

Meet young judge Simbongile Ndlangisa

 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.



Wits University BA graduate Simbongile Ndlangisa and director at Melenial Media.

Here, our interview with Wits University BA graduate Simbongile Ndlangisa and director at Melenial Media...

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

Being selected as a young judge has been incredibly humbling and exciting. Having only begun in the PR industry six months ago, I have a lot to learn and this is how I am making the most of the PYJ programme. I am gaining proximity to very influential people in PR and taking in the expertise and insights they have to share. The judging process has taught me a huge amount on the structuring of public relations campaigns and the way that brands are investing in the practice.

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

Having started blogging in university, I would liaise a lot with PR companies who required coverage - that is where I learnt about PR and the role that it plays for its clients. I interned at a full-service digital marketing agency once I graduated and my PR knowledge expanded after being exposed to media lists, media manager, news clip and interacting with the media. In 2017, I launched my own PR company [Melenial Media] servicing South African influencers and talents as well as SMMEs.

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

It has been interesting, to say the least, but it has also been widely informative.

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

This is the first time I am judging and from what I gather, the entries have been incredibly impressive compared to years before.

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

Innovative thinking on the part of the agency or PR team, incorporating new media channels and out-of-the-box concepts.

■ ***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?***

In South Africa especially, young people make up half the country.

“ It is so crucial to ensure that young people have input in programmes such as the Prism Awards – we are huge chunk of the market that is spoken to and there is disparity between that and the people that actually create marketing material that is meant to speak to us. ”

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

New media expertise, fresh approaches to PR concepts and insights into what we and our peers care about and resonate with.

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

I have learnt more about the importance of fulfilling the brief as initially set out and the traditional 'i's and 't's that need to be dotted and crossed.

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

It would be validation that I have chosen the correct business and have something to offer the industry.

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

Engaging with other PR professionals, networking and finally finding out who had the best campaigns of 2017.

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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