

Play naked!

By [Danette Breitenbach](#)

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If one is going to be a dick, then one should be the Best Dick. At least that's what Mike Sharman believes and to prove his point he put pen to paper and wrote the book, *The Best Dick*. The book, which observations in business, launched in Johannesburg this week.



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Here Sharman shares his motivation for the book, his biggest lesson in business and challenges he is preparing for going forward.

■ **What is the motivation for writing the book?**

There is so much BS and ego in business. Silicon Valley has lied to us and told us that every business idea will turn you into an entrepreneurial rockstar.

I notice how – every time I get on stage at a marketing or industry conference – calling out any hypocrisy about antiquated thinking and hypothetical data, such as demographics and LSMs, encourages an audience to nod in agreement. Premises plus comedic act outs lead to audience absorption of your conference content.

I love to write, I had a stint as a stand-up comedian in a previous life and my job is that of a professional *storyseller*. I entertain clients and consumers, daily. Tracey McDonald Publishers approached me to pen my industry insights. There are

a LOT of dicks in business. I never want to be the biggest, I want to be *The Best Dick*, at everything I achieve.

This book is a collection of observations – first hires, the cash flow struggles of small business, networking, told in the uniquely Mike Sharman, candid way. Anecdotes of time spent in Hollywood, as well as fancy dress competitions, and even armed robberies. There's something for both green and seasoned entrepreneurs, as well as people in a corporate role contemplating a departure to start up land.

■ **What is your biggest lesson in business?**

Speak spreadsheet. Far too often, creative types (present company included) ostrich their way through finance – with their heads in the sand – but the most well-rounded entrepreneurs have a balance of marketing savvy, coupled with a real understanding of elements such as their business Opex and the other functional, finance jargon that supports your business case.

■ **What is the biggest challenge you see going forward?**

Careers are volatile. My job didn't exist at the start of the century and it will continue to evolve and mature over the next decade. It is imperative to hunt the obsession and trends that saw you achieve success as a service provider with early-adopter clients, in order to prevent your redundancy in an era of machine learning and AI.

■ **What is the most fun you have ever had?**

Three examples are etched in my mind from projects we have worked on. Nando's "Last Dictator Standing" with Black River FC, "#5GumExperience" with Jason Cederwall from Wrigley (at the time) working on an experiential campaign that allowed us to live the Rockstar lifestyle, and most recently, the RocoMamas "#ElectionBurger" campaign. Making brands go globally viral – that's my narcotic

■ **If you had to do it all again, what would you keep the same and what would you change?**

From a Retroviral perspective – the journey has been my University of Life and 2015-2016 was my MBA of Life. The start-up experience is paved with blemishes, but it's the most free, vulnerable and terrifying choice you can take. If you ever want to truly feel alive...

Life is short. Play naked!

*The Best Dick is available [here](#) or at Exclusive Books, CNA and all good book stores mid November.

Mike is the co-founder of Retroviral (a digital communications agency that has won many awards) and Webfluentia (a platform that establishes relationships between consumers and brands through influencers) as well as a 2013 Mail & Guardian's top 200 young (under 35) South Africans.

WIN! To win a copy of *The Best Dick*, send a tweet with #TheBestDick to [@mikesharman](#). The best tweet wins!

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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