

# #BehindtheSelfie with... Diogo Mendonça

 By Leigh Andrews

12 Sep 2018

This week, we go behind the selfie with Diogo Mendonça, managing director of Blacksmith Collective...



Mendonça on the move.

## 1. Where do you live, work and play?

I call it the “JCB – JHB Creative Band”, which spans from Bryanston to Sandton, Rosebank, Melville and the CBD.

## 2. What’s your claim to fame?

Not really sure, but I would say my work ethic and personality. I also happen to just know a lot of people, which may help.

## 3. Describe your career so far?

It has definitely been eventful, but most importantly, it’s been all about natural progression, which took me a while to understand but it’s pretty clear at the moment.

“ I would never have thought that this was going to be my future job, but my career has been shaped around my personality, strengths and being. My career is complementary to my personal life, which allows me to have a career based

on my passion. This is something I believe few people have the opportunity of doing, thus taking into account that I have been able to work on some of the biggest brands in the country, as well as on an international scale. ”



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It makes me feel that my career is on a good path. Being naturally competitive and ambitious, I will always want my career to move forward. It's important to me that I continuously learn and develop my career for the future.

### 4. Tell us a few of your favourite things?

I really appreciate a well-crafted and -produced movie. Food, music, fashion and football are also some of my favourites. *Hala Madrid e Forca Portugal!* I had to ;)

“



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A post shared by [Blacksmith Creative Collective \(@weareblacksmith\)](#) on Nov 2, 2017 at 3:32am PDT

”

### 5. What do you love about your industry?

- Our ability to influence and shape perceptions.
- The impact that our work often has, which can sometimes be on millions of people.

- I also love that the industry is currently in a brave and adaptive state, whereby brands and industries are merging to give a more authentic and real experience vs a pushed message to conform.
- It has led brands to be a lot more transparent and purposeful, which I believe has a positive impact on the industry as a whole.
- South Africa and Africa is also a good space creatively, and with the world currently watching us, we are only developing and getting better at showcasing our talent.

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

In a constantly changing environment it's difficult to say what the average day consists of, but I would say a lot of phone calls, WhatsApp voice notes, client meetings and review sessions form part of the norm. I try and avoid meetings before 10am and after 3pm, to avoid traffic.



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## 7. What are the tools of your trade?

I believe that tools are super important for a business, thus we take these very seriously. I am an Apple fan who was late to the Apple world, but between my laptop, phone, Apple TV, AirPort Extreme, G-Raid storage server and bad-ass fibre line, we are pretty comfortable.

## 8. Who is getting it right in your industry?

Within the vast array of silos that we work in, in our industry, there are so many different people, agencies and production houses that inspire us.

Some of these would include people such as Osborne Macharia, Salomon Ligthelm, Terence Neale, Lebogang Rasethaba, Chris Saunders, Didi Simelane, Siyabonga Beyile, Laduma Ngxokolo, Jamal Nxedlana and Elsa Bleda, to name a few, while musicians like Black Coffee and Nasty C keep waving the South African flag high within the global market.



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25 Apr 2018



Also, having worked with agencies like Grid Worldwide and content creators such as Egg Films/Arcade Content and Militia,

we have been able to be exposed to some of the best creative talent that I believe is getting it right. Watch this space, LOL!

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

- **Communication and accountability.** Unfortunately, when one party drops the ball, it has a ripple effect on the rest of those involved in the project. Often due to human error and miscommunication, we as suppliers are blamed due to people not delivering on their end, which has led to losing a client.
- **Education –** clients tend to take for granted the time it takes to deliver a certain quality of work. It's important to make sure your client understands the time it takes to do your work correctly. It's easier said than done in an always-on content-hungry industry, but it's important to build these buffers, in order to manage client expectations.

## 10. What are you working on right now?

Coca-Cola event, Absa Drone Show after-movie, DHL animation, Castle Lite Minion campaign, MTN 8 event and AB InBev global induction video.

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

Creative entrepreneur, creative collective, creative collabs, experientialist, hustler, plug and creative/art director – a lot of people tend to assume this position quite easily.

