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Headline: How we can shape the future of talent

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We are in an experience economy. There has been a clear evolution in consumer behaviour, with expectations of more automation, personalisation and customisation. Solving this with traditional marketing and communications no longer works.

We are no longer designing for a brand built around media habits, but designing and transforming brand experiences built for technology habits. We're not just building systems, but ecosystems of communication and services. To do it, takes a team of brilliant, and diverse individuals - experience designers, brand strategists, visual designers, creative technologists - and their creativity, skills and thinking are integral in the creative mix to come up with solutions that will help us transform brands.

To ensure we evolve and stay at the forefront of disruption, teams need to be creating new edges and pioneering new frontiers, staying on top of innovation and technology trends as we advise brands on future strategies. It's no easy task finding this talent, and it's more important than ever to create an environment in which they will be nurtured and enabled to grow.

A collaborative, innovative and inclusive environment is key - it allows talent to do the best work of their lives, constantly sharpening and challenging themselves and each other.

However, looking further into the horizon, how do we ensure we are future-proofing our business with the talent that's incoming into the industry? How do we seed into the next generation of talent and equip them with skills fit for this digital economy?

Working closely with SMU on its Communication Management track, we designed an undergraduate module modelled around the R/GA business, with our methodology of 'Transformation at Speed' woven into their undergraduate curriculum. With a bespoke business communication model, our objective was to increase the employability of the next generation and pave the way to success in a world that is transforming at speed.

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The initiative was the first of its kind. SMU students went through eight weeks of lessons by Dr Mark Chong which included co-designed topics such as business model innovation, storytelling, engagement strategy and the impact of technology innovation, brand experience design, and design thinking methodologies.

Students then spent a four-week practicum Bootcamp with various R/GA departments, applying theories to live business cases from four brands, before presenting responses to a panel of judges.

The students benefited from getting our expertise on-tap, which helped shape their educational experience and ensure relevance in the real world, and we benefit in the long run, by investing into the next generation of talent with diverse capabilities and heavy competency in a primary skillset. With more initiatives like this, we can then truly say we're built for the experience economy.

By investing in the generations to come, we will be helping talent keep pace with an economy that's transforming and evolving at speed. While creating conditions for our teams to grow is crucial and often an attractive benefit for talent acquisition, we can take it a step further and close the gap in digital readiness by using our knowledge, skills and experience to seed into the next generation of talent.

Dorothy Peng is managing director of R/GA Singapore.