



OUTCOME.LIFE



MEDIA RELEASES



THIS STARTUP IS BREAKING DOWN STEREOTYPES AND CREATING A FAIR GO FOR INTERNATIONAL GRADUATES

With international students comprising almost a quarter of higher education places within Australian, one startup is making it their mission to give internationals a chance to step into the Australian workforce by breaking down misguided stereotypes and perceptions.

Funded by LaunchVic, Outcome.Life is all about empowerment and offering international students the independent advice and the help they need to plan for life after study, including assistance with internships and collaborations with startups.

Outcome.Life Co-Founder Gerard Holland said that a lack of industry experience is one of the biggest barriers for international graduates looking to gain employment.

“The best way to get a foot in the door is through an internship, and it’s not just about the experience they gain but the confidence we see thrive in the individual; it’s an opportunity for internationals to let their skills and their personality come out.

“It also allows them to build their professional network, which can lead to more opportunities further down the track,” he said.

In 2015, 175,000 international students studied in Victoria, generating \$5.6 billion for the state’s economy, but Gerard said many international students go back home after finishing their degree.

“International graduates make for fantastic employees as they are qualified, highly motivated, dedicated and keen to make a difference.

“In the last few months, we’ve shifted our focus to placing interns in to early stage, innovative businesses as startups are resource poor but have so much going on, the connection is a no brainer,” he said.

Alongside internships, Outcome.Life help their clients to choose the right Professional Year provider, ensuring that students not only kickstart their career, but also achieve permanent residency status where appropriate.

“Getting a degree within Australia is easy, but getting a job after university is quite difficult and even more so for internationals; we’ve found that startups are a lot more open to international interns as they think globally from day one,” said Gerard.



Also just opened is Outcome.Life's innovation hub, a first of its kind co-working space where international students and graduates will be able to collaborate and engage with like minded peers, to get entrepreneurial projects off the ground.

For further information about Outcome.Life please visit <http://www.outcome.life>



PRESS RELEASE #2

FIRST OF ITS KIND INNOVATION HUB FOR INTERNATIONALS OPENS IN MELBOURNE

A first of its kind co-working and innovation hub for internationals is hoping to boost Melbourne's startup ecosystem and launch the city back into the top 20 in the global rankings.

Known as Outcome-Hub, the co-working space on the fringe of the Melbourne CBD supports graduated international students to join and/or start their own business in Victoria, offering support and world class incubator services that cater specifically to the needs of entrepreneurs who have not grown up in Australia.

Co-Founder of Outcome.Life Domenic Saporito, who launched the innovation hub, said it's important overseas born Melbournians are empowered to actively participate in the Victorian startup ecosystem.

"There's 175,000 international students in Victoria at the moment and they need to be supported and given the right knowledge and resources to ensure that when they finish their degree, they don't go back home to start their business," he said.

"We are breaking down the barriers for international people to generate business by establishing a thriving community of like-minded people who feel empowered by each other.

"A key focus of Outcome.Life is the integration and collaboration between those who were not born in Melbourne and long established Melbournians and businesses.

"It is this integration of networks that proves to be the most powerful and successful in accelerating the startups of internationals," said Domenic.

To encourage networking, the hub regularly hosts social events, network meet ups and happy hours.

The space, located on Cardigan Street in Carlton, was designed by Interior Design Honour Students from RMIT and includes meeting areas, an events space, stand up desks, a café style kitchen and of course, high speed internet.

Outcome-Hub will officially launch on May 11 with guest speakers including CEO of LaunchVic Dr Kate Cornick and International Student & Co-Founder



of Hobspot, a website that connects people through hobbies and interests, Alfonso Ordonez.

Outcome-Hub is funded by LaunchVic and silent investors. For more information regarding the innovation hub, please visit www.outcome-hub.com



PRESS RELEASE #3

MULTICULTURAL COWORKING SPACE URGES START-UPS AND COMPANIES TO GIVE INTERNATIONAL INTERNS A SHOT

International education is now Australia's fourth-largest export industry and is estimated to be valued at \$21.8 billion* but Outcome-Hub, an international co-working space in Melbourne, says more needs to be done to ensure international graduates are given a fair go in the Australian workforce.

As of April 2017, there were 492,964 international students in Australia but a report by Hobsons Solutions found only 34% of workplaces hire international graduates; the biggest factor coming down to businesses preferring to hire Australians.

"If Australia wants any chance at being anywhere near as innovative as Silicon Valley, we need to be open to internationals and more companies need to welcome them with open arms," said Gerard Holland, co-founder of Outcome-Hub and Outcome.Life.

In recent weeks the Turnbull Government announced it will offer up to 10,000 internships in the retail sector to unemployed youths and Gerard said it's important international students and graduates are considered for internships too.

"The best way to get a foot in the door is through an internship, and it's not just about the experience they gain but the confidence that comes with it; it's an opportunity for internationals to let their skills and their personality come out."

Gerard said getting a degree within Australia is easy, but getting a job after university is quite difficult and even more so for internationals.

"Majority of international graduates who have come to Outcome.Life and Outcome-Hub have no idea about their fate after study, and most have spent in excess of \$100,000 on education.

"Their concern is reasonable as there are a lot of misconceptions around companies hiring international staff; they feel that they could be giving the job to someone that is a local resident or feel daunted by the thought of cultural challenges in the workplace.

"But with nearly a quarter of students at Australian universities being international students, it's important that they aren't disregarded for employment, especially if they are receiving the same education as local students."



Gerard said he's met dozens of graduates who have applied for over 300 jobs on Seek to no avail, but after completing an unpaid internship have successfully converted their experience into a paid position.

"85% of jobs come through people that you may know, so internships provide an incredible opportunity to increase your professional network. By the time you complete your internship, make sure everyone knows your name and who you are."

Interns can be available to businesses at no cost for a period of 12 weeks and are ideal for businesses in all stages of growth, from startups through to established companies.

"Although they are unpaid interns, it is not exploitation. Local students and local graduates often complete unpaid internships as a pathway to employment as well.

"Many businesses want graduates to have local experience, but how do you get local experience if no one will pay you to get this experience? It's a vicious cycle and what people don't realise is an unpaid internship is a chance to invest in someone's future – universities provide a certificate of education, but an unpaid internship provides an opportunity for a job," he said.

