

Transformation isn't just about your scorecard or employing more black people

 By [Jessica Tennant](#)

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Digify Africa recently won a Black Pixel for Best Contribution to Transformation in the Digital Industry at the IAB Bookmark Awards.

Having won the same award in 2017, Nomacala Mpeta, head of learning at Digify Africa, explains why they're proud to be recognised a second time for leading digital transformation locally and encourages more agencies and NGOs to recognise the need to do so as a business imperative in corporate South Africa and to adopt their approach in collectively achieving widespread transformation across the industry...

Comment on your Bookmarks 2019 win.

We are honoured to be recognised for a second time for leading transformation in digital. It has been a real boost to the team who have worked so hard and done the hard work of creating programmes that have helped young black people create valuable and meaningful careers in an industry that is still largely untransformed.

What does this recognition mean?

It gives us hope and optimism that the impact is being felt. It is a long-term project, but we are in it for the long haul. We hope it inspires others to take it seriously and not treat transformation as a box-ticking exercise. We also hope it means something for all the partners and funders who have believed in us and our mission and put their money where their mouths are.



Nomacala Mpeta



Livity Africa will now be known as Digify Africa

12 Jul 2018



More specifically, Digify Africa (then Livity Africa) won the same award a couple of years ago – what does it mean to have won this award twice?

It has been incredibly encouraging in both years, but we would love to have seen more progress in the general state of transformation in the two years. In some ways, it reminds us of how big the task is. It does give a bit of perspective to reflect that we have now trained almost 100,000 young people, and to be recognised for that is awesome. I think it is also recognition that we have led the way in concentrating on young black talent. We have been running boot camps and graduating talent into the industry since 2011 and it's also flattering to see that this model has been copied and replicated by other NGOs and even some agencies.

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■ ***Comment on your contribution to transformation in the digital industry, why Digify Africa is a shining example of a transformed workplace (employing 92% young black women) and why you think Digify deserved this win.***

In this context, it's really about the hundreds of careers we have kickstarted in the digital industry.

“ You can find ‘Digifyers’ all over the place. You never know where they will show up! These young people will be the leaders of the industry someday. ”

We try and give a chance to those young people who have the talent but may lack the means or opportunity. They rarely disappoint. Because we have learnt that by placing people in other companies, it has been easy for us to adopt the philosophy ourselves and be an overwhelmingly black female company (of superstars).

■ ***Which aspect, in particular, do you believe stood out?***

I suppose the scale we have worked at. Outside of our industry-focused boot camps, we are tackling transformation at grassroots level, with schools’ programmes, startup training and also expansion into Nigeria and Kenya with many of our programmes. Closer to home, we get great recognition and support from our partner agencies and brands we work with, mainly because anyone who has employed or worked with a Digifyer has thankfully usually had a great experience.



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■ ***Why does Digify Africa believe that in order to close the digital divide, we need to equip young people and professionals with digital marketing and content marketing skills. Why is skills development and more specifically digital education the way forward in this regard?***

These skills at an educational level are becoming basic skills that young people need. In terms of livelihood, whether a traditional career or an entrepreneurial journey, they are also becoming fundamental. There is rightly a big focus on critical skills like coding and programming, but we are trying to focus on more accessible skills that can unlock jobs or help grow businesses. Specifically, we are looking at digital marketing, social media and digital content. These may sound niche but they’re actually hugely broad in focus and have many specialisms within the job families related to them.

We have put a lot of thought into how basic digital skills can lead to junior, mid-level and senior jobs in digital and trying to understand the ever-evolving skills landscape and how it relates to demand. But at the end of the day, everyone needs these skills to excel in the digitised world of 2019!

■ ***What would you say to encourage other businesses to recognise the need for transformation as a business imperative in corporate South Africa?***

It will make you a better business.

“ It's not just about your scorecard or having more black people in your team – we believe our approach will breathe life, diversity, innovation and energy into your company. ”

Young people have been born into a digital world and have a lot to teach the older generation. They also understand the consumer on the ground.

In conclusion, Mpeta said a big thank you to their partners and supporters: Facebook, VML, Ogilvy, Standard Bank, the IAB and all the agencies that recruit and employ their Digifyers.

Follow her on Twitter [@NomaMee](#), as well as [@DigifyAfrica](#). Also, click through to our [IAB Bookmarks Awards and Summit](#) special section on site for continued coverage of this year's winning work.

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