

Success = Extremely hard work and perseverance

 By Leigh Andrews

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Communication specialist, Jana Leonard, explains the importance of hands-on experience to succeed in this typically-female field and how she juggles all her responsibilities.



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With years of experience in the communications industry and having worked within various PR fields such as lifestyle, sport, fashion and events, she prides herself on delivering accurate information relevant to the respective media, and clients, all while driving exposure and key messaging. She focuses on storytelling, with a strong success rate in doing so.



Jana Leonard. Image © Willem Foster Photography.

I got the story behind the storyteller below, this #WomensMonth...

As a female leader, what's the most stressful and enjoyable aspect of your workday?

As a communicator, numbers don't come naturally to me, however this was something I had to learn – and very quickly, too. Now, I actually enjoy it! Like any other profession, however, I do believe in getting professionals to assist me when and where applicable.



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The most enjoyable part of my day, and I'm sure other PR professionals can relate, is to see my clients' name in the lights. Other than that, talking to media and pitching makes my heart so very happy!

■ ***You're definitely in the right field, then. Are enough SA women getting a chance to shine in their industry and shatter that oft-referenced glass ceiling?***

I'm fortunate as I've always known and worked with incredible female entrepreneurs who has achieved great success in their respective fields. Therefore from personal experience, I do believe women are getting much bigger opportunities to shine. However, their success certainly didn't come without extremely hard work and perseverance!

■ ***That's for sure. Who's your current female work inspiration – both an older mentor and a youngster who's attracting the spotlight?***

I have many: Tammy Holmes from Brandnew Creative Agency, Deborah Pead from Pead-PR in New Zealand and Sophia Amoruso.



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All for different reasons, but the one thing that always stands out for me is the way they are able to achieve great success by being strategic, building relationships, caring about others and of course, by standing their ground.

In terms of 'newcomers', Jo-Ann Janse van Rensburg from Cherry-Pick PR and the girls from Butterknife PR are doing amazing work!

■ ***How can we ensure the next generation results in more empowered females and better gender representation in the creative industries?***

I believe women make great PR professionals because they are able to relate to consumers and brands on an emotional as well as a strategic level, therefore we do see a large female representation in this field of work. What I would like to see is industry growth for junior staff. The only way to do this is to allow for hands-on experience like internships, shadowing or assisting with certain projects.



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13 Feb 2017



I have had the privileged to work with many interns throughout my career, and with good leadership, assistance and their drive to learn and grow, most have been appointed as full-time staff.

Click through to Leonard's [Twitter feed](#), [MyBiz profile](#) and my [#BehindtheSelfie interview](#) with her for more on what makes this storyteller tick.

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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