

Meet young judge Phushaza Sibiya

 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.

"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.



Phushaza Sibiya, content producer at Primedia Broadcasting.

Here, our interview with Phushaza Sibiya, content producer at Primedia Broadcasting...

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

The opportunity that I have been presented with to be part of the Prism Awards means that I'm able to participate in one of the most sought-after industry awards, and to enhance my passion for the communications and public relations industry.

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

Having studied marketing management from the University of Johannesburg and working as the communications manager for a campus-based community radio station I realised the significance of public relations. I then joined a commercial radio station as a producer and contributed to content creation.

■ ***Comment on the judging process.***

Being part of the judging process has been rewarding. Mainly because of what I have been exposed to during the judging process. Judges (young judges included) are required to be rigorous and pay attention to detail in their assessment of each submission.

Each entry is evaluated individually according to criteria outlined for the Awards, which has implemented very stringent steps in the judging process to ensure that the standard of the industry is upheld.

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

There's been a great number of submissions this year, and I'm convinced that the Prisms will see even more entries being submitted for consideration.

■ ***What makes the winning work stand out?***

In judging all the entries, we look for the wow-factor. Entries need to be exceptional and stand out from the crowd. They need to clearly communicate realistic objectives of the campaign, and what research has been undertaken.

We need to see that the campaign has gone over and above their brief and display a non-conventional way of communicating their message.

■ ***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?***

Introducing Student Campaign of the Year provides up-and-coming PR professionals an opportunity to contribute at grassroots levels to the PR and communications industry. It also affords them the chance to learn from established professionals.

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

Because the industry is evolving at a fast pace, it needs individuals who are committed to what I call the "art of the communications" industry. Young minds bring in a different perspective from existing ones.

“ What's even more interesting is the collaboration that comes into play, by joining efforts of both established communication practitioners as well as individuals who will then take the baton. ”

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

Working alongside established industry professionals has provided me with great insights into the communications and PR industry. I was fortunate enough to have been placed in a cluster where judges shared extensive knowledge on the industry.

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

The nature of communications necessitates a need for the PR industry to grow and evolve. And many of these changes have been documented extensively.

“ Where sending out press releases would have been enough 10 years ago, it isn't any longer... Where previously, public relations relied on just press releases, we're now moving towards an industry that is embracing change by integrating “visual public relations”. ”

We're saying to the receiver of the message, “We understand and respect your time, but this, you have to see!” This is why we always need to be clear in our communication. Public relations has made its mark in the world by ensuring that companies live up to their brand promise and it has contributed positively on a global scale. And this change will be affected by trends such as new interfaces and new interactions, which we need to embrace.

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

I can't wait for the outstanding campaigns that will be recognised at this year's Awards. To meet industry peers as well as engage in conversations, which I believe will add value to the industry.

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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