For more information on Outcome.Life and Outcome-Hub, please visit <https://outcome.life>



International graduates want a fair go; launch ‘We Can Do It’ campaign

Melbourne - International students and graduates are facing increasing difficulty to succeed in Australia with the odds against them in almost every way but Melbourne-based startup Outcome.Life has launched a campaign highlighting the strength of international students in Australia.

Outcome.Life has likened international students and graduates to women in the 1940s with the ‘We Can Do It’ poster that came about during the Second World War.

Although international students contribute 19 billion to our economy annually, only 34% of workplaces hire international graduates.

Outcome.Life Co-founder Gerard Holland believes that international students and graduates aren’t able to succeed in Australia because locals have misconceptions and negative views which are holding them back.

“There are issues with systems in Australia that make it hard for international students to succeed here, on top of the negative views some people hold about their abilities.

“Research has shown that employers believe hiring an international graduate is a greater risk than hiring a local graduate, but we want to highlight that they are just as qualified as locals and they can do it too, if we let them,” said Gerard.

The ‘We Can Do It’ campaign depicts six international students and graduates wearing the same clothing attire as Rosie the Riveter from the original poster, striking the same pose and showcasing their strength.

The six international graduates originate from Mauritius, Columbia, Malaysia, China, India and Indonesia, with Australian degrees including a Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering, a Bachelor of Global Media and Communications, a Bachelor of Business and a Masters in Architecture.

Harsh Solanki, an international graduate who has studied in Australia, is one of the faces of the campaign and has been subjected to prejudice and other difficulties when trying to obtain work.

“I’ve applied for so many positions that I was qualified for but I often get overlooked because I’m not a local graduate.”



While studying, Harsh felt that there was a financial burden placed on him and was forced to work multiple jobs to cover his expenses.

International students pay up to 400% more for higher education courses than local students which adds to the struggles they already face when coming here to work and study.

Harsh believes that current fees for international students are too high and would like to see greater opportunities for internships and work.

“Even those working full-time in Australia can hardly afford the university fees and for us internationals, it's just next to impossible,” said Harsh.

The ‘We Can Do it’ campaign will run for six weeks around Melbourne.

“We just want international graduates to be given a fair go; once employers have experienced their skills, passion and dedication via an internship, they're generally always blown away and want to hire them,” said Gerard.

For more information please visit <https://outcome.life/>



PRESS RELEASE #5

From one international student to another: What it takes to make it in Australia

Alex Law Min arrived in Australia from Mauritius over six years ago to study but after some struggles, he has finally learnt what it takes to 'make it' in Australia as an international student.

He studied a Bachelor of Environments and a Masters in Architecture, so his qualifications were never an issue, but Alex still faced difficulty settling in and finding work in Australia, even after spending approximately \$150,000 on course fees.

Alex has now found his dream job at an architecture firm in Melbourne and is thrilled to be in a job he loves, learning new things every day and using what he has learnt from his studies.

He now offers his tips and recommendations to others to find success as an international student in Australia.

Stay at a college when studying

Alex recommends that international students live on college when first arriving as it helps replicate a family environment and is the best way to meet others in a similar situation.

"I was very lucky to live on college for the first few years of university, and I made a lot of lifelong friends," he said.

"After I moved out, I realised that the world is very different without your family around.

"It can be tough, but those experiences shape you into a better person.

"I am really grateful for that."

Network as much as possible

Finding a job was the hardest part and Alex has found that utilising his network was necessary.



"I was applying through Seek and obviously, I got zero responses," said Alex.

"I decided to put my effort and energy into something more productive, so I started to reach out to and build my network.

Without his network, Alex now realises that he might not have ever been offered a job in his field.

"Networking turned out to be the most successful strategy for me, in seeking employment.

"I was lucky to have met a group of architects through my father's Australian friend about 4 years ago, but I still kept in touch with them.

"If it wasn't for that, I would probably not have gotten a job in the industry," he said.

Find support systems

"I must say that I am extremely lucky to have a supportive family and great friends. Without them, I would not be where I am today."

Aside from friends and family, Alex believes there are benefits of reaching out to others and finding initiatives that cater specifically to international students.

In his quest in finding employment in Australia, Alex found Outcome.Life, a community helping international students in Australia through internships and offering a co-working space so they can start their own businesses.

"Outcome.Life was a really strong support network and they helped give me the confidence to keep applying," said Alex.

Outcome.Life co-founder Gerard Holland comes across international student struggles on a daily basis and believes that with hard work, it is possible to see success in Australia.

"It can be disheartening hearing that there are many instances where people spend a large sum of money on university fees but then end up returning home or in jobs not related to their area of study," said Gerard.

"I hope the success that Alex has found inspires others to continue to follow their dreams and stay in Australia after studying."

Alex's story is part of Outcome.Life's 'International Success Stories' campaign, an initiative that looks to highlight what it takes to make it in Australia as an international graduate.



THOUGHT LEADERSHIP



OPINION ARTICLES

AUSTRALIANS DON'T WANT A FOUR-DAY WORKING WEEK

With Greens leader Richard Di Natale spearheading the recent proposal of shifting to a four-day working week or a six-hour working day, many Australians were thrilled by the future prospect.

However, is this future idea just a very luring distraction from the fact that maybe many of us just hate our jobs, and that it has nothing to do with the amount of time that we are working?

According to SEEK Learning's 2016 survey, more than half of Australians are unhappy with their jobs. This suggests that it's not necessarily the number of hours comprised in a working week that we should be questioning, but rather the need to put our attention into building sustainable career pathways, that nurture Australians both mentally and financially.

An individual's work and career should be about fostering their happiness and livelihood, it shouldn't just be viewed as the requirement for financial survival.

So perhaps we need to turn away from the rigid and cautious approach of chasing a paycheck or a career that has a lot of job opportunities, and let individuals take back control and steer their career towards their passions.

If you do what you love, why would you even talk about work-life balance? Monday should be your favourite day.

I meet people on a daily basis who are in a certain field because it's "what their parents want them to do" or "it's what society expected of me" but are these people happy? Most likely, these are the individuals whose ears pricked up with the mention of a four-day work week.

If you do what you love, why would you even talk about work-life balance? Too often, people find themselves trapped in a job that doesn't fulfil them. But if you enjoy doing something, you don't view it as work. Ever wondered why business owners and entrepreneurs work around the clock, sometimes over 60 hours a week? They probably couldn't think of anything worse than a shorter working day, because they're passionate about what they do on a day-to-day basis.

