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MY INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE



Interning at NPI Governance Consulting during a Global Pandemic.

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Many may resonate with the fact that 2020 is the year that taught us to be grateful for what we have. For a lot of people, the year 2020 gave us an eye-opening experience – most probably due to the global pandemic known as COVID-19. Sadly, lives were lost, and people lost their jobs too. Those who were lucky enough to keep their jobs had to take salary cuts. Economically speaking, very hard times to live in, indeed. Although the South African economy has recently reopened to accommodate for more job seekers, some of which are graduates, some were fortunate enough to embark on an internship programme – like me. Having one foot in the door is a good start, but you should also "hit the ground running" as the saying goes.

About Ten months into my internship at NPI Governance Consulting, the pandemic truly made it memorable. As with most of these programmes, soon after you get into the working environment, you have certain expectations. For instance, some graduates may feel that the institution from which they come from will get Employer X instead of Employer Y to hire them, and their career path would somewhat, be set for them. Even if the former is not entirely false, it is not always the case either. On an interpersonal level, I learnt a great deal from working with different team dynamics. It's important to manage your expectations for this reason, much like how mine were managed on an ongoing basis effectively and transparently. The reason why that is important is that interns are only given a year to prove themselves worthy. So regular feedback is a crucial element for an internship, as it gives an intern direction and guidance moving forward.

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For instance, COVID-19 has forced us to be extra safe and smart in the ways we work and operate daily. Interns need to work with as many departments as possible for a fuller experience. Since you are expected to be office-bound while interacting with actual people exchanging knowledge and experiences. After all, besides trying to "make a name for yourselves", you are eager to learn that way you become better at what you do. Therefore, working from home forced me to adapt mentally and even quicker than expected.

Upon starting your position you are told that you might not utilize everything you were taught in varsity – which should be exciting news because it means that you will have to learn more at that company since your varsity did not equip you with a particular set of skills to work at NPI specifically. And that is the purpose of an internship; to learn how to work there or ultimately anywhere else. I did use a great amount of what I learned from varsity. However, there was a lot that I had to learn because of my limited knowledge of the world of BEE – notably as a young black South African male.



However, the pandemic forced my creative marketing skills to kick in – especially as an online marketing content creator. What I liked about that is how the BEE industry could not be left out even at such a troubling time in the country. This added onto what I had already known about BEE thus making me appreciate marketing BEE the best way I knew how over and above what I was taught about strategic brand communication in varsity.

While my programme is not yet over, so far, I realized that the institution you come from plays a role in your career path but not as much when it comes to the the kind of work you are expected to deliver. And do not be afraid to fail early as that allows you to learn sooner and apply better. You are also there so that your colleagues learn how you work too. You are given a chance to work on your personal brand. You can make a name for yourself, but it is also about making the company's branding more appealing. I come from a school of marketing where branding is taken seriously, you also learn to become a memorable (personal) brand that will be recommended by colleagues.

There is always something to learn if you have a teachable spirit. Which I am enhancing as I go. I know now that being learnable is better when you are put in a position to teach someone too. And I am looking forward to the next couple of months of learning to perhaps teach others more on what I have experienced. After all, the learning never stops.



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What I liked most about this programme is the fact that it focused on growing and transforming me for the better. I understood it clearer when I started working here at NPI that the company was not only consulting to improve other companies' performance, but it builds you for newer and better skills. Meaning despite the pandemic, I had more to gain than to lose. This encouraged me to stay positive no matter what.

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