

Unpaid dogsbody - it's never OK!

By  Juliette Attwell

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This week we look at quite a personal situation, as well as the work options for a Bcom graduate.



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Someone who I had gotten very friendly with via social media and enjoyed all the same common work interests approached me in August to help her with their business, there would be no money because they couldn't afford me, yet. I said I had enough saved till the end of December to work for free as I really liked and believed in what they were doing. Promises were made, I truly believed I was going to be learning new things, doing different things, and gain invaluable skills that I would one day be able to use somewhere else. We agreed that from January I would get a salary of R15,000pm - but I was ok at the time with that because I thought of it as gaining new skills and learning new things without having to pay for any courses.

We're at the end of February, I have not been paid anything yet, the volume of workload is causing massive amounts of stress. I am given menial, grunt work to do, treated with zero respect and have my head 'proverbially' bitten off for not doing things exactly their way every day. I have not learnt or done anything new or different, I am an unpaid dogsbody. - S

Hi S,

Wow, I'm so sorry to hear about your situation. I would in most cases suggest having a discussion with your employer and coming to a reasonable agreement, however it sounds to me like you are being taken complete advantage of here and I would get out now! There is no place (unless you're a missionary or similar) where it's ok to work without getting paid. The fact that they promised you this and have not delivered is even more testament to the unsavoury character of the company. If you are also not doing the work you were intended for, treated with disrespect and are not learning then there really is no point in staying. Please get out now, you do not deserve to be treated like this and the more you stay, the more you will think that's all you're worth and that's not OK. Put your CV on the various job portals, contact recruitment agencies and get

your name out there as quickly as possible.

Wishing you all the best!

I am currently studying for my Bcom in marketing management with Unisa. I don't know what jobs to look for at present. I have worked as a receptionist and as a social worker. Please advise. - Kay

Hi Kay,

Thank you for your question. The nice thing about your degree is that it's very broad and allows you to do just about anything. The Bcom gives you nice exposure to business concepts and the marketing major really hones those creative marketing and communication skills.

What you need to do is find out what industry you want to learn more about. Perhaps it's events or maybe more corporate like the banking industry. You could also try focusing on branding and identify large FMCG companies to work for. To give you an example, I started out in events, moved into online marketing and eventually landed in recruitment, as I too have a Bcom and have found that there is very little that you cannot do.

Step two would be to apply for posts in the industry you want to get experience in. Try posts such as marketing assistant, administrative assistant, events coordinator, marketing coordinator, sales coordinator or communications assistant within these industries. Really, with this degree, the world is your oyster.

Best of luck and I hope you find your dream job!

Remember to always love what you do!

Juliette

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