Recently I met a man who was pursuing an economics and finance degree at university, but when I asked him what he was passionate about, he answered "gaming and marketing".



When asked why he was studying the opposite, his rationale was that he would be able to manage his money more effectively later in life, when perhaps he's got a lot of it. Why use a good part of one's life accruing future debt on a university degree that's only intended to get you by for a fleeting stint in the industry?

It seems backwards that many Australian's are adopting the mindset that they'll steer towards a career that they love and want to do later on in life.

Ever wondered why business owners and entrepreneurs work around the clock, sometimes over 60 hours a week? They probably couldn't think of anything worse than a shorter working day, because they're passionate about what they do on a day-to-day basis.

With the responsibilities of mortgage repayments, raising families and covering increasing expenses, the problem is whether Australian's can afford to have this attitude.

There is a high risk that Australian's may never find a 'right' or 'good' time for a career change, and may lose the option to chase work that's meaningful to them altogether.

According to Seek, 38 percent of Australians intend to change jobs within the next 12 months, but only 23 percent are expected to actually make the change.

If you still don't know what makes you happy, perhaps consider taking a self-awareness course or spend some time self-evaluating, but don't get carried away with the prospect of fewer work hours in a day or a shorter week.

Figure out what you really want out of your work and what will make you happy; then simply go for it. If you wait for the 'right' time, you'll be waiting for a long time.

WHY COMPANIES OF ALL SIZES SHOULD GIVE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT INTERNS A SHOT

There is an overwhelming number of international students in Australia and for most of them, they don't just come here to study. They want to stay in Australia for longer periods of time and I don't blame them, we aren't called the lucky country for nothing.



Any international student will tell you that they don't know their fate after they finish studying. They don't know if they will be able to find work and therefore won't know if they will step closer to gaining permanent residency.

Their concern is reasonable as there are a lot of misconceptions around companies hiring international staff. They feel that they could be giving the job to someone that is a local resident or feel daunted by the thought of cultural challenges in the workplace.

But with 22.3% of students at Australian universities being international students, it's important that they aren't disregarded for employment, especially if they are receiving the same education as local students.

The University of Melbourne is the number one ranked university in Australia according to The Times Higher Education Rankings and 28% of their total students hold an international status. International students are certainly intelligent and capable.

Interning and work experience is a growing component of tertiary education and even then, the misconceptions are still prevalent.

Internships are the best segue for international students and graduates to get into the workforce as even though they may have had experience in their original country, it's experience in Australia that is mostly sought after.

Here's why companies should give international students and graduates a shot at interning.

They have global knowledge

If Australia wants any chance at being anywhere near as innovative as Silicone Valley, we need to be open to internationals. They have a deep understanding of another country that Australians lack. They know what opportunities are available, the needs and wants of people and have cultural knowledge to make entering that market a breeze.

They are significant in helping achieve global growth, expansion and overcoming any boundaries that might impede success of operating or making a product available in a new country.

International students are more dedicated

With a lot more hanging on the line, international graduates can be more dedicated than their local counterparts. They have the urgency to secure employment as their status and right to be in the country is indefinite.



They also have to work significantly harder than local students to develop a network. They often come to Australia without ample friends or family, so don't have people available to draw on for employment opportunities or support.

These people really want to work here and maximise life and opportunities in Australia. The Australian Government International Student Survey reports that 78% of international students in higher education say an important factor in selecting Australia as an education destination was the potential to work after study.

International students often want to bring their loved ones over to Australia with them and require jobs and income to be able to do this. Their motivation to do so is usually very high.

They're perfect for start-ups

Interns can be available to businesses at no cost for a period of 12 weeks and are ideal for early stage businesses.

Although they are unpaid interns, it is not exploitation. Local students and local graduates often complete unpaid internships as a pathway to employment as well.

Start-ups generally lack financial means and resources to hire staff and there are only so many areas of expertise that the founders can have before they require intellect from someone else. The skills of international graduates we've previously placed can range from program developers and testers through to accounting and business analysts.

By welcoming an international intern into your workplace, you're investing in their future.

SCRAP THE CV. IT'S ALL ABOUT NETWORKING.

Once upon a time, having a bachelor degree was kind of a big deal.

Today, it seems that virtually everyone has one, making applicants for jobs harder to differentiate and the 'it's who you know not what you know' saying more relevant now than ever before.

A CV is something that we all have saved on our computers and is a file we might turn to when we have a bad week at work, hoping it can solve our woes.



But in reality, it won't be a knight in shining armour carrying you to new employment. If everyone is submitting one for the same job, there is not a lot of scope available to stand out from the crowd. Is it fair to say that the good old-fashioned CV is now virtually obsolete?

Employers care if you already know someone that works at that particular company and your ability to bring in new business matters to them. These go back to connections that you might have.

Networking is useful in terms of being able to easily stay in touch with what people are up to and to be noticed by those who are looking for someone just like you to join their team. Platforms like LinkedIn are an easy way to create and maintain a database of your contacts you've met along the way in your professional life, who you might utilise to find employment one day.

Sending out a few CVs isn't enough on its own to land a dream job. Networking is a necessity in finding employment, and it most definitely shouldn't just be considered as an option.

Here's why the CV is superseded by networking.

1. A CV doesn't define a person

A person is much more than what a highly-curated bundle of words can say, especially given that people often get others to write their resumes for them.

This raises concerns about the authenticity in job applications. People aren't truly representing themselves if they are being talked about through the filter of a third party. People should not, and most likely will not, hire you purely based on what will fit within a couple of pages.

A CV will say where you have worked and where you have studied but these things don't truly define you and what you can bring to a company.

2. CVs are full of lies

CVs do not compare to taking the stand in court and are far from accurate and truthful. A CareerBuilder survey has found that 56 per cent of recruiters have caught job candidates lying on their CVs.

We are in an age where facts can easily be checked, however, people still regularly overstate their abilities. Recruiters are aware of this, and won't take anything at face value.

It's much more convincing to lie on a written document than it is in person and CVs give so much opportunity for people to do that.



3. Networks are breaking down barriers

Networks can help overcome issues with CVs, especially the concerns around accuracy and authenticity.

A survey from The Adler Group shows that 85% of jobs are filled from networking rather than applying through more traditional methods.

If people are referring someone for a job, they are likely to be telling the truth, as they will look bad if they don't. It is because of this that references are usually trusted, however, the references need to be from people who matter.

