

#BehindtheSelfie with... Andreas Smit

By [Leigh Andrews](#)

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This week we go behind the selfie with 'total technophile' Andreas Smit - newly appointed at Isilumko Activate as Isilumko Business Partner - Marketing.



Smit is just as friendly in real life as he is on screen!

1. Where do you live, work and play?

I hail from the Mother City, but am currently enjoying the energy and relentless ambition of the Johannesburg culture. I work and live around Sandton and Bryanston, but ultimately, I end up where my clients need me to be.

2. What's your claim to fame?

A professional career highlight was definitely when I was the project lead on the SAB Carling Black Label Champion Cup – a role I assumed for two consecutive years. One of the world's biggest through-the-line marketing campaigns – this experience definitely shaped my career prospects and professional development. In my private life I can claim rock-star status, having toured the world playing rock guitar in front of thousands of fans. #ForReal!

3. Describe your career so far.

My career has been as diverse and energetic as it's been inspiring. My initial years involved mastering the art and science of experiential marketing across all the SAB brands. This exposure ensured I received significant experience across a wide spectrum of consumer segments, which was an incredible grounding and laid a solid foundation for future upward moves within the group. Ultimately, this led to the next stepping stone in my career – within brand management – joining the team that returned Carling Black Label to a growth phase.

I have also spent some time in the financial services industry, the premium beer category and I have now turned my attention to drive real results for multiple brands through below-the-line marketing management.

4. Tell us a few of your favourite things.

Between experiential campaign development and expanding the Isilumko business, I am deeply invested in launching my first solo album – a début set for July this year! I am also an avid fitness enthusiast and a bit of a gadget geek. It may sound cliché but I really am inspired and energised by meeting new people and immersing myself in the different cultures of the world. I don't do mundane and variety truly is the spice of life.

5. What do you love about your industry?

The fact that we get to engage with people one-on-one, get to know them, understand them and make a meaningful difference in their lives. We get to build emotional connections between brands and the people that use them, whilst empowering young people with jobs and an income.

6. What are a few pain points your industry can improve on?

As an industry, we need to hold ourselves to a higher standard when it comes to the execution of our ideas. It's not enough to just present beautiful, creative strategies to our clients; we need to ensure we have the requisite systems and operations to execute the ideas and more than that, deliver over and above that which we promise. I would like to see more senior managers and executives at the coalface engaging with consumers, running their events, being present and learning by doing, not assuming.

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

There's nothing average about my workday. At Isilumko Activate we are constantly pushing ourselves to learn more, do more and be more for our clients. It is however critical that I stay abreast of current trends and what's happening on the business landscape because this is what drives the solutions we offer our clients. I keep in touch by consuming a lot of content - usually in the early hours of the morning. The second big area of focus is finding ways to get closer to my clients. I am invested in the success of our partners and the more I understand their business the better we can tailor solutions that are relevant while delivering tangible benefits.

8. What are the tools of your trade?

An experienced and robust operational team, directed by efficient management systems, which can deliver national and regional campaigns with diligence, commitment and passion. A pool of vetted brand ambassadors who do justice to the brands they partner with and a senior leadership team of experienced marketers who get their hands dirty on the ground.

9. Who is getting it right in your industry?

There are quite a few big players in the industry that I have great respect for; Playmakers and M-Sports Marketing are two agencies I consider to be getting it right. However, there are an increasing number of larger below-the-line agencies who are not properly resourcing themselves when they land big accounts. This ends up diluting client service, the quality of execution and ultimately the reputation of our industry.

10. What are you working on right now?

I am very fortunate to be working with some of the largest brands in the alcohol industry. In quite a different market [did I mention I am built for variety?], I'm partnering with some new and innovative players in the financial sector who are going to be offering incredible value to South Africans when we help them launch.

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

Customer-centricity. Campaign integration. Passion point. Consumer insights.

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

I'm a bit of an introvert, so my best ideas are normally generated when I'm alone – working out on a cardio routine – or listening to audio books before I fall asleep. This is equally so when I am busy with early morning reflection and meditation.

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

At some stage during a party I inevitably get asked to flex my biceps. It's seriously embarrassing and if I give into the "bullying" I end up red faced; I prefer party tricks that include my guitar.

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

My phone content is a definite reflection of many aspects of my life and includes plenty of hilarious gym memes, inspirational quotes, audio books about Navy Seal management principles and pictures of my beautiful girlfriend, to remind me what a lucky man I am.

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

Drop your ego! Be curious but don't become a victim of distraction; shut out the noise and focus your time and energy on what's best for your clients and their business. Become a partner, not a supplier. Work hard and work with integrity. And make sure you have some fun while you're doing it.

Simple as that. [Click here](#) to view Smit's MyBiz profile, [here](#) for his views on the agency-client disconnect, [here](#) to view the [Isilumko Activate](#) press office, and while Smit is on [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#), he's a sucker for one-on-one engagement – connect with him on andreas.smit@isilumko.co.za or give him a shout on Whatsapp on 083 796 8478.

**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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