

#BehindtheSelfie with... Shorn Khumalo, co-founder, director and head of PR at The Client Media

 By Jessica Tennant

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This week, we go behind the selfie with Shorn Khumalo, co-founder, director and head of PR at The Client Media.



In the business of amplifying brand stories.

Where do you live, work and play?

To be quite honest, I don't know where I live. LOL. I'm always in between Cape Town and Johannesburg. I'm wherever my clients need me to be.

What's your claim to fame?

Besides being the executive member of the BeyHive (Beyonce's entourage – I'm not a fan, I'm an entourage. She just doesn't know it yet), I'm in the business of amplifying brand stories.

“ Just a reminder. She came. We saw. She conquered [#GlobalCitizenFestival pic.twitter.com/RJskR3lz72](https://twitter.com/RJskR3lz72)— A Global Citizen (@PRChap) [December 3, 2018](#) ”

Under The Client Media, we manage and facilitate brands and their development. We have been so fortunate to be trusted with unknown brands of which we've helped amplify.

Describe your career so far.

My career has been a whirlwind and a timeline of self-development. I actually enjoy watching the process as opposed to the end result. There's so much work that goes into strategising before execution. It's like watching a child grow right in front of you before letting it out in the world and trusting that you've instilled values for it to face the world. I don't even have kids but I've learned this from family and friends. In this case, you have to trust the research you have done prior and that the implementation is a result of it.

Tell us a few of your favourite things.

- There's absolutely nothing like a good bottle of red wine, I'm a pinotage and merlot kinda guy. Naturally, I explore a lot of vineyards in Stellenbosch, Franschoek and Paarl.
- I enjoy watching documentaries.
- My heart still aches over the ending of *How to get away with Murder*.
- I have an insane collection of Beyonce's performances. More than anything I appreciate how she strives to do better than her last show or album.

What do you love about your industry?

We are custodians of business image, communication and customer experience. We guard and guide brand development.

Describe your average workday, if such a thing exists.

No day is ever the same. One day I find myself writing press releases, speeches, company and individual profiles to booking clients flights and planning itinerary for them to appear on media platforms across the country to having external graphic designers branding communication etc. I say this all the time, there's no thrill better than media picking up whatever you're working on and wanting to run with it. To me this means we see you and we hear you.

What are the tools of your trade?

Besides my laptop, internet access, cellphone and media database, our clients are our top priority. We have open and honest conversations and I think that's very important.

Who is getting it right in your industry?

Small-medium agencies are doing an incredible job. Shout out to large corporations who are giving us a chance and trusting our direction.

List a few pain points the industry can improve on.

It has to be delayed payments. Those can incredibly inconvenience us small businesses.

What are you working on right now?

Besides working towards being a better human being, I'm working on Free State Fashion Week 2020, CliniMed's Wellness Day Campaign and Heels on Wheels Women's breakfast, developing a TV show, sponsorship here and there and we've recently signed Nyalleng Thibedi, an actress and engineer, who has a principal role in South Africa's number one TV show with over 10-million viewers *Uzalo* on SABC 1.

“ Proud to return as PR Agency for the annual prestigious fashion and lifestyle event [@FSFASHIONWEEK](#) 2019 [#FSFW19](#) [pic.twitter.com/Llu9wiPLI3](#)— A Global Citizen (@PRChap) [July 12, 2019](#) ”

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

We shoot a lot of TV work for the SABC on our TV production division and so this is a new field for me. My business partner has TV production background, of lately I'm learning a lot about 'panning', 'Zoom in', 'Wide Shot', etc. A catchphrase I use has to be: "You are doing the most". It's my way of complimenting people.

Where and when do you have your best ideas?

In the wee hours of the morning in my bedroom, airports, restaurants and cafes. I'm not an office person. I would go insane if I had to be confined to the same space for a lengthy period of time.

“ [pic.twitter.com/NdmUNpqwR9](#)— A Global Citizen (@PRChap) [May 29, 2018](#) ”

What's your secret talent/party trick?

I'm not sharing my secrets. Then they wouldn't be secrets, now would they? Urgh, good conversations always win people's hearts.

Are you a technophobe or a technophile?

Definitely a technophile.

What would we find if we scrolled through your phone?

Lots of screenshots. I screenshot whatever speaks to me and you'll definitely find videos of myself singing along to my favourite songs.

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

Be willing to learn and have an open mind. There's no one-way dimension to building brands. Write down all your ideas. One idea may not apply today and work tomorrow.

Follow Khumalo [@PRChap on Twitter](#) and [@shornkhumalo on Instagram](#), and/or The Client Media on their [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) feeds for the latest updates. Or email info@theclientpr.co.za to get in touch.

*Interviewed by [Jessica Tennant](#).

ABOUT JESSICA TENNANT

Jess is Senior Editor: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com. She is also a contributing writer. marketingnews@bizcommunity.com
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