This makes the upkeep of a network all the more important. You need to stay in touch with people who hold weight in an industry and respective companies.

Networking allows people to see the side of candidates that CVs don't show – which is what you might be like working in the office and interacting with stakeholders.

I was asked recently, how do you make your cover letter and CV stand out from the rest? Well the answer is to understand the relevance of the CV as a supporting document and make sure that someone within that organisation already knows you and is happy to offer a recommendation.

SIX TIPS FOR TRANSITIONING INTO AUSTRALIAN WORKPLACE CULTURE

As Australia continues to boast onshore international education as one of its largest exports, an increasing number of international individuals are opting to stay and enter the Australian workforce.

International students currently account for 43% of current higher education enrolments, but work after study may not be a smooth transition for some due to local nuances and cultural context.

Adapting to cultural differences and workplace norms is one of the biggest challenges for internationals when starting to work in Australia for the first time, but integration is a key factor for achieving career success.

It is also up to the individual to ensure that they are positively partaking and contributing within their organisation, so here's some tips to assist in making a good impression to your Australian colleagues.



1. Punctuality reflects your commitment

Timeliness is always important at work and meetings. Being punctual directly reflects your commitment to your job and communicates your level of respect for the person who you are meeting with and the organisation that are you are from.

2. Put in extra hours if you're falling behind

Make sure you get the job done, it's important to complete your assigned projects and meet deadlines. If you're struggling, no heads will be turned if you need to come in early or stay back late, in order to catch up and finish. In peak or busy periods, it is common for Australians to work outside of usual office hours.

3. Communicate clearly and promptly

Be clear, succinct and honest. Everyone has their own work pressures and stress; they don't need the added difficulty of deciphering what you're trying to say or engaging in long blown out conversations. Try to keep your communication style to the point, write simple emails and provide the extra details when requested.

4. Be mindful of Australia's sarcasm trap

Jokes are common in the workplace and are often a quick way to lighten or diffuse, stressful or awkward situations. Be mindful that workplace jokes targeted towards you can be a sign of endearment or if slightly negative they could be hinting at something that needs improvement. Also be careful you don't fall into the trap of sarcasm, it's also an aspect of humour that uses irony.

5. Socialise outside of hours

Don't be scared to socialise with co-workers, after work drinks are a common practice. Just don't blow off too much steam or over drink, you don't want to offend your co-workers or be Monday morning's gossip.

6. Does anyone want a coffee while I'm out?

As silly as it may sound, a coffee or 5 can be an essential for getting through a work day. If you notice a workmate is fizzling and overdue for their caffeine hit, it is polite to see if anyone wants a coffee before you step out to grab your own.



WHY START-UPS AND EDUCATION PROVIDERS SHOULD GO HAND-IN-HAND IN AUSTRALIA MOVING FORWARD

Innovation and startups are set to be the future of the Australian, and possibly even global, employment landscape. However, educational institutions place a greater emphasis on students and graduates obtaining employment in established companies in favour of startups.

With reports stating that the concept of automation will see five million Aussie jobs gone in the next 10 to 15 year, Australians should be thinking about their current skill set and the changing nature of the industry they are in to ensure ongoing employment..

The alliance between industry, including startups and educators, has never been more important. Australia needs to maintain and advance upon our global ranking of 7th in the 2017 Global Entrepreneurship Index. Despite this seemingly high ranking, Australia still has a relatively low rate of startup formation for a developed nation. Education providers need to be taking this into account in not only the types of courses they offer, but also the components taught in existing courses, including more emphasis on startups.

GREATER EMPHASIS ON STARTUPS IN COURSES

Universities usually encourage their graduates to find employment at large, multi-national companies, as these are traditionally seen as employers of choice

However, there should be a push for graduates to think about joining startups and/or starting their own business from early on, ideally when they are still students and generally don't bare financial and family responsibilities.

While financial limitations will hamper young students' ability to start their own businesses, it should be ingrained into them that the goal is attainable, even if at a time in the future.

This can be taught in courses and experienced by partnering with the University's local startup ecosystem; making students feel that they are equipped to commence a business of their own.

Teaching a diverse skill set of entrepreneurial skills, as well as promoting an entrepreneurial mindset, will provide immense benefits for those looking at launching their own startup and putting their ideas into action.

THE RIGHT WORKING SPACES

There is a growing number of co-working spaces for entrepreneurs and small businesses, but not many are aligned with universities, nor designed with students in mind.



Co-working spaces are becoming more niche. For instance, our Outcome-Hub in Melbourne is a co-working space designed specifically for international graduates to start their own businesses in Australia, rather than in their home country.

Universities are places where this type of co-working should commence. Regular 'libraries' are suited to study and research but a greater emphasis needs to be placed on the concept of co-working and the development of business at educational institutions.

Universities should create and promote dedicated spaces open to students at all levels and from all faculties to foster an entrepreneurial environment. This could have dedicated mentors available to allow for greater discussion and implementation of ideas between students.

INTERNS AT STARTUPS

Internship opportunities at startups should be pushed so that students can see first-hand how new startup businesses operate.

Instead, Universities generally encourage their students to take intern roles, as part of courses, at established, long-standing companies where they become a small cog in a very large machine

While this type of experience is also important, students should be given the chance to apply their skills and knowledge in startups where, typically, they are given a greater range of roles and responsibilities.

Interns at startups can also make a greater impact on the business, especially in its infancy. Being resource poor, student interns are encouraged to do more, and think outside the box, something the Universities say they teach, but rarely implement outside the classroom. The experience in startups for interns is real, rather than observational as it often is at major firms.

If we agree that innovation and startups are set to be the future of the Australian employment, Universities need to incorporate entrepreneurial thinking and experience into their courses. After all, grass level learning's are always a better way to ingrain important concepts in people's minds.

LOOKING FOR YOUR FIRST JOB? LAND AN INTERNSHIP INSTEAD

Ask anyone looking to land their first great job and they'll tell you that finding a job in their industry isn't easy. The likelihood of getting a call back from an advertised position on a job board is fairly low given the high number of applicants relative to a single position.



Undertaking an internship prior to looking for your first permanent role may be a better choice.

In industries such as investment banking, statistics show that up to 80% of positions are filled by people who have already undertaken an internship at the same firm.

Statistics like these can't be ignored. Here's why an internship may be the best way to get a job you'll love.

