

#BehindtheSelfie with... Jennifer Stein

 By Leigh Andrews

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This week, we go behind the selfie with Jennifer Stein, managing director at Gillian Gamsy international or GGI Communications since 2013 and driving the agency into its fourth decade.



"Stein unframed."

1. Where do you live, work and play?

I live in Parkwood and work in Houghton, and love the fact that the two are so close by. It's five minutes to and from work in rush hour and not having a long daily commute is life-changing. I play at the coast or in the bush – anything for real no-pressure downtime.

2. What's your claim to fame?

Balance. I have really good work-life balance and while there are always sacrifices, I can look back and say that I got it right. My two kids are proof of that.

3. Describe your career so far.

PR agency, through and through. Agency born and bred and moved up the ranks, with a short-lived foray into the corporate world.

4. Tell us a few of your favourite things.

On the work front, getting a strategy right and seeing it come to life. On the general side, good coffee, good dark chocolate and good whisky. Life's too short to waste it on mediocrity. Bush drives with no cell phone connectivity. Long, late-afternoon beach walks. And anything to do with dachshunds.

5. What do you love about your industry?

That it gives a chance to work in a constantly changing environment and there is no such thing as a 'status quo'. That despite perceptions of spin and smoke and mirrors, there is deep substance and strategic depth to the work we do.

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

There is no such thing as average in the PR world! I can go from being in the office all day, working with my team or developing new business strategies, to new business briefing meetings to giving high-level counsel to existing clients. No matter how well a day is planned, I have no idea how it will actually pan out.

7. What are the tools of your trade?

Knowledge. It's that simple. Knowledge about our industry, about the industries and sectors in which our clients work, and knowledge about what's going on in the world.

8. Who is getting it right in your industry?

Those agencies that understand the critical importance of analytics, metrics and measurement and packaging them in such a way that clients see a direct link to success.

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

See above! Any agency that doesn't take measurement seriously. Equally important is any agency that purports to sell a campaign without backing it up with clear research and insights. Clients who don't or can't brief properly and, equally guilty, agencies who don't demand clear briefs. And my biggest issue is quality – of people, of output and of general standards, which all impact on how the profession is perceived.

10. What are you working on right now?

I have a triple focus of ensuring that initial and ongoing strategies are relevant and delivering results, maintaining our client base and new business growth. A strong component is bedding down and on-boarding new clients, while keeping current clients happy. What's exciting from both is that a current and new client perspective is how PR and strategic communications is increasingly being embraced at C-suite level.

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

I'm not a fan of buzzwords – they have a shelf life and after a short space of time tend to become tired and more annoying than useful. They tend to lose meaning due to overuse and inappropriate or irrelevant application.

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

In the shower or when I'm alone in the car.

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

The ability to remember arbitrary details, like number plates and birthdays.

14. Are you a technophobe or a technophile?

A bit of both, as I'm not an early adopter but I'm a constant user. I'm a technophobe in that I get others to set up technology for me, but once it's up and running, it's my best friend.

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

Emails and messages, lots of pics of my kids, holidays, dogs and recipes... all in albums!

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

There is no quick or magic path to growth and promotion. Bring enthusiasm and willingness and deliver unconditional excellence. Tricks of the trade and skills can be taught, but there is no substitute for a determination to exceed.

Understand the absolute importance of deadlines – if you don't rule deadlines, they'll rule you. Get on top of them and stay on top, as missing a deadline can impact on your entire team and their delivery.

Be curious and don't ever be afraid to ask questions that are relevant for the situation and environment in which you find yourself.

Simple as that. [Click here](#) for more on GGi Communications, [here](#) for Stein's MyBiz profile and interact with her on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#). You can also follow [GGi Communication's Twitter](#) and [Facebook updates](#).

**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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