



The dynamics and demands of the time

ments in
relationship
client

The Inner Game of
coach Tim Gall-
ed a revolutionary
for overcoming the
business and lapses of
that can keep a player

applied these prin-
ciple world in *The*
ork, his precept being
ways an inner game
your mind — no mat-
game you are playing.
can take numerous
ost influential being
al coaching for busi-
d executives.

the coach in every
pave the way for im-
mance and capability.
onal coaching is all
ating new behaviours.
will not do that unless
meaningful reason for

ry outcome of transfor-
ching is to give people a
der, deeper view of what
life, why they may not be
g it and how they can

l psychologist Eugene
ays ideal candidates for
re high achievers and cur-
rential leaders — and this is
true for CEOs, who have
ling boards in an organ-

ies need to be diligent and
when selecting coaches for
employees.

tionally, people may have a
e coaching experience, but it
be unwise to conclude that all
ing is ineffective — that would
e suggesting that one had ex-
e means you should never fall in
again.

NOT CRICKET: If your coach talks at you, he's not professional

These lessons must be applied to
other service providers who are not
want a coach to be a coach.

Mathatha Tsedu

In 2008, the Media24 leadership decided that the internship programme in existence was inadequate and needed to be bolstered. That responsibility was bestowed on me as I had indicated my intention to move out of active editing of *City Press*.

What drove this decision? In the main it flowed from a realisation that graduates were arriving in newsrooms to start working ill prepared for the world of work. It was not a new problem. The skills audit done by the South African National Editors' Forum in 2002 had revealed a shockingly low level of skills in newsrooms.

This audit led to an Indaba in Stellenbosch which brainstormed what could be done. Two of the solutions identified were to increase the ability of journalism students to access internship programmes in all media houses, and an approach to the Department of Education to jack up the schooling programme as it was identified as one of the contributing factors. To this end a meeting was held with then Minister of Education Kader Asmal.

Media24's decision was thus in line with conclusions already reached by the journalism fraternity itself about the need to streamline and mainstream internship programmes. As an editor I had dealt with interns and had found language and the ability to use English in particular to be a serious problem. And many of the interns had not even been into a courtroom during their two, three or four years of journalism studies.

This was disturbing as the expectation from editors is that graduates would arrive with a good theoretical grounding and use of language. Editors also expect graduates to bring to the newsroom some practical experience, not just exercises done in lecture rooms but real-world work that would have been marked and even published.

In the past journalism schools taught aspirant journalists a general approach to journalism for the early part of their studies, with students expected to choose a specialisation area – print, radio, TV, PR etc – before completing their course. The world of journalism has moved on, but many training institutions, universities and colleges, are still locked in this mode while convergence now means that a journalist is expected to do all of these.

The fact that a newspaper has a website that has podcasts, photo galleries and video clips of interviews or events, means editors expect graduates to be able to write a story for the web, edit sound for a podcast, shoot and edit short video clips and possess the ability to upload pictures, sound and videos on their own to the website. When all of that is done, they would still be expected to write the story for the paper of the following day or the following weekend. Online sites may expect their most

NOT JUST TALENT, BUT PRACTICE

Remy Raitt

I am working at *The Witness* daily newspaper in Pietermaritzburg. Although I am treated like any of the other reporters here I have a support system behind me. The Media24 Academy is always there if I need help and the editorial seniors are always willing to sit down and unpack any issues I might have. This is similar to the set up my final year class had at *Grocott's Mail*, but at the *Witness* I am working with bigger stories and tighter deadlines.

In the two months I have spent at *The Witness* I have already noticed a drastic improvement in my writing. My lecturers were right; it is not just about talent but more importantly about practice. And whenever I am cast into a tricky situation I try and think back to the ethical training I got at Rhodes and the advice the visiting speakers gave us at the academy.

Although short, my journalistic career so far has been crammed with new experiences – one of the reasons I wanted to be a reporter in the first place. And although I still have a lot to learn I feel the training I have received will allow me to be an ethically-minded, hard-working and inquisitive journalist.

Debora Patta told our academy class that she was worried about the future of journalism. I can't share her concern. I think that if universities continue to instill the importance of fair and balanced reporting and young people continue to show a keen interest in news, then institutions that offer journalism courses and internship programmes like the Media24 Academy will continue to mould young reporters into capable journalists.

junior staffers to edit and upload stories, while magazines often need journalists to also do Twitter, Facebook and mobile sites.

Instead we are welcoming graduates who at best have some idea of uploading a story, or who have “done radio” and thus are able to edit sound but not load it, and so on. This is not helpful today because it means whatever the medium is that takes such a graduate, staff have to spend a lot of time teaching the new arrival basic stuff that should be common in any university today.

To make life even worse, the decline in readership of newspapers in particular has only been offset by the growing tabloids. Many of the people at universities have an antipathy towards tabloid journalism and the graduates from these institutions are ill-equipped to work in this growing sector of our media. Class influences about the content of many tabloids should not affect the preparation of students who are going to work in a world where that is the growing sector, the sector that may employ them.

In forming the Media24 Academy, interviews were done with heads of journalism departments at various universities to share our own approach but also importantly to check our understanding against their own experiences as teachers. Except in cases where some saw the academy as a vote of no confidence in their work or as a threat to bursaries funded by the industry, in the main there was agreement that this would add value.