Experience is vital

While previous employment in retail, hospitality or similar industries can demonstrate customer service skills and workplace experience, it probably won't be enough.

Experience in a relevant or similar industry to that desired is mostly favoured by employers.

It is not only the experience itself that is significant but other facets of the internship that prove beneficial.

Interning in the industry allows the opportunity to build contacts and expand your professional network, increasing opportunities for employment and collaboration in the future.

The experience can also create positive relationships between you and others from the host organisation and ultimately lead to the perfect reference for a future job. After all, recruiters are more likely value a reference from someone you have worked for rather than someone you haven't.

For internationals, many businesses expect new recruits to already have had previous experience in Australia. But how do you get local work experience if everyone already wants you to have local work experience? An internship is the perfect way to achieve this.

Learn on the job

Older people will be able to tell you that once you would get trained on the job and prior experience or education was not required.

Unfortunately, this rarely happens these days and some extent of education and previous work is expected.

I think that internships should be viewed as the modern-day version of 'getting trained on the job'.



They allow for practical learning and experience to coincide with education and existing qualifications and are a segue into further employment, possibly at the same company.

Qualifications aren't enough

Various universities, TAFEs and other educational institutions are offering internships as part of their courses.

Educational institutions are seeking to improve graduate employability and they too are recognising that a qualification alone is no longer sufficient to land a job in certain industries.

For those currently completing courses where an internship is only optional, I think you're crazy not to be doing it.

Prove yourself in person and not on a piece of a paper

You have 12 weeks to show the value that you can bring to your host organisation during your internship.

Make yourself indispensable and ensure that by the end of the internship, everyone in the organisation knows who you are and how you have benefited the company.

Internships also allow for networking. You meet customers, other staff members, suppliers and even friends of colleagues. There is no choice but to network with people from different ages, demographics and cultures, which ultimately gives you the opportunity to prove yourself to an even broader spectrum of people.

HEY GUYS, HOW COME NOBODY IS TALKING ABOUT MULTICULTURALISM IN THE STARTUP SECTOR?

There's been a significant shift in the way we understand gender equality in the startup world, with recent discussions focusing on the lack of funding, the lack of female founders and of course, the right to be seen as an equal.

The gender equality discussion is well and truly alive because as a whole, we recognised that there was an issue that needed to be addressed. Groups and



programs all over the world have been formed to support women entrepreneurs and founders.

Here in Australia, we have SheStarts, Girls in Tech and Like Minded Bitches Drinking Wine, to name a few.

These support programs exist because the discussion was had. So now we need to have another discussion. Why is nobody talking about multiculturalism in the startup world, or the lack thereof?

According to McKinsey, gender-diverse companies are 15% more likely to perform better financially. Those that are ethnically diverse are 35% more likely to perform better financially.

The latest census reveals that Australia is one of the most culturally diverse populations in the world, with 1 in 4 Australians being born overseas, 1 in 2 Australians having an overseas-born parent and over 20% of Australians speaking a language other than English at home.

So why isn't there a bigger debate around cultural diversity in the startup ecosystem? Research shows that entrepreneurs are more often than not "disproportionately white, male and highly educated," indicating that there is already limited scope for people beyond this prototype to succeed in starting a business. Those that don't fit this description still hold the capabilities to start, run and succeed in business, despite the lack of recognition.

But aside from the business founder or owner, the fewer people in a company, the less likely there is to be cultural diversity. There's less pressure on startups to meet implied quotas because there's less people altogether.

Cultural diversity in the startup ecosystem is equally, if not more, important than cultural diversity in the standard workplace. Here's why.

People are so important in a startup

With limited resources, and sometimes a limited amount of funds available, the people at a startup are the most valuable asset. They are the ones that make everything happen, from the day-to-day small things that go unnoticed to the big ideas that everyone sees.

And if people are so significant to businesses, especially to those in their infancy, the minds from a different walk of life will be able to offer the greatest insights.



The smaller the company, the more likely an individual is able to make a greater contribution, where startups can give international employees and interns the opportunity to do something big.

But, Melbourne's startup ecosystem is not as integrated as that of cities that are more highly regarded.

Diversity is linked with innovation

MasterCard, who are known for their initiatives surrounding cultures, say that diversity "is the backbone of innovation".

For startups who rely on innovation, ideas and new concepts to succeed, they should be the first to get international team members on board as soon as possible.

LaunchVic, who support and invest in the local startup ecosystem, have opened their Round 3 Grant Funding Program which is focussed on increasing diversity by improving accessibility for migrants and refugees.

It's great to see LaunchVic and the government dedicate a funding round to promoting equal opportunities for migrants in startup enterprises.

Leveraging from our strong international education sector

We need to support and encourage international students and graduates to start their own businesses here in Australia, rather than in their country of origin.

There's currently over 175,000 international students enrolled in Victorian education courses. We need to leverage this pool of highly motivated and educated individuals and in order to maximise the longer term benefits of international education here in Victoria, they need to be encouraged to start businesses here.

After all, ethnically diverse startups are fundamental in promoting the generation of ideas and feeding the startup ecosystem.

**GOT REJECTED BY A STARTUP ACCELERATOR? IF IT'S ANY
CONSOLATION, 98% OF THE APPLICANTS WERE**



I often find it frustrating when I hear or see people from startups actively chasing the help and financial support of an accelerator. For those that don't know, startup accelerators offer funding initiatives, mentor programs and other resources for startup businesses.

It's not to say that these are not useful, far from it. As I'm sure there are businesses out there who have benefited from some of these incentives. But in the early stages of a business, when things are still an entrepreneurial idea or even once a business has emerged, there needs to be space and freedom for the founding members to start defining and establishing everything themselves.

This will help shape the direction of the business with the intentions of the founders being placed front and centre.

More often than not, individuals can be quickly deterred or demotivated when they don't obtain the backing they hoped for from an accelerator. Spending time dwelling on what has been missed is only detrimental to the business.

And just because one person or one company isn't keen to throw their support behind you, it certainly doesn't mean your business is worthless or doomed for failure.

YOU AREN'T THE ONLY ONE TO MISS OUT

When you look at the stats, the likelihood of getting accepted by an accelerator is very slim.

Well known accelerators like Techstars only accept 1-2% of applicants and 500 Startups take in less than 6% of applicants.

