

with... Charlie Stewart

 By Leigh Andrews

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This week, we find out what's really going on behind the selfie with Charlie Stewart, CEO of Rogerwilco.



Paragliding. Check how white those knuckles are.

1. Where do you live, work and play?

Stewart: Durbanville and the winelands... I've lived here since relocating from the UK 14 years ago. When people heard we were opening a digital agency in Cape Town's northern suburbs they laughed in our faces, telling us we'd never hire 'real' people. Today, we're the ones laughing as we've been able to bring some stellar people on board – people who want to grow their careers and want to avoid the misery that is Woodstock traffic.

2. What's your claim to fame?

Stewart: Gosh, I suppose top of my current professional brag list is that Penguin published a book I co-authored on B2B marketing earlier this year. As a personal brag, I've had my Apple Watch since December and still haven't had to make a payment for it... Discovery, your actuaries will never get the better of this canny Scot! And at a pseudo-fame level, the time in Australia back in the mid-90's when I was confused with Keith Flint, the frontman of the Prodigy. That was an extraordinary evening.

3. Describe your career so far.

Stewart: After studying Theology I realised I didn't have the kind of calling my fellow students had, so I became a spin doctor, helping some pretty big businesses extricate themselves from a variety of crises. After moving to SA and setting Rogerwilco up with my co-founder Jakes Redelinghuys, I tentatively embraced digital. I was surprised to find that online marketing wasn't too far removed from traditional marketing – for example, SEO is really just media relations with a bit of techie jargon.

4. Tell us a few of your favourite things.

Stewart: Words; a good malt whisky... preferably East Coast; great food; exploring some of the lesser-walked paths of the world; having one of my UK friends tell me a travel agent had sold him on visiting us in South Africa's 'undiscovered

season' – basically, the middle of winter.

5. What do you love about your industry?

Stewart: The speed at which it moves; the manner in which South Africans are embracing digital; the fact that, at an entry level, the barriers to entry aren't high, which empowers people to move into digital, yet it's also incredibly complex, which fosters a culture of innovation.

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

Stewart: Into the office at 07:00, three coffees by 07:30 (Des, our barista/office mother makes the best cappuccino this side of Italy); team catch up at 08:00; meetings, meetings, meetings. Gym at lunchtime; meetings, meetings, meetings. Leave at about 18:30, home by 18:35.

7. What are the tools of your trade?

Stewart: MacBook, iPhone, brain.

8. Who is getting it right in your industry?

Stewart: At a creative level, Gloo and Ogilvy continue to excel.

9. What are you working on right now?

Stewart: Mostly strategy – some for clients, some for our own spinouts; when there's a gap I'm trying to focus on the 2nd edition of the book – which is all about case studies of really good B2B marketing campaigns... and yup, that's an invitation to anyone reading this column. If you've got an example of a B2B campaign that generated really good results, please let me know.

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

Stewart: Hmm... my language is a bit choice, so probably best not to repeat my catchphrases, although we have a fridge in the office that's plastered with some of the team's more 'interesting' utterances. I heard a client criticising one of their colleagues for 'solutionising' the other day which put a smile on my face, but that was trumped by an article I read recently featuring the word 'thought-ware'. And it wasn't written by George Orwell.

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

Stewart: When I'm pounding the roads and trails. Running is one of the few times that I'm able to switch off. And that's when the best thoughts come.

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

Stewart: When my daughter was younger I taught myself magic. But I was pretty rubbish at it. When you get called out by a bunch of eight year olds, you figure there's no point giving up the day job. So these days I generally stick to wielding a tequila bottle. Which I do with alarming alacrity. Mostly when there are no kids around.

13. Are you a technophobe or a technophile?

Stewart: My devs would definitely put me down as a technophobe. But one day I will surprise them. I'm tenacious like that.

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

Stewart: Lots of apps I never use. Some obscure music and heaps of half-written notes.

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

Stewart: Dabble in everything but specialise in something. Digital encompasses so many areas that you really need to have a good idea of what it's about and what you want to do if you're to break into the industry. Show passion – be it for copywriting, design, coding, search or many of the other digital disciplines – and you're on the right track.

You can read more about Rogerwilco by [visiting their website](#) or [press office](#) and interact with Stewart through the following social media accounts:

[LinkedIn](#)

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

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

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