

Joanne Hope and Anelde Greeff launch 2Stories

 By [Evan-Lee Courie](#)

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2Stories is a new content collective by serial entrepreneur Joanne Hope and seasoned content director Anelde Greeff. Not "just another content agency", 2Stories offers boutique-level service with big-agency experience that turns the usual model on its head.



Joanne Hope and Anelde Greeff

The duo tells us more about [2Stories](#).

■ *Can you tell us a bit about 2Stories?*

Joanne Hope: Imagine a traditional content marketing agency. We're not that. We're a new genre. Think smaller, and imagine way more flex appeal. But with big-agency energy and experience. We speak, write, strategise, conceptualise, plan, direct and produce content marketing fluently.

■ *When, how, and why did you get started?*

Anelde Greeff: I walked into Joanne's office on a random Tuesday in 2019. She was general manager of John Brown Media SA, I was a freelance content strategist. It was not let's-start-a-business-together at first sight. But we soon realised we had the important stuff in common.

We laugh at the same jokes. We love a latte and a lekker chat. And we discovered that we shared the need to channel our passion for storytelling, creativity and purpose-driven innovation into a new kind of agency. One that could create the agility and flexibility needed by clients, creatives and other agencies alike.

Both of us have been around the content-marketing block a couple of times, and have the T-shirts and trophy scars from South Africa's top two content agencies between the pair of us. We're lucky to have collaborated with some of the best minds in content marketing globally whilst bringing content marketing to life across the fashion, food, lifestyle, finance and automotive sectors for some of South Africa's most prominent brands.

But we wanted more. Something different. So we dreamed up 2Stories – a new way of creating compelling content.

■ ***What is the core function of 2Stories?***

Hope: It's the gentle art of anticipating what a brand's audience really wants. What are they searching for? What questions are they asking? Digital targeting has become all data and no intuition about what real people actually want. We spend a lot of time helping brands find their intuition again.

For us, it's not just about creating good content. We believe great stories can change the world. That's why we love working with clients and brands that move society forward – and we actively seek those brands and stories out.

■ ***You're not "just another content agency". Tell us what makes 2Stories unique.***

Greeff: We have a modern approach to the C-word. Our work is driven by humans, not channels. And we're not just talking about the humans that derive value from reading or watching the content, but also those that create it. We have a network of skilled content specialists of all shapes, sizes, races and genders. No matter which solar system they're from, we aspire to offer flexibility, balance, and the opportunity to create awesomeness. Having worked as freelancers ourselves, we get it.

“ We aim to solve the pains of these über-talented creatives, empower women in particular, and champion the true meaning of flexible working in the South African industry. ”

And this enhances the output, too. We are building a business that solves problems for both clients and creatives. This approach offers us instant scalability as we have access to the best of the best – locally and internationally.

Hope: Another differentiating factor is the fact that we embrace collaboration with other industry players by supplementing their above-the-line offerings with content strategy and content-creation services. We don't want to compete with traditional agencies. We want to help them optimise their offering to their clients and, more importantly, the end consumer.

■ ***What are some of the obstacles you've had to overcome since starting out? How did you get through it?***

Hope: Loadshedding? No, seriously, I think the biggest challenge has been time. There's so much to do and the list never stops growing. And not just must-dos, also want-to-dos. So the challenge is keeping focus. Knowing when something is essential to where we want to go, or just a nice-to-have.

■ ***The hustle is real and almost everyone wants to start a business these days. What advice do you have for someone starting out?***

Hope: When you start a business you don't necessarily have the luxury of established teams, so find experts in the legal, HR and finance space to help you start your journey. And listen to their advice.

Greeff: Understand the value that you bring and start as you mean to finish. From the moment you get going, stay true to your vision and don't compromise. For us, cultivating the right team is as important as the clients we work with (because a happy team = great work), so we spend a lot of time finding the best people.

■ ***With all the doom and gloom around us, we need to hear more success stories. What has been your proudest achievement thus far?***

Hope: Our industry – media, marketing, advertising – is not in a good space. Apart from the pandemic, things are just generally very tough. Corporate shuffles, slashed budgets, downsizing, retrenchments etc. Creatives in particular are suffering and frustrated.

We're so happy and proud that we've been able to create a new way of working, one that is truly flexible and allows creatives to thrive.

■ ***Innovation and creativity is key, especially in the time of Covid-19. What can agencies no longer ignore when it comes to their content marketing agency strategy?***

Greeff: Definitely innovation and creativity, but above all else, collaboration. Between client/brand and agency, and between the multiple agencies serving the brand. Gone are the days of content being an afterthought or something that gets figured out once the above-the-line strategy has been set. Content needs to be part of the conversation from the get go.

■ ***In terms of content marketing, what trends could we expect to see in the coming year?***

Greeff: So many things! The biggest challenge but most exciting opportunity lies in brands addressing screen fatigue. This will play out in audio/podcasts and print, the latter specifically as a way for brands to differentiate themselves from the digital clutter. Globally, we have seen a number of brands, especially in the luxury space, revisit their approach to print and more indulgent content. We think the opportunity lies in creating a moment of pause, where brands can create conversations about what's important to them as a business, and illustrate how that is relevant to their clients' lives. The need for curated content has never been more important.

Hope: Then, on the more technical side of things, the use of artificial Intelligence in the content marketing space is very interesting. We look forward to exploring what the content marketing industry looks like at the intersection of editorialised content and AI.

ABOUT EVAN-LEE COURIE

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