You need to weigh up if the time spent applying to get into an accelerator program is worthwhile given the low acceptance rates. I'm sure there are other uses for your energy, such as gearing it toward other aspects of your business.

REMEMBER YOUR PURPOSE

The spotlight shouldn't necessarily focus on concepts associated with market growth prospects and skyrocketing profits.

More importantly, it is about purpose. Your purpose is self-defined by you and what you are hoping to achieve through your business.

Your aim could be as simple as replacing your income from your current job, or targeting a niche sector where you know you could add value.



With a clearly set out objective, it is important to be self-actualising and driven. You have to remain loyal to your original ideas and dreams for the business.

Whether your idea is big or small, there's no shame in trying to realise it yourself.

INPUT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE IN THE FORM OF MONEY

A huge contributor to the success of a venture can often stem from the level of self-investment, but don't make the mistake of assuming that self investment always refers to what you put into the business financially, it is far more reaching than that.

Input in a business can also be in the form of commitment.

Having that sense of control over the destiny of your own business can be a huge motivator and be an incredibly empowering force.

Utilising your own network, or taking some time to do networking yourself is also a way to create value for your business and offer input in a non-monetary sense.

DETERMINATION WILL GET YOU THROUGH

Don't forget that hard work is essential.

You must be willing to make sacrifices early on and this means investing huge amounts of time and effort that only you will be able to put in.

It's crucial that you keep up momentum and hold onto that passion that first got you started.

With your own perseverance and patience, you'll probably soon forget that you were considering going for an accelerator program in the first place.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS CAN DO IT TOO, SO WHY DON'T WE LET THEM?

It's not a stretch to liken international students in Australia today with women in the 1940s.

Just like the 'we can do it!' poster that emerged during the Second World War that promoted the role of women in the workforce, a movement similar to this should be happening in Australia.



A major difference is that women were encouraged to work in manufacturing at this time and were given the opportunities to do so. Later we saw the poster image being used to promote feminism, again acting as an empowering motif.

Outcome. Life has launched a street poster campaign similar to this promoting international students in Australia and showing that they can make it here too.

Unlike the women from the old and well-known poster campaign, international students are not given the same opportunity to show what they can do.

They have barriers that prevent them from succeeding and we all aren't giving them the same prospects to get ahead and do well.

So my question is, why don't we let them?

They can do it

International students form a large portion of the total students in Australia and want to be doing everything just like the rest of us who were born in this beautiful country.

They account for approximately 24% of total students in the higher education sector, with the highest numbers we have ever seen flocking to our shores to gain Australian qualifications.

We can then say that international students are learning the same things as local students and in turn graduates too have the same qualifications.

On top of that, they have an eagerness to learn, work and live here that some Australians take for granted.

We take without giving much in return

Education plays a large role in Australia's economy, not only for educating our future generations but also as one of our biggest exports.

In 2016, education was Australia's 3rd largest export with international education being worth \$22.4 billion to the Australian economy.

On saying this, Hobsons Solutions report from last year shows that only 34% of workplaces hire international graduates.

International graduates that I have known and worked with, have found that employers find hiring them a 'risk' if they are not a permanent resident.

Australia seems so willing to take money from these people for their own



benefit particularly with the excessively high price tags put on courses and places for international students.

Yet we are reluctant to offer them jobs in return for the contribution they've already made to our economy.

We need to increase opportunities

Not only is it important to cast light on the challenges these people face in Australia, but we need to be creating scope for them to succeed.

I'd like to see more workplaces willing to recruit international graduates rather than disregard them compared to those that were born here.

We need to play our part in empowering them to do what they came here to do, because they so desperately want to work and live here, even if we don't appreciate it.

They know that they can do it. All we should to be doing is offer them the courage, optimism and opportunities they need.

WHY OUR PRIORITIES ARE WRONG WHEN SELECTING A UNIVERSITY

When students are selecting a university or education institution to study at, they probably aren't thinking about the longer term, or the reasons as to why they want to go to university in the first place.

According to The Times Higher Education, the leading provider of higher education data around the world, students say that high-quality teaching is the most important factor when selecting a university, followed by the offering of scholarships, with university rankings coming in third.

A large emphasis seems to be placed on getting accepted or taking the course, rather than outcomes following its completion.

While these are also important factors to look at, it surprises me that graduate employability isn't higher, with only 12.8% of students considering their graduate employment outcome as the most important factor.



It's worthwhile noting that The Times Higher Education World University Rankings don't consider graduate employability rates in their rankings system anyway.

The QS (Quacquarelli Symonds) World Rankings is one of the few that considers graduate employability in their ranking process, but other ranking systems should follow suit.

Employability should be important enough to be considered in all university ranking systems, since gaining a job is the goal of most university students, and in particular international students who are wanting to stay in their chosen country after study.

Employment after study in Australia doesn't have much of a prosperous outlook right now either.

The graduate employment rate for Australian students dropped from 56.4% in 2008 to 41.7% in 2014.

We are more educated than ever before, yet simultaneously facing poorer job prospects as we compete for a finite number of jobs requiring tertiary education.

Students are fast working out that traditional university rankings shouldn't be taken at face value and can be deemed irrelevant if the purpose of undertaking a course will only see them have a growing student debt, without the means to pay it back.

We also need to be mindful that employment outcomes are closely aligned with achieving personal and career goals, which are imperative to the individual.

For the Australian international education industry to stay relevant, and be in demand from people overseas, there must be a focus on employability, as this is how we will be judged in the future.

Is there any point in getting a degree if you can't get a job at the end of it?

Gaining knowledge is great, but it alone won't pay the bills or contribute to longer-term individual prosperity.

That's why getting a job is important for current graduates, but even more so for future students.

If employability figures are constantly declining, people from overseas won't choose to study here.



Many Australians are complacent about the industry, forgetting that it is one of our biggest exports and the benefits it affords our economy.

Just recently, the Australian Bureau of Statistics amended the annual education exports from what was already a record \$23.6 billion to \$28 billion in 2016-17, a 19% increase.

Therefore, we need to be doing far more for employability for local graduates as well as international graduates who face even more difficulties when looking for work.

The countries that will win in the long run for international education are the ones that will get employment prospects right.

THE BEST WAY FOR GRADUATES TO GET EMPLOYED IS TO AVOID JOB SITES

We are entering the time of year when university graduates are completing their degrees and getting ready to wear the gown and mortarboard.

But the next stage is to find employment – which may be daunting for some graduates.

