

# #BehindtheSelfie with... Zubeida Goolam

 By Leigh Andrews

16 Oct 2019

This week, we go behind the selfie with Zubeida Goolam - co-founder and creative partner at BrandTruth Digital integrated content practice.



A rare selfie of Goolam (not her colleagues), laughing and loving life.

## 1. Where do you live, work and play?

I grew up in Bulwer in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands. Coming from a small village meant I was always attracted to the big city lights and now that I live in the big city, I long for the easy village life. Oh, the irony.

*“ But Joburg is where it all happens and comes to life. I love this city, there’s something magical and special about it. It’s a melting pot of African possibilities. One only realises it when you return after some time away. ”*

The pace is like nothing else, and it has a way of keeping you focused and pushing you forward. When I’m travelling, I miss the hustle and bustle, but, mostly, I miss the people.

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"We work with content, platform and design specialists across Africa and the world, exchanging knowledge and building a support network of creative collaborators." - @zubeidagoolam #TeamBrandTruth #AboutUs

#SocialMediaMarketing #DigitalMarketing

A post shared by BRANDTRUTH/DGTL (@brandtruthco) on Jul 22, 2019 at 8:08am PDT



Brand Truth Digital's office is in Bryanston, and we did this for practical reasons. We needed a larger office space and the location is really central to the business.

We also really love that the office park feels like we're not in the 'concrete jungle' so much.

## 2. What's your claim to fame?

I'm not famous yet, but I do make a mean curry, and, incidentally, I am the co-founder of BrandTruth Digital – which is great. Most of my family are entrepreneurs.

Both my grandfathers were business people, so I always knew this was something I was going to do. It was almost a natural progression in my career.



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An all female team for our latest heart snatching escapade. Yes, they woke up like this! #TeamBrandTruth #Storytellers #DigitalMarketers #FierceFemales #WCW

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I'm a woman in business, which isn't always easy. I generally try not to view the workplace or the industry as a 'male vs female' arena, but more as 'people doing business' in a tough environment. It's a tough environment and it gets competitive, but I keep my eye on the goal.

### 3. Describe your career so far?

It's been a topsy-turvy, thousand-miles-an-hour ride. Even though it's been wild, it has been consistent, and the goal was always clear – sharpen the craft until you can stand up and make a difference.



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Zubeida Goolam 29 Jan 2019



One of the most memorable times was definitely starting BrandTruth Digital. Nothing can prepare you for the realities that come with being an entrepreneur.

Some of those highlights include having secured several new clients in the first few days, and then realising that there were only two of us to do the work. It was, kind of, a bittersweet moment!

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#Spotted: The coolest kids in #digital roaming the @loerieawards streets. Can you tell that this picture was captured by the awesome @loyisobala?

#DigitalMarketers #TeamBrandTruth #Loeries2019

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I remember my business partner, Wayne, and I sitting in the car and looking at each other in disbelief that we had three new clients, and no idea where to begin.

I still don't know how we got through that initial period, but I know at some point we seriously considered selling coffee and ice cream instead.

The lessons that got me through this time, were: patience, patience, patience and, then some more, patience.

#### 4. Tell us a few of your favourite things?

I love music, I have a bit of an eclectic ear – and I have so many favourites, for different reasons. Marvin Gaye, Fela Kuti, Aretha Franklin, Bob Marley, Donny and Lalah Hathaway, Jabu Khanyile, Sade, South African house music – it changes on a daily basis.

“ I also have a keen eye for design – whether it's photography, architecture or fashion. I am moved by beautiful forms and how they are captured, and I am drawn to the striking and unusual – that always gets me. ”

I love buildings like the Zeitz MOCAA, The Bosjes Chapel and the Louvre in Paris and Abu Dhabi.



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Ruth Cooper 23 Oct 2018



And I'm completely in love with the Stella McCartney building in Tokyo – I could live there.

Some of my favourite fashion designers are definitely Palesa Mokubung, Naeem Khan, Stella McCartney, Thula Sindi, David Tlale, Karl Lagerfeld and Tom Ford. I also adore vintage Chanel.



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Ruth Cooper 23 Jun 2016



I like watching people and listening to them, and this is because I am passionate about stories. To observe how interestingly diverse the human race is, helps me understand stories and enables me to tell them.

