

# #BehindtheSelfie with... Rudy Hassiem

 By Leigh Andrews

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This week, we find out what's really going on behind the selfie with Rudy Hassiem, [relatively new](#) MD for Brandnew Creative, the Cape Town-based, strategic below-the-line agency specialising in the sport, fashion, lifestyle, tech and finance sectors.



Behind the "Teamfie"

## 1. Where do you live, work and play?

**Hassiem:** I have always called Cape Town's southern suburbs 'home' and have generally always worked in the CBD, except for a few years spent travelling. Traffic, and travelling into the city, is therefore the norm for me. I play anywhere I am surrounded by good friends and family, which is as true at the office as it is being out and about. In my downtime, I am

family-orientated and happy to simply spend time with my kids enjoying their unique take on life.

## 2. What's your claim to fame?

**Hassiem:** I don't have a claim to fame but I am glad to say that I have worked with many amazing people who have helped me to deliver fantastic work against the occasional impossible deadline. The one project that resonates with me is being part of the Cape Town 2004 Olympic Bid. Even though unsuccessful in the end as we lost to Athens, it was a fantastic experience, which has left me with lifelong friends.

## 3. Describe your career so far.

**Hassiem:** My career has been a constant journey of learning, which is weird as I didn't leave school with any ambition to be in the industry. I kind of stumbled into studying marketing and then got my first break into advertising at King James. This was a great learning curve, which gave me an appreciation for the unreasonable power of creativity. A stint at Berry Bush BBDO gave me an appreciation for strategy, while my time at BrandsRock and Speak Advertising exposed me to the intricacies of being an entrepreneur within this industry. In-between, I spent time as a client but being at Brandnew Creative allows me to put all this learning to use for our clients, and I welcome the opportunity.

## 4. Tell us a few of your favourite things.

**Hassiem:** Not in any particular order:

- Liverpool FC – clichéd, but I grew up with that team.
- Custard, on anything.
- Music – I like the idea of playing it, but have no skill. I own an old acoustic guitar, which I have promised myself to master at some stage.
- Running. I have done a few marathons but after the recent Cape Town Marathon, I have officially decided that marathons are for crazy people.

## 5. What do you love about your industry?

**Hassiem:** I love the constant questioning. The constant pursuit of ideas and the strength of people to expose their creative thinking. There is nothing like that moment when an idea clicks with the room.

## 6. Describe your average workday, if such a thing exists.

**Hassiem:** I am sure that everyone in this industry says that an average workday does not exist and I agree. But I try to have a structure to my day, which starts at 05:15am with a run and then at least 45 minutes in traffic – I have embraced traffic as an opportunity to explore my thoughts and settle my brain. At the office, I start with two or three coffees and a bit of a 'social' around the coffee machine to connect with the team. After that I sit down at my desk and get stuck in managing business priorities, engaging and supporting staff, providing strategic direction on jobs, responding to emails and client management.

## 7. What are the tools of your trade?

**Hassiem:** Without my laptop bag I am lost. It has everything in it, from any cable you could want, to back-up drives to allergy medication. Add that bag to my phone and I am in business.

## 8. Who is getting it right in your industry?

**Hassiem:** This is a tough question, as I think there are so many companies and agencies getting it right in their area of expertise. As a strategic BTL/experiential agency MD, I appreciate the kind of work that shows a true understanding of

consumer engagement/activation. I'm not talking about dressing up an area and filling it with promoters. No, I am talking about a central creative idea, rooted in a human truth, which is then amplified to provide an experience, which becomes a true talking point. To deliver this though takes boldness, and belief, and that separates the race winners from the 'also rans'.

## **9. What are the biggest pain points/challenges/areas for improvement?**

**Hassiem:** Everybody is consuming information at an incredible rate right now, add to this the exponential growth of social media as well as the myriad new media opportunities out there. I understand this is the way the world is moving, always chasing the next big thing. But for me, there's value in occasionally taking a moment to breathe and sense-check your actions. We hardly do that anymore, and if anything, that is a value which I hope Brandnew Creative can bring to any client's brand.

## **10. What are you working on right now?**

**Hassiem:** We are currently doing some exciting activations work for WeChat as well as long-term positioning work for Viva Gyms. Added to that, due to positive client recommendations, we have been lucky enough to provide proposals and concepts on products ranging from financial products to FMCG.

## **11. Tell us some of the buzzwords floating around in your industry at the moment, and some of the catchphrases you utter yourself.**

**Hassiem:** Anyone who knows me, knows that I use words such as doohickey, thingamajig and "goodiegat" (that's 'gat' like 'hat' and not Afrikaans like 'hut').

I admit to being very susceptible to industry speak so I will be the person around the braai suggesting that we need to "Open the discussion around potential pain points inherent in the existing positioning of the braai grid on the fire".

## **12. Where and when do you have your best ideas?**

**Hassiem:** I am a visual thinker and as such I have always used mind maps as a way to structure my thinking. This has been very useful to me and serves as a way to open my mind to possibilities, and therefore new ideas. In terms of best place, it is often at 2am or 3am, but by then I am too lazy to get out of bed. As a matter of fact, I think that I might have found a way to make world peace a reality in one of those 3am idea sessions.

## **13. What's your secret talent/party trick?**

**Hassiem:** I am a fantastic dancer. Although no one else thinks so. I say... don't be a hater.

## **14. Are you a technophobe or a technophile?**

**Hassiem:** I think it is a split. I am completely technophobic about things that don't actually interest me. Being a PC/Android user I don't get Mac/ianything and I am ok with that. Don't judge.

## **15. What would we find if we scrolled through your phone?**

**Hassiem:** At least three Liverpool apps, two other football apps, news apps as well as social media apps. Add to this my banking apps and my WeChat app, of course. On top of this you will find lots of family pics and a diverse music collection.

## **16. What advice would you give to newbies hoping to crack into the industry?**

**Hassiem:** I know you already feel as if you know it all, but take a moment and listen to someone with experience. The technology may have changed, but the nuanced understanding of advertising and creativity has not.

Simple as that. Send Hassiem an email at [rudy@brandnewcreative.co.za](mailto:rudy@brandnewcreative.co.za) or contact him on [LinkedIn](#) for more.

*\*Interviewed by [Leigh Andrews](#).*

## ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh\_Andrews.

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