

#BehindtheSelfie with... Jana van der Spuy

By [Leigh Andrews](#)

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This week, we find out what's really going on behind the selfie with Jana van der Spuy, communications manager of Brandnew Creative Agency.



An adventure awaits!

1. Where do you live, work and play?

Van der Spuy: I live in the Northern Suburbs where gardens and animals are a-plenty, and work in Sea Point, a mere 200m from the Promenade – one of my absolute favourite places in the world. I tend to play equally in both.

2. What's your claim to fame?

Van der Spuy: My creative and hardworking team. Without them I would not be able to implement the exciting communication strategies or identify relevant, take-notice-worthy angles on behalf of our clients. We are a small team with a lot of brain-and-execution power.

3. Describe your career so far.

Van der Spuy: I believe my training ground, without my knowledge at the time, started when I waitressed straight through school. I had to interact with people, help them with their problems and execute a solution (1. Greet, 2. Order, 3. Food). Thereafter, I moved into the wedding industry, while completing my BTech in PR, part-time. After a few years, I got the opportunity to work at an award-winning hotel as PR executive where I was reminded of the importance and impact of a smile as well as attention-to-detail. This is also where I learned that everyone has a story to tell, they just need someone to listen.

Little did I know that PR at an agency is what would make my heart flutter with excitement! Here I am, able to live out my dream of telling other people's stories, sharing ideas, thinking creatively and meeting amazing, highly influential individuals. Securing media exposure makes me jump with joy – I get so happy; every time!

In the over five years I've been in industry, I can be super sure of one thing: your career chooses you, you don't choose it. Just let it be and enjoy the ride!

4. Tell us a few of your favourite things.

Van der Spuy: Gosh, there are so many, but if I had to pin-point a few, they would be: my life in general – I have been accused of being irritatingly grateful #LifeGoals, my fiancé, our dogs (Eddie and Eva), exercise, my friends and family, Brandnew Creative and the awesome team that comes with it, as well as excellent food and wine.

5. What do you love about your industry?

Van der Spuy: I love the people! It really is as simple as that. I try and connect with as many people as possible on a daily basis; and I try to learn something from them. I love the hard work you have to put in to reap the rewards. I truly appreciate every single conversation I have, as this is the way I learn and grow.

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

Van der Spuy: My day starts at 5:30am with a run or gym. I leave quite early, travelling around 1.5 hours to the office every day, so I use this time to be inspired by podcasts. Currently, I'm obsessed with the [CreativeMornings podcast](#) as well as '[The way I heard it](#)' – short stories told by a narrator.

When I get to the office, it's coffee first, and then:

1. Status with my team
2. Emails, reply and prioritise
3. Actioning of emails
4. Following up with media
5. Checking in with clients
6. Checking in with my team: strategy, creative brainstorms and research
7. Potential securing of media coverage

7. What are the tools of your trade?

Van der Spuy: My voice and the ability to use it. PR is all about engaging with others and telling stories. I am grateful I have the gift of speech!

In addition: Media, social media, Outlook, PPT and Google Docs.

8. What are you working on right now?

Van der Spuy: I am working on various fun clients, including: HQ Restaurant, Black Key Diamonds, Natura Sugars, TomTom and Coca-Cola Craven Week 2016.

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

Van der Spuy: Early in the morning, while training and while driving (and listening to podcasts).

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

Van der Spuy: Does telling cheesy jokes count? I'm such a dork.

11. Are you a technophobe or a technophile?

Van der Spuy: I am most certainly a technophile. I love new technology, new gadgets and new inventions. That's what I love about my client, TomTom, they are leaders when it comes to navigation and fitness technology.

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

Van der Spuy: Loads of photos of my dogs, fitness and daily inspirations as well as a lot of wedding ideas as I'm getting married in November, most likely including candles, fairy lights and the colour gold!

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

Van der Spuy: Try and absorb every single thing you can when you start out, ask questions, don't be scared or shy (but don't be too in-your-face and loud!) Work hard, offer your assistance, always have a notebook and pen by your side (if it's glittery in colour, I'll hire you) and most importantly, take criticism with a pinch of salt. You won't understand it then, but when you've been in industry long enough – you'll know why!

Simple as that. [Click here for more on Van der Spuy](#) and follow @janavdspuy on [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) for dog posts and food pics. #DoubleWhammyWinning.

**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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