

#BehindtheSelfie with... Giles Shepherd

 By [Leigh Andrews](#)

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This #BrandManagerMonth, we find out what's really going on behind the selfie with mostly-technophile Giles Shepherd, group CEO of The Brand Alive Group.



Shepherd says: "It's all about the balance."

1. Where do you live, work and play?

Shepherd: Live in Fourways, Johannesburg, work in many places around the world – headquartered in Johannesburg, but wherever I'm needed – and I always blend play with working and living, so the same places!

2. What's your claim to fame?

Shepherd: Professionally the development of many top, international brands. Personally, I was once a competition skydiver, did the Camel Cape to Cairo and climbed Kilimanjaro.

3. Describe your career so far.

Shepherd: From being a photocopier sales rep through television, journalism, publishing, radio broadcasting, and advertising to specialist brand strategy, design and film-making. A wild, wild ride!

4. Tell us a few of your favourite things.

Shepherd: My kids (who can simultaneously become my least favourite things – but that's teenagers for you), gin, wine, preparing and enjoying great and interesting food, my home, cars, my career and living in South Africa.

5. What do you love about your industry?

Shepherd: It's all about the constant attention on staying relevant, so by its nature reinvents itself frequently. That means it never gets tired or dull – there's always new stuff to learn.

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

Shepherd: Always good coffee at the start, always a GnT at the end. Everything in between is unexpected!

7. What are the tools of your trade?

Shepherd: My MacBook and my gift of the gab!

8. Who is getting it right in your industry?

Shepherd: A brand that is getting it bang-on is [NetFlorist](#). Their messaging is relevant, compelling, memorable and enjoyable. They are doing a great job of combining simplicity and consistency, and their brand extensions work excellently. Over and above this, the experience of the brand (certainly mine and many people I have spoken to) aligns brilliantly with the promise.

9. List a few pain points the industry can improve on.

Shepherd: Creating a real and meaningful industry body that is genuinely interested in working together to create knowledge and value, and to advance overall perception of the discipline.

10. What are you working on right now?

Shepherd: Apart from a brilliant collection of very forward-thinking and brave clients around the world, I'm still trying to complete a book called *The Restaurant Toilet* – a collection of thoughts about considering every facet of the brand experience.

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

Shepherd: Big data is a current buzzword, and like all of them, makes its users feel intelligent and informed. Very few people can actually give you a meaningful explanation! Authenticity is the one I like best right now, because people want authentic brands and real experiences.

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

Shepherd: In the shower in the morning.

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

Shepherd: I can sing all the words to the 1980's Kellerprinz ad and all the words to the *Cheers* theme.

14. Are you a technophobe or a technophile?

Shepherd: Technophile, unless you are asking my know-it-all kids, in which case I'm a dinosaur!

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

Shepherd: About 100 selfies of my son – who doesn't want to consume his own memory, and is too lazy to delete the ones he takes on mine – an enviable collection of great music, and some extremely hard-to-get cell phone numbers (including

some eye-popping ones!)

Simple as that. Be sure to follow both [Brand Alive Group](#) and [Brand Film Co](#) on Facebook and follow [Shepherd](#) on Twitter or email him on info@brandalivegroup.com.

**Interviewed by [Leigh Andrews](#).*

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

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