

Meet young voice Siyolise Shinga

 By Jessica Tennant

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In the run-up to the 23rd Prism Awards to be announced virtually on Friday, 15 May, we chatted to this year's cohort of 'young voices' 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 (albeit remotely) and what their young minds bring to the virtual table.



2020 Prism Young Voices announced!

PRISA 13 Feb 2020



"As sad as it is that I won't be able to celebrate the winning entries at the awards this year, I commend the Prism Awards board for heeding the call by being part of the solution. We have seen a lot of countries shutdown, imposing travel restrictions and completely sealing their borders as means to effectively flatten the curve and decrease the spread of Covid-19. Social distancing has emerged as the only effective prevention method and as a result, we are seeing major events being cancelled and companies having to allow staff to work remotely.

"The whole world is in shock and everyone is avoiding any reason beyond necessary to leave their homes. For the industry, this implies that brands and their agencies will have to reconsider their event marketing and PR strategies and lean more towards digital and traditional platforms to engage their audiences – the consumer is at home." – Siyolise Shinga, BA (Hons) Strategic Communications graduate at the University of Johannesburg, commenting on the cancellation of the physical Awards and the general impact of the pandemic on the industry.



Siyolise Shinga

Here, our interview with Shinga...

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

I cannot express how grateful I am for the opportunity to be a Prism Young Voice. This is such a great initiative by Prism Awards and Prisa to pull young PR communications professionals in and get them involved in shaping the state of PR in South Africa. As a young judge I am exposed to the best PR campaigns from top PR and communications agencies. There is also the opportunity to be mentored by industry leaders and that is exciting. The recognition for me means that I am seen, and my voice matters in the industry.

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

I have agency experience working in strategic planning on brands such as Sensodyne, Hunters and Volvo. The consumer landscape in South Africa is very diverse, which provides interesting challenges and opportunities for marketers. Today, brands are competing for the attention of consumers. Your ability as a brand to show insight into your target audience and come up with strategies that inspire consumers to stay true to themselves, is what differentiates a great brand and what makes this industry so much fun to work in.

■ ***Comment on the judging process.***

The judging process is highly rigorous and is defined by your ability as a judge to pay attention to detail. I am judging the biggest category of the awards and all the entries are in it to win it. Choosing great entries is almost impossible and that speaks volumes to the state of PR in South Africa, that indeed we are doing well. It is also a fun challenge I am excited to be a part of.

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

The entries this year are of such of high calibre and I am inspired by the work South African PR consultancies are putting in. A mentor once told me that PR is a passion-led industry and there is almost no way of succeeding if PR doesn't move something inside of you. Each entry that I have judged has moved something inside of me.

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

Work that shows insight, work that inspires, work that is exciting and, importantly, work that achieves objectives.

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

They bring different and fresh perspectives. This is such an awesome opportunity for the PYVs met with eagerness to involve themselves and be part of the most sought-after industry awards. That's the energy young minds bring.

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

I have learnt that it is the tiniest detail that puts an entry above the rest and that as a judge I should always have a critical eye when reviewing entries.

■ ***What would the title of Prisms Young Judge for the 2020 awards mean to you?***

The title is important for me to grow my personal brand. I find that your brand as a person grows with more titles one can attach to their name. Being a Prism Young Judge means that my name holds some weight in industry related spaces and conversations.

■ ***Comment on the current state of PR.***

The current state of public relations is an indication of how time has influenced the practice of PR. Public Relations has moved from the era of just using old media (TV, radio, print) to new media (digital). Today, PR professionals must be competent in integrated approaches in the way they practice PR. It is also important to keep an open mind as PR is always evolving. There is no telling what the future holds, however, we are excited and we anticipate future trends that are going to shape PR.

As mentioned, the Awards take place on Friday, 15 May. Follow us on [Twitter](#) for live updates and visit our [Prism Awards special section](#) for other related content and a list of 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. Follow Siyolise Shinga on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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