

In the front row: Bokamoso Pascal Tsogang

 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](#).

Here, our interview with Tsogang:

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

Being a Front Row winner feels great! As a student, my biggest struggle has been gaining access to the industry. I am hopeful that the Front Row initiative can help in providing me access and insight into the industry.

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

I am currently studying at Vega. I am studying an Advanced Diploma in Brand Innovation.

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

I am thinking of studying the Media Management course or the Digital Content & Copywriting course. The Media Management course is focused on traditional marketing, which will help reinforce and expand on the current knowledge I have regarding marketing. The Digital Content & Copywriting appeals to my copywriting nature. The course can help me on how to effectively utilise my talent.

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

I am yet to have any real experience in the creative field. I'm still currently a student. I've always had a keen interest in the creative industry for a long time. Thinking about it in hindsight, I always knew that I'd somehow grow up to contribute to the field. Growing up I've always been creative, from sketch drawings to creative writings. Advertising has always been a place where I could see myself applying my trade.

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

One major problem that I have recognised within the industry is the lack of diversity. Whenever I look online at agency photos, the lack of diversity is clearly visible. This problem is not only applicable within the creative industry but rather the professional work environment.

Transformation is always discussed and debated when rather the focus should be on implementation.

Another problem facing the industry is the fact that many creatives are underpaid, meanwhile the creatives' work highly valuable. This approach towards creatives should be totally disregarded, corporates and agencies should both show more respect towards creatives by paying their rates accordingly.

Lastly, the industry as a collective should be more bold. The work being put out currently is great but I believe that the standard should be challenged. Agencies need to push the mould. I understand that budgets and some briefs are constraints but this shouldn't be an excuse for average work.

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

The coronavirus/Covid-19 pandemic is crippling, not only within the country but globally. It has placed many businesses under severe pressure and some simply don't have the luxury to function while under lockdown. The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted the industry quite drastically. Fortunately, enough most companies have made adequate provisions to continue operating during the lockdown.

Although I believe the effects of the Covid-19 lockdown reach beyond disrupting operations, staff morale must be at a low. Companies need to have effective lines of communication to keep staff morale high and to keep employees working, even though working from home is uniquely different, an emphasis needs to be placed on communication.

Although the Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted work operations, I do believe that this is an opportunity for digital to shine. The industry should be ramping up their digital/online presence across the various platforms.



Front Row winner Bokamso Pascal Tsogang

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

Access is one of the most important factors in any industry. Access is imperative to the growth and development of the industry. By providing access the industry continues to grow and helps provide insight and knowledge to those who need it.

Mentorship and collaboration when done right can really help many young professionals or entrants within the field. Mentorship and collaboration should be ingrained in every agency's ethos. It should also be mentioned that it should be done with the right approach.

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

The future of the industry looks expansive, young and vibrant. I see digital becoming a major space in which the majority of creatives will thrive. The reduced costs in data and upcoming 5G network rollout could hold the potential of unlocking the digital landscape's full potential.

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

I am looking forward to learning from the industry's various professionals that have vast experience and knowledge. Although I am looking forward to actually applying myself, I aim to gain real-time industry experience.

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

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