

Being #PRWise - A Tweet Chat Review



By [Tyrone Van Heerden](#)

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Public Relations is an evolving industry in South Africa, and today, more brands and businesses are starting to realise the value of PR as part of their overall marketing strategy.

The problem, however, is that PR professionals often feel that there is no, or very little representation from an independent body for the industry. This is why factors such as the best practice, measurement, [media liaison](#), proper crisis management, etc. get disregarded.

Added to this, many students are underprepared for the working environment and are often tasked with jobs that they simply don't have the skillset to do.

Tackling PR issues

To tackle these exasperations by professionals, a one hour Tweet Chat was held on Thursday, 18 April 2013 using the hashtag [#PRwise](#).

Several professionals were encouraged to discuss their views on the value of PR, as well as what their current issues are. The aim was simply to debate and learn from one another and to hopefully create a regular forum for both professionals and students to refer to when needing advice or guidance.

Three key elements that featured in the chat were:

1. Industry bodies:

[@ricegirl2](#) believes that it is important to have a body who is more interested in furthering the industry than policing it, whereas [@j9laubscher](#) feels that industry bodies should set a benchmark which mirrors what is happening internationally and set standards around that. She used the digital environment as a key example where South African's look at what is being done internationally and tailor it to suit the local environment.

2. Best Practice:

[@mikescharman](#), an aficionado in the digital PR space, believes that it's important that the monitoring companies and industry bodies work closer together for benchmarks and that the solution is to monitor media coverage with social media influence to determine the business results and value for brands. He has had a good experience of the Newsclip (traditional) and BrandsEye (Social) platform integration.

In terms of measurement, [@galiakerbel](#) believes that agencies need to understand clients goals and measure according to their brief. To add, [@ricegirl2](#) made a good point around credibility and reach being key and that it's not about the money or spend - its about who cares about it (your communications/campaigns)

3. The role of the in-house PR:

According to both [@ricegirl2](#) and [@ivans24](#) in-house professionals struggle just as much as agencies to outline the value of PR and that often there is a strong education job that needs to be played about both the industry and deliverables.

Until an independent body puts up their hand, I believe it's up to people in the communications industry to drive change and assist in the growth of PR in South Africa in order for businesses and brands to realise the true value of it.

ABOUT TYRONE VAN HEERDEN

Tyrone Van Heerden (@tyronevh) is a South African strategist at the Iris Worldwide Munich office, and is responsible for steering the quality of the strategy product across B2B and B2C client partners. Encouraging brave work, Van Heerden has been responsible for creative, commercial and transformational strategies for brands such as Allianz, Samsung, BSH, Ab InBev and Harley-Davidson. His specialties are creative strategy and direction, innovations and digital communications.

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