

#BehindtheSelfie with... Musa Kalenga

 By Leigh Andrews

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This week we find out what's really going on behind the selfie with Musa Kalenga, chief future officer at House of Brave (HOB).



Kalenga on camera.

1. Where do you live, work and play?

I currently live in Johannesburg, work in Africa and play in the world.

2. What's your claim to fame?

My beautiful family – I have a lovely wife and two supernova children.

3. Describe your career so far.

Non-linear, but super exciting. I was fortunate to have started my own business very early in life and had moderate success in business.

“ [@musakalenga](#) killed this stage!💎💎♥️👍 [#DigitalSummit2018](#) [@iab_sa](#) [pic.twitter.com/mLhYujZqea](#)— Kelly-Anne (@KellyAnne_Jo) [March 1, 2018](#) ”

I've enjoyed working in executive corporate roles in more formal environments and have also worked for one of the world's fastest growing tech businesses. So while my career has been short (in relative terms), it has been both exciting and impactful for me.

4. Tell us a few of your favourite things.

I enjoy reading, I love boxing and solo travel. Looking forward to seeing my family after a long day creates butterflies in my tummy and the feeling never gets old. These are a few of my favourite things... (singing)

5. What do you love about your industry?

I work in a few industries – ha ha ha! But despite all the industries that I play in, all of them require me to bring a set of skills that I love together – creativity and the use of technology. These skills have found application in the education and advertising space quite easily.

I particularly love using those skills to create new things, to build new ideas and to watch people consume our products to solve their problems.

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

I am a super earlybird, so I am up between 4am and 5am typically. I read, work and pray for two or three hours, and once a week I box between 6am and 7am. My days are usually filled with meetings (the world's biggest waste of time) - but I am working hard to have shorter, more impactful meetings. I generally leave the office between 6pm and 7pm.

7. What are the tools of your trade?

Networks, relationships and the Google suite of services.

8. Who is getting it right in your industry?

In advertising, at the moment, I think the global consulting businesses are doing a better job than traditional ad agencies. They are getting into conversations with the big clients about business results and respecting the return on investment requirements.



The true definition of ROI: Return on Investment, Ideas, Insight and Innovation

Leigh Andrews 19 Dec 2017



They then make strategic acquisition of the capabilities required to deliver commercial results.

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

Phew – how much time do have? The three biggest pain points are: (1) diversity, (2) the broken relationship between clients and suppliers and (3) the inability to retain top (diverse) talent.

“ For historical reasons, agencies are untransformed spaces that never really felt the need to transform until the latest revision to the MAC charter. This meant that for the longest time, agencies and creative communication businesses hacked their way to being 'compliant'. Windowdressing, dodgy ownership structures through “trusts” with the tea lady as a majority shareholder, etc. ”

Now, my belief is that compliance is a regulatory requirement that forms part of the journey to diversity. If you don't embrace diversity, you can never be fully compliant.

This has created a level of animosity to compliance and therefore a negative perception of diversity. Meanwhile, diversity is actually the thing that will solve a lot of problems for agencies. Most research confirms that top-performing teams generally tend to be more diverse than not.

“ The second pain point is this notion of master-slave between clients and suppliers. This is wrong on so many levels, but without going into detail, it ultimately haemorrhages the trust in the relationship. ”

The commercial pressure makes agencies use incapable resources to drive conversations with clients who get increasingly frustrated and then begin to reframe their view of their agency as incompetent.

The third issue, which is also a deeply complex issue, is that the retention of top talent is difficult. Young hopefuls often view the agency world as a transient environment, *en route* to their actual goal. The only ones that remain identify with senior structure that is likely white and male, and therefore perpetuating the issues of diversity.

All three pain points are really complex, but I have done my best to sum them up.

10. What are you working on right now?

After the acquisition of a stake in the HOB group, together with our leader Karabo Songo and founders Andrew Shuttleworth, Rob van Rooyen and Vanessa Pearson, we will be building a future-fit business strategy. We hope to make a few more strategic decisions through our investment vehicle.



House of Brave announces major empowerment deal, appoints Karabo Songo, Musa Kalenga

2 Feb 2018



I am also still involved in the BridgeLabs group as founder and CE, so we continue to design technology solutions for what we refer to as the 'digitally invisible' consumer.

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

- **“Digital marketing strategy”** – death. I believe digital marketing as a concept is dead, we are marketing in a digital world.
- **“Influencer”** – vomit. Everyone in their own right is a broadcaster and by definition an influencer. These macro influencers with millions of follows often have no idea how to create real value for a business aside from the few super smart ones.
- **“Integrated marketing”** – oh please. Just do your job, you lazy marketer, LOL!

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

In the early hours of the morning, between 1:47am and 2:19am.

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

I can spell “Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious”!

14. Are you a technophobe or a technophile?

Sigh. I am probably more technophobe than technophile, to be honest.



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15. What would we find if we scrolled through your phone?

In my photos, loads of selfies with my kids. I mean loads.

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

Focus on value, self-develop without being asked to, be ruthless about timelines and progression, and don't be a douche.

Relationships are more important than whatever shiny little opportunity you may be faced with.

Simple as that. Visit Kalenga's [MyBiz profile](#), his [Changing the world starting in Africa Facebook page](#) or [website](#), and be sure to follow him on the following social media channels for more: [LinkedIn](#) | [Twitter](#) | [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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