

Top PR consultancies and individuals

"Entering for 'cluster 6' of the Prisa Prism Awards - best agency and best PR practitioner - is more than submitting an entry, it is about getting feedback from highly regarded experienced professionals. Entrants ought to review it and apply it - it will be to their benefit" - Dr Amanda Hamilton-Attwell, CEO of Business DNA and cluster 6 chief judge.



Jolene van Heerden, this year's Best PR professional at the Prism Awards; and Monare Matema, best up-and-coming PR professional. Images © Van Heerden's [LinkedIn profile](#) and Matema's [Twitter profile](#).

Best PR professional

Silver – Jolene van Heerden

As communications manager for Mahle, an automotive component manufacturer in Durban, she has challenged the automotive industry to take ownership in assisting and addressing the ongoing shortage of skilled engineers and artisans.

She is also the driving force behind a highly successful sustainable CSI project (Science2Go) with NGO Casme, which is helping to reduce the knowledge gap that exists within these critical focus areas, by providing science education in the under-resourced areas of mathematics and science at 31 schools and over 20,000 learners in the rural areas of Durban.



Chevron to invest R3.6 million in Stem centre

15 May 2017



Her colleagues and suppliers say she has outstanding communication skills, superior presentation abilities, a passion for excellence, and a contagious enthusiasm. Tenacious and resourceful; she demonstrates good research and information-gathering skills.

She has over 22 years' experience in the PR industry, is a frequent speaker and guest lecturer on public relations topics at the Durban University of Technology (DUT) and is the current Chairperson of KZN Prisa.

Best up-and-coming Public Relations professional

Bronze – Monare Matema

A 25-year-old creative who says that for the longest time, he has wanted to share his stories with the world. He was given the opportunity after a chance meeting with founder of DNA Brand Architects Sylvester Chauke who offered him an internship, despite the fact that he had no prior experience and no qualification in communications.

He proved himself and within three months of his internship, moved from the reception desk into the role of brand assistant.

He is passionate about the spread of ideas and has a burning desire to make a difference in the lives of people the world over.

“ For him, mediocrity is not option, so he makes it his mission to constantly learn about and excel in the industries that he works in. ”

He has a fierce work ethic and a dogged determination to get things done.

Best Large Public Relations consultancy

Silver – Clockwork Media

That's two in a row for the agency, which also took the silver in this category last year. Since then, the agency has gone through a period of growth as well as recognition upping both its staff and revenue.



Take a shot and keep up, or die

Danette Breitenbach 17 Jan 2018



Notable work includes the dotsure.co.za 'Doggy Day' campaign, which saw the agency break the Guinness World Record for 'the most dogs gathered in one place wearing bandanas', as well as 'Enter the Microsoft Age' for Microsoft South Africa, and Tile Africa's 'More Than' national campaign.

Best Mid-sized Public relations consultancy

Bronze – DNA Brand Architects

A family of 34 young thinkers who are a mix of different cultures, they draw from their different experiences to create work.

“ They believe in a new dawn of young leaders, who challenge the status quo by demonstrating what is possible when our minds are given an opportunity to take on the boardroom. ”

They say, “What makes us unique is our shared vision and goal to reshape the narrative of South African youth, work ethic and culture”.

Best Small Public relations consultancy

Silver – Plato Communications

Celebrating a decade of delivering solid PR campaigns and maintaining strong client relationships, Plato continues its success, something it believes starts with an integrated strategy and plan based on solid insight, as it sets the benchmark for small agency work in a heavyweight agency world.

Judges' feedback

Standard of entries

There were some very good entries, but overall it was slightly disappointing. Some of the entries were really not worth the time and effort the panel had to invest to evaluate it. In several instances, we felt the person submitting the entry did not respect the evaluators – they did not use the guidelines provided, nor did they bother to proofread their entry.

Some entrants submitted their 2017 entry, with a few “replacements”. What was sad, was that they did not even apply the advice the team gave them to improve their submissions. We are concerned about the dwindling number of individual and agency entries. We need to find ways to profile these awards as aspirational and value-adding.

What stood out and what did not

Agencies are paying more attention to setting measureable objectives and eventually measuring in a valid and reliable way. We were very impressed with the agencies that linked the outcomes of their projects to the bottom-line of the business, indicating in real terms the strategic impact of communication interventions.

Unfortunately, there were still submissions that only used AVE as a measurement. Even though we understand that we still need to educate client organisations to move away from AVE as a measurement of impact, we need to measure our work according to the outcomes and the outputs achieved.

General judging comments

The number of entries submitted in this cluster speaks volumes. It says most agencies want to submit projects to be evaluated, but not themselves. They do not want to be evaluated according to their strategic focus, their commitment to staff development, their investment in transforming the PR industry.

“ Looking at the individual entries tells us that most PR practitioners do not have a career development plan, they do not measure if their projects are making a difference and what they can learn from each project they are involved in. ”



Prism Awards 2018 judging panels

4 Apr 2018



Chief judge: Dr Amanda Hamilton-Attwell of Business DNA

Danette Breitenbach – journalist

Nikki Munsie – IAS

Kavitha Kalicharan – Adcock

Bridget von Holdt – Burson-Marsteller

Roslyn Jones – Anglo American

Young judge: Sithulile Mbayi

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