

# Nurturing growth and embracing challenges: Tips for your journey towards career growth and empowerment

By [Gabrielle Marx](#), issued by [DUO Marketing + Communications](#)

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Adaptability and being open to new challenges are the key to success in South Africa's PR and digital marketing industries. Celebrating my first-year work anniversary at DUO Marketing + Communications, where I have recently been promoted to senior account manager, I've had the privilege of being part of a supportive and empowering work culture that has allowed me to grow both personally and professionally. I would like to share my journey and offer some valuable tips that can help fellow professionals in South Africa's PR and digital marketing industry to navigate their own paths to career growth and success.

## Embrace continuous learning and development

To thrive in this dynamic industry, it's essential to prioritise continuous learning and development. Your clients are thought leaders at the forefront of their industries, so why shouldn't you be? Continuous learning can take different formats, and in my case, this has been focused over the last year on the move from solely focusing on traditional PR, towards using digital marketing to take my clients' brand strategies to the next level. My advice would be to seek out opportunities for internal training sessions, attend relevant industry events, and stay up to date with the latest trends and technologies. This not only gives you insight into what the future of the PR and digital marketing industry holds, but gives you an advantage in marrying your clients' commercial objectives with the most important digital channels to reach their audiences.



Gabrielle Marx, senior account manager at DUO Marketing + Communications

At DUO, this emphasis on ongoing education has been instrumental in expanding my expertise and providing innovative solutions to clients to match their own commercial objectives. For instance, traditional PR may not be the best communication method to build your clients' credibility. Their audience might be on a different channel altogether. The world of digital has expanded communications activities and exploring the use of social media, video content and integrated digital PR could be the missing link between marketing and the sales your client needs. By staying ahead of the curve, you'll position yourself as a valuable asset to both your clients and your organisation.

## Dive deep into client needs

Trust is one of the biggest factors of any relationship, especially between client and their communications partner. Building client trust comes down to showing that you understand their business completely and have their commercial interests at heart. Yes, they are the experts in their industry, but so are you in yours. My next tip is to really take the time to learn about and understand your clients' needs, challenges, and what their specific goals are. This is critical to developing any effective PR and digital marketing strategy. Take the time to immerse yourself in their world, engage with their leadership and implementation teams, and gain an in-depth understanding of their business. This deep dive into their operations will serve as a solid foundation for creating strategies that are tailored specifically to their unique requirements.

There is not a more rewarding feeling than really making a change and adding value to your client's business by matching what their goals are to what your expertise and knowledge is in PR and digital marketing. And the results really will speak for themselves. In my case, being rewarded with my clients' feedback that they see DUO as an integral partner for their business means that we have become a trusted partner who truly understands their goals and the road to achieving them.

## Seek guidance and coaching

One of the biggest lessons I've learnt throughout my career is not to be afraid to seek guidance and coaching from experienced colleagues within your organisation. Oftentimes you would think that this is seen to be a weakness, you're supposed to be an expert in your field right? Wrong. This brings me back to my first tip about continuous learning. There's a saying that we regularly use at DUO that goes, 'You don't know what you don't know' and this stands true every day. Your colleagues are there to support you, learn from you and you from them. At DUO, our culture of support and mentorship has been pivotal in shaping my personal career growth. By collaborating with your team, learning from their experiences, especially with refocusing from traditional PR to digital, and tapping into their expertise empowers you to deliver exceptional results for your clients. By leveraging the collective knowledge and wisdom of your colleagues, you gain valuable insights, develop new skills, and build the confidence needed to tackle new challenges head-on.

### **Be agile and adapt to digital solutions**

Digital is here, and no, it's not just another saying. It's part of our everyday lives for every single person on the African continent and it's here to stay. From a traditional PR perspective, it's all good and well reporting each month on how many top tier print articles you've secured, but it really does take a certain amount of self reflection to recognise when PR efforts alone may not be effectively driving your clients' commercial objectives. This requires you to be agile and adaptable and to explore digital solutions to better align with their goals. The key is in listening, paying attention to your clients' feedback and identifying signs that PR activities may require evolution. I encourage you to use the insights and success stories shared by your team in their unique situations to implement digital pivots and journeys for your clients. By embracing new strategies and approaches, you'll position yourself as a valuable resource who can drive tangible results.

### **Take ownership of strategies**

If you are given the opportunity, one of my biggest tips would be to take ownership of client strategies from start to finish. This can be a game-changer for your career. In my experience, not only will you be the person implementing the strategy, but it comes back to that rewarding feeling of really understanding your client and their business. By getting involved in the client onboarding process, you can immerse yourself in their business from the get-go and understand their unique needs. Armed with this knowledge, you will be able to design comprehensive action plans that align with their goals and objectives. The key outcome that you should be striving for with this is that taking ownership of digital strategies allows you to showcase your unique expertise, collaborate with your team and learn from their insights, and demonstrate your ability to deliver exceptional results.

### **Build a supportive network**

The last tip I want to focus on is based on the notion that 'it takes a village'. And trust me, it really does. The support of your team and colleagues is crucial in your journey towards growth and empowerment in any communications role. My advice is to start off by building a network of professionals who are just as passionate about innovation in PR and digital marketing as you are. This should be a network of skilled individuals who can offer guidance, share insights, and provide support when needed. At DUO, I've found my village where I can collaborate through brainstorming sessions, knowledge sharing, and one-on-one coaching with colleagues who I trust. Surrounding yourself with a supportive network provides the motivation and resources necessary to overcome challenges and achieve your individual and collective goals.

In the PR and digital marketing industry, a continuous focus on nurturing growth and embracing challenges are essential for your career success. By prioritising continuous learning, deepening your client understanding, seeking guidance and mentorship, being adaptable, taking ownership, and building a supportive network of professionals passionate about innovation, you can navigate your career path with confidence.

While every person has their own experiences and career lessons to share, it's important to understand the background behind this. My personal journey at DUO has been one of empowerment and growth, and I encourage you to embrace these tips as you embark on your own professional journey. With the right mindset and a commitment to personal and professional development, you can achieve remarkable results and thrive in this exciting industry.

Find out more about the career opportunities available at DUO [here](#).

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Gabrielle Marx is senior account manager at DUO Marketing + Communications.

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