Job websites are tempting for new graduates, they have an inviting, empowering aura about them that presents a somewhat false world of opportunity.

Even though they show a large scope of employment possibilities, graduates should avoid them. Here's why.

There's no way to stand out

All applications received on job sites will look the same. There will be a cover letter and CV but not much else.

Everyone will appear exactly the same. People have been to school, earned a degree and that's usually all employers will see.

Qualifications alone are not enough to get a job, especially for graduate positions.

Job sites won't allow for a dialogue of any sort to be developed around what an individual can actually do.



It's easy, but ineffective

Sending a CV and cover letter in response to a job advertisement is far too easy. For graduates to think that they can get a job from something like this is a bit naïve.

This type of system seems to be efficient and work well.

It makes people feel that applying for jobs is an efficient process and plays right into the hands of desperate graduates, usually giving them a sense of false hope.

Reality, however, is far different and much bleaker.

I had a recruitment agency for 14 years and when I advertised a graduate role, I would get 200+ applications on the first day and the exact same thing would happen the following day.

Statistically, an individual hardly has a chance at finding a job.

No one considers the opportunity cost

While applying for a single job won't take up too much time, applying for many will add up.

This is taking into account that cover letters aren't copied and pasted but thought goes into tailoring it for each specific job – something which should definitely be done.

But taking into account the statistical chance of getting one of these jobs, there is an incredibly high opportunity cost in spending such a long amount of time on applications.

When deciding to do this, the time can't be spent on something more meaningful and valuable, such as building a network.

Networks are much more likely to be the source of a job.

Data shows that up to 85% of people find their jobs through networking – a figure that really cannot be ignored.

What to do next

Rather than impede their own ability to find a job any further, getting into the hidden job market is the next step any graduate should take.



This involves getting out there, meeting people and making connections.

Industry meetups are a good way to do this with sites like meetup.com and Eventbrite proving useful. You can also find out about other meetups and events through industry bodies.

By the time students finish their studies, they should have 200+ connections on LinkedIn, where a lot of these are 'significant' connections such as employers.

Having any internship experience will prove useful, but for those that don't, learning things that university doesn't teach you will prove vital.

An excellent example is gaining an understanding of the current software used in certain industries and jobs.

I certainly don't want to discourage people from seeking out jobs. But I want this to be a reminder about the competitive job landscape in Australia and the need to go beyond the obvious channels for employment.

WHY HIRING GRADUATES ISN'T A COST TO SMALL BUSINESS

New graduates are stepping out of university and finding it harder than ever to gain employment.

They often turn to the graduate programs offered by large companies, where in some industries they take on hundreds of new recruits annually. For those that aren't successful in these initiatives, or find themselves in an industry where programs like this don't exist, it can be cause for concern.

These graduates are particularly reliant on small businesses to fill the gaps.

[LinkedIn Insights](#) shows that 80% of small businesses hire graduates but only 12% have formal graduate recruiting programs. These stats illustrate that most small-medium enterprises (SMEs) want to hire graduates but hardly any commit to it becoming a regular aspect of the business through a dedicated system.

The number of applicants far outweighs the number of graduate jobs today and small businesses should be taking advantage of this talent pool available to them. Small businesses in Australia employ around 2.5 million people and



without them, the local economy would have difficulty functioning.

So why should small businesses take on a graduate?

It's a cycle that needs support

As many university and TAFE courses today include a work integrated learning component, students are able to gain experience while studying. This type of work is usually in the form of an internship and is undertaken unpaid.

While some students look at it negatively as they don't have the potential to earn money, it is somewhat necessary to reduce the cost that they may have on small businesses. Being able to take on a student without the need to pay a full wage makes small business much more inclined to participate as a host company.

It's a cycle that needs to be supported by both businesses and students to work effectively.

The cost is on the decline

As students are now graduating with more experience than previously, it means that the cost of hiring someone straight out of university is getting lower.

Graduates now usually have some experience under their belts, so when they are getting paid in a graduate or entry-level position, there is less of a cost to businesses again as they can get into regular work quicker.

The learning curve that graduates have traditionally come with is no longer as steep. This is because they will require less time training for basics and will already have an idea of what working in the industry is like.

Host companies can use student internships to their advantage as a way to 'try before they buy'. A 12-week internship, for instance, can be seen as an extended job interview where an ongoing position can be offered based on this.

Graduates shouldn't be seen as a cost

Graduates are young and beaming and can bring something new to an office or workplace, as they have the most up-to-date knowledge and education compared to experienced workers.

Those from overseas can prove to be particularly valuable as they have a cultural and global awareness. Graduates can offer a fresh take on things and can adapt quicker as they aren't used to being buried in bureaucracy.



The last thing that they should be classified as is merely an expense. The view that they may leave after having time invested in their learning shouldn't be a deterrent as, if you offer them the right conditions, they won't want to leave at all.

The value that they can add to a business is huge and is often overlooked since it can't be quantified with a dollar value.

While graduates may not necessarily be able to bring in new business right away, they can offer the perspective that is needed to retain and enhance existing projects.

WHAT GRADUATES CAN DO OVER THE SUMMER IF THEY HAVEN'T FOUND EMPLOYMENT

While some people who have finished their studies at the end of this year have already secured a job for the new year, there are many out there who haven't.

It can be quite daunting as there are limited entry-level positions available.

According to Good Universities Guide, 70.9 per cent of bachelor degree graduates were in full-time employment four-months after completing their studies, but four-months is still time that shouldn't be wasted.

No one wants to be left on the shelf in the new year as some feel that the longer they are out of work, the less 'attractive' they look to recruiters, so what can graduates do in the meantime that will enhance their job prospects?

Improve your skillset

Not everything is taught at university, or if it is, not everything can be covered in a single course.

An example is coding. Most broad courses don't teach it, but it can prove useful for various jobs, especially as we are moving towards careers that almost always involve some sort of 'tech' element.

Other skills can be photo editing, such as getting the hang of Photoshop and similar programs to improve your ability to create exciting images.

Learning a new language is another option. You don't have to learn it as well as a native speaker, but knowing enough to have a basic conversation can



prove useful to work at companies who have clients across the globe. Short courses are offered at various institutions.

For international students who already know more than one language, it can be a good opportunity to improve your English.

These are things to add to your CV that will look like you haven't spent the summer lazing by the pool, that can help give you an edge in a competitive job market.

