

Wunderman Thompson inspires growth within the youth

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Every June, South Africa observes Youth Month to pay respect to the courage and sacrifices of the Soweto uprising youths and to celebrate young people and their potential. Devoting a month to the youth puts the spotlight on the efforts and progress made to empower and advance the young generation.

Back at the One Young World Summit in 2013, Brand South Africa spoke of how the youth have a responsibility in shaping our country's future, whereby they lead to ensure that we live in a world that is better than today.

But who's responsible for the youth?

Inequality, poor education and high unemployment are just some of the socio-economic challenges that South African youth have to overcome before thinking about shaping the nation's future.

And while corporate South Africa will use the significant month to launch a campaign to do good and send a positive message, there is still much to do on a more consistent basis.

As one of the country's largest marketing services agencies, Wunderman Thompson South Africa takes its role in inspiring growth within the youth very seriously. Through learnerships, internships and even employee personal development plans, the agency is committed to finding, nurturing and advancing talent, some of who have never had the opportunity to grow and develop their potential.



Wunderman Thompson's learning and development manager, Khumo du Toit.

Wunderman Thompson's learning and development manager, Khumo du Toit is passionate about investing in people and cultivates a solid foundation for young talent to grow with the agency or take what they've learnt to flourish in the industry.

She explains: "We run an annual learnership programme that brings young black talent into the agency, so that we may teach future industry professionals and specialists. We work with partners, including Umuzi and Transcend, to identify and source young talent for the 12-month learnership. Currently, we have six candidates for the 2020 programme; we usually have an intake of between four and six learners annually. In just the last three years, the group has invested more than R2,5m on learnerships. We are excited to build on this investment as we expand our learnership and internship opportunities."

The agency runs six-month internships to help young graduates put their qualification's theory into practice. Opportunities exist across the business for their personal development. Du Toit adds: "I'm proud to share that since 2018, approximately 30 learners have been absorbed successfully into the agency as full-time employees, post-internship."

Thando Simelane, Sandile Dube, Njabulo Mavundla and Sewela Matlala are just some of the learners who are currently employed full-time. They share the same sentiments about their experience, saying that the opportunity encouraged them to develop their careers proactively. One explains: "You need to want it for yourself before anyone else can give it to you, or help you achieve your career goals."

Both the learnerships and internships aim to expose young graduate talent to all aspects of the business, offering on-the-job upskilling, as well as formal training and mentorship. Formal workshops are run through the Wunderman Thompson Academy, and straddle a range of material and modules that are Seta-accredited.”

Furthermore, the agency is fully committed to transformation beyond compliance through its employee personal development plans. By recording the training, development and aspirations of its staff, the leadership team can offer the support and means to help individuals achieve their personal career goals while understanding where the business is going.

Unati Moalusi, chief people officer of Wunderman Thompson SA, is delighted that overall talent growth is a strategic intent at a fundamental level within the business. Moalusi believes that the industry has to be agile, especially when it comes to young talent and says: “We’ve come to focus on how we can add value to them, and help them give of their best.” Miles Murphy, who joined the agency as CEO a few months ago, reinforces this intent, having shared his determination to significantly increase employment opportunities for South Africans in the sector over the next year or two.

Moalusi concludes: “We are proud of the role we play to foster and enrich the youth to realise their potential. To quote an African proverb, ‘Knowledge is like a garden: if it is not cultivated, it cannot be harvested’. Happy Youth Month, South Africa.”

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We are 20,000 strong in 90 markets around the world, and in South Africa we are one of the largest integrated marketing services agencies with over 600 professionals. Our people bring together creative storytelling, diverse perspectives, inclusive thinking, and highly specialised vertical capabilities, to drive growth for our clients. We offer deep expertise across the entire customer journey, including communications, commerce, consultancy, CRM, CX, data, production and technology.

Wunderman Thompson is a WPP agency (NYSE: WPP).

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