

Bontle Tsikwe, business director at The Grind PR

 By [Karabo Ledwaba](#)

9 Mar 2023

This week I catch up with Bontle Tsikwe, the business director at The Grind PR.



Bontle Tsikwe. Source: Supplied.

■ ***What do you enjoy most about your industry?***

What I enjoy the most about my industry is that it puts and pushes me into spaces I never thought I could go into. This industry has created opportunities for me to sit at tables with a myriad of people from different walks of life, with different passions, dreams and aspirations, which allows me to learn a lot about myself and how to relate to different personalities. It has granted me the opportunity to shape the narrative of some amazing campaigns, causes and organisations.

■ ***What is a typical workday for you?***

My typical workday starts the night before when I go through my diary to remind myself of the meetings and deadlines for the next day. The actual day will be filled with a number of meetings with clients and colleagues in our multi-disciplined teams. I also make time for consultations with my immediate team at The Grind PR where I review all the work that is produced before it lands in clients' inboxes. These vary from reviewing and finalising client presentations, to editing written content such as media statements, speeches, etc. And just being my team's number-one cheerleader – cheering them on!

■ ***Describe your career so far.***

I have grown and developed over the years – and I am one of those who believe that one's growth and development doesn't only happen in formal settings like a classroom or boardroom. My development has come through working in the agency environment – this is where I started my career and during my stints in corporate (South African Institute of Chartered Accountants) and a State Owned Entity (State Information Technology Agency). I have found myself back in the agency and consulting space with Group Africa Marketing's PR firm, The Grind PR. I am in a good space where I play an advisory support role to clients while building and nurturing a strong team of passionate and driven PR professionals.

■ ***What are you currently streaming/reading/listening to?***

Reading – my *Bible* and daily devotionals to start my day.

Streaming – I am a junkie for local TV content, especially reality shows.

Listening – I have just discovered the *PR Girl Manifesto* podcasts which I use for inspiration but to rest the mind I listen to gospel music, old R&B as well as jazz.

▣ ***What's your favourite gif?***

Dancing gifs – I like celebrating even the littlest of milestones and will always share those as part of the celebration!



▣ ***Who inspires you?***

I draw inspiration from several people – in the broad sphere of marketing as well as in general life.

1. Mother Teresa for her generous heart.
2. Oprah Winfrey – there are some great quotes about life and success which I always pick up from her works.
3. Thebe Ikalafeng – I am yet to know another SA marketing guru.

▣ ***What did you want to be when you were a child?***

I wanted to be a medical doctor but I am not sure how I would have coped with that considering I cry when someone is sick, in pain and suffering.

▣ ***Give three pieces of advice for young people waiting to enter this industry***

1. Don't be in a hurry to master the PR industry, it is a professional career that requires investment in time, dedication and patience to develop and master.
2. PR is not social media – just because you have the greatest social media following doesn't make you a great PR professional. Remember that social media is a platform that can be used by PR to disseminate messages – it is not PR
3. PR is not only about attending great parties – it involves lots of hard work – often behind the scenes

▣ ***Has it all been worth it?***

Without a doubt. I always tell my peers, friends, family and colleagues that I am very jealous and protective when it comes to PR because this is the only industry I know. This is the industry in which I have invested tears, sweat and long hours. I have learned a lot from the best in the industry and gave back at the same time through mentoring those who follow in my footsteps. Leading the PR team at The Grind PR and seeing how my team blossoms gives me a sense of pride and achieving some industry awards which affirm the value we bring to clients and their work. So yes it has all been worth it!

ABOUT KARABO LEDWABA

Karabo Ledwaba is a Marketing and Media Editor at Bizcommunity and award-winning journalist. Before joining the publication she worked at Sowetan as a content producer and reporter. She was also responsible for the leadership page at SIVag, Sowetan's lifestyle magazine. Contact her at karabo@bizcommunity.com

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