

Emerging talent share their experience of working at Machine_

Issued by [Machine_](#)

21 Nov 2022

An inside scoop into how creative agency Machine_ run their internship programmes and development initiatives.



At the start of 2021, Machine_ launched an initiative called The Forge, established to assist previously disadvantaged individuals with the opportunity to access creative careers. “A forge is where metal is heated and shaped into what it will eventually become. The Forge by Machine_ aims to do the same, by finding and shaping undiscovered talent – mentoring and growing young creative talent and equipping them with the tools and skills needed in the industry,” says Robyn Campbell, managing director at Machine_ Cape Town.

One aspect of The Forge includes a sponsored bursary in partnership with the [Red & Yellow Creative School of Business](#). Upon graduating, Machine_ offered the selected student a paid internship for the following year (2022).

That successful candidate was Nuhaa Jacobs, who completed an advanced diploma in copywriting in 2021. “I heard about The Forge through The Knowledge Trust. It’s this online resource for young adults, helping them find funding, courses and jobs. It’s also a place for recruiters to find young talent,” explains Nuhaa. She had, at the time of the bursary application, completed an undergraduate degree at the University of Cape Town, studying English Literature, Film History and Media and Writing, which was sponsored by the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS).

“Red & Yellow is incredibly hands on,” she says. “Which was daunting coming out of four years of theory and essays. Despite that, finishing every assignment with proof of my capabilities was incredibly satisfying. The course gave me copywriting wisdoms along with a lot of information about the industry,” says Nuhaa.

Nuhaa then joined Machine_ Cape Town as a paid intern copywriter at the start of 2022. “The culture here is incredibly welcoming and I’ve had good mentorship that will stick with me going forward. I get to work on fun briefs and great brands, with people who genuinely want to see each other do well,” she says of her time at Machine_.

But this is not the only avenue for internships at Machine_. “As Machine_ is also part of the Publicis Groupe, we are actively involved in an internship programme called ‘Le Cubs’ and apply our ‘Forge’ methodology in preparing and

mentoring these young talents, making them future fit for the industry,” says Lindsey, managing director of Machine_ Johannesburg.



This year, Machine_ hosted an additional four interns across different fields: Vuyani Masango, a junior design intern; Katlego Tladi, a business analyst learner; Itumeleng Tau, a junior copywriter intern; and Lebone Taukobong, also a business analyst learner.

Vuyani shared some of his experience: “My time at Machine_ has been amazing. I'm loving every second of it. Every day is an adventure and no day is the same. I've worked on Weet-Bix, PNet, Lay's, White Star, and Simba. I'm super grateful to have been exposed to these brands and given a better insight.”

“I think Machine_ is a brilliant place to learn and grow, seeing creative thought leaders conceptualise and execute their ideas is really cool,” says Katlego. “The environment also really goes a long way in illustrating how many other departments are pivotal in getting great work out into the world. Everyone at the office is always willing to give me insights into their processes which is great for developing my skills and learning how to work in a team. Great peeps, great experience,” he adds.

“I had a great experience working as an intern copywriter at Machine_,” says Itumeleng. “I have worked on several campaigns including Weet-Bix, LiquiFruit, ABSA, Lay's, Heineken, and White Star. I learned that it is very important to remember the tone of the brand when writing copy,” he says of his experience.

“The Machine_ team is amazing,” says Lebone. “I enjoyed spending time with such creative and hardworking people, learning about marketing lingo and the different types of roles in an agency. My most favourite project was for the SAMA Awards for White Star,” he adds.

Creative Group head, Roderick Laka, who took two of the interns under his mentorship says: “It's been an incredible experience to mentor and work with both the talented Vuyani and Itu. Being afforded the opportunity to nurture young creative talent in this current climate has shown me the importance of leading with compassion and understanding. I am excited to see what the skills and tools they have been afforded during this time will enable them to achieve, and how they will push the boundaries of creativity for the progression of society.”

The Forge also has other initiatives that involve mentorship and training programmes throughout the year. One such successful initiative is Machine_67 for Mandela Day, where, in 2021, Machine_ raised over R10,000 for Blackboard Community and hosted a day in office with the talented teens. This year, Machine_ raised R15,000 for Blackboard via an online raffle of artwork created by Machine_ team members – including Vuyani, who contributed a piece called ‘Synchronicity’ – and hosted another successful workshop in the Machine_ Cape Town office. “The greater impact here is that through these programmes, we aim to diversify the advertising industry by opening up opportunities for students in the

field,” says Lindsey.

“At Machine_ we commit to raising the consciousness, representation, inclusion and the upward mobility of diverse talent. Developing easier and more supportive channels for emerging talent to enter the creative industry is a key business strategy for us as an agency. The past two years have seen incredible young talent contribute to our creative product and we’ve seen our work flourish as a result,” says Robyn.

Interested in working at Machine_? Want to know more about our internship programmes? Contact us at hello@thisismachine.co.za.

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