

THE FIRST DIGITAL MARKETING APPRENTICESHIP IN THE U.S. BRIDGES THE WORKFORCE GAP BY ACCELERATING THE CAREERS OF RECENT GRADS

Amantha Hons built a robust social media portfolio while attending college. She served in the marketing department at her university and even interned abroad marketing for a sports complex in London. From such impressive experiences, it was clear that Amantha was going places.

It took her 6 months to find a job upon graduating.

During that half year, Amantha discovered a daunting challenge. The entry-level roles she applied for either had her making coffee runs or required at least 4 years of experience. Eventually, she learned about Digital Creative Institute. We paired her with a company that valued not only her skills but also her potential. Amantha grew into a well-rounded digital marketer by accelerating at her job and expanding additional skills outside of work.

She's still with the same company now (going on three years) and although her story is unique, the struggles she faced as a college graduate are not - and that's where Digital Creative Institute comes in.

A lifetime proponent of educational innovation, Brad Voeller was struck a few years back by how underprepared students were to enter the digital workforce. On a tour through Europe, Brad discovered how digital apprenticeships were a common milestone there and was surprised that we didn't have such a system here. So he returned to the U.S. to build it himself.

In 2015, Brad launched Digital Creative Institute, the first digital marketing apprenticeship in the United States. The program is designed to equip young digital marketing professionals, like Amantha, with the skills and wisdom necessary to thrive in their careers.

Apprenticeship is nothing new. It's an age-old model dating back to the Middle Ages where passing on the knowledge and experience of master craftsmen was a moral and logical imperative. DCI applies this model to the craft of digital marketing.

Unlike traditional educational institutions, DCI merges learning with working. Apprentices work a full-time job and receive hands-on training and guidance from industry experts. They go to their jobs and meet afterward to develop their skills through projects and certifications. Then they return to work the next day and apply what they learned. The result is an immersive experience that not only supports but accelerates their careers.

So far, over 30 apprentices have graduated the program, most of whom hold [digital marketing roles at various companies](#). Some freelance on the side. Others have launched their own consultancies and influencer channels. All of them are continuing to grow and exceed expectations in a fast-growing industry (a search on LinkedIn for entry-level digital marketing jobs in the U.S. yields over 35,000 results).

This year, 37 more apprentices from varying backgrounds have enrolled in the program - fitting, given that the demand for digital marketers continues to grow (digital ad sales in the U.S. have surpassed [\\$107bn in 2018](#)).

But there is more work to be done.

The current system for transitioning from school to employment is broken. It's an issue that is bigger than a frustrating job hunt. This year alone, student loan debt reached an all-time high ([a depressing \\$1.5 trillion collectively in the United States](#)).

College is growing increasingly unaffordable and fails to adequately prepare students with the skills necessary to secure fulfilling jobs in a workforce undergoing technological change. This affects companies that depend on an abundance of trained talent from higher education.

In 2017, the White House [signed an Executive Order in response to this problem](#). The Order includes efforts to support more apprenticeships and workforce development programs that are deemed effective across the country. In light of this, Digital Creative Institute has been officially recognized by the Department of Labor as the first registered digital marketing apprenticeship in the United States.

At DCI, our aim is to equip college graduates with the tools necessary to overcome these obstacles. Our program provides the benefits of an expert community, a dedication to growth and learning, and the lessons of practice all-in-one. [We exist to provide an affordable path to successful and fulfilling careers](#).

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