

#BehindtheSelfie with... Carissa Rapolthy

 By Leigh Andrews

4 Oct 2017

This #EntrepreneurMonth, we go behind the selfie with Carissa Rapolthy, director at brand activation company, Urban Striker.



"I'm a mom, a wife and an entrepreneur, I'm a superwoman!"

1. Where do you live, work and play?

I live in Durbanville with my husband and two kids. My Cape Town office is in Montague Gardens with the Johannesburg office in Dunkeld West. I spend most of my weekends with family and friends at surrounding wine farms or friends' houses. Our weekends are determined by how we can spend time with our kids and keep them entertained!

2. What's your claim to fame?

I'm a mom, a wife and an entrepreneur... it's not an easy task balancing all three, but I certainly try my best.



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Any woman that works full time and is a mom is a hero in my eyes.

3. Describe your career so far.

During my varsity days I started working for a brand activation agency, doing promos in my spare time. I then got employed by that agency and after four short months in their Cape Town office, I moved to Johannesburg as the operations manager for the same company. During this time I became the client service director and, after spending four years in Johannesburg, I moved back to Cape Town. I still loved the vibe of Johannesburg though, and regularly commuted between the cities.

I then worked in a BTL ad agency for two years before deciding that events and brand activation was really what I enjoyed, so at the age of 30 I started my own agency, Urban Striker, doing exactly that.



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Over the past six years, I've been given the opportunity to work on incredible brands, with great clients. I still enjoy being client-facing, so I choose to remain involved with clients and the creative, planning and implementation side of what we do. I have an incredible team behind me and nothing makes me happier than seeing them grow and getting to bring creative ideas to life.

4. Tell us a few of your favourite things.

Spending time with my family and friends, my kids are my daily entertainment. My husband and I love to travel, so we go abroad at least every two years.

5. What do you love about your industry?

I love that no two days are ever the same, no brief is ever the same, so we are constantly challenged to think on our feet

and find creative, practical ways to bring ideas to life. I've learned that with technology, nothing is impossible these days.

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

The average day really is a juggling match of doing what you planned in between the last minute requests that get thrown in!

7. What are the tools of your trade?

Creative thinking, logical mind set, administratively strong, attitude, and you have to absolutely love what you do, otherwise the curveballs and long hours will get to you.

8. Who is getting it right in your industry?

Anyone managing to merge experiential marketing and digital effectively.

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

Probably timelines, but we know that's never going to happen, because when a great idea comes along, you have to make it happen before someone else does. We work in an extremely pressured environment and timelines are always the biggest challenge, but we always make it happen, no matter what.

10. What are you working on right now?

A very cool experiential activation plan for a top secret, super fun "limited edition" brand that launched end September. We are also working on Enel Energy, Indigo Brands, Lindt, Bos and lots of other smaller activations that consistently roll out month after month.

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

My most used catch phrase would be "This too shall pass", we go through some highly pressured times and often I need to remind myself and my team that once we get through it, we will look back and have a breather.

We are heading into peak season, what I call the pressure cooker, where there is laughter, tears, screaming, lack of sleep and utter craziness, but come January, everything goes back to normal.

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

Probably in the evenings when I am relaxed and not in front of my laptop, or when I am driving. Mostly when I am alone and zoned out but my brain is ticking overtime.

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

I work incredibly well under pressure.

14. Are you a technophobe or a technophile?

I'm probably somewhere in between, the younger generation in our office keep us abreast of the digital world, as do my incredible digital suppliers.

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

Apps for my kids and loads of photos and videos of my kids, and in between the photos of my kids are photos of events or activations that we are implementing. Apart from photos, you will find all the shopping apps... online shopping is my thing these days. It's nearly impossible to shop with two kids under the age of four!

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

Be eager to learn and get stuck in to whatever opportunity you get given to work on a project. Each event or activation will give you different learnings and that bank of experience dealing with different situations will give you the confidence to take on any project in the future. It will teach you to think on your feet and be solutions-orientated. There isn't a book that will tell you how to make a creative idea come to life, technology is evolving, creative thinking is evolving so what we did 10 years ago is very different to the experiential concepts we get to implement now. You need to be solutions-orientated and have an attitude and desire to bring ideas to life.

Simple as that. [Click here](#) for Rapolthy's MyBiz profile and interact with her on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#). You can also visit the [Urban Striker](#) website directly.

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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