

#CommerceMonth: with... Richard Wood

This week, we find out what's really going on behind the selfie with technophile Richard Wood, national retail solutions manager at Graffiti Retail Solutions.



My friends call me Vinyl Richie – but you can call me Chuck!

1. Where do you live, work and play?

Wood: I live in the northern suburbs of Johannesburg, not far from where our Graffiti head office is located in Kyalami. Outside of work, I play wherever the fun is at!

2. What's your claim to fame?

Wood: Successfully pulling off a great Zoolander impersonation. (Still working on the Magnum...)

3. Describe your career so far.

Wood: I began my career in the digital printing game when I joined Graffiti a little over 12 years ago, as an apprentice for what was then intended to be a four-month stint. The rest, as they say, is history! I was completely taken with the company and the industry and I've never looked back. As I grew and as I was exposed to the different facets of the business, my niche became more apparent, and when my apprenticeship came to an end I was presented with the opportunity to become the traffic manager for the business, which I gratefully accepted. This quickly morphed into project management, where I spent two years. I was then moved into the position of head of procurement, where I picked up the nickname: "Vinyl Richie". During this time, Graffiti was on a big research and development drive, which was at the heart of improving our value proposition to clients. This was in part achieved by using the best and most versatile products on the market and being at the coal face of this operation expanded and accelerated my grasp of the industry and its challenges and prepared me for the roles that lay in store for me; it was an exciting time. I then moved into sales, where my passion for people was ignited. Four years on, Graffiti started moving into the retail market and, envisaging a long and satisfying career in this department, I naturally gravitated in this direction. I have been privileged to be able to add what I like to think of as my special brand of magic to the business as I have worked my way through the company's various departments. Three years ago I moved into my dream role when I took over as the Graffiti national retail solutions manager – a position I have embraced and intend to retain and expand for many years to come.

4. Tell us a few of your favourite things.

Wood: Well that's easy; my fiancée Claudia tops my list. I am also quite partial to sport, movies and spending time with my loved ones.

5. What do you love about your industry?

Wood: The forever-changing environment and the challenges it brings to the business environment; it breeds entrepreneurial thinking, which in this country is a good thing.

6. What are a few pain points your industry can improve on?

Wood: I've come to realise that is easier said than done! Artwork changes, but deadlines never do!

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

Wood: Get to work early to beat the Jo'burg traffic and get a head start on the day – time I use for planning! After 8am things start to hot up and we get moving; seeing clients and working with the various teams to achieve their goals. If you are familiar with the industry, you enter everyday expecting things to go from calm to chaotic.

8. What are the tools of your trade?

Wood: Knowledge. Without it you will always be following and never leading.

9. Who is getting it right in your industry?

Wood: We are!

10. What are you working on right now?

Wood: We have some massive projects in the pipeline; it's unfortunately a bit premature to share the details though. Watch this space!

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

Wood: QUALITY and RELIABILITY.

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

Wood: While I'm sitting on my patio having a glass of wine. Very easily the best strategy studio you could ever hope to find.

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

Wood: Again - that's definitely my "Zoolander".

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

Wood: A ton of work photos but, on balance, there are plenty of shots with friends and family in party mode.

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

Wood: Pick your battles wisely and always work smarter, not harder.

You can read more about Graffiti by [visiting their website](#), and interact with them on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

**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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