

There needs to be more diversity in digital and technology-related roles

 By [Jessica Tennant](#)

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As part of our #EvolutionofWork content feature, Boomtown's all-female digital department shares what the future of work looks like from their point of view and how they're navigating the 'new normal' in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic...



Liesl Silverman

With the recent promotion of Cayleigh Zambonini to digital integration manager, Lisa Snyman to digital project manager and Liesl Silverman to digital copywriter, as well as the appointment of Brenda Ulay as community manager and content creator, Boomtown has enhanced its digital service offering to ensure a 'digital first' mindset across the business and for its clients.

The digital department also includes senior social media manager Marion Marais, digital product manager and user experience specialist Helna Brown, art director Tamarin Fraenkel, and digital strategist Lara-Anne Derbyshire.



Boomtown enhances its digital service offering

Boomtown 1 Oct 2020



Boomtown is a creative, fully integrated advertising agency that offers brand design, integrated brand communications and digital marketing. It's headquartered in Port Elizabeth, with offices in Johannesburg. It started trading in 1994 when its founder famously sold his inheritance, yes, two cows, to buy the office's first computer. Today, Boomtown has achieved Level 2 BBBEE status and 51% Black ownership, of which 30% is by a Black women-owned entity. How times have changed!

Here, we chat to digital copywriter Liesl Silverman...

 **When did you start at Boomtown and tell us about your career trajectory to date, within the organisation and in general?**

When I started working at Boomtown in 2018 as a proofreader and copywriter, I hadn't worked in an agency environment before and was entranced by the immense energy of the people and the overall ecosystem. With some great mentorship and guidance, I found my feet and completed an advanced SEO course through UCT. Since then, I haven't looked back and feel that I have grown from strength-to-strength within the agency, recently taking on the role of digital copywriter.

■ ***What do you love most about the digital industry, your career and specialisation?***

I started dabbling in SEO in 2018 and, from the start, I was fascinated by the mix of technical and strategy that is at the core of SEO. What I find most interesting about it is the span of skills it covers and requires. Because of the nature of search engines and the constant updating of algorithms, you never stop learning and that's what I love - the constant pursuit of knowledge. There is always something new to learn, whether it's how machine learning works, new SEO tools, trends and the power of content. To do SEO you have to be a detective of some sort. You have to like problem-solving, finding the clues and be ready to work out exactly why people are bouncing off a page or are not responding to a certain ad. The simplest adjustments can lead to conversions and great results.

■ ***Tell us a bit about your experience and how you feel this has equipped you for your new position.***

I originally studied journalism. After graduating I did an internship and worked briefly as a journalist and digital content writer. Writing online content meant that I had to quickly learn how to get my articles on the top of search engines and make sure they were noticed using solid SEO strategies. With time I started to love SEO and discovered a new nerdy side to me that liked the data and analytical aspects, just as much as the creative aspects of writing.

■ ***What are you most looking forward to and what are you working towards at the moment?***

With the gradual expansion of our digital team at Boomtown, I'm most looking forward to tackling new and exciting projects with my all-women team. I'm honestly proud of every website I've worked on. From the copywriting to the back-end optimisation, I've put my all into every project. There are so many moving parts, whether it's UX design or creative design you have to work closely together and there is always a feeling of accomplishment when you've completed a successful website. And, every time you do it, your process becomes better. With time, hard work and determination I want to master my craft and become an expert in the field.

■ ***What excites you most about the agency, being part of an all-women team and your role in particular?***

To keep up to date with digital trends, companies need to have an agile business structure and be willing to encourage their staff to upskill, do online courses and perhaps take on new roles within the organisation. Boomtown has done exactly that, recognising who can fulfil digital roles within the company. It means there is scope for growth and development. I'm so happy that our team happens to be all-women: in an arena that is usually male-dominated, it's refreshing to see ladies taking hold of the reins.

■ ***Why do you think the digital industry is traditionally male-dominated?***

When it comes to SEO copywriting, it's like any other digital or technology-related role. Men make up roughly 75% of the tech industry. One of the reasons for this is that girls are less likely to study STEM subjects in school and university compared to boys. Traditionally men are more likely to study coding and programming, but it is slowly changing. At the end of the day, perceptions need to change at home and in society. Girls currently feel like they aren't smart enough to do tech jobs, and don't have role models in the industry. But I assure you, if more of them had the confidence, they would excel in these roles and see how enjoyable it is.

■ ***What is your hope for the industry? What needs to change and what do you think needs to happen to achieve this?***

There definitely needs to be more diversity in digital and technology-related roles. Gender shouldn't matter or play a part, even though a lot of hiring still favours men. One way to change this is to encourage women and people from diverse

backgrounds to enter these careers.

My advice to women who are intimidated by starting a career in SEO or a career which is leaning into tech would be that now is the best time to start. There is a lot of encouragement and support out there. Set your fears aside and believe in yourself. Hone your craft, keep practising, be confident and fulfil your career goals.

For more, visit [Boomtown's press office on Bizcommunity](#) and our [#EvolutionofWork special section](#).

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