

#BehindtheSelfie with... Ashleigh Wainstein, co-founder and director of Social Places

This week, we go behind the selfie with Ashleigh Wainstein, co-founder and director of Social Places.

 By [Jessica Tennant](#) 4 Mar 2020



Wainstein says, "In Tokyo, my favourite place!"

Where do you live, work and play?

I live and work in Cape Town and it's basically one big playground. So, wine farms and mini road trips to seaside towns are my favourite playtime activities.



What's your claim to fame?

We were really honoured to be finalists in this year's FNB Innovation Awards. But besides that, we work with many of the country's largest brands, from Spur Group, McDonalds, Pep, Virgin Active, Old Mutual and so many more.

Describe your career so far.

My career has been very rewarding so far. I have always wanted my own business and over the last five years, that has not changed one bit. It's exciting, fast-paced and obviously stressful at times, but the personal and professional growth is motivating. I am passionate about our tech and solving pain points in digital, but I am just as passionate about having a team and a working environment that inspires this innovation.

Tell us a few of your favourite things.

Travel, gym and binge-watching terrible reality shows (*Love Island*).

What do you love about your industry?

I love that it's forever changing and developing so I am always learning. I also love that each of my clients have such different requirements, so I get to adapt our products to suit each one's needs.

Describe your average workday, if such a thing exists.

The first thing I do in the morning is to check my mail (after hitting the snooze button a few times, of course). Most days I have client meetings where we strategise and discuss current projects, updates and upcoming tasks.

So, to summarise:

“ Coffee, emails, meetings, coffee, admin, more meetings, coffee, emails, admin, meetings. ”

What are the tools of your trade?

Our main tool is our own software that we have for our clients, which is centralised and manages their social media listings, reviews, content and bookings.

For internal management, though we understand the value in using tech to simplify internal efficiencies, so Monday.com for project management, Xero for accounting, PandaDoc for legal agreements, Google docs/slides, and what would work be without 500 WhatsApp groups for communication?



Who is getting it right in your industry?

There are so many boutique tech/digital agencies emerging and specialising in niche services and I think brands can really capitalise on working with smaller companies that can provide very hands-on services and adapt their products fairly easily vs large international enterprise companies.



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List a few pain points the industry can improve on.

I think marketing teams need to use agencies to their full strengths as well as the tools that they have invested in. MarTech products are there to solve pain points and streamline workflows, but a lot of the time the reporting is not utilised to its full potential. This works both ways though, agencies need to make sure they are offering a hands-on approach to assist their clients in the necessary management and adoption of their software and services. I also think agencies need to spend a lot more time understanding their client's businesses.

What are you working on right now?

The two main projects I am currently working on include:

- Launching SA's first online review landscape survey
- Developing our AI technology to automate client insights on reviews



CRM, CX, UX

Gearing for growth with online reviews

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Tell us some of the buzzwords floating around in your industry at the moment, and son

of the catchphrases you utter yourself.

Many people are talking about data and AI, however, don't have a clear understanding of how it can be utilised to make business decisions. It has been quite a journey for me over the past year as well, but I think we are finally in a place where we are utilising AI and showing the value and insights to our clients, which is really exciting.

Where and when do you have your best ideas?

I love my trips to and from Johannesburg to Cape Town - two hours of blissfully uninterrupted time where I can focus. I get to complete a lot of my writing or admin during this time, in fact, I am answering these questions on a trip to Johannesburg right now.

What's your secret talent/party trick?

I sadly have no exciting party tricks or secret talents to report on but if we're scraping the barrel here, I have recently discovered that I perform a rather convincing Irish Dance.

Are you a technophobe or a technophile?

I am 100% a technophile. If it can't integrate, connect, or doesn't have an app, we can't be friends...

What would we find if we scrolled through your phone?

You'll find every app under the sun, mostly unused, pictures of my dog and far too many shared memes.

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

If you're wanting to get into digital marketing, don't invest in overpriced courses. There are so many amazing free courses on sites like Udemy, Facebook and Google. Take advantage of the vast amount of knowledge you have at your fingertips. There are also really awesome networking groups like The Resource on Facebook.

Hope you're jotting this down. Follow Wainstein on [LinkedIn](#); and follow Social Places on their [website](#) [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [YouTube](#) and [Instagram](#) feeds for the latest updates.

**Interviewed by [Jessica Tennant](#).*

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