

John Beale, Pernod Ricard's head of communications

 By Jessica Tennant

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Pernod Ricard recently promoted John Beale, who joined the company in 2017 as a media manager, to head up the communications department. In his new role, he oversees paid media, digital marketing, social media community and content, as well as public relations for the company's brands and Pernod Ricard Corporate.

Here, Beale tells us why his previous position was a learning curve for him and that what he's found most rewarding is the recognition from the people he has mentored and the talent he has grown...

■ *How do you feel about your promotion?*

I am very excited to be working with such a capable team and adding value to wider parts of the business

■ *What excites you most about the company and where it's going?*

For me, Pernod Ricard is an advanced company that rewards employees, especially those who take an entrepreneurial approach to their business units. It's great working for a company that trusts its employees.

■ *What do you love most about your career in general and the media/comms field in particular?*

I love the changing landscape and the quick pace at which media and the communications arena moves, not only in social and digital but also in the channel and PR space. You really have to keep up to date with the next big thing and try to stay ahead of your competitors and the environment.

■ *Tell us a bit about your experience and what you hope to achieve in your new position.*

I come from an agency background and worked my way up to being a managing director of MECNotabene, Cape Town (Wavemaker) with experience across traditional and digital media. I was lucky enough to spend four years at Cerebra honing skills around social media and PR, so the earned and owned bucket got filled with lots of know-how in the introduction of social media in SA.

I hope to bring some cohesion and acceleration to the communications team across the various roles, as well as making sure that my team continues to shine in each area in which they contribute to the wider business. I have an amazing, highly specialised team and it's about bringing together communications thinking, with the needs of the brands in the business and delivering on that day in and day out.



John Beale



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■ *Any career highlights you're particularly proud of?*

Managing one of Cape Town's biggest media agencies, by billing, at the age of 27 was a huge learning curve for me, and the challenge grew me as a person. Most rewarding is the recognition from the people that I mentored, and seeing where they are today. Growing talent is such an important part of anyone's management career.

■ **What are you most looking forward to?**

I am already deep into the role and looking forward to continuing to raise the bar on digital, media, social and PR for Pernod Ricard South Africa.

■ **What's at the top of your to-do list (at work)?**

Right now, ensuring I give budget feedback. However, my to-do list changes daily, as most do, in order of priority or projects and urgency of deliverables. I try to not let e-mails dictate my to-do list.

■ **What are you currently reading/watching/listening to for work?**

I rely on morning news and industry mailers to get quick updates. *Daily Maverick* every morning and afternoon, *Contagious*, a few marketing podcasts, *Bizcommunity*, and *The Media Online* mailers as well as *Wired* and a few global mailing lists I've found interesting over the years. I make a point of reading *Frenemies* from a work perspective. I also enjoy watching anything on *Netflix*.

■ **Tell us something about yourself not generally known?**

I was a freelance contributing motoring journalist to Cars.co.za and had my own blog. It married two of my passions – writing and vehicles. I loved every minute.

ABOUT JESSICA TENNANT

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