

Natalie Roos heads up Positive Dialogue's new influencer marketing division

 By [Jessica Tennant](#)

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Positive Dialogue, the PR and communications agency in the Duke Group of companies, recently launched its specialist influencer marketing division, PD Influence.

The team is headed by influencer and content creator Natalie Roos. She will lead the Positive Dialogue Influence team from Nairobi, Kenya, a strategic coup, opening Africa's borders to clients.



Natalie Roos

"This launch was the next logical step in the Duke Group's overall strategy, with all the agencies in the group fitting together like puzzle pieces that reveal the big picture: an insights-driven, 360° brand and communications solution," says Tracy Jones, owner of Positive Dialogue Communications. "Duke is making big, bold moves as it bets on the future of our industry on this continent and beyond."

This follows shortly after the agency won in the Influencer Marketing category at the 2020 New Generation Digital & Social Media Awards for its One Plus 7T Pro campaign. “While we don’t chase accolades for the sake of winning awards, however, winning Best Influencer Marketing Campaign alongside our Duke partner Mark 1 provides the validation and impetus to take our influencer marketing to a new level,” adds Jones.



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Roos has spent most of her career in the travel sector, on influencer campaigns for major tourism brands such as Reunion Island Tourism and the Stellenbosch Wine Route.

She has worked on integrated, content-driven digital campaigns for brands like Old Mutual and Land Rover and won brands such as the Protea Hotels group and Pepsi.

She is also an accomplished digital media editor, having served numerous positions at the Associated Media group.

“Having had the opportunity to work as an influencer myself, I have experience working on campaigns with brands such as Cotton On, Capitec Bank, Volkswagen, Adidas, Attitude Hotels and many more, creating content that both resonates with my audience and effectively communicates the brand’s message,” says Roos. “My passion is content excellence.”

■ ***Congrats on your new appointment at Positive Dialogue’s specialist influencer marketing business division! How do you feel about it?***

Thank you so much! I feel extremely grateful to be in a position to work within this dynamic agency, and to be able to craft campaigns that are not only mutually beneficial and impactful for both the client and the influencers we work with, but exciting and engaging for followers. I have been waking up every morning feeling excited about growing PD Influence.

■ ***You’re going to be leading the Positive Dialogue Influence team from Nairobi, Kenya. When and why did you move to Nairobi, and how do you plan to go about opening Africa’s borders to your clients?***

I moved to Nairobi at the end of 2019 with my fiancé, who is a creative director in the advertising industry. We were keen to explore more of Africa and get to know the industry outside of the Cape Town bubble. For the past seven years or so I have been working as a freelancer, and 2020 was set to be a big year of travel jobs, but that obviously changed around March.

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So, I've spent most of this year thinking about how much opportunity there is in the influencer industry, where you essentially have an entire creative studio, marketing department and media platform wrapped up in one person.

During a time where major media houses and big-budget creative agencies are losing steam, influencers have the ability to remain agile and work under very limited conditions. I've seen so much opportunity here in East Africa, where the influencer industry is growing fast, and where there is major opportunity to bring structure to collaborations.

I see a lot more intra-continental collaboration going forward, where SA and East Africa don't feel so removed from one another as we have in the past. Networking is vital to getting things done in Kenya, so for me the next six months or so will be about meeting stakeholders and engaging on where we can solve problems together.

■ ***What can you tell us about the Kenyan market? Any insights you can share with us. Kenya is alive with possibilities. It's a hugely tech-driven country, where you can order a single carrot, pay on your phone using MPESA and have it delivered to your door within the hour. People here are ready to hustle, they're looking for opportunities and they are ready to seize them when they present themselves.***

Instagram is a big sales channel here, and you can find anything from imported skincare to a replacement iPhone screen on the platform, DM your request and have it sorted within 24 hours. It feels very exciting.

The tourism industry here is of course a major contributor to the economy, and it's been incredible to see how it has adapted to welcome local and domestic travellers to a new normal.