We also travelled to a number of countries and interacted with industry-based institutions to learn from them. Arising from all these interactions, we formulated a programme along the following lines:

The internship programme lasts for a year and takes 16 graduates.

It consists of a small amount of theoretical class work which helps assess the levels of each intern and where they would be most suitable within our company.

This initial part also involves lots of field work

in courts and at press conferences, visits to the Union Buildings to understand the workings of government, guest lectures by editors, etc.

The interns spend on average three months each working at newspapers, online sites and magazines. While there they are visited by academy staff for interviews and assessments as well as interaction with their mentors and supervisors.

The work in class and at the various outlets is assessed and is used to give the top 70% one-year contracts with various mediums.

The academy also manages the internships of former bursary holders who have completed their post-graduate studies at a number of institutions. These interns are placed at one newspaper for the whole year but we insist that they move around and do news, online reporting, feature writing and some sub-editing.

Finally, the academy is responsible for mid-career training, managing all journalism-related courses for the whole of Media24.

The selection criteria for the 16 graduates are stringent. Besides the usual CV and application form, the applicant must send at least one published work in print, radio, web or TV. We insist that anyone who thinks they want to become a journalist should have been able to get something into a public space given the advances in technology.

They also need to choose from a number of topics and write a 1000-word feature on that subject – this is used to check writing style and ability.

Those shortlisted undergo face-to-face interviews with a panel of editors and academy staff. On the same day, they write a short news story for the web under supervision, to make sure the feature was indeed written by the same applicant and not by some aunt or uncle. They also do a semi-psychological test that includes news sense, logic and general knowledge. The scores on all these are added up and the top 16 are in.

Journalism is about language and logic: the ability to organise information in a logical and informative way is central to the work of journalists. These are the two critical areas we look at.

Since Media24 introduced the academy, Independent Newspapers SA has relaunched its cadet school and Avusa has revamped its internship programme with more emphasis on new media. This is an indication that a number of significant media houses are seeing a need to streamline internship programmes and ensure interns are better equipped to deal with real work before they are thrown into the deep end.

Every generation produces its own journalists who go on to meet the demands and challenges of their time. But for that to happen, those entrusted with shaping the initial training need themselves to understand the dynamics and demands of that time. I am unable to say all institutions do this.

This failure leads to certificated graduates who land in newsrooms unprepared and find themselves lost because the newsrooms are themselves so juniorised that the seniors in many cases need much help themselves.

The basis of all journalism is writing, so universities need to get students to write more. Not just exercises in class but written work that is published in a publicly-

ALTHOUGH SHORT, MY
JOURNALISTIC CAREER SO
FAR HAS BEEN CRAMMED
WITH NEW EXPERIENCES

accessible place such as a campus newspaper or website. Nothing concentrates the mind, when writing, like the knowledge that the piece is for public consumption and not just class work.

Universities and other institutions need to incorporate tabloid writing into their curricula, and make sure all journalism students can edit text, photos, sound and video, and upload these. In addition, universities must help students get driving licences because companies no longer employ people on a permanent basis without a driver's licence – even employing an intern who cannot drive causes practical problems.

When these few things are done, the gulf between industry expectations and what the training institutions are delivering will narrow and internship programmes will cease being the virtual starting base of real journalism. At that point, the academy will be able to focus merely on widening practical experience and become what it aims to be: a bridge from education into industry.

AN EXTREME INTEREST IN NEWS

Tamaryn Sutherns

It is safe to say that these are interesting times that we live in. Julius Malema has been spewed all over the media, President Jacob Zuma's sex life hung up like dirty laundry and the ANC coalition crumbling before our eyes. To enter the media world at this point has been like grabbing a bull by its horns: exciting, challenging and something I've had to grapple with, wrapping my mind around the politics of South Africa.

I did not take enough interest in current affairs at university, where I studied journalism for four years. If I had time I would skim online news sites, but my news knowledge was limited to the local happenings of Grahamstown, something which became a necessity when our writing class worked for *Grocott's Mail* three days a week for the first semester of 2009.

The fact is, if you aren't working in news, there is little pushing you to engage with it. It is only now, once I have to think of my own news stories and generate my own ideas and opinions around politics, sports, business and events taking place in our country, if not the rest of the world, that I find myself taking an extreme interest in the news channels and documentaries. I have replaced evening series shows with news and political commentary, as well as *3rd Degree* – it is safe to say that I would now choose Debra Patta giving political leaders a tongue lashing over *Grey's Anatomy* any day.

I'm working at *The City Press*, where I will be for a total of five months. Media 24 provided us with five weeks of training before we were placed at various newspapers around the country. Every day during training, we were encouraged to read the news and we had discussions about it with Mathatha Tsedu. News awareness quizzes at university do little to push students to grapple with the goings on of the world. Only when these issues can be discussed and understood do they begin to infiltrate the mind. I began to really immerse myself in news when I knew I could talk about the things that I didn't understand and they would be explained to me, debated and the issues engaged with.

After *City Press*, I will be placed somewhere around the country for three months of online experience. After that I will be replaced somewhere again for magazine experience for six weeks. These are diverse and fantastic opportunities to any journalist in training.