

Gone Digital Academy helps businesses stay ahead of the curve

By [Juanita Pienaar](#)

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Gone Digital, an agile digital marketing consultancy has recently launched the Gone Digital Academy, which offers Seta-accredited, digital marketing education to businesses, agencies and individuals.

“We have worked in the industry for over a decade and have seen a rapid decline in the quality of skills and resources in the market,” says Luke Peters, group CEO and founder of Gone Digital. “Instead of complaining, we decided to do something about it and have invested in delivering knowledge and mentorship-based learning that will help upskill teams to ensure they are ahead of the curve in a fast-paced digital world.”

Here, Peters elaborates more on where the idea for the academy came from, what makes it different from other educational institutions and the future plans he has for it.

■ What do you think has caused the decline of skills and resources in the digital marketing industry?

What we have seen across the board is that the middle tier of skilled resources is falling out of the industry. These are the people who have 7-10 years of experience and require very little guidance and management to get the job done. They just get on with the project. But what has happened is that these people have been burnt out, jaded or decided on a new career path and have left which means that the seniors in the business are having to step in and do the 'grunt' work.



Luke Peters, group CEO and founder of Gone Digital.

The juniors who should be mentored by the seniors are left to 'sink or swim' as they have limited exposure to the seniors.

“ I am of the opinion that we need to stop the sweatshop mentality that exists and start encouraging these people back in some capacity, to add value to the businesses which will free up time for internal mentorship and growth. ”

■ In terms of education and training, what are people's options?

There are a number of excellent schools, academies and online courses that an individual can take to upskill themselves in their field of interest. Most people think that just because they have a qualification that they are entitled to a big salary or a big title, which is certainly not the case.

“ Theory is one thing and application is another. Attitude and passion will not be taught at a school or online.

People taking these courses need to be willing to put their heads down and apply the learnt knowledge and get experience in their field to be able to add value. ”

■ Where did the idea for the academy come from?

No one place but more of a need to help businesses and people solve a big problem and trying to make an impact on the local market.

■ Who is looking for extra training more do you think – companies for their staff or individuals themselves?

Individuals are always keen to learn more but are limited by funds. Corporates have the budgets for training but at times it's not being used effectively for their teams' growth or where the business is going.

■ **Do you have any advice for young professionals entering the industry?**

Be prepared to work hard. Be prepared to sweat it out and learn from all those around you. Everybody has something to teach you and every day is a learning day, so be a sponge and absorb as much as you can.

■ **What else can you tell us about the academy?**

The academy offers Seta-accredited, digital marketing education to businesses, agencies and individuals. Born out of the digital industry itself, it provides the necessary recognised certifications and qualifications for candidates to advance and progress within this industry.

With a team that has worked with many of the top brands and agencies in South Africa, we specialise in helping clients navigate their way through the digital landscape which includes digital strategy, development, content, design, paid media, SEO and data analysis.

■ **What does Seta-accredited mean, exactly?**

This means that corporates and agencies who opt to send people on our courses will be eligible for rebates or BBEEE points depending on their structure. Basically, it's a win-win for all parties. Business can allocate their training budget to a course that will benefit their teams and clients.

■ **What makes the academy different from other institutions?**

“ Our practical experience in not only working with business but in building teams and solving problems for our clients on a daily basis ensures that our courses are not just the theory of marketing but actually informed by real-world scenarios. ”

Our team not only lectures but provides mentorship to people on an ongoing basis.

■ **What are your hopes for the future of the academy?**

That we are able to make a meaningful difference in the South African employment landscape. If we are able to upskill enough people and help them become more marketable and for them to find suitable employment in our sector can only lead to a better industry.

For more on the Gone Digital Academy, go to the [website](#) and follow Gone Digital on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

ABOUT JUANITA PIENAAR

Juanita is the editor of the marketing & media portal on the Bizcommunity website. She is also a contributing writer.

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