

#BehindtheSelfie with... Samantha Fuller, head of communications for Uber in sub-Saharan Africa

 By [Jessica Tennant](#)

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This week, we go behind the selfie with Samantha Fuller, head of communications for Uber in sub-Saharan Africa.



Samantha Fuller, a working mummy, balancing this thing we call life.

Where do you live, work and play?

I am originally a born and bred Joburger, but have relocated to Cape Town and have been here for 14 years. I currently reside in Wynberg, with my second home (my parents) in Plettenberg Bay. I've always been a wanderer/traveller and maintained that my home is wherever my family is, but over the years, creating my home in Cape Town has become my primary sanctuary.



Work doesn't have an allocated desk with my name or pictures on it. I travel globally on the regular and with the help of Google Suite, any space can become my workspace.

I play everywhere, anytime, most of the day. Too often life passes us by and I want to make the most of each moment. I live by a playbook, not a rulebook, and that same zest for adventure has led to some of my greatest memories.



What's your claim to fame?

I have a bicuspid aortic valve (Arnold Schwarzenegger had one as well). Only 2% of the world's population has this. While this may scare others, I've always tried to live on the brighter side, while I have one less valve, I have double the blessings.

Describe your career so far.

I am currently head of communications for Uber in sub-Saharan Africa and have held this position for the past five years. I am a results-driven individual with more than 10-years of experience across multiple industries including marketing, PR, communications, strategy, business transformation and development, and creative.

Successfully managing the entire communication and brand reputation of Uber and Uber Eats across sub-Saharan Africa, which is a total of seven countries and 16 cities, has been a real career highlight.

Tell us a few of your favourite things.

My son, hubby and our two furbabies. I really struggled for three years to get pregnant, eventually, after multiple rounds of IVF (and unwavering support from my husband), we were successful. My son, Leo, was born in February 2019. He will forever be my greatest achievement.



I also have two beautiful fur babies, Zoe Bear and Fibi Maybe, who have brought in copious amounts of love, snuggles and joy.



What do you love about your industry?

It would certainly be the people I work with! They're some of the smartest, most passionate techies around! I am always learning skills and also interesting things about people, cultures and cities.

And of course, the impact we are making across Africa, and globally. Uber has already created over 59,000 economic

opportunities for locals across SSA to own their small businesses and has changed the way people move around their cities. The impact Uber is making across SSA is simply phenomenal, and this is why I have stayed around for over five years.



Describe your average workday, if such a thing exists.

I find myself in the fingerprint of industries because no two days are the same. Communications is a changing environment that requires an always-on, always-ready approach. Each day provides new challenges, and new opportunities, but both allow for the same output, of creating a strong reputation via brand building. Some constants are looking at new cities we can launch in, to help change the way people move around their areas.

The most common thing about my day-to-day job is to expect the unexpected.

What are the tools of your trade?

I use multiple tools to enable a more productive workspace. Media monitoring is a must, as this provides the best reflection on how well we're able to do our jobs, while Google Suite provides me with access to quite possibly 90% of my daily activities.

Who is getting it right in your industry?

- Flexiforce
- SweepSouth
- Netflix
- Disney & Disney+

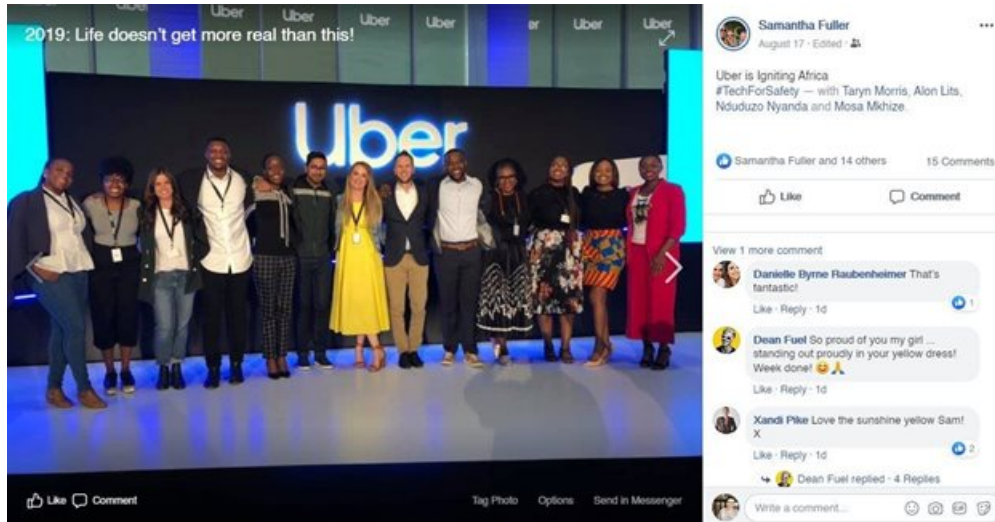
List a few pain points the industry can improve on.

An over-stacked layer of decision makers, which results in delayed decision making due to the various repeat procedures that are needed to get the job done. CCing everyone on a mail is a major pain point for me! Can we learn the age-old art of the BCC? Only CC if you require an action or reply for a specific person.

What are you working on right now?