### 5. What do you love about your industry?

I have always enjoyed observing behaviour, and trying to get the full story of what influences people and their culture. This industry allows me to do this, and almost perpetuates the behaviour – in a positive way.

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

My day starts at 5am; scanning papers, the news and #blacktwitter to find out what the world has to offer. There is always something new about tech and digital, which keeps me abreast of the industry.

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Stories in the making. #storiesbeyondimagination #storytelling #filmmakers  
#brandtruth #brandtruthco

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What happens in between is really unpredictable and usually fast-paced. To prepare for this, we have a 9am scrum meeting every day at the office, where we start with a short breathing exercise and reflect on gratitude. Then the fun starts.

## 7. What are the tools of your trade?

My biggest tool is the internet as well as Google, my mobile phone and some of my apps. The ones I can't live without are FNB, Apple Music, WhatsApp, Instagram and Netflix.

## 8. Who is getting it right in your industry?

Chicken Licken and Nando's almost always get it right and, as a result, have comfortably created subcultures. They remain true to their essence, never apologising.



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Zubeida Goolam and Wayne Flemming 29 Jan 2019



FNB is also a brand that resonates with me – I'm often inspired by the way they're constantly pushing the digital and innovation boundaries.

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

In South Africa, brands have age-old assumptions about why people behave the way they do, and then they create communication – which often misses the mark.



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Wayne Flemming and Zubeida Goolam 18 Apr 2019



I remember a white client adamantly assuming that black people don't wear long-sleeve t-shirts. It all comes down to representation, with an opinion, in boardrooms.

“ Brands can make a difference in their own communities by treating people like people and not consumers. ”

Brands are always trying to sell something, and they need to start engaging to make a difference. I love working on projects that create a positive impact on society – it makes me feel like I am contributing to a greater cause.

## 10. Tell us some of the buzzwords floating around in your industry at the moment, and some of the catchphrases you say to yourself.

Words that come up a lot include geofencing, customer journey, micro-moments, smart content, hyperlocal and omnichannel.

Two personal favourites that I often smile about are: 'dovetail' and 'leapfrog'.

## 11. Where and when do you have your best ideas?

As with everyone else, my best ideas happen in the shower.



Importance of culture in creative practice

Zubeida Goolam 30 May 2018



The things that inspire me are creative freedom, brave brands and willing audiences.

## 12. What's your secret talent/ party trick?

- I can move my ears.
- It's been said that I have an infectious laugh.
- I learned to read and write Arabic as a child.

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A toast to our queen of style and sheer class 💎💎 We wish you nothing but a life filled with love and many more opportunities to share your infectious laugh with the world! #HappyBirthday @zubeidagoolam 📷 #Birthday #BrandTruth #TeamBrandTruth

A post shared by [BRANDTRUTH/DGTL](#) (@brandtruthco) on Apr 29, 2019 at 10:19am PDT

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### 13. Are you a technophobe or a technophile?

I love how tech has become an integral and inseparable part of our everyday lives. But I also appreciate human connection and interaction without social media influences.

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

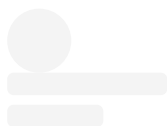
I have reminders: for meetings; to drink water; and to be present in the moment. I also have a tonne of selfies from my colleagues. They take my phone and take pictures of themselves when I'm not looking.

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

Never give up. Keep your offering simple and niche, and don't try to be everything to everyone.

If I could give my younger self some advice, I would say: "Do what you love and you'll never work a day in your life." That's not an original quote, but it's accurate.

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Join Zubeida tomorrow 10 April at 13:00 - 14:00 on Twitter for a conversation on #SistaHoodHour with Phumeza Langa about 'The Culture of Creativity'. Follow them on Twitter on @uberbeida and @phumeza\_langa to chat along!

A post shared by BRANDTRUTH/DGTL (@brandtruthco) on Apr 9, 2019 at 10:57am PDT

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Also, stay true to yourself. That can only happen when you know exactly who you are.

Simple as that. Follow Goolam on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#), as well as BrandTruth Digital on their [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and



[Instagram](#) feeds for the latest updates.

\*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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