Listen to the experts

Talks from industry and business experts can not only prove motivational, but they are a great source of new and up-to-date information that employees would be seeking. The professional insight that can be gained from talks is a great way to gain an insider's take on trends in a given industry. There are plenty of these around at various education institutions and some are even free.

Things that are learnt from these professional talks can be drawn upon in job interviews to demonstrate your understanding of issues and trends that the industry is facing.

Reading any genre of book is likely to improve your knowledge or understanding but if you are a graduate, steer clear of fiction and gain an insight into what might be relevant to you.

Business and entrepreneurial books such as those by Seth Godin or motivational books by people like Lisa Messenger are other ways to get expert advice wherever you are.

These can really open your eyes as to how to think differently in the business world

Take a break

After studying hard, it is important to have some time to relax, catch up on Netflix shows and if possible, take a well-earned trip.

This won't be for everyone, but for those who can afford it, travel is a great way to learn about new places and cultures.

Travel can challenge what you know about a country and even make you re-discover yourself and what it is you are looking for.

It also goes hand-in-hand with learning a new language.



If you are one to prefer a relaxing break over an adventure, then do exactly that. You never know, if you do find a job soon, it might be a while before you build-up annual leave again.

WHY YOU SHOULDN'T BE ASHAMED FOR FAILING A STARTUP

There is a stigma about having an unsuccessful startup as it can quickly go from excitedly telling others about your idea to explaining why you have moved back in with your parents. But failing a startup shouldn't be viewed so negatively by those in the business world or by others.

Many budding entrepreneurs who decide to commence a startup are excited about potential growth while nervous about failure, but the statistics aren't helping any fears people might have.

A report from Dun & Bradstreet shows that the startup failure rate is on the rise with a 42% increase in the number of startups ceasing operations.

While it is challenging to make it big, people should not be ashamed for opening a startup that didn't go as planned.

Many people will look at this as a bad thing, but here's why it is quite the opposite.

It's not failing, it's practice

An unsuccessful startup should be placed in the same category as practice or training. Just like you train for a marathon or study before a test, the only real way to practice running a business is to actually start one.

Startups are the best way to do practice as there's a lot less on the line than buying an established business or franchise. Failing a business in its early stages is much more harmless than folding later down the track.

There are less staff that will become unemployed and there is likely to be less money invested.

People shouldn't think of it as investing time and money into a business that went nowhere. If you don't win a gold medal, does that make competing at the Olympics any less of a valuable experience? No, and it's the same in the startup and small business world.

There's still scope for a second, third and fourth chance



Classifying an unsuccessful startup as 'practice' implies that there will be another attempt at starting a business and many people that I come across are planning to do just that.

This cloud really does have a silver lining and the founders of these businesses could use what they have learnt for the better.

Things from the get-go could be done different, experts should be called in sooner or more market research undertaken.

These are the most common things I hear when talking to former startup owners that they wish they had done.

Attitudes need to change

Many people that try to start businesses in Australia can't stand the thought of failing.

Some cultures, particularly in Asia, do not accept a failed business in such a way, and international students in Australia don't want to go home and explain to their parents that their business was hardly able to take off the ground.

I have worked with budding entrepreneurs in Outcome.Hub, most which are international students. One international graduate had a shot at creating an app that simplifies the process of choosing a restaurant. However, the pin was pulled early when it was discovered it was too hard of an app to monetise.

While the founder feels like a disappointment and is trying to save face in front of his parents, it should be seen in a completely different light.

I know that this particular graduate has learnt so much from what has been an incredibly valuable experience but many people, and even the statistics, don't see it that way.

Our perceptions and attitudes towards failed businesses needs to change so that it isn't seen as a bad thing but as more of a stepping stone to startup success.

HOW GOVERNMENT AND BIG BUSINESS ARE HALTING STARTUP SUCCESS

Big business and government divisions are contributing to the death of small businesses in a less-obvious form than first thought.



We are aware that the big players competing against small businesses and startups often win with their strong bargaining power, unparalleled ability to compete on price and lower cost structures. What isn't always considered is lengthy or overdue invoices and payments. I'm not talking about a week old invoice, but instead an invoice that is three months overdue.

Government departments and big businesses in Australia are known to be slow at paying for the work completed by small businesses and startups. It can be incredibly damaging and it needs to stop.

Their strict, non-negotiable payment terms are generally 90 days in the first instance and it's unfair that they are already taking advantage of their situation before even signing a deal.

Studies have found late payments to be worse in Australia than other countries, and from my experience as well as speaking to other small business owners, the big players are the worst culprits.

The bigger the business, the bigger the problem

Although small businesses are likely to be short on cash, most small business owners say that it is usually their largest clients that are the slowest to pay for completed services.

Bigger businesses should be supporting those in their infancy, especially as they too were in the same position once before and understand how much they are relying on that money.

Not receiving money from them is harder to swallow as you know that they aren't struggling to find the funds, but are buried in bureaucracy that means they can't pay.

It halts startup growth

Startups can't expand, hire more people or even complete future work if they aren't receiving money for work already completed.

Small businesses have wages, rent and other bills to pay and struggle to operate when they aren't receiving earned money. It contributes to poor cash flow, loss of staff and in some cases causes businesses to cease operating.

The owners are always taking on extra responsibility for everything in their business and don't have the time to be chasing up unpaid or overdue invoices that far exceed payment terms.



These things make startups hesitant about taking on big clients as it can take months of work to see a cent. It acts as a deterrent for taking on future work from huge clients, which simultaneously is a necessity for the business to expand.

When giving startups work, big businesses think they are making a positive contribution and are supporting small businesses but instead by not paying, they are adding to the problem and stifling innovation.

The playing field needs to level-up

Big businesses need to realise the potential consequences of their delayed payment to startups and small businesses.

Nobody wants to necessarily come and say that they can't survive without that money, but for large invoices that are months away, it can be the case.

Established businesses and government departments don't realise that what might be a small sum of money to them is quite large for small businesses and startups.

Small business owners do not appreciate being taken advantage of, where the tough payment terms imposed mean they are being used as an easy source of cheap finance. They are accruing interest on the money they already have and it needs to stop.

To make matters fairer, small businesses and startups should charge interest for payments that are extremely overdue and larger businesses need to reconsider their lengthy payment terms.

My final words to large corporations out there is that if you really want to support small businesses, pay up.