

Forget the naysayers, run your own race



By [Juanita Pienaar](#)

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Clayton Morar Media is a full-service public relations and marketing agency. Its areas of expertise range from celebrities, lifestyle, hospitality, business, food and drinks to TV, film, music, franchise, entertainment, nightlife, health, wellness, and fashion.

Situated in Cape Town, the agency delivers creative and customised public relations strategies designed around its clients' specific goals and objectives, and that strengthens and markets the clients' brands within the industry.

Former journalist turned publicist, Clayton Morar founded Clayton Morar Media in 2012. Here, he shares more about the challenges he encountered getting his PR business off the ground and dispenses several tips to help aspiring entrepreneurs.

■ Tell us more about yourself and what it is you do.

I was born in Port Elizabeth in 1984 and I studied my National Diploma in Journalism. I started my journalism career as a junior writer at *tvplus* in 2006. By 2009, I had worked my way up to the position of assistant news editor - a position I held until March 2011.

I then worked as a freelance journalist for a number of national media titles such as Heart 104.9 FM, *Sunday Times*, *City Press*, *Sunday World* as well as *Expresso* (on SABC 3) - contributing breaking celebrity and entertainment news, while also covering various red carpet events around SA and in Los Angeles.



Clayton Morar, founder of Clayton Morar Media.

Essentially, Clayton Morar Media provides the services of what ideally is **reputation management**. My job is to ensure that my clients are seen in the right media platforms, within the right genres and audiences, which exposes their skills, products and news to a greater audience - outside of their industry circles, colleagues, families and friends - therefore crafting their reputations in a manner that appeals to the public at large.

Here's a list of my services found on my [website](#).

Some of the marketing, public relations services on offer include:

- Business PR
- Hospitality PR
- Lifestyle PR
- Event PR
- Celebrity and media RSVP services: Inviting celebrities to your events to ensure the right crowd is associated with your brand while assisting you to develop healthy and mutually beneficial relationships with local and national media – print, radio, TV and online
- Celebrity, brand ambassador PR services

■ How did you make the switch from a journalist to publicist? Was it difficult to break into the PR industry?

In 2012, I saw an opportunity to break into the public relations market, as I was asked by various Cape Town-based celebrities to represent them, by setting up media interviews and attaining various scopes of media coverage (across online, magazines, newspapers, radio and TV media platforms), in order to increase their brand within the SA media market.

In essence, PR found me and it kickstarted my career in the PR industry. I registered my company in 2012 and as they say the rest is history. It wasn't too difficult to break into the industry as the heart of PR lies within one's network of contacts and the ability to forge great relationships.

■ What are some of the challenges you've encountered as an entrepreneur, and how have you overcome them?

- It's never a 9-5 job. I like to call it 'a 9am until that payment reflects into my bank account' approach. At the beginning on one's career, or when acquiring a new client, you want to put your best foot forward by showing your capabilities, but you have to incorporate boundaries into your workday - as it could lead to burnout and stress if you don't apply healthy working hours and boundaries. It's taken me six years to finally get this right.*
- No day is the same (which is also a blessing if you love your job, like I do). It could mean excessive travelling outside of one city and depending on the type of PR clients you take on, you could engage in multiple travels per week or per month. Therefore one is never office-bound - which is a trait I love the most about this job as no day is the same as the previous one.*
- Clients don't always pay on time, so you never get a salary date - compared to a 9-5 job. You have to look at implementing structures and procedures in place when acquiring a new client and relook at payment terms and conditions, e.g. require a monetary deposit upfront before you commence with work.*
- When you don't work, you don't earn. You determine the level of success and clients you acquire, depending on your personality.*
- You need to be disciplined and it took me a few months to master this. When you work from home, you could easily become distracted from opening up a laptop and emails and delivering on client briefs. You should ensure you start work as a normal workday and this applies to all other employers and employees, and will help you get into a disciplined routine of how long your workday will be.*
- Being an entrepreneur is lonely, as you are isolated - should you be working alone and/or from home. You constantly have to motivate yourself each day to do better than the previous day, if you want to achieve a greater level of success, and be seen as an authority in your field of business.*
- You have to constantly remind yourself what your vision for your business/brand is, as one can be demotivated at times. If you aim at nothing, you will meet that target every time.*

■ What do you believe are the traits an entrepreneur needs in order to succeed?

a) Tenacity - Success never happens overnight. They say if you're in business after three years, you're doing something right on the path to becoming a successful entrepreneur.

