

Meet young judge Tina Lapan

 By [Jessica Tennant](#)

9 Apr 2019

In the run-up to the 22nd Prism Awards taking place on Sunday, 14 April, we chatted to this year's cohort of young judges about their fresh approach to the judging process.

In this series of interviews, we find out what they've learnt working alongside the cluster judges and what their young minds bring to the table.

"This year's young judges' entries far exceeded expectation. The selected group is proof that there's an array of diverse and young talent in this industry and that they have a lot to offer," says co-convenor and founder of the Prisms Young Judges initiative, Palesa Madumo, executive director of strategy at Vuma Reputation Management.

Here, our interview with Tina Lapan, PR executive at Verve Marketing and Communication...

■ **What does this recognition and opportunity mean to you?**

It's a huge opportunity to get recognition from the industry. This means a lot to me. I'm so excited to be a part of the next generation of PR professionals.

■ **Briefly tell us about your experience in the industry.**

I started my career journey working at Symbiotic Communications (one of Durban's most well-known PR agencies, under Sharon Wilkinson) servicing the Beiersdorf Account (Nivea, Nivea Men, Labello, Elastoplast and Eucerin). There, I learned the foundations of PR and a lot of focus was spent on building relationships as well as traditional print PR executions. The highlight of my time at Symbiotic was conceptualising and executing Beiersdorf SA's first sponsored influencer digital campaign, with beauty authority, Mathahle Stofile and her online platform, The Matte Project.

Today I work at THB Verve, another one of Durban's treasured local agencies. At THB Verve, I've been introduced to PR strategy and have learnt how to craft a narrative to serve as a compass for all PR key messaging and objectives. I have been given the opportunity to delve deeper into PR reporting and analysis and I get a lot of joy out of assessing if our KPIs have been met and positive sentiments achieved.



Tina Lapan

“ I have a soft spot for non-profit organisations and social mission work. I am a firm believer in co-creating content with partners to create unique campaigns that stand out from the rest, as collaboration often brings out the best in all parties. ”

■ **Comment on the judging process.**

The judging process has been a huge learning experience for me. I found some of the entries extremely inspiring. My chief judge, Vincent Magwenya has given me a lot of insights into the categories we judged together, specifically the "African Network of the Year" and the "Pan African Campaign of the Year". These categories were interesting because it's nice to see what other agencies are doing around Africa in the PR space (as most of my work focuses on South Africa only) – it helped me to broaden my perspective and to learn how other African PR agencies overcome challenges, build networks that last and ultimately unpack meaningful stories that deliver on campaign objectives.

■ **What has the response been to this year's entries?**

The response has been great, we have seen a variety of entries that are diverse and original.

■ **What makes the winning work stand out?**

Clear understanding of a client's problem or opportunity, solid research to distil insights (rather than assumptions or secondary research), defined objectives to see if the campaign performed well and unique executions to solve client problems were the common traits winning entries displayed.

■ **Prisa also introduced the Student Campaign of the Year in 2016. Why do you think it's important that PR students are included in such initiatives?**

I think this is an amazing initiative. Students tend to push the boundaries, remain progressive and often outwit dated beliefs and methods, from my observations in the industry. It's important to show PR students that their work and ideas have value and should be celebrated; we can learn a lot from them.

■ **What do you think young minds bring to the table?**

I think the younger generation can add a new perspective, challenge the status quo and is extremely passionate about making the world a better place. These values are needed in the PR industry, now more than ever; it's great that we are giving fresh talent a seat at the table.

■ **What have you learnt working alongside the cluster judges?**

My cluster judges have taught me to not accept entries at face value. I've been encouraged to probe, ask questions, play devil's advocate and to challenge my fellow judges in friendly debates. It's been a great experience to pick the brains of my cluster judges, they all come from unique backgrounds but all live and breathe PR (just like me) – they have been incredible mentors to me.

■ **Comment on the past, present and future state of PR.**

PR is an ever-evolving industry and with the rise of digital and the age of Influencer Marketing, it is changing to meet the needs of younger audiences. During my two years in the industry, I have witnessed profound changes in the media, including the trend of the influencer and the decline of print. I've learnt that to survive in PR, you need to be agile, dynamic, have a strong network and constantly keep abreast of current trends, news and technologies.

■ **What would the title of Prisms Young Judge for the 2019 awards mean to you?**

It would mean the world to me; to be recognised by my peers would be the highlight of my career so far.

■ **What are you most looking forward to in terms of this year's Awards?**

I'm really looking forward to connecting with my Prism Young Judge family at the awards evening this year. As I'm based in KZN and have been judging remotely, it will be fantastic to catch up with my fellow young judges in the flesh to find out how their experience has been so far and to network for the future.

As mentioned, the Awards take place this Sunday, 14 April. Follow us on [Twitter](#) for live updates on the night and visit our [Prism Awards special section](#) for other related content and of course all the winners following the announcement. Here's the link to our other [social media](#) pages, as well as the Prism Awards' [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts.

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