

#BehindtheSelfie with... Sonja Winkler

By [Leigh Andrews](#)

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This week we go behind the selfie with technophile Sonja Winkler who heads up Meltwater's Johannesburg office as the youngest MD in the company's 16-year history, making her the perfect fit for our #YouthMonth feature and an example of another step towards the organisation's mandate of global female empowerment.



Winkler trying to stay warm at the Meltwater EMEA conference in Prague in January 2017.

1. Where do you live, work and play?

I am based in Johannesburg. I live in Parkmore, work in Bryanston and play primarily in Parkhurst and the suburbs surrounding it.

2. What's your claim to fame?

I am the youngest female to be appointed as a MD in Meltwater history!

3. Describe your career so far.

I started in market research but grew tired of staring at spreadsheets all day. I then moved to Meltwater, where I began as a sales consultant but quickly progressed through the ranks to where I am now, MD of Meltwater Johannesburg.

4. Tell us a few of your favourite things.

I like nothing more than reading a great book (*The Mountain Shadow*), learning new things, relaxing on the couch on a rainy day, or spending quality time with my two Burmese kittens – Luna and Wren.

5. What do you love about your industry?

I love how the digital landscape is constantly evolving; it keeps me on my toes! I also appreciate that I get to meet really talented people from a diverse range of sectors – all the way from SA's biggest corporates to your smaller niche PR agencies and startups. Being able to negotiate solutions for either type of client on a daily basis is what keeps me motivated.

6. Describe your average workday, if such a thing exists.

- 6am to 7.30am: Wake up, feed my cats, catch up on mails and get ready
- 7:30am: I begin the great trek to my office
- 8am: Plan my day
- 9am to 3pm: Reach out to companies I am currently chatting to and spar leads with my team
- 3pm to 6:30pm: Back to mails and any office admin that needs to be done
- 6:30pm: Head home or to the gym
- 8pm: Make dinner with my partner and watch the latest documentary on Netflix/read a book. Switching off before bed is really important to me as I function best on eight hours of rest
- 10pm: Sleep

7. What are the tools of your trade?

Aside from our own software, it would have to be Trello. It makes forecasting and team collaboration so much more manageable.

8. Who is getting it right in your industry?

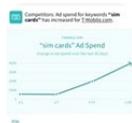
We intersect with so many different sectors and industries, so it's difficult to say. In terms of digital media, I'd say the IAB has gone from strength to strength, and is really pushing the envelope when it comes to developing progressive thinking among marketers and communications professionals in this country.

9. List a few pain points the industry can improve on.

Educating the public about the difference between media intelligence and media monitoring. There's so much great external data and information available to companies today, but half of them don't even know it exists. America is so developed in this area while South Africa and broader Africa is still lagging behind.

10. What are you working on right now?

I have a couple of big clients in the background that I'm aiming to bring on board. I'm also familiarising myself with our new software offering for CEOs, 'Executive Alerts'.



Meltwater launches Executive Alerts, delivering critical real-time insights

3 Mar 2017



Over and above that, my focus is on growing and coaching a new up-and-coming sales team.

11. Tell us some of the buzzwords floating around in your industry at the moment, and some of the catchphrases you utter yourself.

'Dark social', 'influencer marketing' and, most notably, 'real-time analytics'. We're living in the age of the on-demand consumer. If your data isn't provided in real-time, then it's akin to trying to drive using only the rear-view mirror.

12. Where and when do you have your best ideas?

In my car on the way to work.

13. What's your secret talent/party trick?

I'm pretty good at choosing and tasting wine, thanks to half my family being involved in the wine industry.

14. What would we find if we scrolled through your phone?

I love buying apps that I don't really need, but the focus at the moment is vegetarian recipes – which are bought with great intention and not so much follow through – and flight search engines.

15. What advice would you give to newbies hoping to crack into the industry?

Be persistent and believe in what you're selling.

Simple as that. [Click here](#) for more on Meltwater, be sure to visit their [press office](#) for their latest news and follow Winkler on the following social media channels: [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#).

**Interviewed by [Leigh Andrews](#).*

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

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