Challenges come and go. So does success. An entrepreneur must possess a burning desire to want to achieve great success and add value in their industry. In doing so, it will take time to achieve these things but being patient, goal-driven and tenacious will lead you to greater success eventually.

b) Proactive personality - Business never just comes to you. You have to go out to do the research, approach prospective clients and create opportunities for oneself in order to attract clients to want to utilise your services.

c) Visionary - Have a vision for what it is you want to do as an entrepreneur and then take action/steps in every way to lead to that bigger goal.

d) Hunger to learn - One must never rest on your laurels and also study and grow within the trends in one's industry.

e) Adaptability - Briefs/tasks/deliverables/deadlines can change at any time. One must always be malleable.

f) Collaborator - Often you will need to work in teams or collaborate with other companies/agencies.

g) Resilience - This trait keeps you going when times are hard.

h) Grit - There has to be a quality like this inside of you as a person, that keeps you going every day.

■ What have been your proudest achievements thus far?

Having handled PR for reputable corporate clients such as Woolworths, Clicks and OudeMeester. In July this year, I acquired the globally-successful Showtime Australia as a retainer client, and going global with my PR skills and services has been a six-year dream in the making.

It's by far my proudest achievement to date and getting to work with international media on top-notch shows, has been a career highlight for me.

■ Would you encourage someone to become an entrepreneur?

Absolutely. As challenging as it can be, you create your own level of success if you have the determination and will to succeed. Together with the ability to partner with the right networks, collaborators and resources to assist you in achieving your dreams, it can be a very rewarding journey.

You are only as good as your last project or client, so you have the ability to determine how fast or slow your career trajectory forges in the area of business. Being your own boss is great, but the buck starts and stops with you and you are able to realise your own dreams as an entrepreneur - or even making a difference in the lives of others too.

Tips to make it in business:

1. Believe in yourself and in your business. This industry can make or break you and the ability to thrive as a business person in whatever you do stems from the belief in your skills and ability to succeed in your industry.

2. Quality control is essential. The buck stops and starts with you in order to ensure that delivery to and for your clients results in success. You are a product of your business and skill that you are selling, so in order to achieve success in the industry you're in, you have to ensure impeccable service delivery from start to finish on any product and/or campaign.

3. Being self-employed requires engaging in long working hours during the week and over weekends in order to get the job done. You can't adopt a 9-5 attitude as a businessman, because no work means no pay.

4. Networking is everything in the public relations and media industry. You are only as good as your contact list and one should aim to master the art of being a serial networker, but with the sheer authenticity that allows clients and your business brand to benefit the effects of your hard work and labour.

5. Exercise balance in everything you do. Working hard all the time shouldn't be the primary focus to achieving success. You should be able to enjoy the fruits of your labour just as much as you spend time growing your business. Balance is key at all times. A healthy you results in a healthy business.

6. Run your own race. Don't focus on your competitors and the voices of naysayers. There is enough room to work in any industry and if the lanes of business are too full, create your own lane.

7. Trends in every business change all the time, so it's imperative to become multi-skilled and multidimensional. Stay constantly updated on the changes and updates in trends in your career field. An enhanced business can compete at any level and alongside any competitor.

ABOUT JUANITA PIENAAR

Juanita is the editor of the marketing & media portal on the Bizcommunity website. She is also a contributing writer.

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