

Did you just hire your worst social media manager yet?

 By [Skhumbuzo Tuswa](#)

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It's another bright morning under blue skies. "TGIS (Thank God It's Spring) - could be a nice hashtag for that air freshener brand client," you think to yourself.

The taste of your cappuccino lingers on your taste buds while you greet your colleagues, one by one, as they enter the office. The new coffee machine is proving to be well worth the near-apocalyptic war you started with Finance six months ago. You will now be remembered as an 'Office Struggle Icon' for your contribution to the 'Frisco Must Fall' movement.

This major win comes just in time. Today will be Katy's first day on the job as your agency's new social media manager. She seemed a bit shaky in the first two interviews with you and your line manager, but somehow her uncle's high school mate – your MD – thinks the 12 years of experience she has doing PR for various canned vegetable and dog food brands will be valuable. "I mean, look at it like this – PR is kinda like social media – just it happens online," you remember him saying. Oh well, it'll be interesting to see what she thinks of the coffee machine, nonetheless.



A week after she's started, you've noticed some subtle (and a few not-so-subtle) red flags. The first being that she doesn't drink coffee. She came in with a bottle of green Vegan juice that didn't smell so nice from your side of the desk. You overlook this because one of your agency's core values is diversity.

But there are other things that you shouldn't let go as easily when it comes to deciding if you've chosen the right social media manager...

Do they ask silly questions like "What's Black Twitter?"

Look, I'm not an ageist, but I've found that years spent on Planet Earth and social media savvy are inversely related. There are obviously plenty of exceptions, but not enough to disprove this rule outright. To put it in Darwinian terms: Some people are just T-Rexes in the Information Age and are physically not built to handle these delicate but powerful devices we know as smartphones. At 25, even I struggled to "get" new apps like SnapChat. And if you asked me who I expect to be South Africa's first 'SnapChat celeb', my first guess would never be anyone over 30.

Ms 'Strictly 9-to-5'

Am I saying that because social media never sleeps, neither should your social media team? No, it's not that deep. Firstly, a social media job should come with plenty of calendar wiggle room to begin with. The bigger the account, the more valuable this structure is. A negative Facebook post or Twitter rant that was posted at 11pm on a Friday can grow into a PR monstrosity by the time you decide to log in at 9am the next Monday. So you want to work with someone who knows how to manage their own time and loves what they do enough to sometimes do random checks at odd hours.

Mr 'Panic first, ask questions later'

You'll find a lot of customers use your clients' brand pages as a complaints forum. After all, it's easier to just tweet something to a brand than it is to go their premises in person. A good social media manager finds ways to weigh how bad a scenario really is. And it's almost always possible to follow a simple process to solve an issue. But alas, a newbie will inevitably panic because @NoOneImportant tweeted that they don't like your brand's coffee. "Guys what should we respond, he's got like 400 followers OMG?"

Social media is a young and fun area to work in. People that do well at it will tell you that it shouldn't feel like a "job". One of these people is 24-year-old [S'buyiselwe Mthembu](#) from Gloom@Ogilvy. Besides helping out a lot with this article, she's also the brains behind viral campaigns like McDonald's SA's 'Twitter Crush'. If you're not lucky enough to have people like her in your social media team, make sure to read this article again before your next round of interviews!

ABOUT SKHUMBUZO TUSWA

Skhumbuzo Tuswa is social media marketer at Just Perfect, a digital agency. Skhumbuzo has managed the online presence of leading South African brands and award-winning musicians. He's a leading voice in the social media space.

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