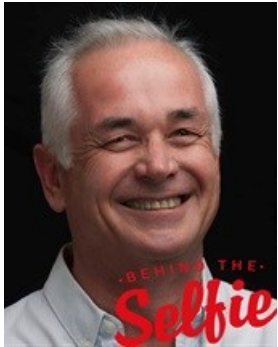


# with... Walter Pike

This week, we find out what's really going on behind the selfie with Walter Pike, thinker and doer behind PiKE | Social era campaigns...

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

**Pike:** Jozi.



Pike was horsing around in his home studio when he struck gold with this smiley selfie

## 2. What's your claim to fame?

**Pike:** I've developed ways of thinking about marketing communications strategy (advertising/PR) in the new technology-enabled and highly connected world. I apply them and execute campaigns in politics, as I've been fortunate enough to advise political campaigns right into Africa, as well as in social change campaigns and in brand marketing. I'm also a professional speaker and I talk about the future of business, focusing on advertising and PR.

## 3. Describe your career so far.

**Pike:** Believe it or not, I started off my working life as a farmer, farming citrus in the Eastern Cape. I then moved into the motor industry in sales and marketing positions, left, joined advertising, went back and then got into the advertising industry again. I worked in Cape Town as strategy and client service director at what I think was then the hottest agency in South Africa.

But I've been on my own for decades, except for a time as head of faculty at the AAA School of Advertising. When I started the digital academy, we were the first ever, anywhere in the world, to be endorsed by Google. There have been lots of innovations in that time, like the time I managed to convince a major retail clothing chain to stock lifestyle clothes, dovetailing into a car launch as part of their normal merchandise, in effect selling our promotional clothing... but I won't bore you with them all.

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

**Pike:** I have many. I recently picked up an old passion of mine with horses. I now play polo again after a break of 30 years and am often asked to assist on the racecourse and others with difficult horses. I love photography and fly fishing. My best times though are the times I spend talking to smart people. I used to run a group called IdeaOrgy (where ideas meet and mate). I learn so much from talking to people. I also believe that red wine is a health drink.

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

**Pike:** Change. I thrive on change, I love uncertainty and solving big problems. I get bored by the mundane and routine.

## 6. What are a few pain points your industry can improve on?

**Pike:** I think the industry is by-and-large selling what the clients want. I know that sounds like good customer service. But, like Steve Jobs felt, it's not the client's job to know what they need, and I think we fall down on that. The industry needs to take the leadership, we are, after all, the sector experts, to guide our clients into what is essentially a new world. Recent research shows that the adoption rates for example of social media by SA corporates is very low. I do a talk about the world changing at midnight, when everyone was asleep to no one noticed. I don't think we do that.

## 7. Describe your average workday (if such a thing exists)!

**Pike:** It doesn't exist, there is no routine. I have three screens running on my desk, streaming information to me all the time. I spend an enormous amount of time being on top of stuff, I'm often travelling especially into Africa, which I love. For the rest, every assignment is a fresh new project and I approach them all from first principles.

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

**Pike:** My intellect.

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

**Pike:** I suppose it depends on how you define the industry. I've always followed the advice of slicing the industry into thin slices and to be the top of your own thin slice.

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

**Pike:** I'm working on a social change project aimed at getting South Africans to believe in ourselves and in our countrymen. I'm also working on an advanced workshop with my colleague from California on social media.

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

**Pike:** Buzzwords are lazy. Mostly they are there to hide a lack of understanding and to appear smart. 'Big data' I suppose is one of them, 'influencer marketing' another. I talk a lot about directed activism, but it's not really a buzz word, it's just how I see things.



Pike on a horse. Bless.

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

**Pike:** My best ideas come to me in no special order and at no special time.

Usually they are sparked by someone saying something, which opens up a new thinking pathway in my head.

So they happen when I am with people.

I find these days that I am at my most relaxed when I'm out riding a young horse just off the racetrack, on my own in the veld.

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

**Pike:** Listening.

## 14. Are you a technophobe or a technophile?

**Pike:** Ha ha, would you like an invite to [Elo](#)?

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

**Pike:** Such a variety of stuff. Many apps that I'm playing with. I'm always looking for new stuff.

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

**Pike:** Turn up, be there, learn, have an opinion.

## 17. Plug your contact details, punt yourself - list all the places people can find you/your work online...

On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/walterpike>

On Twitter: [@walterpike](#)

On LinkedIn: <za.linkedin.com/in/walterpike/>

My website: <http://pike.co.za>

[Click here](#) for Pike's latest article on influencer marketing.

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

## 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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