

# Mentorship is an investment into the future of our industry

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In the fast-paced and competitive landscape of the media industry, young professionals face unprecedented challenges as they strive to make their mark. Navigating their careers while making a meaningful impact requires more than just talent and ambition - it requires proper guidance.



Mentorship emerges as a pivotal factor in shaping the future of these aspiring individuals, serving as a catalyst for unlocking their true potential and overcoming obstacles on their journey to success.

With mentorship at the centre, the media industry must focus on attracting the best possible talent and fostering a supportive environment where experienced leaders share their knowledge, skills, and experiences with the next generation.

“ A mentor is someone who allows you to see the hope inside yourself. ”

– Oprah Winfrey

This hope, which lies within every young professional, needs consistent nourishment and must be seen as more than just a passing trend. Mentorship is an investment in the future of the media industry, driven by hope and guided by experience. However, building a solid mentorship culture requires more than just a few good mentors.

To establish a strong mentorship culture, the media industry must foster a supportive environment where experienced leaders willingly share their knowledge and wisdom. This supportive culture benefits not only the mentor and mentee but also the overall growth of organisations and the industry as a whole.

Mentorship goes beyond transferring tactical knowledge that cannot be acquired from textbooks or formal education alone. Mentors bring years of experience, honed expertise, and unique perspectives to the table, guiding young professionals through the complexities of the industry. They provide insights into client management nuances, foster creativity, and nurture leadership skills, accelerating the learning process and helping mentees avoid common pitfalls.

Mentorship plays a vital role in shaping the character and values of young professionals in the media industry. Effective mentors become trusted advisers, offering guidance on ethical decision-making, work-life balance, and career transitions.

They provide a safe space for mentees to discuss their aspirations and fears, while imparting lessons in resilience, integrity, and perseverance. This holistic approach fosters the development of well-rounded professionals who can tackle challenges with maturity, empathy, and a strong moral compass.

The media industry is currently facing a significant talent gap due to various factors, such as professionals immigrating or choosing to work directly with clients. Mentorship, among other strategies is a way to overcome this challenge and ensure a steady influx of talent.

Mentorship is a two-way street that benefits both mentors and mentees. Experienced leaders find fulfilment in nurturing the next generation, contributing to their legacy, and witnessing the impact of their guidance first-hand.

This reciprocal relationship also provides mentors with fresh perspectives and new ideas, keeping them connected to emerging trends and innovative approaches. It fosters a culture of continuous learning and growth, benefiting brands that thrive on diverse ideas and forward-thinking strategies.

While mentorship can occur organically, it is crucial to establish formalised programmes to ensure widespread access and equitable opportunities. By creating and maintaining mentorship initiatives, aspiring professionals can be paired with suitable mentors based on their career aspirations, skill sets, and shared interests.

Structured programmes provide a framework for regular interactions, goal setting, and progress tracking, ensuring the mentees' development remains on track and meaningful. This has been made much easier to accomplish given the bevy of digital team engagement tools at our disposal.

By investing in mentorship, we unlock the potential of the next generation, creating a legacy of capable leaders who will drive our industry forward. Let us embrace this transformative power, strengthening our organisations, propelling our industry, and building a brighter future for all. Together, let us guide and inspire the next generation, and in turn, let them guide and inspire us.

The advertising media forum developed an initiative called project mentor as we know how important mentorship is for our industry. The project aims to provide young minds with opportunities to learn and grow while interacting with professionals to strengthen the media fraternity.

On Wednesday 31 August 2022 the Advertising Media Forum hosted the first-ever 'Project Mentor' skills-sharing and networking workshop across the media industry.

The free-to-attend workshop – the first of many – is part of our commitment to upskilling and connecting the next generation of media strategists, buyers, and planners.

The workshop was filled with panel discussions by industry heavyweights, skills-sharing and training sessions by experts in emotional and physical wellbeing and EQ and leadership. In addition, we closed out the day with an inspirational talk on personal branding from media personality, Msizi James.

The Advertising Media Forum is committed to playing a role in the career guidance and success of all young minds joining our industry.

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