

# #BehindtheSelfie with... Tracy Jones

 By Leigh Andrews

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This #WomensMonth, we go behind the selfie with Tracy Jones, managing director at Positive Dialogue Communications, who dubs herself “a technophile out of necessity.”



Jones says, “Make work your passion.”

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

I live in Durbanville; our agency is based in Buchanan Square, Woodstock; and play is slalom water-skiing, CrossFit, trail running and obstacle courses.

## 2. What’s your claim to fame?

I have absolutely no claim to any fame whatsoever, but my career highlights were launching Nelson Mandela’s “Touch of Mandela” artwork on Robben Island with him as the guest of honour amongst 250 celebrity guests, and securing the front page of the *New York Times* the following day. And, working on the Robben Island Balloon Run with Matt Silver-Vallance to raise much-needed funds for paediatric care in SA. Positive Dialogue has also won a couple of awards that makes me famous in my children’s eyes, which is my most valued kind of fame.

## 3. Describe your career so far.

After studying I started my first job in banqueting sales at the Mount Nelson Hotel. After three years I moved into the PR manager role just as the hotel was turning 100 years old in 1999. After managing their centenary programme, I moved to London to work in a PR agency, Halpern Associates on their travel and lifestyle team. At the end of two years I returned to Cape Town to work at Total Media, where I stayed for five years as business development director, before starting Positive Dialogue Communications in 2008.

We’re now nine-years strong with a multi-faceted team of PR, media and digital specialists – who love what we get to do every day!

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

Good coffee, preferably in large flat-white format, the happy hormone feeling I get after an exhausting Crossfit WOD, my Kindle, spending good quality time with family and friends, and weekends away water-skiing on perfect water.

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

No two days are ever the same. Given our broad spectrum of clients, a morning start could be hosting media to a yoga class in a children's school in a township, lunchtime is a digital workshop with an international speaker, and in the evening a media launch event in a five-star hotel. It's the most fascinating, multi-faceted exposure to all types of industries, people and skills – within which we aim to create positive dialogue, educate audiences and shape understanding on behalf of our clients – and I get to call it work!

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

No average workday really exists, however, I aim to spend the least amount of time of email correspondence in order to focus on the 'big picture' goals that we identified for our agency at the start of the year. Client meetings and team meetings are always a focus, as is industry reading, research and creative brainstorming.

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

A laptop, a phone, and a passionate team of creative and solutions based thinkers – and anything is possible.

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

In my opinion, Atmosphere Communications sets the benchmark for the PR industry in South Africa. Not only are they multi-award winning due to their creative campaigns, but they are also active in promoting the credibility and value of PR as a marketing priority and not an afterthought.

## 9. List a few pain points the industry can improve on.

The measurement of PR in general is a constant source of industry discussion. Different clients value different PR outputs, and with the evolving channels of communications that we work within, the goal posts are constantly changing. Value propositions for clients can include anything from audience reach to positive brand message penetration; digital engagement; website backlinks to drive traffic; and brand awareness through high-volume quality editorial.



### No 'cookie cutter' solution

Tracy Jones 22 Apr 2015



But there is no doubt that PR AVE value is now last on the list for measurement. However, not only do we need to constantly upskill to be able to deliver work across these channels, but we also need to monitor the results and evaluate the value back to clients in order to show ROI.

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

As [Bizcommunity communicated](#) earlier this year, we recently won seven new clients, and are in the process of consolidating them.

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But, we're always hoping to attract new clients for our specialist teams. Internally, we've just launched a new website and a comprehensive HR programme, which is linked to a training calendar that motivates our team to stay inspired via local and international campaign case studies, and informed of new platforms, apps, tech and influencers that can be incorporated into client campaigns.

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

Integrated communication solutions.

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

The 1.5 hour commute into town every day is when I plan my day and have my best ideas.

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

I claim to be terrible in the kitchen, but my one redeeming talent is my signature milk tart.

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

Apple Music playlists, curated business and leadership e-books and Ted Talks, photos, and lots of to-do lists!

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

Be open to all experiences, and try to focus your career path on opportunities that help build multiple skills that relate back to the communication industry. i.e.: digital design, video, social media, writing, photography.

Simple as that. [Click here](#) for Jones' MyBiz profile, and connect with Positive Dialogue Communications on 021 461 5108, their new website on [www.positivedialogue.co.za](http://www.positivedialogue.co.za) and the following social platforms: [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#).

*\*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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