

Meet young voice Brenda Sono

 By Jessica Tennant

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In the run-up to the 23rd Prism Awards to be announced virtually on Friday, 15 May, we chatted to this year's cohort of 'young voices' about their fresh approach to the judging process.

In this series of interviews, we find out what they've learnt working alongside the cluster judges (albeit remotely) and what their young minds bring to the virtual table.



2020 Prism Young Voices announced!

PRISA 13 Feb 2020



"One thing Covid-19 has proved to me is that our industry is essential. PR and communications are keeping the country updated, aware and informed during this time. It is our duty to ensure that our brands have a strong presence in the media during this time. The cancellation of the physical awards ceremony was a stab – I mean, I had an outfit planned. However, I am excited to see how the awards pan out online because the reality is that online working and networking is now our new normal." – Brenda Sono, account manager at Eclipse Communications, commenting on the cancellation of the physical Awards and the general impact of the pandemic on the industry.



Brenda Sono

Here, our interview with Sono...

What does this recognition and opportunity mean to you?

This recognition is an honour above all things. I mean I am one of the top ten Prism Young Voices in the country and this means industry recognition on a different level. For me, being selected afforded me the opportunity to meet and engage with PR giants. It has also widened my network pool and made me realise that there are many layers and diversifications within PR.

■ ***Briefly tell us about your experience in the industry.***

I have been in the PR industry for six years now. I am currently an account manager at Eclipse Communications. What I can say is no day is ever the same as the other and I think that's what I love about PR – we grow and we grow daily. Our industry is one that is never stagnant and that's what keeps me on my toes. For instance, we went from selling media soft news about our clients to now feeding them with insightful Covid-related content. I have also realised the fact that PR is an essential service and I hope more and more businesses start noticing this – we are essential! You cannot achieve your organisation's goals without a good PR, marketing and comms strategy. I have learnt a lot and trust me when I say I continue to learn a lot on a daily basis.

■ ***Comment on the judging process.***

The judging process was interesting for me. It came with a lot of learnings. Vincent Mangwenya, our cluster head, talked me through what makes an award-winning PR campaign – that man is smart. The other judges share their insights on each entry and it was great to see us agree and disagree on certain entries. I lived to the Prism Young Voice mantra – my voice was heard throughout that entire session. This has instilled a culture within me that I would like to pass onto the future Prism Young Voices. It is a culture of mentoring and celebrating each other.

■ ***What has the response been to this year's entries?***

There were a lot of entries and this goes to show what I mentioned earlier – we are essential as PR practitioners. We bring brands to life through storytelling and this is something we should never sleep on. Many entries blew my mind.

■ ***What makes winning work stand out?***

Creativity and the fact that it changes not only perceptions but it changes lives. Award-winning work is life-changing and shakes up the normal or traditional way of doing things.

■ ***What do you think young minds bring to the table?***

Young minds bring creativity, innovation and a fresh way of approaching PR and communications. Young minds are hungry for growth and eager to learn, so they bring their A game at all times. With certain platforms slowly fizzling out, young minds bring solutions to which platforms one should be focusing on.

■ ***What have you learnt working alongside the cluster judges?***

They are leaders and not bosses. They are people we can look up to as the younger ones. They are also not shy to impart knowledge where possible, and that's what we all need – mentors.

■ ***What would the title of Prisms Young Judge for the 2020 awards mean to you?***

Shuuuuuuuu, it would mean that I have a huge role to play in terms of mentoring the next batch of Prism Young Voices. It would also mean that I keep waving the Prism Young Voices flag higher and higher.

■ ***Comment on the current state of PR.***

The past was easy. We could send out a press release and, voila, 50 pieces of coverage. Now, newsrooms have gotten smaller and there is a juniorisation of journalists, so this means we need to ensure that the content we send out is relevant and topical. The future for me is not isolating PR and social media – these two should coincide with each other.

As mentioned, the Awards take place on Friday, 15 May. Follow us on [Twitter](#) for live updates and visit our [Prism Awards special section](#) for other related content and a list of all the winners following the announcement. Here's the link to our other [social media](#) pages, as well as the Prism Awards' [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts. Follow Brenda Sono on [Twitter](#).

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