Web development to the rescue - Bridging our skills gap one learnership at a time

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South Africa needs coders, South Africans need jobs. It seems a simple equation, and an area of immense possibility for creating employment, changing lives, and growing our economy.

In our experience, taking a person with potential from A to B is seldom simple but always rewarding. The complexities of equipping someone with skills and the ability to gain skills involve many moving parts and various forms of motivation. Resources, programme design, accreditation, industry involvement, the right guide, aptitude, recruitment and selection processes all need to come together to find and support a student and prepare them to build their careers. As a school, tertiary institution and training provider, we are a vehicle that takes someone from being a student to being a professional, but we rely on some parts we assemble from industry and society to make this possible.

In South Africa, with a 26.7% unemployment rate, and a challenged schooling and tertiary schooling system, we are all aware that resources are an issue. **Even after access to training or education has been established, students contend with more challenges than completing their school work;** support, transport, money, and knowledge of how to get a foot in the door - these all present barriers to entry. For those who want to learn but can't, resources to enable them have to come from somewhere and can take on many forms.

Through the Red & Yellow Springboard Marketing Institute (RYSMI), we have produced more than one batch of marketing and advertising professionals who could enter the industry after completing the National Certificate in Advertising with us. A partnership between industry and government means that we can offer learnerships to make this possible. **We are now applying this formula to a Web Development and Programming qualification.** So let's focus on the moving parts and where you can help.

Resources

There are many organisations struggling to hire web developers - listed as a scarce skill in a number of industries - but only a portion of those are investing in training and equipping people with this skillset. There are a number of local initiatives operating as vehicles (We Think Code, Code for South Africa, Code for Cape Town), and their success depends on funding and partnerships. Government has incentivised business through various rewards to invest in skills development. **Find out what your organisation is doing or can do to grow people with the skillsets they need.** This investment should be one of not just money, but time, and requires long-term thinking.

Programme design, outcomes, and mentorship

Those in the world of programming and web development, like many in the marketing and advertising industry, often **look more to what you can do, your portfolio and skillset, than just your qualification**. This opens up the possibilities for the ways in which skills can be imparted and how we can work within the programme design. Mentorship, guest lecturing, providing live case studies and briefs all provide points of connection that current professionals can offer. In the world of marketing and advertising specifically - there are unique challenges and context that a young web developer should be made aware of. Consider what kind of time you can make available, or where you can offer some mentored work experience to a student undertaking training.

Get involved

Whether it's mentorship, sponsoring learnerships, or lending your time and expertise to the programme, **Springboard**

needs your help to create and develop opportunities for the real career growth that South Africa's youth needs. Get involved by contacting Red & Yellow on info@redandyellow.co.za or calling us on 021 462 1946 (Cape Town) / 011 067 3400 (Johannesburg). Visit our website for more information on Springboard and the benefits of the programme for your business.

Applications for the programme are now open. *To apply, learners need to have a valid Senior Certificate, with Mathematics and Communications Literacy as one of the subjects passed. They need to be able to use a personal computer, and so Computer Studies as a Matric subject is advantageous.*

Please email your CV to springboard@redandyellow.co.za to be considered for the programme. Any queries about the programme can also be sent to this address.

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