

#BehindtheSelfie with... Pierre Heistein

By [Leigh Andrews](#)

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This #BrandManagerMonth, we find out what's really going on behind the selfie with technophile Pierre Heistein, former journalist now independent macroeconomic consultant specialising in sub-Saharan Africa.



Technically not a selfie, here is Heistein in a makeshift boardroom, studying sustainable development in rural Nepal.

1. Where do you live, work and play?

Heistein: I live – mostly – in Argentina when I am not travelling for work. Most of my writing is done from my office there if I am not stationed on a project elsewhere. Play is a part of everyday life, but at any given opportunity you'll find me trying to get off the beaten track in a far-flung, unknown destination such as the rivers of Myanmar, mountains of Iran or jungles of Ecuador.

2. What's your claim to fame?

Heistein: I worked alongside the Angolan Ministry of Finance to help them restructure their financing plans after the oil price crashed.

3. Describe your career so far.

Heistein: Exciting. It never sits still, jumping from Bitcoin to agriculture to East African railways to drought to renewable energy and back to African monetary policy.

4. Tell us a few of your favourite things.

Heistein: Innovation, creativity and decoding uncertainty. The world is in a constant state of disruption and navigating this space is exciting. It forces you to drop all assumptions and perpetually seek new ways of looking at the systems around you.

5. What do you love about your industry?

Heistein: We're on the forefront of change. We're the first to be called to the scene when the water gets murky and the first to get insight into where the world is going.

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

Heistein: Consulting services are still too rigid. While structure is needed to be efficient, old models of solution development are leading to inappropriate results in a rapidly changing global landscape.

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

Heistein: I'm up early. Before work I take time to build a strong base in my personal life and read widely on topics unrelated to the project I'm working on. Thereafter the project defines my routine. The challenge of working project-by-project is to keep up with changes and innovations beyond that single task. Seeing the unexpected links and relations is what defines good insight and analysis.

8. What are the tools of your trade?

Heistein: My networks. In an age where public information is abundant, true insight comes from learning from the experience and exposure of people directly involved in the topic.

9. Who is getting it right in your industry?

Heistein: There are a number of small boutique consulting companies who are adapting quickly to the new industry environment.

10. What are you working on right now?

Heistein: Helping General Electric write up their new work processes after a recent M&A in the tech space.

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

Heistein: Consulting changes buzzwords like models change shoes. It's a constant challenge to see through – and not adopt – old ideas dressed in new clothes.

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

Heistein: Mountains and deserts are my most creative spaces.

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

Heistein: For a few months every year I put the business world aside and film documentaries.

14. Are you a technophobe or a technophile?

Heistein: Closer to the technophile side of the scale but with a strong – and frequent – ability to turn it all off and think in

quiet.

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

Heistein: Photos, photos and more photos, mostly of natural beauty. I'm a minimalist when it comes to apps and noisy tools but my photos are my memory bank.

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

Heistein: Beware of fashions in signaling. The top 10 tips today are the bottom 10 tomorrow as the quick fix punters peddle their trade. Stick to basic principles and never get caught in a single doctrine.

Simple as that. [Click here](#) for more from Heistein and be sure to follow him on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [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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