. We are passionate about creating employment opportunities for young, talented South Africans and we believe that this programme will contribute largely to the talent pool this industry needs," says Mark1 managing director, Daan du Toit.

He explains that while graduates who enter this industry come with a 'top-level' theoretical understanding of the digital advertising and marketing landscape, they fail to fully understand the mechanics behind the campaign conceptualisation process and how it is managed and served online. The academy aims to provide graduates with a more focussed and streamlined approach to the way they would function and operate in the media and advertising industry. Further, it will educate the "new generation of eager, young minds" with the practical experience that can also be applied in a real-work scenario.

M1MA intern Tyan Odendal says: "While my marketing degree gave me a good stepping stone, Mark1 Media's internship programme gives me the real tools and practical understanding I need when it comes the digital advertising landscape. This

programme has equipped me with a wealth of knowledge that I wouldn't be able to get anywhere else."

In the past few years, Du Toit says Mark1 has had "great success" training interns and many remain employed at the business but adds that this year was the best time to introduce a formal and structured internship programme. Six students are currently enlisted in the M1MA programme and the selection criteria is based on the skill set that the business requires. And while Mark1 always strives to provide employment once students conclude the programme, this is not always possible.

"We realise we won't be able to provide employment to every qualifying candidate. But on completion of this programme we are 100-percent certain that interns will be well equipped to find employment in the industry and take their careers to the next level. Mark1 also commits to using its expansive network to assist them," he says.

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