

#BehindtheSelfie with... Kirk Gainsford

 By Leigh Andrews

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This week, we go behind the selfie with Kirk Gainsford, chief creative officer at MullenLowe South Africa.



Gainsford, practicing his pacing to beat the chill.

1. Where do you live, work and play?

I fear my answers will be of no interest to anyone, but I live in Cape Town. I work across both Cape Town and Johannesburg and I don't think I play that much, except when I'm with my kids.

2. What's your claim to fame?

The fame we create in this industry is so transient that we constantly look for another 15 seconds. It's part of being perpetually insecure. I am probably the most normal guy in advertising.

3. Describe your career so far.

Fascinating.

4. Tell us a few of your favourite things.

- I love a challenge that I can get involved in creatively.
- Smart people. Really smart ones, not conventionally well-read.

5. What do you love about your industry?

“ I meet and mingle with people every day who want to be better at everything they do. No person in advertising worth anything is happy to just ‘get the job done’. I love to make stuff and see things happening. ”

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

Meetings, too many meetings. Pacing up and down. Listening to ideas from my teams, more meetings, some with clients,

some internal. Surfing the net. My best days involve hearing a great idea from a creative person.

7. What are the tools of your trade?

Minds.

8. Who is getting it right in your industry?

“ Part of the bad smell that is attached to the industry is about the measure for getting it right. Sometimes, we are inwardly focused and measure ourselves only on the awards we win, and sometimes it's our size. ”

But if the measure is doing great work for clients that are happy with the results of the campaign, then I think King James is an agency getting it right.

“ Only Gold of the night. Great achievement for my awesome [@KingJamesGroup](#) unit for the campaign that keeps on giving. [#APEX2018 pic.twitter.com/LkzmtA3H42](#)— Lesego Kotane (@lsgktn) [July 16, 2018](#) ”

But so are we. In a piece of research done on the industry, we ranked first in client satisfaction across many criteria including creativity, strategy and relationships.



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Leigh Andrews 23 Dec 2016



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9. List a few pain points the industry can improve on.

- The lack of transformation is an enormous problem.
- Talent retention.
- Respect: we need to earn it back.
- We need to improve our business model and we need to address the over-reliance on logic that is destroying the creative advantage we offer.

10. What are you working on right now?

Pacing.

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

SEO, ROI, engagement, storytelling, data, content.

I prefer thinking about people, what drives them, how they feel and how they think.

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

I don't have magical moments. Ideas come from working hard, they aren't things that fall out of the air. For me, that is.

I pour myself into the problem, and I sweat.

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

I can make people laugh. Even if it's *at* me.

14. Are you a technophobe or a technophile?

“ A bit of both. I love the democratisation that technology brings, and when it helps us be more human, but I hate technology for technology sake. I don't believe all the bulls#it that sits at the altar of technology, I believe humans are infinitely more beautiful and impressive than any tech. ”

Photographs of everything and many of my kids, as well as a few really immature games.

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

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

Don't lose focus on the fact that **our business is about immeasurables**; it's about imagination and dreams. Facts are finite but it takes hard work and dedication, which most aren't prepared for.

Simple as that. Be sure to follow Gainsford on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

*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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