

New marketplace connecting local businesses with freelancers

 By [Jessica Tennant](#)

30 Sep 2020

Cape Town-based marketers Hillel Chemel and Jonathan Mayer recently launched Fundi.Digital to bridge the gap between South African businesses and local freelance marketing professionals.



Hillel Chemel and Jonathan Mayer.

The initiative has already shown consistent growth since its launch in February and is quickly becoming a trusted matchmaking marketplace.

“We are a proudly South African company and believe in our country's talents. We have a group of prequalified freelancers who are ready for any task or project you throw at them.

“Our hands-on, consultative approach gives clients the assurance that they are not only matched with the right freelancer for the job but with someone who is an overall great fit and is geared to help them reach their business goals.”

Here, Chemel and Mayer share more on the idea behind Fundi.Digital, why they consider it a proudly South African business and the importance of supporting local talent...

Why did you launch Fundi.Digital?

We started Fundi.Digital because there is a growing demand for highly skilled freelancers and while these skills are available, accessing them can be a challenge. We were either looking for skills within our own work environment or being asked by other people and businesses if we knew someone that could help them with a specific task or project.

Over the years, through our own work in the industry, we have built up a network of highly competent freelancers that we felt confident in referring to other companies and agencies.

Due to our experience, businesses trusted our referrals and we realised that if we created a trusted environment for businesses to connect with freelancers, we could service the growing need. We wanted to bridge the gap between talent seekers and freelancers.

■ ***How was the business impacted by the lockdown, just a month after launching?***

From an economic standpoint, it wasn't the best time obviously. But if we look at it positively, lockdown actually helped us because it fast-tracked remote working norms and digitalisation, which suits freelancers. A lot of the apprehension people had around working with someone virtually was removed.

■ ***Comment on the growth of the company since its launch and of the gig economy in general.***

We've been fortunate during this period and have seen really positive growth month on month since inception. This is partly due to the fact that the gig economy itself is booming and becoming ever more prevalent in SA. Every day, we see more and more skilled marketers either transition to a full-time freelance lifestyle or pick up more 'flexi' type work in their spare time.

As a hub for connecting freelancers with talent seekers, Fundi.Digital is a secure environment that enables everyone to leverage the growing gig economy.

■ ***How did you come up with the name?***

We wanted a name that translated to one of our core values (highly skilled/talented) and a name that also represented SA. Hence, Fundi, which comes from the Xhosa/Zulu spoken word umfundisi, meaning teacher or learned person. Shortened, it's Fundi, a South African term for expert.

■ ***Describe the model. How does it work?***

The model is based on providing value with two parties, the business and the freelancer. The value for the business is simple, they now have access to a variety of marketing freelancers (that are well-vetted by marketers - us) at zero cost. We also act as account managers for the business and personally assist them in finding the right freelancer based on their business goals and requirements.

The freelancers derive value from Fundi by gaining the opportunity to work with top tier agencies or SA's most exciting businesses, they also secure future income which is often a concern for a freelancer. The freelancers pay a referral fee to us for any work received.

The model works because it is symbiotic.

■ ***You consider Fundi.Digital a proudly South African company and believe in our country's talents. What makes your business proudly South African and why do you believe in South African talent and nurturing it or supporting local talent?***

“ South Africa has incredible talent. If you ask anyone overseas if they enjoy working with South Africans, the answer is always a resounding yes. We are hardworking and skilled. ”

What makes us proudly South African is that all our freelancers are South African.

Ultimately, we also want to be a platform that exposes more South Africans to the international market.

■ **What's your vision for the initiative?**

We want to be seen as South Africa's go-to freelancer hub, an environment where businesses and freelancers can connect and grow together. We want to do this by eliminating any pre-existing fears that businesses might have had in the past regarding working with freelancers or working under remote conditions.

■ **What's your message to other local businesses and industry folk during these uncertain times?**

It is during uncertain times that true success stories can be forged so keep pushing, focus on what you are good at but stay agile so that you constantly stay on top of the ever-changing nature of the world of work.

Go to [Fundi.Digital](#) for more information.

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