

Melanie Ramjee on being the Hypress of the entertainment industry

 By [Karabo Ledwaba](#)

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Publicist Melanie Ramjee believes she has cemented herself as the hypress of celebrity public relations.



Ramjee is the founder of Tutone Communications a public relations (PR) agency based in Johannesburg.

■ *How did you get into PR?*

I always say PR found me. I was studying fashion design and didn't know there was a career choice called PR, to be honest.

I loved writing and interacting with people. My boyfriend and I decided to start an entertainment company/indie record label in our teens. So I just fell into my role as the publicist of the business while he did A&R.

■ *You are the go-to for all things celebrity, even during times of sorrow, how did you get there?*

I have a very approachable nature and have built my business on sincerity and genuinely do care about my clients. A lot of the time we cross the business line and become friends and I am not complaining.

A few years ago a close industry friend passed away and her family approached me to inform the media and let the public know. They didn't know how to go about it and I assisted with media relations and sending out the sad news to media. The reality is that I work with a lot of celebrities, and I am the go-to person when the unfortunate happens.



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■ *Tell us about Tutone Communications. How did it come about?*

Tutone Communications was born after years of contemplating starting my own business and being pushed by my best friend Ninel and my brother Mpho.

During the 2008 recession when raises weren't possible and the cost of living was going up, it seems like the perfect time to try and do something on my own. I borrowed money from a friend, asked another friend for a lift to Sandton to register my company and the rest is history. Well, I got burnt a few times along the way but here I am now.

▣ ***What do you love about PR and what are the challenges?***

I love helping create the narrative for people and branding to get their names out there. It's very fulfilling. I love telling stories and with PR, I get to tell people and brands stories all day.

The challenges are the same as most jobs which include long hours or low pay and often unrealistic and rude clients.



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▣ ***Do you think there is enough representation of women in the industry?***

I don't think there is an industry in the world that has enough female representation. However I do believe that in the corporate sphere they are trying to put more women in managerial positions because it is the era of the female. But I think we could be more assertive and take more risks by applying for the positions and fighting for them more.

▣ ***Which women do you look up to?***

Starting at the very beginning I looked up to my mom who had her own business selling fruit and vegetables and also ran the tuckshop at school. She gave me my spunk.

Along the way there were strong black women who I looked up to like Basetsana Khumalo, Mel Bala, and people I work with every day like Bonang Matheba her work ethic is amazing, she is a huge inspiration and she pushes me to work harder.

Lebo Motswenyane, taught me what I know and held my hand as well as Marang Setshwaelo, I worked for her and that was my first PR job at the Samas, and she taught me the fundamentals of PR.

ABOUT KARABO LEDWABA

Karabo Ledwaba is a Marketing and Media Editor at Bizcommunity and award-winning journalist. Before joining the publication she worked at Sowetan as a content producer and reporter. She was also responsible for the leadership page at SiMug, Sowetan's lifestyle magazine. Contact her at karabo@bizcommunity.com

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