

Meet young voice Lerato Motloun

 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



"I am still not sure what it means for myself as a young judge. We have already judged and chosen the winning campaigns, but aren't going to get the full experience we had hoped for. I truly hope that we will receive another opportunity to get the full 'PYV' experience next year or when the Covid-19 pandemic wears out." – Lerato Motloun, PR and digital strategist at Creative Shoppe, commenting on the cancellation of the physical Awards and the general impact of the pandemic on the industry.



Lerato Motloun

Here, our interview with Motloun...

What does this recognition and opportunity mean to you?

I always asked myself if doctors or scientists ever doubted their skills even after spending so many years at school to perfect it. Well, I noticed that sometimes we all go through that. What this opportunity means for me is that I am recognised in my industry as a young, up-and-coming PR professional. It also shows me that we never stop learning and being chosen as a PYV is giving me the opportunity to continue learning from those who came before me.

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

I haven't been in the industry that long. Between 2013 and 2015 I was studying Corporate Communications and Marketing at the University of the Free State. In 2017 I enrolled for a Diploma in Media Practice: Public Relations at Boston Media House. I only started practising PR in 2018 when I started to volunteer at agencies such as The Alore Group and Magna Carta. In 2019, as I was completing my final year of studying, I got exposed to amazing opportunities, such as volunteering at the Prism Awards, assisting with publicity and PR for the South African Music Awards and landing an internship at Creative Shoppe. That is where I harnessed my digital marketing skills, working under Olwethu Leshabane, who is an amazing marketing communications practitioner and media entrepreneur.

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

The judging process has been tricky. All the entries we received were amazing and I found myself wondering where to fault them. Looking at all the campaigns submitted, I have picked up some inspiration to take back with me to work. It was a tough two weeks of judging, but it was worth it.

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

In our cluster (group), we are judging the digital and social media relations category. The campaigns have been exciting to judge, given that a few of them made waves on social media. There is also the virtual reality and gaming category, which is new to most of us, so that was a bit of a challenge.

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

I love a good story. I wish I could have given bonus points for the campaigns that had an amazing story to share. I also believe in message quality over quantity. It's rarely ever about how many messages you can get out to your targeted audience, but more about, "Did it resonate with them and did it reach them?". What stands out for me is when an agency is able to take the challenge they are faced with and create something memorable from it.

■ ***Prisa also introduced the Student Campaign of the Year in 2016. Why do you think it's important that PR students are included in such initiatives?***

I truly believe that this is one of the most important categories. Students being involved while they are still studying gives them an opportunity to get a hands-on experience of the competitiveness in the industry. Unfortunately, I didn't have the opportunity to enter our campaigns, but volunteering at the Prisms gave me an experience I wish all PR/Communications students could get.

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

We have the privilege of growing up in an era where social media (TikTok, Instagram, SnapChat), 4IR (virtual reality, artificial intelligence) and digital media (as opposed to traditional) exist. We have been gruesomely exposed to these things and it works in our advantage when we're having to find new and improved ways to make PR work.

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

Team work makes the dream work. What that means is I really wouldn't know how I would have handled the responsibility of having to decide on my own. The other judges have also made me so comfortable in learning to ask questions, I never truly believed in the statement: "There is no such thing as a dumb question," till the judges created a safe space for me to ask what I am not sure about.

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

We are currently in the digital era and thus PR has had to go digital too. For instance, digital media relations and social media are recently added categories in the Prisms. Five years ago that category didn't exist. PR is being forced to adapt to

technology and the rise of AI. We constantly need to change the way we communicate with our stakeholders. The traditional methods are slowing losing momentum.

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 Lerato Motlounq on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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