

## with... Lani Carstens

This week, we find out what's really going on behind the selfie with Lani Carstens, Managing and Executive Director at John Brown Media, South Africa ...



Lani and son, Luca

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

**Carstens:** I live in Hout Bay, work in Black River Park, Observatory, and play wherever there is Champagne.

### ■ 2. *What's your claim to fame?*

**Carstens:** Almost 20 years in the media space, the last decade or so in content marketing (branded editorialised content for blue-chip clients) and building John Brown into a formidable industry player.

### ■ 3. *Describe your career so far.*

**Carstens:** I started off in advertising for seven years; was offered a job at Media24 (my then-client) as advertising manager for 12 magazine titles; became marketing manager for the Women's Magazine Division; launch publisher of *Shape* magazine; did a two-year stint at New Media; was seconded to China for three years by Naspers and then approached to become MD of John Brown, where I have been for almost five years. John Brown has recently been acquired by [Dentsu Aegis Network](#).

### ■ 4. *Tell us a few of your favourite things:*

**Carstens:** Travel; chardonnay; open spaces; big cities; open minds; shoes; books; my children; great food (as long as I don't have to cook it) and being a part-time Life Coach.

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

**Carstens:** Without a doubt the people, the constant variety and being able to craft beautiful solutions to brand problems.

■ **6. What are a few pain points your industry can improve on?**

**Carstens:** Getting over the whole "content marketing" fixation. Everybody claims to be a content marketer (much like everyone's a publisher), and they are probably not wrong. The trick is helping clients to recognise the importance of editorialised, crafted content in maximising engagement, which leads to commercial success.

■ **7. Describe your average workday (if such a thing exists)**

**Carstens:** Every day is different but it always starts with checking emails on my mobile; getting kids to school; a Vida cappuccino; more emails and catching up on daily news; staff and/or client meetings; emails; then a passing thought about getting back to gym.

■ **8. What are the tools of your trade?**

**Carstens:** Insane optimism, saintly patience and a sense of humour.

■ **9. Who is getting it right in your industry?**

**Carstens:** There are a few agencies locally and abroad who understand the importance of editorially crafted, strategically aligned branded content. It's part science and mostly art.

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

**Carstens:** Integrating our staff and policies with Dentsu Aegis SSA and maximising the incredible opportunities and extra services for both companies and our clients.

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

**Carstens:** At John Brown we use "Authority to publish" - (identifying what your brand stands for and what it can "own"); "sweating your assets"- (taking a piece of great content and crafting it on multiple platforms). And I tend to use "editorial intelligence" quite a lot.

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

**Carstens:** Under pressure or, inconveniently, at 3am.

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

**Carstens:** Dancing and singing to "Rooi Rok Bokkie" with my bestie from London. We are word perfect.

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

**Carstens:** Desperately gorgeous photos of my sons and décor pics.

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

**Carstens:** Spend time identifying your strengths and play to those. Never take 'no' for an answer.

■ **16. Are you a technophobe or a technophile?**

**Carstens:** Technophile and social media junkie!

■ **17. Plug your contact details, punt yourself - list all the places people can find you/your work online**

## Carstens:

[Email](#);

[Website](#);

[Twitter](#);

[Pinterest](#);

[Instagram](#).

You can read more about of Lani Carstens by [clicking here](#) and all about John Brown Media by [visiting their press office](#).

*\*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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