

Le Roy applauds the Thirve@55 move by Thinkerbell to introduce an interesting intern opportunity that is not only open to older people but encourages people from a broad range of backgrounds.

"Diversity in thinking, backgrounds, gender and age is the secret to creating a more interesting and successful industry – hiring people who think and act the same way is not representative of society and not a successful way to drive innovation," she says.

Eaon Pritchard, a regular contributor to *AdNews* has just turned 55 and he's messaged Thinkerbell.

"Things are quiet-ish at ArtScienceTechnology global headquarters for the next few weeks," he says.

"This kind of thing is what makes Thinkerbell so zeitgeisty. An activation arranged for the convenience of social media and news media.

"Success is measured by how widely it is published and replicated. They understand newsworthiness is a key metric. They are fast, intelligent and creative – and it supports their challenger position as a sort of anti-WPP!"

WPP's Mark Read took a beating with his suggestion but Pritchard can see his point.

"People have been quick to cry 'ageism' but even as a card-carrying old git I say the last thing we need in this business is another victimhood narrative," he says.

"When Bill Gates walks into a bar, on average everyone's a billionaire. That's the trouble with averages.

"I am pretty sure the big decision-makers in WPP are all grown-ups but the average age is pulled down because there are so many 'bullshit jobs' in these big agencies, particularly in digital. Flunkies and box-tickers, jobs that require little experience or expertise and will be superseded by AI automation as soon as the tech catches up."

Allan Dib, strategist and champion of consumer centricity, thinks the problem is what "digital" has become, not the technical skills.

"Digital is now synonymous with short-term benefits – quick sales," he says.

"Anyone that is over the age of 45 believes in building long-term sustainable brands. The industry does not want to have a brand-building conversation, so it is easier to get rid of people trying to have that conversation."

Adam Wise, co-founder and creative director at *Jack Nimble*, the *Adnews* Small Agency of the Year - Independent, says every industry benefits from having diversity in age, just like diversity in culture.

"There's so much to be learned from people who are different to you," he says.

"For me, age doesn't matter. I've learned loads from people who are older than me, and from people who are younger than me.

"The most important thing is attitude. To be good at digital, you need to have a willingness to learn because it's a space that's constantly changing. I've met people who have lost the willingness to learn at 22 and people who've lost it at 55."

Two years ago in *AdNews*, **Darren Woolley**, CEO of pitch consultants TrinityP3, exposed the underlying economics supporting ageism in advertising.

He says the announcement by Thinkerbell on recruiting 55 plus year old interns is a positive for addressing ageism.

"Any step that encourages the retention of experience and wisdom in agencies has to be good," says Woolley.

"But why internships? If there is one thing the advertising industry does worse than retaining mature age workers, it is exploiting younger workers through protracted, non-paid internships.

"Or expecting and demanding ridiculously long working hours from those that manage to land a job.

"While Thinkerbell is offering paid internships, the concern is we could end up with second-class employees at both ends of a career. Exploited juniors and seniors. Isn't there a better way to treat human beings in an industry that prides itself on being a people-industry?"

Adam Washington, consumer practice lead at Orchard, the *AdNews* Digital Agency of the Year, says the industry often misses the important distinction between understanding an audience, and understanding technology.

"In the past, it could be someone else's responsibility to 'get' tech, but that's not the case in 2020," he says.

"Everyone working in advertising has a responsibility to understand and passionately follow technology, because it's the canvas we use to tell our stories today. And anyone who misses this, regardless of age or experience, will miss the mark.

"But assuming technology is understood, I believe more experience will always lead to a better understanding of an audience, and better work. We all lose when we so systematically undervalue it. Perhaps by more clearly distinguishing between the two, we can make fewer assumptions and better value what older staff can bring to our clients today."

James Lawrence, co-founder of digital agency Rocket, says good marketing is timeless.

"It is about truly understanding the target market and great storytelling," he says.

"I don't care if someone is 20, 30 or 45, if they can truly understand concepts like market orientation, segmentation, targeting and positioning then I want them running my client campaigns."

Lawrence says the best digital marketers he has come across since starting Rocket in 2006 are those that truly embrace the speed of change in the current landscape and are curious self-starters.

"Give me a 45-year-old marketer that continually embraces change and takes their personal professional development seriously over a tech-savvy 22-year-old TikTok aficionado that believes they have learnt everything they need to know," he says.

"Digital is becoming an increasingly redundant term. Loads of traditional offline media is being bought programmatically, and conventional TV advertising has been 'digitalised' with the rise of YouTube and other channels.

"In fifteen years we won't talk about digital media and digital marketing. Digital will be a redundant term in these uses.

"The marketing landscape will be a converged one with loads of technology that impacts how we buy media and manage it, but many marketing fundamentals that pre-date the 1990s rise of digital will remain true."

Have something to say on this? Share your views in the comments section below. Or if you have a news story or tip-off, drop us a line at adnews@yaffa.com.au

Sign up to the AdNews newsletter, like us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter for breaking stories and campaigns throughout the day.

11:08 AM Great idea but No need to specify a minimum age, which maybe illegal, just specify a minimum of say ...

Peter Evans on *The lawyers advised against it but an agency is advertising for older interns*

8:10 AM This is actually brilliant.

Lopin on *The lawyers advised against it but an agency is advertising for older interns*

8:55 AM

The alternative creeper. We can all compete, but you wouldn't become a peeping Tom to be the best pe...
Lopin on *Media agencies applaud Nine&co's move as an alternative to Facebook and Google*

0 Comments

AdNews

Disqus' Privacy Policy

Login

Recommend

Tweet

Share

Sort by Newest

Start the discussion...

LOG IN WITH

OR SIGN UP WITH DISQUS

Name

Be the first to comment.

Subscribe

Add Disqus to your site

Do Not Sell My Data

DISQUS

About AdNews

Advertise

Contact Us

Privacy Policy

Site Map

Newsletter

Subscribe

Terms & Conditions

Yaffa Media

Web Advertising Specs

Print Advertising Specs

Mobile Site

yaffa

daemon

bespoke web development