

When the road to your promotion seems unending...

 By [Khuthalani Khumalo](#)

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Agencies around the country are structured in different ways. In some companies, you start as an intern; graduate to a junior account executive (JAE); then a senior account executive (SAE); through to a junior account manager (JAM) - creating up to ten levels before reaching account director (AD) status. Whereas in other agencies, it's a very clear cut road from AE, to AM, to AD.

Regardless of the structure in the agency you choose to work for, the road to your promotion can at times feel unending.

People at different levels in the agency structure are often impatient, wanting to rise up the ranks much faster than is wise to. This can result in job-hopping - with a person leaving one agency as a junior to take another position at a slightly more senior role, at a slightly higher package - in essence, pricing yourself out of the market for your level and experience.

You could then end up frustrated because your workload is more than you can honestly handle, leading to stress, unhappiness and numerous vows to leave the industry!

If you're willing to listen, I have some (unsolicited) advice for you: sit tight and stay put! (Yes, I said it! Stop your complaining!)

If you have not yet been promoted from one level to another, it isn't because nobody sees your potential, and it's not because you are incapable. Chances are you are not ready for more responsibility. You might have perfected the tasks required at your level, however, your emotional intelligence or maturity levels may still leave a lot to be desired. You could be that person who sulks when you get amendments from your client on that thought leadership article or you may find it challenging taking direction from your immediate supervisor, (not so) secretly believing him/her to be incompetent (read as "an idiot").

For whatever the reason, there is no reason to rush through your current level. There are many lessons to be learnt, and it's a time of certain growth. Yes, it feels like you've been there forever, but hang in there. The jump from where you are now to the next rung on the ladder is big. If you are not fully prepared for that move, you could slip and fall flat in trying to take on more than you are ready for. There are certain fundamentals of communication that need to be perfected at the level you are, instead of rushing to become a half-baked AM, who can't handle difficult media or an immature AD whose team-management or budget-management skills are non-existent.

Enjoy your current level.

Perfect the systems.

Solidify relationships.

Love your clients.

And make mistakes - because mistakes as a junior are forgivable, but mistakes as a fast-tracked senior could cost you your job.

ABOUT KHUTHALANI KHUMALO

Khuthalani is a communications strategist, voice over artist, freelancer, proof reader, self-proclaimed CANVA-guru.

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