

# Marketing a superHero city

 By Leigh Andrews

16 Sep 2016

Marketing and communications agency, Hero, recently won the [City of Cape Town](#)'s communications and PR account. MD Andrew Hall talks us through the intricacies of effectively marketing a city that's so cosmopolitan yet still uniquely African, and why the Hero team is perfectly positioned to do so.



Hall

Frequently voted one of the most beautiful and 'best' cities in the world by [foreign travellers](#) to our shores, this is the account every agency wanted. But it wasn't an easy win, as Hall explained this was more than just a creative pitch – this was a highly competitive, full-blown tender process, with all the qualification components and checks and balances that such a process necessarily should entail. That means to even qualify to pitch in the conventional sense, there were a significant number of benchmarks in terms of capabilities, structure, financial viability, BBEEE status and the like to comply with.

Emerging from that lengthy process as one of the two final candidates, Hero then got to pitch in the conventional sense, with creative and strategic responses to specific tasks as outlined by the City of Cape Town or CoCT. But being placed under the business microscope didn't end there. Following the actual pitch, Hall says as winners they were then subjected to a full due diligence by an independent auditor, whose task it was to verify their

tendered credentials in all respects.

Rather than off-putting, Hall says, "It was actually quite refreshing to be subjected to that level of scrutiny, because not only did we clearly pass the audit with flying colours but the process indicated how seriously CoCT views tender process and supplier quality – and that's the kind of approach we, as tax- and rate-paying Capetonians, are very happy to endorse."

Hall says CoCT clearly recognised the agency's ability to deliver a uniquely broad range of integrated services – think strategy, marketing, digital, mobile, social media, design, point of purchase, events and activation, campaigns, video and virtual reality, content generation and more – combined with their sharp focus on achieving measurable results and contributing to the client's realisation of their organisational objectives.

## Marketing musts: Passion and personal interest

But there's more to it than that. Hall uses a sports analogy to explain: "If a lifelong Chiefs supporter was appointed to work for Pirates, do you think they'd be capable of being truly passionate about their client team? Do you think they would truly put that client team's interests above their own or the team to which they are ultimately loyal? Now think about a foreign-owned company or, dare I say it, even a company from another SA city being appointed to look after CoCT."

Not even an option. As a result, Hero is now responsible for driving the communications process and maintaining stakeholder engagement. Luckily, Hero sees CoCT as primarily a "communications" rather than marketing client, which means their role is more around effectively communicating what the City does or has available rather than trying to hard-sell these services, capabilities and achievements as one would sell products or a company. So, a huge proportion of their job is simply to ensure that Capetonians properly perceive the wide range of that which CoCT does and offers, and how best they can utilise and benefit from these.



Hall with some of the Hero team against the Cape Town backdrop.

The biggest challenge then is to ensure that CoCT both understands and is understood by that similarly wide range of people that call the city home and rely on CoCT to provide a platform off which to build a better life. Hall admits that's a tall order in a city as culturally nuanced and multifaceted as Cape Town, but it's a task he believes they're uniquely equipped for. See, their 70+ team evidences wonderful "representability" when it comes to the varied social cultures and sub-cultures that make Cape Town so cosmopolitan yet still uniquely African. Added to this, they're hugely passionate and loyal South Africans first and similarly devoted Capetonians as a very close second, in it for much more than professional reward, and totally committed to doing the best they can for our country and our city.

Hall goes on to describe the Hero team as "marketing MacGyvers" – inventive, creative and ready to use whatever is at hand to get the job done and provide the best possible results and returns – which typically involves "thinking way beyond the box and sometimes being disruptive and counter-intuitive".

So, while it's a little early to spill the beans on some of the communications and activities they have in mind that'll positively influence behaviour and impact on culture in CT, Hall shares that they're busy with some really exciting projects, keep your eyes and ears open for some great campaigns hitting the city soon! Check out [Hero's website](#) and you can also follow them [on Twitter](#) for more.

## 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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