

2021 agency interns: Put yourself out there!

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"Be confident. Be aggressive. Be your authentic self."

That's the advice from Boomtown's human resources rock star, Sinethemba Mashibini, to the interns working job experience at South Africa's agencies in 2021.

Growing up in Queenstown, a small town in the Eastern Cape, Mashibini never thought he'd work in the industry, let alone at an agency that works with such amazing brands.

"The only ad agencies I ever saw growing up were Ezweni Communication and Shuku-Shukuma Ad and Prints on TV," he quipped. "Working for an established ad agency seemed to be a faraway dream. But a move to Johannesburg broadened my perspective on what was possible and led me to study industrial psychology and public administration at Nelson Mandela University, and an introduction from a friend led to a job interview at Boomtown."

"My advice to 2021's interns is to make the most of their time in the industry I now love and, in doing so, they'll never regret it."

"Be confident – no one will notice you if you don't put yourself out there. Be aggressive when it comes to your learning goals – no one is going to volunteer knowledge to you. Don't question your place at the table – many young Black professionals suffer from imposter syndrome when they should be embracing the fact that they do have a place where they belong. Be your true authentic self – shine through and deliver to the world."

Boomtown opened its doors on 18 January to a new crop of participants in its successful graduate internship programme, Bayeza. This year, it has 10 graduates joining the agency in the disciplines of design, art direction and copywriting, digital strategy, market immersion, videography, social media content creation and client service. Mashibini will be one of the established Boomtown teams helping mentor them through the year.



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"My role at the agency, as I see it, is to facilitate healthy relationships that are beneficial for both staff and agency," he said.

"Human-centric organisations like ad agencies need to put their people first. Firstly, the talent turnover is notoriously high, so retention is of key importance for stability as this can have an impact on a company's profitability. Therefore, agencies have to make sure they foster the best possible working environments so that people want to stay."

"Second, a happy workforce is at the core of any successful business and any business leader who does not recognise this eventually suffers the consequence of being ignorant to the value of their staff."

"With Covid-19 this has become increasingly apparent. All people-related decisions need to be taken seriously and must be intentional. For example, hiring decisions, employee relations, pay, culture, work-life balance and remote working have to be well considered as they will ultimately influence how well the business functions."

When it comes to transformation and hiring, Mashibini believes the industry still needs to make some strides towards better representation.

“Agencies need to be intentional when it comes to their hiring strategies and transformation. There are so many advantages in having a diverse and inclusive work policy in a creative space. It gives a diversity of thought and perspective, and can be a great catalyst for amazing work.

“And, the pandemic has given the industry an opportunity to redefine how agencies work, one that supports both the creative solutions clients count on us for, while being more empathetic and supportive than previously.

“Boomtown has embraced the hybrid model with employees been working remotely the majority of the time, and has a success of it. Key has been the fact that our leaders have put more trust in us. This has allowed us to operate with more self-sufficiency and from a place of confidence, because we know we are trusted and empowered.

“They’ve aligned their company goals and vision with their people’s health and wellness, and this will allow the agency to continue to flourish.”

You can view the interview with Sinethemba Mashibini here:

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