■ ***How and when did this come about/take effect?***

I actually first worked at Positive Dialogue about 10 years ago, as their first-ever social media manager. Tracy and I have always enjoyed working together, and over the years I've had the opportunity to consult on many exciting projects for PD. So, when Tracy contacted me about the growth of PD Influence, I jumped at the opportunity to lead the team. I really enjoy project work, and that's exactly what PD Influence specialises in.

■ ***Any other career highlights to date, besides this?***

Honestly, I've had a long and varied career so far. I started working as a K-T.V. presenter when I was in high school, presented a celebrity gossip show on DSTV's MK in my 20s and a makeover show on VIA at the start of my 30s. And then throughout these years in TV, I've also built this career in digital, which is really where my passion lies. My blog has afforded me amazing opportunities to travel to Thailand, Tanzania, Mauritius, France and Reunion Island, as well as all over South Africa and call it work. I've been a speaker at Indaba, Africa's largest travel conference and I've contributed to major publications like *Wine Enthusiast*. I've had the opportunity to work with the most amazing team, as the acting deputy editor at *Cosmopolitan SA*. So, I've worn many hats, but I've really loved them all.

■ ***You've spent most of your career in the travel sector, on influencer campaigns for major tourism brands such as Reunion Island Tourism and the Stellenbosch Wine Route. You've worked on integrated, content-driven digital campaigns for brands like Old Mutual and Land Rover and won brands such as the Protea Hotels Group and Pepsi. And you're an accomplished digital media editor, having served numerous positions at the Associated Media Group. Tell us a bit about your experience and why you believe you're well equipped to take on this new role? What does the role entail? What are your responsibilities?***

I think when it comes to influencer marketing, there are so many mysteries and a lot of smoke and mirrors. A lot of the time, myth busting and education is half the job. Clients are often not even sure where to start. Influencers aren't sure what other creators are charging. There's a lot of uncertainty.

I feel like my experience working as a blogger and influencer while at the same time working on conceptualising and managing campaigns for brands, gives me a unique perspective. I think it's really valuable to be able to sit with a brand and be able to offer insight into how to brief a campaign to creators, allowing them to really retain creative control, since they know exactly who their audience is and exactly how to speak to them, while also having the client's goals and objectives at the top of mind. It's a delicate balance, the brand's message and the creator's authenticity, and that's where I think PD Influence has a very specific set of skills.

■ ***What do you love most about your career, the industry and what you do?***

The opportunity to be creative and to solve problems. I really enjoy a varied landscape when it comes to work, and I think there's always a new trend, a new app, a new problem to solve when it comes to social media and influencer marketing. Seeing a campaign come to life and seeing the amazing results influencer campaigns can generate really gives me a rush.

■ ***Comment on the current state of influencer marketing in SA and globally.***

I'm excited to see the industry taking great strides towards transparency and responsibility. Influencer marketing is always changing and evolving, and the industry has seen some major bubbles burst during the past few years, but I think we're finding our way in terms of regulation and standardisation. We are seeing Influencers building multimillion-dollar apparel brands, media companies and even travel agencies from their personal brands, and it's exciting to see.

■ ***What's at the top of your to-do list (at work)?***

Right now I'm focusing on brand PD Influence, creating the visual and written language that will help us with both education and inspiration. We deal with clients at every stage of the influencer marketing journey - from those who don't know what all the hype is about to those who had a bad experience five years ago and don't want to touch it again. So, it's important that we have the materials we need in order to be able to speak to them exactly where they are.

■ ***What are you currently reading/watching/listening to (for work)?***

Honestly, I spend *hours* a day on TikTok. It's such an interesting platform in terms of algorithm and virality and *addictiveness* and I love watching what gets four million views and what brands are doing to try and hop on the trends that blow up organically.

■ ***Tell us something about yourself not generally known?***

I know everyone hates receiving phone calls in 2020, but I actually break out in a sweat every time my phone rings.

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