

126: The PRISM Awards and more...

On last week's episode of the [Biz Takeouts Marketing & Media radio show](#), Warren Harding (@bizWazza) was joined in studio by Andy Gilder, Head of Digital for Publicis Machine.



Andy joins us to talk about Newsdesk, an innovative new service provided by the agency that ensures agency teams, their clients and brands keep up with the relentless pace of social media, enabling them to not only react and respond to potential opportunities or threats, but also catch onto trends as they emerge in the social arena.

Andy said: "This is not about 'reactervising', but rather about creating a way of working between the agency and its clients that we believe is best designed to cater to the needs of platforms that are both time-sensitive and data-dependent."

[Check out Publicis Machine here.](#)

[Publicis Machine launches Newsdesk.](#)

Now in its 18th year, the annual PRISM awards, happening on 19 April 2015 in Johannesburg, honours the public relations industry in SA. The PRISM Awards are awarded to communications and public relations professionals who have successfully incorporated creativity, strategy and professionalism into PR. We were joined via Skype by Bridget von Holdt, Executive Director of Glasshouse Communication Management. This is what Bridget had to say:

■ ***What is the history of the PRISM AWARDS? Where did it all start?***

Bridget: The PRISM Awards started 18 years ago as a call to recognise the PR consultant for their campaigns on behalf of their clients. This award is regarded as the Oscar of the PR industry. Over the years it has attracted entries from large and small consultants, small budgets to large budgets

The changes of the past include:

- From an initial five entries to over 210 entries in 37 different categories
- Open to all PR professionals: consultants, corporate communicators, NGOS, government communicators, etc.
- Over 35 different categories
- Introduction of individual awards including lifetime achievement awards
- Introduction of consultancy of the year: small, medium and large consultancy
- Introduction of Campaign of the Year
- Introduction of Pan African Campaign of the Year

■ ***What is the value of the PRISM AWARDS? What do you honour at the awards?***

Bridget: Companies and individuals have built their reputation on winning a PRISM Award. It is the most sought-after award in the industry. The impressive array of judges add the value to being awarded a PRISM Award.

The PRISM Awards are judged by a stellar array of respected business people. They look for above average work, ROI and going beyond the norm. The PR professional is expected to implement the PR campaign effectively, but it is the campaign that goes beyond that will win the award.

▣ *Does PR in SA really work?*

Bridget: Absolutely. Increasingly more important in the boardroom, meeting the objectives and the ROI. It has always been that the credibility of PR far out-measures an advert. PR is about reputation and building on the positioning of a brand/company/person.

▣ *How do we compare to international trends and PR comms?*

Bridget: South Africa is right up there among global players. We can be proud of our campaigns and their achievements. The winner of the Campaign of the Year goes forward to participate in the Global World Awards managed by the International PR Association. (This year, the global congress and Golden World Awards will be held in South Africa in September). Many of the PR consultants in SA have global affiliations, or else associations. Global best practice applies.

▣ *How has digital affected the PR industry over the last decade?*

Bridget: It has had a huge impact in the PR campaign. In the past, digital comms has run as a separate aspect to the comms programme or as an add-on. What we have seen over the last two-three years is integration/convergence of communication over different platforms and utilising different channels.

The digital space should be owned by the PR professional and we are seeing that the space is being managed more and more by the PR professional. The key is integration, it cannot stand alone.

▣ *How do you measure PR effectiveness?*

Bridget: Campaigns need to be evaluated against measurable objectives. There are measurement criteria for PR campaigns, for media coverage and for social media. The key is ROI. Management needs to know that they are getting bang for their buck. The measurement criteria needs to be determined up front. The key will be the influence the comms programme will have on the target audience, the brand awareness, the reputation, the call to action and the bottom line.

▣ *What does the future hold for PR?*

Bridget: PR's future is rosy. Any CEO should not operate without a PR plan, without a crisis plan, without a stakeholder engagement plan. King III refers to stakeholder engagement. PR should be positioned at boardroom level, it is about management of the reputation, it is about dissemination of the key messages - those that can influence the target market.

▣ *Contact details?*

<http://www.prisa.co.za>

We were also joined by: Darlene Mezies, CEO of SMEasy Software.

[Check out SMEasy here.](#)

Due to some technical issues there is no podcast this week, but Biz Takeouts Marketing & Media radio show, airs every Thursday 9am-10am streamed live via [2oceansVibe Radio](#). Tune in to hear us live or look out for next week's podcast right here.

The news roundup:

- [The digital era, the driving force behind customer-everything](#)
- [The PR basics of getting your press event just right](#)

- [\[Orchids & Onions\] Justify it with real figures for it all to add up](#)
- [NATIVE VML appointed as brand engagement agency for 22seven](#)
- [Featured job: Customer Support Agent](#)

If you are interested in getting interviewed on Biz Takeouts, or want to suggest a show topic, email Warren Harding ([@bizwazza](#)) on biztakeouts@bizcommunity.com.



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