

#BehindtheSelfie with... Jason Stewart, co-founder of HaveYouHeard

 By Leigh Andrews

11 Dec 2019

This week, we go behind the selfie with Jason Stewart, co-founder of HaveYouHeard.



Stewart enjoying the time, space and isolation needed to think.

1. Where do you live, work and play?

Live: Tamboerskloof, Cape Town.

Work: Woodstock.

Play: Family, mountain, beach, tennis courts, books, podcasts and imagination.

2. What's your claim to fame?

I love growing people and I believe I have a good ability to get the best out of individuals and teams. I am also incredibly curious and have a collection of over a thousand documentaries I have watched, and am unfortunately always eager to recommend. Playing beach bats: I reached 876 consecutive hits on the Copacabana in Rio!

3. Describe your career so far.

It's been very entrepreneurial. I started selling tracksuits at 10 years old in school and have always been on the lookout for something new. I am not driven by money, but more by my desire to have the freedom to create and chase opportunities.



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I loved advertising but was very disillusioned early in my career with the politics, ego and constraints that went with it. It was the mixture of business and creativity that I loved and I started HYH with my partner because I thought there could be a better, easier and more fun way to do it.

4. Tell us a few of your favourite things.

- It's cheesy but true – my wife is the love of my life and my kids are my everything. I really don't need much more.
- I love learning and am very curious about everything, so I devour books and podcasts, which I use as a form of candy for my brain.
- Hitting tennis balls against the wall for an hour and listening to music is how I de-stress. It sounds lonely, but it's my form of meditation and coming back to normal.

5. What do you love about your industry?

I love the creative freedom for ideas. I love being able to explore and understand humanity. I am driven by understanding the Why – why we do everything. I love that the world is our lab and we get to try and figure out problems and create smart innovation every day.



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

- Managing change and driving growth, which is a constant and evolving challenge.
- Getting the business and team to be able to run without my input, which is done by constantly and purposefully developing and growing a great team of new leaders. This involved a lot of coaching and development.
- Governance and tracking that we are moving along, hitting our targets and goals.
- Research, reading, asking questions, debating, exploring and writing.
- Seeking out, exploring and playing with innovation and new opportunities. Thinking about where the industry will be in three to five years. What will consumers need, what will clients want and what will brands need to be? Aligning how we are evolving into that new direction.

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[Throwback to the awesome mid-year hyh agency dinner last weekend](#)



That is the start of the end and must always be stamped out.

10. What are you working on right now?

Right this very minute, I am finishing off a presentation for a talk in Paris, explaining the forces shaping society and how this influences design.

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

I desperately try to stay away from buzzwords. I think it is a crutch for not really having a clear understanding of the subject and is a hindrance to clarity.

But the things you will hear me talk about a lot this week are evolutionary psychology, behavioural economics, and the zeitgeist...



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A word I fell in love with yesterday was quixotry. I will leave it up to you to look up the meaning!

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

I think best when my mind has space to float, which is almost never at work, as there are too many meetings, distractions and disruptions for your brain to really dive deep into thinking about a topic.



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It's on weekends, in the evenings after work, trying to fall asleep or early mornings. Time, space and isolation are essential for me to think.

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

I am faster than a ninja at leaving a party, and I can do a pretty cool disappearing cigarette trick.

14. Are you a technophobe or a technophile?

I am a mix. I am the last to pick up on a new gadget. Hardware doesn't really excite me, but I get very excited about the power or ability that something new provides. So, I am focused on the outputs that new software, tools and apps will provide.

“ I’m very focused and will do research before jumping in, as I try to reduce time wastage in my life. I do my best to stay disconnected and avoid distraction, but at the same time, curate lots of content that I want to feed my mind with. ”

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

- Pics of the family.
- WhatsApp conversations with my team.
- Open sites from research or something interesting I have found.
- Notes and thoughts I have written on things I am thinking about.
- Spotify – love music and podcasts.
- No social media at all.

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

- Build social intelligence – understand yourself and others (develop soft skills.)
- Don’t only focus on developing advertising skills, focus on developing skills to understanding people as well as skills that allow you to be part of and create culture.



The influence of drag

Brett Rogers 2 Jul 2019



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- Actively pop your bubble – engage with everyone and everything. Go places that scare you, bore you, confuse you, disgust you, excite you. Know the point of view and life experience of as many people as possible.
 - Use your time wisely and make sure you are always making an impact.
 - Be a good person – kind, helpful, well mannered, friendly and always positive.
 - Never say no to anything until you hit 30, to broaden your experience. Then protect your time passionately and only focus on what you can do best.
 - Build resilience – the world is tough and things are going to get harder – learn how to handle disappointment, failure, insult, rejection... and how to pick yourself up again and keep going. This is crucial.
 - If you have to work for free to get noticed, do it and make sure you get noticed. People will pay for talent and value, but it’s up to you to prove it.
 - When you start your career, look at how the best in the company/industry/world does it and learn from them. Copy them; see what they do; what they read, learn, watch; their habits, routines; their ways; their thinking; and aim to be as good as them now. Hold yourself to their standard. You will learn quickly.
 - Stop watching series and start lifelong learning – keep developing other interests and other skills.
 - We are all capable of so much more than what we think we can possibly do, so raise your aim and work harder than anyone else to get there.
 - Don’t expect anything from anyone. It’s up to you. Your success is your responsibility and what you put in is what you will get.

Simple as that. Stewart’s not on social media himself, so be sure to follow HaveYouHeard on their [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) 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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