

Wunderman Thompson SA gives back by supporting Youth@workK

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This month on 12 August 2022, the world celebrated International Youth Day. The UN describes this commemorative day as a reminder that "the world needs to leverage the full potential of all generations; to collaborate and foster successful partnerships to ensure no one is left behind."



While the youth are resilient, the biggest issues they face are access to quality education and meaningful employment, and in South Africa, Statistics SA reports that unemployment among young graduates aged 15-24 sits at a bleak 32,6%.

Youth@workK, an implementor of the YES programme, a joint initiative by the private sector and government, helps South African youth gain invaluable work experience through employment placements. As an NGO, however, marketing and communications budgets are tight.

Wunderman Thompson South Africa runs annual internship and learnership programmes, but the business wanted to offer its services to an initiative such as Youth@workK so that it could extend its influence to a much broader pool of recipients. The agency partnered with Youth@workK in September 2021 in a pro bono capacity to help the NGO build awareness as a brand that has massive potential to impact the macro and socio-economic challenges the country faces. The team prioritised developing a positioning and communication strategy.

Erica Kempken, director at Youth@workK, says, "Wunderman Thompson SA opened our eyes to the processes needed to develop brand awareness and the depth of understanding required to see how best to translate this into a positioning strategy and communication strategy. As an NGO, we focus on getting more young people into employment, but WTSA has shown us how best to speak about our 'Why' to various stakeholders and beneficiaries. Their dedication and patience in

this process have been humbling and are much appreciated, as well as their openness to incorporating different operating approaches into their largely corporate world. I believe this journey has been truly transformational for both parties.”

The Wunderman Thompson executive sponsor for the project is Kayembe Ilunga, consulting director, who explains that Youth@work is poised to now implement its strategy, including social media management, content creation, and website development.

Erica adds, “We’d love to see more companies like Wunderman Thompson offer to work with us; it’s rewarding and very necessary work as many young people are growing up in families where there is little experience of formal work. Our programme exposes them to the digital world of work and e-learning, allowing youth to step into self-employment or formal employment within 12 months. The benefits for young South Africans who get an opportunity to be exposed to a real-life workplace as a result of us being able to successfully grow skills and attract more corporate partners into the YES programme are tangible. It’s in the private sector’s interests to nurture our economy’s future talent.”

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