

A letter to my 'trainee' self

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I've just reached my five year work anniversary at MediaCom. Now I know that to those who have worked here for double or even triple that, it makes me relatively new but in those five years I've learnt so much that I wanted to share my learning's with the next generation of beginners. So, I've written a letter to my 'Trainee' self, to help others just starting out and to remind me just how far I've come!

I know that negotiating rates for the Nursing Times and buying A3 panels on the back of toilet doors in Planet Bingo isn't sexy, but it will give you the strong foundation you need to be a well-rounded planner/buyer that will mean clients trust your judgement.

I've been fortunate enough to get exposed to a plethora of clients from public sector to premium airlines, who were all very traditional in their approach to media, as this has given me a solid base of skills from which to develop further. I used to be envious of the senior employees who were excellent top-line planners and who could give clients a quick, rough estimate of how much they would need to spend to get a certain reach or frequency. But now it's me who is becoming more comfortable with those types of questions, and I believe that it is all down to the experience that I got as a trainee.

Give yourself a break – you are on a massive learning curve.

When you're a trainee you're literally starting from a base knowledge of zero – even excel feels like a mountain to climb – so just relax. You're on the biggest learning curve that you'll face for a while and it will take time to find your feet. Not one single person is expecting you to be an expert, so lean on the people who do have the experience and ask questions you don't know the answer to, because winging it is never the answer! Please don't sit in silence fretting about how to work out a CPT! Just ask.

You will make mistakes. But that is totally OK.

Mistakes will happen, in fact, you'll make mistakes for the rest of your career, but its how you fix them that will be the making of you. You need to be honest and upfront with people when you have made a mistake and 9.9 times out of 10 it will be able to be fixed. More importantly, they are never the end of the world. I've yet to accidentally book a million pound media plan without getting sign off from the client *touches wood frantically* as there are processes in place to help stop mistakes from happening but if some do sneak through, don't beat yourself up – instead learn from them.

Trust your gut – your initial instinct will usually be right

You'll get to a point when you know you can trust your gut. All the knowledge you've gained will eventually mean you can spot something that simply doesn't make any sense. If the little voice at the back of your head is ringing the alarm bells, listen to it, you know more than

you think you do.

One day a switch will flick in your brain and everything will make sense

The time will come when everything falls into place and suddenly everything that seemed confusing and daunting will seem like a breeze, but that takes time so be patient with yourself, there's a long journey you have to go on to get there.

I was really fortunate that I managed to get a job so quickly after graduating. So many of the friends I went to university with, only managed to get work in the industry very recently – some even had to re-train and go down a different path – but I always knew I wanted to work in media and I have thoroughly enjoyed my time at MediaCom. Never in a million years, did I expect to get so much from a job. I've made genuine friends for life not to mention the man I'm marrying next May.

I've no idea what the next five years will bring? But I can't wait to find out!

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