

GroupM takes young graduates under its wing - again

Issued by [Wavemaker](#)

17 Feb 2022

On the eve of the pandemic, in early 2020, international media company GroupM launched its graduate programme in South Africa for the very first time. In hindsight, the timing was critical. Within a few months, young graduates looking for practical, on-the-job training were likely to find learnerships and internships hard to come by. Those who secured a position with GroupM were among the most fortunate.



Wanita Berry, Wavemaker SA, head of human resources

Although all-too aware of the importance of the GradX programme in 2020, GroupM has subsequently come to see it as an ethical and economic imperative. “We believe that we have a role to play in helping to upskill young talent to ensure growth within our industry and within South Africa,” says Wanita Berry, Wavemaker’s head of human resources. “Particularly during these challenging times, we want to do everything we can to create a talented pool of skilled, experienced professionals.”

As the programme enters its third year, it is larger, more robust and has a wider geographical spread than ever before.

“Our interview process remains quite rigorous and, with a large number of interested candidates, selecting those who are successful is both challenging and emotional,” Berry continues. “There is such eager talent in the market hoping to be snapped up and upskilled as the next successful generation of media experts.”

In its successful candidates, GroupM looks for individuals who have a passion for the industry and a willingness to learn. “We resonate with graduates who enjoy working in a team and collaborating, who aren’t afraid to ask questions and get involved, and who understand that challenges usually bring opportunities for learning and growth,” says Berry.

With every passing year, GroupM has been steadily increasing its intake of graduates. In 2020, it welcomed 11 graduates. In 2021, this number increased to 33, and this year, GroupM will be welcoming 40 new graduates through its doors. These graduates will be split between GroupM, Wavemaker, MediaCom, Mindshare and the African markets.

The programme’s expansion into other parts of Africa started in 2021 when, for the first time, three graduates joined the South Africa-based team remotely from their homes in East Africa. This is likely to be a priority going forward, and candidates from our African markets are once again part of the cohort in 2022.

“The programme is also evolving in terms of learning and development,” Berry adds. as we partnered with, Redefine Human Capital, to ensure that the programme is more streamlined, more efficient and more effective.”

At the end of this 12-month process, GroupM's objectives are clear. “We want to see our graduates succeed, regardless of their areas of interest,” says Berry. “We want to ensure that they are fully prepared for the next step in their careers. Ideally, we hope that we will be able to bring them on board within our suite of companies, as we have already done with so many graduates in the past.”

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