

# #BehindtheSelfie with... Terry Murphy

 By Leigh Andrews

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This week, we got behind the selfie with Terry Murphy, publisher at Marketing Mix Conferences who will open next week's Social Media Landscape Briefings 2019 in Sandton and Cape Town.



Murphy captions this: "#GreatThoughts"

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

I have been living in beautiful Hout Bay for the last 10 years, and operate my conference business from a downstairs office at my home. The good news is I am almost never late for work!

I am very involved with community projects, right now establishing a Hout Bay Nature Park and a major recycling initiative intended to employ many disadvantaged people, and I play a lot in my indigenous garden.

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

My Irish ancestry naturally bestowed charm, good looks and the gift of the gab. I also have a very extensive network within the marketing and digital fraternities, having founded, directed and chaired quite a number of them.

### 3. Describe your career so far.

It's always been connected with publishing. In the UK, I worked with the international Thomson Group in their provincial newspaper division and learned an enormous amount from a very get-up-and-go culture. Then I moved to the *Nottingham Evening Post*, where we had a blank cheque to reform the marketing of the business and created many initiatives and projects.

In those days, the inflation rate in the UK was about 24%, so we decided to immigrate to Johannesburg. The Thomson Group offered me publishing directorship with their trade publishing in South Africa. It was a tumultuous experience, as the turnover of young white males was horrific. We stabilised the business by switching to white women, who were much more competent and committed.

Then I started Systems Publishers, focused on IT titles, and ran this business for about 25 years. Our titles won many of the specialist publishing awards, and it made some money as well.





Murphy, at home/work.

We disinvested from this business and focus on creating compelling conference programmes serving professional marketers through Marketing Mix. It's all about interpreting continuous change and identifying pragmatic opportunities.

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

When Manchester United play well that's one of my favourite things, sadly this only happens now and again. I'm a great fan of Formula 1 and, as I said earlier, am very interested in indigenous gardening.

*“ Keeping abreast of the numerous cultural, lifestyle, technology and legislative changes in SA and elsewhere is fascinating, thank goodness for my iPad. ”*

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

Working with very bright people, enjoying the rise and rise of talented women, interpreting continuous macro changes,

and appraising individual company business and marketing strategies.



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

It starts when I wake up, as I check many channels on my iPad and my emails, then I start work in the office at around 8am and finish around 5pm, then I'm normally involved in community activities.

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

My iPad, mobile phone and Google; how did we live without them?

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

Three research companies that I much respect are Ask Afrika, Kantar and Nielsen. I frequently use their research projects as the basis for keynote presentations at the Marketing Mix Conferences.



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I have a network of about 300 speakers from middle-sized to large companies – they are very bright and well-informed people who are the cream of the crop. There are just too many to single out.

However, one company I wish to mention is Outsurance, because they run a really excellent call centre. The person who answers your call is the person who takes charge of your query. None of the typical 'being transferred from one person to another' business, and waiting and waiting.

The marketing guru that I still admire most is Raymond Ackerman. During a store visit, one of his techniques was to push a lady's trolley to her car. He found out so much in doing so, and just imagine how much word-of-mouth was generated as a result.



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

Number one is breaking down the silos. Everything is now integrated marketing, so I recommend what Mayor Bloomberg did when he took over New York City: He created a huge open-plan area, with his command desk in the middle and lines of desks running from his desk, each devoted to a function. The most senior executive was the one who sat closest to him. He could shout and say "Charlie, how do we solve this problem **now!**"

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

Developing compelling programmes for 2019 conferences. It's really tough out there, one has to identify the key issues and find proven executives who more astutely identify the opportunities than their competitors do.

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

South Africa loves acronyms. The one I like most is TGIF, you can guess what it stands for. The other great expression that I learned when I arrived in SA is 'make a plan'. No premeditated solution works as you intend, so continuous adaption is making a plan.

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

**Where:** Everywhere, be it in bed reading my iPad, listening to the speakers and the questions from delegates, and having one-to-one conversations with smart people.

**When:** All the time!

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

Relaxing people right up front and expressing interest in their expertise.

## 14. Are you a technophobe or a technophile?

Technophile, it's very challenging being one, but does greatly improve your lifestyle.



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

Hundreds of messages and responses from very interesting people.

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

Read via your smartphone or iPad every day, a selection of relevant channels and respected commentators about what's going on in your world. That means the whole world, because something over there will affect you sooner or later, or a radical approach somewhere else can be customised for your environment.

Simple as that. Email Murphy on [terrym@systems.co.za](mailto:terrym@systems.co.za), and follow Marketing Mix Conferences on Twitter on [@ConferencesMix](#) or [@MMixConferences](#), Facebook, and [LinkedIn](#).

*\*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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