

with... Fred Roed

This week, we find out what's really going on behind the selfie with Fred Roed, CEO at World Wide Creative...



Selfie, complete with photobombs. Strange things happen when taking a selfie at Roed's place of work.

1. Where do you live, work and play?

Roed:

Live: On a large, scruffy property that I bought last year, in Hout Bay.

Work: At the digital marketing agency called World Wide Creative, which I founded in 2003 with Mike Perk - in Woodstock, Cape Town, and Rivonia, Jozi.

Play: Mostly with my kids - two daughters and one son - in my garden, at the beach, or inside my home on the family iMac.

2. What's your claim to fame?

Roed: I have a few.

As a cocky twenty-something dude, I snuck into Wimbledon when they were renovating in 1997 and stole a big tuft of grass from centre court. I sent it back to my mom in an envelope and she planted it in her garden. We had some of Wimbledon centre court's finest growing in our back yard.

I worked for a gardening company in London, and one day I mowed the lawn of the barracks at Buckingham Palace. I posed for a bunch of Japanese tourists leaning against the lawnmower.

I have been shot in the head - seriously - with a .22 rifle by an ex-girlfriend when I was seventeen. She was standing two meters away from me. It's a long story.

Also, I won the 'Best Individual Contribution to Digital in SA' at the 2015 IAB Bookmarks awards. That was a good moment.

3. Describe your career so far.

Roed: Successful. Unfinished. Challenging. Exhilarating. Educational. Inspiring.

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

Roed: Right now I'm learning how to surf with my 12-year old son, Mikael - that is definitely up there.

I enjoy cutting trees down in my really big garden. It's completely overgrown, so seeing the progress is pretty awesome. I have a lot of firewood now.

I'm a big cheese fan, all kinds - even the smelly stuff. I also love craft beer and whisky.

5. What do you love about your industry?

Roed: The diversity of challenges within digital marketing. I love that as a mid-size agency we can partner with clients to disrupt entire industries. Good ideas and clever innovation will spread faster than ever now. It's a great time to be alive.

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

Roed: I think the pitching process is still flawed. It is anathema to a strong relationship with clients from the outset. You're starting on a bad foot. We believe in forging trust-based, long-term partnerships with clients. This needs to start with open, honest conversation, along with healthy investigation into the business challenges faced by clients - not a mad scramble for a quick creative win.

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

Roed: I start with coffee. Always coffee. Strong, tasty, delicious, glorious coffee. I usually get to the studio around 8:30am. I start with defining my 'one thing' for the day. I use Momentum Dash, a Chrome app, for that. I usually have meetings scheduled, but on Mondays and Fridays I always have internal team meetings. I get home at around 6pm. I tend to get to emails, proposals and writing tasks later in the day, but if I don't have time then, I have to do them when my family is asleep - around 9pm onwards.

8. What are the tools of your trade?

Roed:

- **Software:** Chrome/Gmail for emails and productivity.
- **Hardware:** End-to-end Apple products (iMac, iPhone, iPad - even iTV).
- **Industry news:** Flipboard, Tweetdeck, Readly.
- **Shopping:** PnP online, Zando.
- **Brands:** Levis, Adidas.
- **Car:** I still have my 2003 Opel Corsa Bakkie. I will drive it into the ground, or at least until my VERY big dogs and VERY messy kids grow up.

9. Who is getting it right in your industry?

Roed: There are some strong agencies that we look up to. Sapient Nitro: we want to be them when we grow up. Huge is also great. Locally, I love what King James and Ogilvy are doing - integrating digital into their work quite efficiently. Saratoga, which is the company that invested in us two years ago, is doing unbelievably strong work in the development space - particularly in insurance and e-commerce. Nice people, too.

10. What are you working on right now?

Roed: I'm overseeing the launch of our in-house magazine, called *Heavy Chef Quarterly* - the name comes from the saying 'never trust a skinny chef'. The first edition is focused on digital marketing strategy, and I'm super excited about it. At WWC, we have several e-commerce projects on the go. We are designing a beautiful new app for a certain famous deejay, soon to be announced. We are redesigning around a dozen major news sites for the Independent Media group. We have a lot of search, media and CRM campaigns for retail clients like Foschini Group and iStore that are keeping us very busy.

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

Roed: 'Mobi-pocalypse' - which is the term our search team have used in order to get psyched about the impending changes to Google's search algorithm, deemed to be the biggest in years.

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

Roed: Usually in my car, which is frustrating as I can't write while driving. I use Siri to create memos, or use my phone's recorder, but they always get lost in the ether. I'm sure I've lost a few million rand to missing memos.

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

Roed: I can sing like an angel - despite what everyone keeps telling me, I know that to be true.

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

Roed: Eish... I don't want to speculate. Missing memos?

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

Roed: Don't start an agency! If you're young, rather start on a product. Selling time is easy, but it's competitive and difficult to scale. Figure out something that people need, but struggle with - then solve the challenge with a disruptive, digital solution. That's advice I'd give myself ten years ago.

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

Roed: www.fredroed.com has most of my details, but my main point of contact would be [Twitter](#).

17. Are you a technophobe or a technophile?

Roed: A technophile, although a lazy-ish one. I'm not a first-adopter. I'm a 'wait-for-first-adopters-to-adopt-then-ask-them-how-to-install-whatever-they-adopted, second-adopter'.

You can read more about World Wide Creative in their [press office](#).

**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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