

# #BehindtheSelfie with... Odette van der Haar

 By Leigh Andrews

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This week, we go behind the selfie with technophile Odette van der Haar, CEO at the ACA (Association for Communication and Advertising).



Because some days you just have to wear a crazy yellow afro. Why not!?

## 1. Where do you live, work and play?

I live in Jozi, my office is in Jozi but my work extends across South Africa. When I am not in Jozi, I look for new places to play in all over the world. Most recently, I was in Mexico during the December 2017 festive season!

## 2. What's your claim to fame?

I consider being a wife and mom to two very amazing boys quite an achievement, although some would argue that leading the most dynamic and creative profession in South Africa, championing self-regulation to make an impact on an entire industry and changing 'Adland' for the better is a claim to fame.

## 3. Describe your career so far.

Work hard, play hard... with people I consider friends, not just colleagues. I've had the time of my life over the past 10 years as the CEO of the ACA, working alongside some of the best brains in the business. My career has been filled with opportunities to travel the world, meet new people, do great things and study. It's been one insane ride so far, and I reckon the best is yet to come.

## 4. Tell us a few of your favourite things.

Good food, good wine and conversations with great minds. I also love jewellery and precious gems – after all, diamonds are a girl's best friend, right!?

## 5. What do you love about your industry?

It is the most inspiring and creative profession in the world. I love seeing the South African ad industry being recognised

and awarded globally. I love that the industry is so committed to transformation and to make the work it creates truly representative of the rainbow nation of South Africa.

*“ Mostly, I love working with ‘the crazy ones’ – the misfits, the rebels, the troublemakers. The round pegs in the square holes. The ones who see the world differently. They are not fond of rules and they have no respect for the status quo. ”*

You can quote them, disagree with them, disbelieve them, glorify or vilify them. About the only thing you can't do is ignore them, because they change things. They invent. They imagine. They heal. They explore. They create. They inspire. They push the human race forward. Maybe they have to be crazy. Because the ones who are crazy enough to think that they can change the world, are the ones who do!

## 6. Describe your average workday, if such a thing exists.

There is no average day in Adland! The business of advertising and communications is fast-paced with deadlines, demanding clients and agencies, with so many complex projects and business problems for which creative solutions are required. I'm often the fixer of all things complicated in Adland.



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Every day is different. I engage with so many people about so many things on a daily basis – clients, agency leaders, government and the media to name a few.

## 7. What are the tools of your trade?

Broadly speaking, entrepreneurship, a great understanding of marketing and the contribution that creativity makes to business success as well as the business of advertising helps, but an iPhone that is always on is the most valuable tool.

## 8. Who is getting it right in your industry?

There are so many agencies who are getting various things right. It depends on what you define as 'it' – Creativity? Effectiveness? Transformation? Growth? Awards and recognition?

## 9. List a few pain points the industry can improve on.

Devaluing intellectual property by providing clients with free IP during pitches, transformation and engaging in a price war.

## 10. What are you working on right now?

If I tell you, I'd have to kill you!

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

"I don't want to adult anymore."

## 12. Where and when do you have your best ideas?

In the morning, when I'm brushing my teeth.

### 13. What's your secret talent/party trick?

I always wear confidence, passion and conviction, even when I'm winging it and literally trembling with fear.

### 14. What would we find if we scrolled through your phone?

Emails, lots of emails and irritating WhatsApp group chats, photos... a few online shopping apps, loads and loads of contacts and a very interesting call history.

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

Get the academic grounding, find a mentor – someone who inspires you, and listen. Listen to hear, not to respond. Be brave and disruptive in your ideas/thinking, and then have the guts to stand up for what you believe is right.

Simple as that. [Click here](#) for more on the ACA, and follow these social media channels for the latest updates: [Van der Haar on Twitter](#) | [The ACA on Twitter](#) | [Van der Haar on Instagram](#) | [ACA on Facebook](#)

\*Interviewed by [Leigh Andrews](#).

## ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

*Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh\_Andrews.*

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