

#Behindtheselfie with... Lebohang Mokoena

 By Leigh Andrews

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This week, we find out what's really going on behind the selfie with Lebohang Mokoena: 28-year-old entrepreneur selected in a *Dragon's Den*-style interview to spearhead Goodbye Malaria's merchandising and fundraising effort at their new pop-up stores at airports, which launched on 23 November.



Mokoena in the Goodbye Malaria store at OR Tambo airport, which features Shweshwe pyjama pants, hats and bowties as well as handmade teddies, bracelets and more...

1. Where do you live, work and play?

Mokoena: I live in the West Rand of Joburg and work for Goodbye Malaria, managing a pop-up retail store based at OR Tambo airport.

2. What's your claim to fame?

Mokoena: Outside of my bubbly personality, eagerness to learn and not fearing challenges, I make a difference every day with my work to the people of southern Africa who are affected by malaria.

3. Describe your career so far.

Mokoena: Interesting, always keeps me on my toes and can be challenging at times, but I roll with the punches. I've now found my passion – working with an awesome team doing good at the same time.

4. Tell us a few of your favourite things.

Mokoena: I have two passions: my daughter and teaching. Oh yes, and learning. OK, I have three passions.

5. What do you love about your industry?

Mokoena: The ability to interact with different, unpredictable personalities on a daily basis, learning different cultures from all over the world, as I'm based at the airport, and knowing I'm making a difference.

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

Mokoena: It doesn't exist! Running the two pop-up stores in the airport space can be really overwhelming as there's so much to do and yet so little time: from admin to staff management, merchandising, making money and still having fun at the same time.

7. What are the tools of your trade?

Mokoena: Being passionate, seeking and taking advice from my mentors and reading motivational books to keep me focused.

8. Who is getting it right in your industry?

Mokoena: Definitely Robbie Brozin, the co-founder of Nando's and co-incidentally the co-founder of Goodbye Malaria. I look up to him and I'm inspired by him and his work ethic. He's smart and yet so humble.

9. What are the biggest pain points/challenges/areas for improvement?

Mokoena: Understanding the challenges. Sales are unpredictable and one has to always keep focused with a positive mindset.

10. What are you working on right now?

Mokoena: We are new to retail, both me as a manager, and Goodbye Malaria overall. My focus is on the team. They need to understand our cause so when they speak to visitors to the stores they communicate what we are trying to achieve. I dream of running more of these pop-up stores around the country, and ultimately helping Goodbye Malaria in their dream of eliminating malaria.

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

Mokoena: The words I normally utter to myself are, "Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority, it is time to reform, pause and reflect." Those are the wise words from Mark Twain. It might not be an industry term, but it's my mantra!

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

Mokoena: Mostly it's when I'm home, just about to fall asleep at night. Like most entrepreneurs, I have no 'off' button.

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

Mokoena: I'm great at keeping my cool.

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

Mokoena: I wouldn't really consider myself much of a technophile. I do admire new technologies and gadgets, but I never really fuss around them. You'd find hundreds of pictures of my daughter on my phone.

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

Mokoena: Read a lot and have someone to look up to, love what you do, always remain focused and have fun!

Simple as that. Find out what Mokoena does on www.goodbyemalaria.com and follow Goodbye Malaria on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/goodbyemalaria) and

[Instagram](#) 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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