

## with... Carla Gontier

This week, we find out what's really going on behind the selfie with Carla Gontier, Head of Social Media at Hellocomputer...



Gontier's life philosophy: What is life without a little whimsy?

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

**Gontier:** I live in the Cape Town CBD, work in Woodstock and play mostly at And Union.

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

**Gontier:** I once stood in line at Topshop with an Olsen twin.

In my career: I was the social media lead on the Mercedes-Benz South Africa account and helped shape Mercedes-Benz' South Africa's social media strategy, alongside a fantastic team at my previous agency - iProspect - and within Mercedes-Benz itself. Now they are one of the leading brands on social in South Africa.

### 3. Describe your career so far.

**Gontier:** My career has been pretty diverse when it comes to social in terms of the types of agencies I have worked for. I started at a specialist social media agency in London as an intern, then worked for Social@Ogilvy at Ogilvy PR London. I then moved to a small agency in Johannesburg, and now I'm at a highly creative agency, Hellocomputer. I have been very lucky to work with some of the most creative, analytical and strategic people in digital at some very big (and small) agencies, both in South Africa and in London. I think exposure to the various types of digital agencies and the way they operate has given me some great experience.

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

**Gontier:** Cheese, wine, beer. Occasionally I run, but only to counteract the previous three favourite things.

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

**Gontier:** It is so fast-paced. There are a million innovations happening in digital all the time, and you have to keep up or you will get left behind. You have to constantly educate yourself. And the fact that I get to work with some crazy, creative and intelligent people doesn't hurt.

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

**Gontier:** Sometimes in advertising we give in to our clients a little too much. Some very good, creative ideas can become diluted because clients are scared, or unsure. We have to be stronger with telling our clients that we are the experts.

### 7. Describe your average workday (if such a thing exists).

**Gontier:** I do a lot of reviews: for campaign reports, monthly reports, strategy and content plans. I also do reports myself, check or write content plans, create briefs, create presentations for strategies. I write campaign concepts and ensure my team is on top of everything they have to do for the day or week, and try find little ways of improving the process. I also sit in a lot of meetings.

### 8. What are the tools of your trade?

**Gontier:** It really depends. Things I use on a daily basis are: Google Docs for content plans, ORM and social-listening tools like Radian 6, Hootsuite, Sprinklr and Social Bakers.

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

**Gontier:** Hellocomputer, obviously! [Insert smiley face]. We have some amazing people working here, and it shows in the work we produce. Globally, there are so many agencies and corporates right now that are doing some fantastic work on social in particular: Ikea does some cool stuff on social, but in terms of social in South Africa, I think there are a few players at quite a high-level, and all of them competing on a fairly even playing field.

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

**Gontier:** I am currently working on a trends report about how technology changes behaviour (Uber, Airbnb etc).

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

**Gontier:** SoLoMo, Thought leadership, native advertising, ROI, bite-size content. I always ask what the value exchange is for bloggers, influencers or consumers. Ideation is probably my least favourite industry term. What the hell does that even mean?

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

**Gontier:** As I am about to fall asleep, so that I forget them, and then have to spend hours the next day trying to recall what they are. Or at my desk when I can think - I hate being put on the spot for ideas, I prefer to sit down and think them out if I have to do it alone. I like brainstorming sessions though, I think they really help stimulate ideas.

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

**Gontier:** I can play the guitar and I can juggle.

## **14. Are you a technophobe or a technophile?**

**Gontier:** Technophile!

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

**Gontier:** Pictures of my friends probably, and a few weird selfies.

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

**Gontier:** Do an internship, put in the effort to get yourself placed at a top agency and you will be set. Don't give up - I had to call about a hundred agencies in London before any of them would even see me, until one finally agreed to give me an internship.

## **17. Plug your contact details, punt yourself - list all the places people can find you/your work online...**

**Gontier:**

[Twitter](#)

[LinkedIn](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Pinterest](#)

Skype: carlarandom

[Click here](#) for comments from Gontier, on how digital advertisers can attract and hold our goldfish-like attention spans.

*\*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.

▪ #Loeries2020: Behavioural economics as creativity, but not as we know it... - 24 Nov 2020

▪ #Dl2020: Ignite your inner activist - representation through illustration - 27 Feb 2020

▪ #Dl2020: How Sho Madozi brought traditional Tsonga *xibelani* into 2020 - 27 Feb 2020

▪ #Dl2020: Silver jubilee shines with Department of Audacious Projects launch - 26 Feb 2020

▪ #BehindtheSelfie with... Qingqile 'WingWing' Mdlulwa, CCO at The Whole Idea - 26 Feb 2020

[View my profile and articles...](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>