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

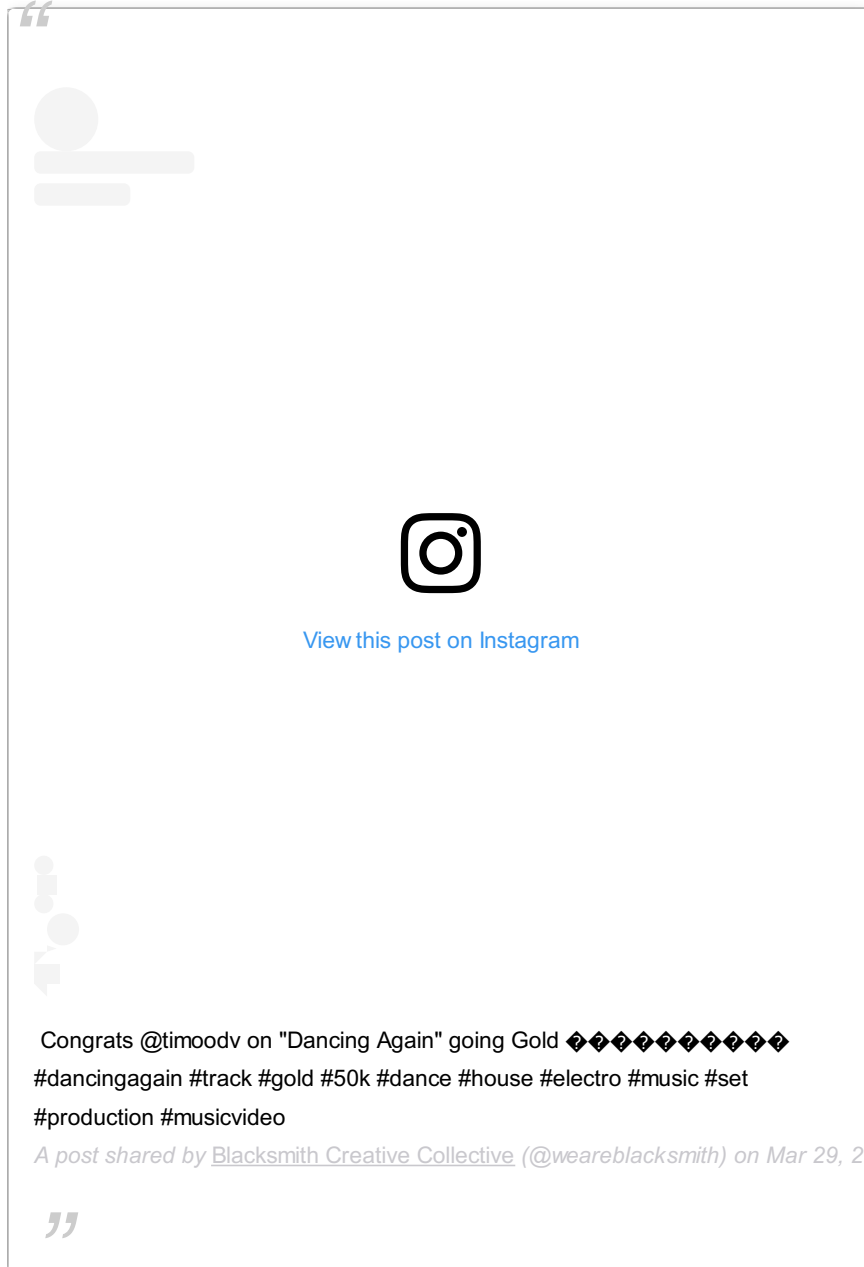
Ideas and inspiration can come from anywhere. I've found that the greatest ideas seem to come at the least expected moments.

“ I do believe that creating a conducive environment for ideas is important. As soon as we get a new project, we look into our creative network and gather a creative team that we believe will best execute the task at hand. We've found that

being clear in briefings, being transparent, and simply assigning tasks to people who are good at what they do, is all key to an ideation environment. Add in great coffee, experiential outings and braais on a Friday, and we have a pretty awesome idea generator. But most importantly, listen to everyone who is involved in the process, as even the cleaner can have a great insight or idea. ”

I happen to be pretty decent at football, as I played in Portugal for a few seasons after school. For some reason, I'm good at telling people the year a movie was filmed.

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



oke... but I'd have to show you.

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

- A lot of screenshots of things that inspire me.
- Meaningless gifs and football banter memes that keep me entertained.
- Various music playlists that I play, based on my mood.

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

As good as you think you are, there's a certain level of development that both you personally, and your business, need to go through, in order to work at the top. The industry is extremely competitive, talented and unfortunately disloyal, thus you need to be as good as your last project.



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

SELFIE CAPTION: Mendonça on the move.

## ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh\_Andrews.

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