

My dear unemployed communications graduate - an open letter



By [Mbali Ndandani](#)

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I must commend you on your hard work in university, I really am so proud of you - getting through mass communication, and even taking the digital media elective. However in case your lecturers omitted to tell you - most of what you learnt means nothing to the job we communications people actually do. I know how exactly how you found yourself in your current "between life phases state".

Second half of the year, and your university campus corridors were abuzz with graduate recruitment weeks. You joined your accounting and engineering friends in collecting pamphlets, but lo and behold when you read the pamphlets, the company wasn't recruiting for communications graduates at all. *So what are were you supposed to do?*

Unfortunately my treasure, you'll soon learn that life is always more difficult for a communications professional. How do you get around it?

A few tips

- **Timing** - November, December and January are the worst times possible for approaching communications agencies for work. In the first two months they're just counting down to the festive season and don't really care about any recruitment-never mind interns, and come January, they've already found interns anyway.
- **Write a press release about yourself** - this is what I advise all communications graduates to do. There are many graduates with CV's, but you need to make your CV stand out from all of the others. Write your bio as though it were going to appear on the front page of a newspaper or magazine
- **Become a sponge** of the communications industry. Write commentaries on industry issues to companies you approach. Even suggest to the company how they can improve on a campaign you know they've done. You might be off the mark, but they'll appreciate the fact that you've at least thought about the campaign in question.
- **Use Twitter & LinkedIn**. No, not to communicate with your friends about your weekend plans, but to build a reputation for yourself around communications and other related interests you may have. Follow people who are experts in the field and I promise you they'll teach you something everyday
- **Look for ways to upskill**. There are free online courses on video editing, creating podcasts etc, skills which will set you apart to potential employers and also show them that you are a self-starter who is constantly trying to improve yourself - and THAT will set you apart

Finally, know that all of us went through the emotional rollercoaster of trying to find our big break. Differentiate yourself from your peers - make it a deliberate strategy and you won't go wrong.

Yours sincerely

A previously unemployed graduate

ABOUT MBALI NDANDANI

Mbali Nlandani is a communications professional with experience in brand, corporate, sponsorship and CSI communications with clients such as Hyundai, Kagiso Trust, Castrol and MTN. Follow @MbaliNlandani on Twitter.

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