

# #BehindtheSelfie with... Josephine Buys

 By Leigh Andrews

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This week, we find out what's really going on behind the selfie with Josephine Buys, CEO of SA's digital trade body, the IAB SA.



Windswept on Chapman's Peak.

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

**Buys:** Cape Town – my dream destination when I first started out in publishing, it took me 15 years to make it come true!

## 2. What's your claim to fame?

**Buys:** I met then-President Mandela in August 1996 taking a stroll (with several body guards!) in Houghton. I talked the bodyguards into allowing me to greet him, but was very star-struck and babbled on about my family in Northern Ireland praying for peace in SA. His face changed from amusement at my being flustered, to one of genuine concern saying “that is a troubled country”. Less than a year later, he was intimately involved in settling an impasse in the Northern Ireland peace talks and a year later the Good Friday agreement was reached. I've always wondered if our short conversation on the 11th Avenue bridge over the N1 that day was just a coincidence or divinely timed...

## 3. Describe your career so far.

**Buys:** After arriving from the UK when I was 21, my yellow-brick road began with selling classified ads for a small boutique publisher on Baker Street in Rosebank. I went on to pioneer the launch of several new titles, including *GQ* & *FHM*, as

advertising manager/director when men's magazines were at their peak (me and my team at *FHM* team sold the highest-ever ad revenues on the highest-ever circulation at that time). The move to CPT saw me on the launch team of *The Property Magazine* with its groundbreaking, page-turning digital edition. I left media for a year to market the city centre of Cape Town before a stint with a digital agency demystifying SEO and rich media sealed my passion for digital. I spent six years as a brand developer introducing SMMEs to digital media and marketing before joining the IAB in 2014.

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

**Buys:** South African sunsets, kind people, fine wines, a perfect avocado, my family and friends. Online shopping – especially for gifts and holidays!

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

**Buys:** The endless possibilities of digital media and the lightning speed at which it evolves.

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

**Buys:** Eight until late (I'm a night owl!); emails, dial-ins, Skype or VC meetings with any of our 200+ members and 10 councils. Unless it's pre-Summit & Bookmarks, then it's event planning 10-14 hours a day for three to four months – this is not a career I would have chosen and, as a result, I have a deep respect for event planners.

#### **7. What are the tools of your trade?**

**Buys:** In a word: Collaboration. Growing digital requires commitment from media and marketers. The IAB simply couldn't achieve the results we do without volunteerism of dozens of industry luminaries who give of their time and expertise.

#### **8. Who is getting it right in your industry?**

**Buys:** The above-mentioned volunteers. [The Bookmarks](#) finalists and winners. Agencies, publishers, ad tech and marketers who are pushing the boundaries in digital.

#### **9. What are you working on right now?**

**Buys:** The youngest council: [Transformation Council](#). I co-founded The Thursday Club (TTC), a networking FUNdraiser, building awareness and raising funds for orphaned and vulnerable children for over a decade. I had to give up hosting the monthly event when I joined the IAB, but I missed my soul food and the Transformation Council (in close collaboration with the Education Council) feels like the perfect channel to continue, by giving the next generation of young, deserving South Africans the opportunity to carve out their own path in digital. It's early days, but I have faith in this council to deliver on our promise to ensure transformation is taking place with the digital industry via recruitment, staff retention, work environment and career development. My mantra for TTC was: "If you can change the world through the eyes of a single child, you can change the world". That remains true of the Transformation Council: if we can create a passion for young professionals to embrace careers in digital, we can supercharge digital in South Africa.

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

**Buys:** [CPA](#) – Cost per acquisition. The total marketing cost of getting a customer to commit to the acquisition objective.

Walled Garden – a safe controlled publisher ecosystem – often within apps – instead of links to the www. It's a faster experience than moving between apps and sites on mobile and allows publishers to keep their audience for longer.

First-party data – First-party data is information collected by digital publishers about their visitors' behaviour. First-party data often includes CRM, subscription/survey and social media data. This type of owned data is often seen as more valuable as it typically has higher degrees of accuracy.

OTT or Over-The-Top – In broadcasting, over-the-top (OTT) content refers to delivery of audio, video, and other media over the internet without the involvement of a multiple-system operator in the control or distribution of the content.

Independent self-regulation – is the process whereby an organisation monitors its own adherence to legal, ethical, or safety standards, rather than having an outside, independent agency such as a third-party entity monitor and enforce those standards.

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

**Buys:** "Blue Sky" time (to gaze beyond the clouds) is the most ideal, but I rarely have time for that so mostly when I'm slow cycling along the promenade (love the Voice Recorder Pro app!) and of course, when our Councils meet – to see ideas born and watch them take flight with the sheer dedication of the task teams that commit to them is hugely gratifying.

## 12. What's your secret talent/party trick?

**Buys:** I'm a fully trained seamstress/I make a wicked pavlova.

## 13. Are you a technophobe or a technophile?

**Buys:** Technophile, of course (unless I'm digitally detoxing, which I allow myself to do once or twice a year).

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

**Buys:** Albums full of sunsets, friends, family and #sipsigh (with a wine glass in shot as I take my first sip then give a satisfied sigh when enjoying a glass with a view). Sayings, inspirations, notes to self. Many apps I use and many more that I haven't yet got around to! And of course, pictures and videos of #SophieBuys - our new beagle puppy.

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

**Buys:** Don't be afraid to take risks! With a small caveat borrowed from Ellen DeGeneres: "When you take risks you will learn that there will be times when you succeed and there will times when you fail, and both are equally important."

Simple as that. [Click here for more on Buys](#) and follow her on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#). She's also on Skype at JosephineTMB or email [jbuys@iabsa.net](mailto:jbuys@iabsa.net).

*\*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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