

Taking talent forward

By [Nick Schilperoort](#)

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The relationship between graduate and employer today really is 80/20. Graduates can be as hungry as their hearts desire, but without an employer or industry willing to accommodate this hunger the relationship really is flawed.

Leaders in the creative industry have a role to ensure that at all times they facilitate an environment that welcomes young talent. This goes beyond the traditional "graduate programmes"/"internship programmes" that stand to only benefit the elite few and end employer, but rather build the industry as a whole from the bottom up versus cherry picking.

For many graduates, entering the creative industry is a lot easier said than done, with the majority being turned away from potential positions solely on the basis that they lack experience. This results in many qualified, talented individuals asking themselves: 'How am I supposed to gain experience if I am constantly turned away for not having any?'

This immediately puts the graduate on the back foot, as he or she begins to question whether this is the 'right' industry for them.



Nick Schilperoort: The industry needs to get involved at ground level.

To resolve this, the industry talent search needs to begin from that first day of study and grow from there, building confidence in not only the student but also the industry as a whole.

Yes, as employers we want to be surprised! However, to do this we need to build skills that go beyond the traditional academic classroom and therefore we need to get involved at ground level.

I take my hat off to the likes of Quirk and their merger with the Red & Yellow School, as it does instil confidence that there are players wanting to get their hands dirty, but there needs to be more of this!

Employers consciously know that when hiring a graduate he or she is going to have very little or no relevant work experience, but it is the graduate who has been exposed to experiences in terms of tangible work and skills development who will be head and shoulders ahead of his or her peers.

With this in mind, there are a few key steps that we as an industry can take to assist any student in staying ahead of the game.

Step forward

As an organisation, put yourself out there and look to add value to the learning process wherever you can. These do not need to be massive full-time commitments, but rather temporary or part-time commitments that allow you to share your skills and experiences with the future leaders of our industry.

Make time

Whether it is partnering with local universities/colleges on specific projects or tailoring job-shadowing programmes, as an industry we need to make time to facilitate more "on-the-job" experiences.

Do digital

The world truly is at everyone's fingertips these days, and the opportunity to connect and network with a younger

generation is entirely possible.

Make use of platforms available to build connections with students, whether it's offering free digital short courses or posing open briefs/exercises to universities/colleges. There are innumerable opportunities to build professional relationships with individuals - relationships you may not have been able to build in everyday life.



In summary, South Africa has proven to the world time and time again that we have an abundance of creative talent and the recent success at this year's Cannes Lions reconfirmed this statement. Our job going forward as an industry is to improve on this and to continue growing this natural talent pool.

Debate and workshop

A debate and workshop on the purpose and practice of internships will be held at The Vega School of Brand Leadership in Cape Town on 31 July, facilitated by Nick Schilperoort and Dr. Carla Enslin.

[Click here for further information.](#)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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