

In the front row: Kamogelo Makhale

By  Jessica Tennant

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Following the announcement of the inaugural IAB SA Front Row winners, announced online during this year's Bookmarks, we interviewed them on what the initiative means to them and what they hope to get out of it.

The aim of the initiative is to create access in terms of events and mentors, as well as career-building opportunities for South Africa's creative youth.

Veli Ngubane, IAB Transformation Council Head explains the initiative: "We have taken a pragmatic approach to support transformation in the industry this year, concentrating on access as the key focus to this end. Front Row forms part of this approach, in giving free access and support to the front row for IAB events and workshops to black students, entrepreneurs and agency interns between the ages of 18-24, and going forward 18-28."



"[SA's advertising industry] is not transformed" - Veli Ngubane

12 Mar 2020



"The IAB South Africa serves to empower the media and marketing industry to thrive in a digital economy. We do this through our connected culture and access to experts and expertise. It is vital that we are always increasing our engagement with the future leaders of our industry while bringing in a fresh, and different, perspective to the IAB SA as a whole," adds Paula Hulley, CEO of the IAB SA. "Platforms like the IAB SA Front Row and IAB SA Youth Action Council, aim to provide easier access to information and platforms of engagement while creating valuable collaborative spaces and the opportunity to 'sit at the table' with seasoned industry leaders at the highest level."



IAB invites young, black and gifted creatives to take up space in the Front Row

IAB South Africa 10 Mar 2020



In addition to being given access to some of our country's most brilliant digital media and marketing minds, each of the five winners received a R15,000, non-transferable, online-course voucher from The Red & Yellow Creative School of Business to further their digital creative and business studies, as well as a R3,000 voucher from Bookmarks 2020 event partner, G-Star and access to the front row at the [IAB SA Insight events](#).



Front Row winner Kamogelo Makhale

Here, our interview with Makhale:

■ ***Congratulations on being announced a Front Row winner! What does this recognition and opportunity mean to you?***

I am so grateful for this recognition and opportunity because it will enable me to get access to platforms of engagement. Not only that, through this opportunity, I will be able to also share my knowledge about the digital economy within our industry and to possibly be able to come up with digital strategies that will help other industries/sectors that are still struggling to adapt to this digital era that we are in.

■ ***What are you currently studying and/or where do you work?***

I am currently an intern at Avon Justine in the Credit Control Department.

■ ***What course are you thinking of studying at the Red & Yellow Creative School of Business and why?***

I was thinking of studying Digital Content and Copywriting mainly because I have realised the importance of content creation and copywriting, but mostly I would like to get more insight about writing and I am positive that when I finish the course my content creation skills would be better than before.

■ ***Tell us a bit about your experience. Why the creative industry and your field of interest?***

Well, I have always been intrigued by the ads and billboards that I have always seen, although I was not certain about the industry because of how broad it is. However, in my first year of varsity, that's when I managed to explore my interest in brand communication. I got a chance to work for Locrate Market mainly on their social media. It exposed me to a lot of creatives who are in the marketing and film industry and such opportunities have helped me broaden my knowledge about the creative industry.

■ ***Comment on the challenges facing the industry.***

Challenges that the industry is facing is that we see most brands jumping on every trend. I mean it's great to see our favourite brands being part of the trends that are part of our lives but there is no need to jump on every trend in order to try stay relevant to your audience, understand your audience and have a creative way that they will see it as out of the ordinary communication.

Another challenge could possibly be reaching potential clients and engaging them, because emotional and meaningful engagements are important yet so challenging, hence it's important to have creative approaches that will solve these challenges.

■ ***Comment on the current state of the industry/the impact of the pandemic and current lockdown on the industry.***

The Covid-19 outbreak has disturbed the way businesses operate. This hits hard on our industry because we have seen campaigns and events being cancelled or postponed. However, the current lockdown somehow forces brands to do things differently. This includes changes in their strategies, but not forgetting their goal as a brand. For some businesses, it can be an opportunity to attract new audiences.

■ ***Comment on the power of access, mentorship and collaboration in transforming the industry?***

Well, for me, access on its own gives an individual a platform to choose what to do with what they have. However, access is not as accessible as one would think. That's why it's important to do your utmost best when given access to an opportunity.

Mentorship is very important because it builds a relationship between the one with experience and the one with less experience. It may lead to a collaboration as both individuals may learn from one another.

The power of collaboration in transforming the industry is an essential tool that many may not realise because most brands are aiming to be at the top and working against each other. Collaboration will transform the industry in a form of enhancing productivity and innovation, and mainly will be the digital transformation in terms of adapting to the new technology, which will change the way people work but also reinventing the business for the benefit of the brand and its audiences.

■ ***What does the future of the industry look like to you?***

To me the future of the industry looks pretty exciting and more especially what happens in the digital space, I see groundbreaking strategies, and more brands finally getting the hang of the use of digital spaces. I see more collaboration between brands or even collaboration between brands and their consumers.

■ ***What are you most looking forward to?***

I am most looking forward to meeting the four other winners and engaging with them. Besides that, I am looking forward to making the most from this opportunity through engaging with industry leaders and possibly having the platform to share my ideas and collaborating with them. I am looking forward to more opportunities that are coming my way, opportunities that are going to challenge my creativity, but most importantly that will groom my creativity.

Find out more about the IAB SA's Front Row initiative [here](#). Follow Makhale on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#), and the [IAB SA](#) on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#) for updates.

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