



Brian Muguto

MA Hons Management Studies / 2008

Head of Strategy at MediaCom

Please can you describe your role?

I am responsible for providing thought leadership to develop the agency's strategic capability and culture; ensuring that the agency (through its team of strategists) delivers a consistent, high quality strategy product to help connect our clients' brands to audiences / potential customers.

What experiences do you think have proved beneficial to your career journey?

I took learnings from every pre-professional working experience. Even though some experiences were out of necessity i.e. to pay bills, they all added value to my character, my soft skillset, team working, communication, budgeting, and just simply having the responsibility to carry out tasks that contribute to business outcomes. My most significant early experiences were part-time roles in my line of study and eventual field of full-time work in 3rd year vacation.

What impact did the 2008 financial crash have on your career path?

As a foreign student / graduate my dream was to secure a place on a Graduate Programme but companies started prioritizing UK citizens. I had to adjust my expectations and find another way to get on the job ladder. I looked at smaller businesses and leveraged relationships I'd built whilst doing part-time work to eventually secure my first job. Not everyone in my position was so lucky... many got jobs as shop assistants in retail, or cleaning work, or just returned to their home countries. Ultimately, I had a slower start to my career than I had originally imagined or planned for.

What advice would you give to students thinking about employment in your field?

Many companies, including the organization I work for have implemented cost-cutting measures including hiring freezes. There is also significant scrutiny on capacity and output of employees, leading to right-sizing and retrenchments. It won't be easy to get jobs, not paying jobs anyway. Freelance work, internships (paid/unpaid), etc. provide a foot-in at minimal risk to employers and, an opportunity to prove your worth - potentially earning a permanent or paid post. Be open-minded to the types of opportunities that might arise, even if they aren't your first choice, but also don't get into a comfort zone and lose sight of your ultimate goal. Find ways to immerse yourself in the industry - events, conferences, webinars, etc. - especially where you can meet and connect with people on the inside - treat each interaction as an interview. Learn from any and every opportunity... be patient, don't give up.