We are constantly working with technology to create new and innovative ways to experience both the Uber and Uber Eats app. We recently launched in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, which makes it the first Francophone market for Uber in Africa. Uber's ambition is to be everywhere - any progressive, forward-thinking city that has a need for safe, reliable and efficient transportation, we want to be there! Unfortunately, that's all I'm able to share at this point. However, a little something I can share, there is a South Africa Tech for Safety 2020 loading!

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

Buzzwords:

- Gig economy
- Future of mobility/work
- Dynamic consumers
- App update
- Urgent (everything is always urgent)
- Fourth Industrial Revolution
- Artificial intelligence
- Future of work

Catchphrases:

- Done is better than perfect

Where and when do you have your best ideas?

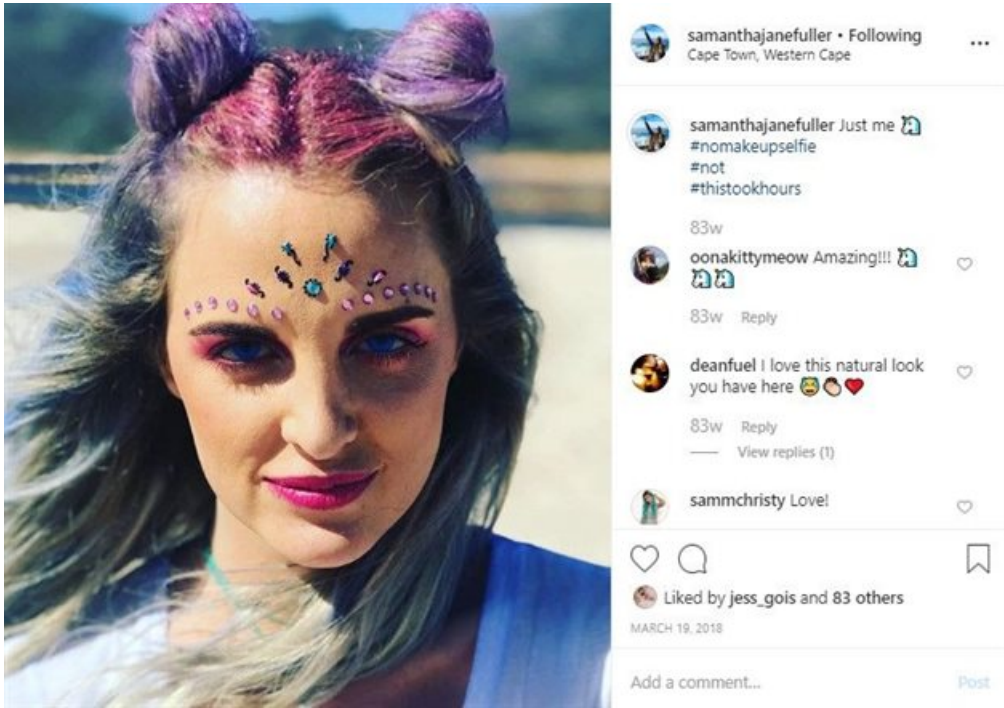
I'm aware of my surroundings and look for inspiration in that, no matter where I am. Most of my best ideas come from having my entire team together and bouncing off each other's ideas, where we would find a great one and build on it. Working for a global brand is a massive plus, as this provides me with access to multiple teams who all are so culturally diverse and have such great universal insights. Our ideas are essentially unlimited with the broad scope of the brand.



I also have an incredible circle of women - a brilliant, creative and crazy bunch. They are a constant source of creative ideas, thoughts and opinions. Together, we encourage, empower and love to break societal stereotypes in life and careers.

What’s your secret talent/party trick?

#RaveToTheGrave



Are you a technophobe or a technophile?

A technophile most definitely. Given my industry, it would be a worry to my seniors if I answered this any other way. I do, however, try to limit my interaction with technology, as being present in the moment is a must. While I live, breath and ultimately make a living off technology, there is no reward if it keeps me away from those I love most.

Technology does offer distractions and it’s important to understand that being present in a moment is worth more. I would much rather dance along with the crowd at my husband’s gig, than watch it through my phone recording him.



What would we find if we scrolled through your phone?

Mostly pictures of my son, hubby and furbabies. Now and then the occasional selfie will pop up. Oh, and also a ton of family and friends pictures over the many adventures I've been lucky enough to have been on.



I also have the Investec banking app, Gmail, Google Calendar, Asana, Arlo baby monitor and Airbnb. Oh, and of course, right on my homepage, the Uber and Uber Eats app, because a girl's got places to go and delicious food to eat!

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

Do not be afraid to ask questions. The hard ones or the simplest of ones, all questions deserve an answer - having the courage to ask a question shows strength and maturity, and you will often find you are not the only one in the room wondering the same thing.

In a fast-paced environment, done is better than perfect. Too often you get caught up in the micro details and forget the overall picture - always aim to do your best possible work, but when you are working to a deadline - always meet that deadline (being late is not an option, even if that means your work is not 100% perfect.)

As a perfectionist, that's a good way to look at it. Fuller says she's a private person so her personal pages are usually off-limits, but she does make the occasional appearance on her husband's Instagram [@DeanFuel](#). Follow Uber on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#), and/or Uber Eats on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) feeds for the latest updates.

**Interviewed by [Jessica Tennant](#).*

ABOUT JESSICA TENNANT

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