

Meet young judge Khangelani Dziba

 By [Jessica Tennant](#)

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In the run-up to the 21st Prism Awards taking place on Sunday, 22 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.



Khangelani Dziba, senior brand architect at DNA Brand Architects.

“What has made judging even more exciting this year is for the second time, we invited young communication enthusiasts from across the country to participate in the judging process, and selected 11 of the coolest, brightest minds who brought some really fresh insight to the process,” says judge and founder of the 'Prisms Young Judges' initiative, Palesa Madumo, executive director of strategy at Vuma Reputation Management.

Here, our interview with [Khangelani Dziba](#), senior brand architect at DNA Brand Architects and a regular contributor to Bizcommunity...

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

When embarking on this journey of becoming one of the 2018 young judges for the Prism Awards, I understood the gravity of the role and how much of a big task it would be.

I was cognisant of the fact that I would be putting myself on a platform that would require I have a meaningful contribution to what would add to the community of judges that have formed part of this prestigious occasion within our industry over the years.

So when I found out that I had been selected as one of the 11 young judges, I was elated and knew that I could not let myself down or the many people that have contributed to my growth as a professional in the space.

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

When I first started out in the industry I knew that I wanted to break walls and glass ceilings for young people who have what it takes to make a difference. Often I felt silenced and sidelined because I was young but feeling sorry for myself was not good enough.

This is most probably because I knew that I had an opinion and often felt like it needed to be heard a lot more. Not only by my peers but those that led the conversations in our industry and boardroom. I had to make a mental shift to elevate myself a lot more to propel my growth the way I desired it.

Since embarking on this journey, I have experienced the industry a lot more differently and I am constantly striving to get better because of the opportunities that have become available to lead and form part of a group of people making decisions that impact brands, teams and clients we work with on a day-to-day basis.

▣ *Comment on the judging process.*

The process of judging the awards was exciting because we got to see all the amazing work created by fellow industry peers, but it was also quite intense. Intense mostly in the sense that it required a great amount of thinking capacity on how the different campaigns presented impacted, shaped and made a difference in the lives of those audiences they were created for.

There was a lot of debating on why we chose to score the way we did and the insights we all drew from the campaigns. But, this made the sessions a lot more robust and worth all the time that was spent reading through the entries.

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

The number of entries received across the board for the Prism Awards increased exponentially. Meaning that there is definitely a need for what the Awards do for our industry in terms of raising the stature of the work done and the role we play as PR professionals. I was particularly looking after the B2B sector which saw some really great campaigns coming through. A lot of work is being put in to ensure brands and clients are getting value.

▣ *What makes the winning work stand out?*

Strategic intent, great planning and execution. But most of all, results, results and results. I think with the winning entries we were able to see this come through quite successfully.

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

This was an exceptional move from the Prisms because it speaks to a subject I am very passionate about, which speaks to opening up the industry to more millennials and making the circle bigger. This is so important because we are the custodians of the industry and need to start doing the things that matter and will impact our growth as experts in the

space.

“ It is encouraging to have programmes and initiatives like this because they push aspiring students towards a place of certainty that they too will become voices the industry wants to hear from and see making decisions that will shape where we are going. ”



Industry folks, it's time to make the circle bigger

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

Young minds I think are an important component in informing the insights brands and industry have about them. They are in tune with what is culturally relevant and are voices that cannot be ignored. They too have to be a part of the bigger conversations had about them, be given opportunities to lead and be led a lot more.

“ We need to master the art of coexisting with young people in boardrooms in order for us to have effective strategies that are created for brands. ”

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

That I truly have an opinion and a voice that need to be exercised a lot more without any fear or reservation. The industry is ready for young brilliant minds and we have to keep pushing to ensure we do not get consumed by the noise. Our time is now and it couldn't be a better place to be a young professional in the space.

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

“ Gone are the days of spray and pray. There is a lot of intelligence that is required to be able to get brands and clients to where they need to be from a PR perspective. ”

The rise of digital and integrated marketing has meant that as PR practitioners we cannot think laterally. Our thinking needs to showcase an understanding of this and how we better our offering in the mix.

■ **What would the title of Prisms Young Judge for the 2018 awards mean to you?**

Wow, I think for me it would mean that I have, as a young judge, had a meaningful role to play amongst my peers and that I need to further continue to contribute in imparting the values of what it means to be in this position to other up-and-coming talent.

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

Back in 2017 I had attended the awards as one of the entrants alongside my fellow agency colleagues with hopes of one day soon forming a part of the Awards in a more meaningful way. To attend this year as one of the young judges is quite a privilege for me.

I look forward to seeing all the winners and most importantly, meeting those that I had the honour of judging. This year's Awards I believe will be bigger and better.

As mentioned, the Awards take place this Sunday, 22 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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