

Adam Hunter, 'Head Honcho' at Hook, Line & Sinker



By [Evan-Lee Courie](#)

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Times are changing, and so is the era of the press release and red-carpet events. Over the last few years, Adam Hunter has managed to set up and successfully grow an integrated communications agency that comprises a bunch of young digital natives that breathe life back into the PR game, added with a dash of marketing and social media.



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As we know, the media sector has been challenged for many years and combined with Covid-19, has seen publishing houses close and popular print titles disappear before our very eyes. This new era has resulted in one journalist for every 10 PR professionals – making it extremely competitive for brands to be seen and heard.

Hunter's determination and the agency's winning recipe of tech clients, paired with digital expertise during Covid-disruption, has seen great success since 2020 with new clients across the globe reaching Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and America. Successful partnerships have also emerged with global giants such as SAP, IBM, Microsoft, Google, The World Bank and United Nations, while scooping Best Tech Campaign and Best Pan African campaign at the Public Relations Industry (PRISM) Awards.

How would you describe your organisation?

Hook, Line & Sinker (HLS) is a family of digital creatives. Our team is young, hip and happening and we love creativity and embrace diversity. We are definitely not your 90's PR press release and red-carpet events agency. Times have changed, the media landscape has evolved, and so has the way we market brands and engage tomorrow's conscious consumer.

At HLS, we help brands to find the right hook and deliver the ultimate campaign sinker. We are an award-winning agency that provides public relations, marketing, advertising, and social media, in a fun and integrated approach to some of the world's biggest tech and computer software brands across Africa, the Middle East, Europe and North America.



▣ ***How would you describe your role in your organisation?***

At HLS we don't believe in hierarchy. This is evident in our designations. For example, my title is 'Head Honcho', we also have a 'Chief Whip', a 'Content Champion', 'PR Maven', 'Digital Guru' and 'Graphic Ninja'. We are all very passionate about our jobs and take them very seriously, but we also work across the board and support one another as a team.

As Head Honcho my role is incredibly hands-on, with no job too big or too small. I am a firm believer that if serving is below you - then leadership is probably beyond you. My role includes morning coffee runs, day-to-day client liaison, lots of proof reading, writing and approvals, to supporting staff with compiling press packs and arranging courier deliveries, to strategy, and overseeing HLS business operations with HR and staff hires, media & marketing, legal contracts, finance, and most of all - pitching for new business.

▣ ***How did you find yourself in the PR industry and what qualities or qualifications would you recommend for aspirant newcomers?***

During my third year at University, I was placed into a nine-month internship at a large and renowned agency with a wonderful client portfolio. I was a junior account executive within the luxury consumer fashion and beauty brand division, and I loved every minute of it! Once my internship was complete, I was offered full-time position and promoted to account executive, and from there, I never looked back.

“ *For aspiring newcomers to the industry, I would say overcome your fears of writing. It's an essential and critical skill that you need in the communications industry. Practice makes perfect, and eventually you will get the hang of it.* ”

Secondly, don't be afraid to try different avenues – I went from consumer luxury fashion to global B2B tech, and I absolutely thrived. Try social media, try corporate or employee communications, try different industry sectors – you never know, you might find another passion in the PR space. Lastly, grow your expertise.

Learn new tools, learn how to apply basic graphic design elements, master excel, know your apps, and learn how to optimise your time and constantly add value to your clients and workplace. Make yourself indispensable!

▣ ***Can you describe some highlights of your career?***

Absolutely! Over the years I have been incredibly blessed to travel the world and present at meetings and workshops across the globe from Paris, to Switzerland, to Morocco, London, Germany, Atlanta – you name it. All thanks to our global software clients.

Highlights also include managing campaigns that have made a real difference for the greater good. Examples include a 'Community Mobilization' initiative for UNICEF working with the Department of Health to promote the importance of Vitamin A to mothers with newborn babies in poverty-stricken townships. The campaign was translated into five different African languages and required creative activations across advertising, PR, and marketing, to reach this specific audience.



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Another rewarding example is a corporate social responsibility (CSR) program called Africa Code Week. The initiative is Africa's biggest digital skills program and spans 54 African countries. It is translated into Arabic, Portuguese and French, and has empowered millions of children and young adults with 21st-century learning. I have managed communications for this program for six years. We have scooped a couple of PR industry awards along the way and to date, more than seven African countries have adopted digital skills into their curriculum thanks to the hard work and efforts of this program while working closely with the government.

■ *In the world of business, how can PR be used effectively to influence and ensure that purpose-driven and society building brand stories reach the right audiences?*

The biggest challenge preventing brands not reaching the right audiences is authentic communication. The fact that brands aren't people, they're companies doesn't help. To communicate authentically with customers, I would suggest the following:

- **Keep it real.** Talk like a human and not like a robotic company: show the people behind the brand, talk on a conversational level, and use humour to help your audiences relate to your company/brand.
- **Communicate in tasty bite-size pieces.** Companies can get overwhelmed with all the information they want audiences to have, and the tone becomes overly stiff and formal. Breaking the content and information up and creating a conversational tone makes everything easier to digest.
- **Build brand integrity by being consistent.** Developing an authentic, clear message which is delivered consistently cuts through the noise and reinforces your reliability to your customers.
- **Use third-party credibility.** Not all the experts have to come from your company or client. Form authentic connections with your audiences through influencer marketing, user-generated content, customer testimonials, rankings/awards, and like-minded brand partnerships. These will help build and communicate the brand organically and in an impactful way.

■ *Would you care to share any future trends or predictions for the PR industry?*

1. **The conscious consumer continues.** Health-focused is only part of the Conscious Consumer. Consumers have been trending towards purpose-driven and ethical brands. The trend towards sustainable, ethical, and purpose-driven will only continue in 2022 and beyond. We need to continue to find ways to build and leverage this in our media and marketing activities.
2. **The crumbling cookie could spark a new data revolution.** With third party cookies being removed, brands are looking for new methods of targeting and first-party data is the answer. Expect to see a new world of tech-focused on helping brands capture and leverage first-party data. This could be the new data revolution!
3. **The role (and compensation) of influencers will change.** The role influencers play in marketing is something we'll see going forward, along with changes to how influencers are monitored and compensated by social media channels, and how brands will work around this.

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