

with... Virginia Hollis

In addition to her role as MD at Magnetic Connection, Virginia Hollis is a member of the Loeries board, amongst others.

Having started her career over 30 years ago working for a small agency as a media buyer, by the time she was 25 Virginia Hollis was a director of the first independent media agency in South Africa, The Media Business. When this closed in early 1992, she joined FCB and started their independent FCB Global Media. This business was merged into The MediaShop in 1997, where she stayed as managing director until mid-2012. In June 2012 Virginia started Magnetic Connection, a strategic communications company working with a number of local and international clients, as well as numerous media owners.

Throughout her career she has judged the media innovation category at Cannes in 2001, sat on the judging panel for AdFocus and has chaired the Loeries' media innovation category for the past two years. She is currently chairman of SAARF (South African Audience Research Foundation) and a board member of both Loeries and AMASA. Here's a little insight into why she was awarded Media Legend at the MOST Awards in 2011...



Hollis in a hard hat.

1. Where do you live, work and play?

Hollis: Johannesburg.

2. What's your claim to fame?

Hollis: I'm a mere media strategist; fame is something for creatives...

3. Describe your career so far.

Hollis: Eventful, tumultuous, frustrating and downright interesting.

4. Tell us a few of your favourite things.

Hollis: Love clever new stuff, interesting people, animals (adore cats – all kinds), cuddly toys, sport, travelling – and lots of other stuff.

5. What do you love about your industry?

Hollis: It is ever-changing, there is no such thing as “do the same as you did before”.

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

Hollis: Up at 5am (gym/Pilates), work/meetings for 10 hours, home/functions/personal time with friends – really busy continuously, and I invariably only get between five and six hours’ sleep! Maybe sleep is over-rated...

7. What are the tools of your trade?

Hollis: Computers, clever people, research, Microsoft, mobile.

8. Who is getting it right in your industry?

Hollis: That’s difficult to answer, because my industry is media (not creative). Right now I think that the small shops are getting it right and the ones that aren’t owned by internationals.

9. What are you working on right now?

Hollis: I work on numerous clients and right now, as I sit and type this, I’m busy finalising Q2 for one of my clients – nothing like lastminute.com. Oh and I’m on four boards. That takes up a lot of time too, from the Loeries to SA research with SAARF.

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

Hollis: Some I can’t consider repeating, they are rude. Innovation, push the envelope, we need better briefs, I wish clients would understand that good work takes time.

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

Hollis: Probably when I’m sitting quietly thinking about something completely different and then other times when I’m brainstorming with colleagues – we challenge each other.

12. What’s your secret talent/party trick?

Hollis: I’m good with people and I listen. Lots of people claim to listen, but they don’t really, they just hear and carry on with what they are doing. I’m also really good at getting involved with industry initiatives; I’ll jump in and help wherever I can. I do not mind hard work and I don’t shy away from problems. I am a doer.

13. Are you a technophobe or a technophile?

Hollis: Technology is allergic to me. I think it’s great, but if you want a mobile or laptop to suddenly stop working, give it to me. I like to learn about new stuff, I’m just not good at it.

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

Hollis: All sorts of travel apps (Airbnb, TripAdvisor), social media stuff; I tend to be quite functional. I don’t load lots of games and frivolous stuff.

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

Hollis: Pick something else! Haha. No but seriously, this is not an easy industry and nor is it one long big party (it used to be in the 80s and 90s). Advertising has become very serious. So if you are prepared to work hard, work long hours, not get continuous affirmations, have fun occasionally and not be offended when people call you all sorts of offensive names, then come join the fun.

Simple as that. You can read more about Hollis by [clicking here](#), and [here](#).

Also remember to visit the [Loeries website](#) and our [special section](#) to keep your finger on that creative pulse if you can't wait for Loeries® Creative Week™ Durban from 15 to 21 August.

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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