

#BehindtheSelfie with... Rob Stokes

 By [Leigh Andrews](#)

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This week, we go behind the selfie with Rob Stokes, chairman of the Red & Yellow Creative School of Business.



Stokes in his Red & Yellow happy place.

1. Where do you live, work and play?

Physically in Cape Town, sunny South Africa. Mentally, I work and play globally.

2. What's your claim to fame?

I can tickle all four of my children at the same time.

3. Describe your career so far.

A true entrepreneur, I started 17 businesses at school, so I learned more about business than school while at school. I started digital agency Quirk in 1999, which I ran before selling to WPP in 2014. I joined Red & Yellow thereafter.

4. Tell us a few of your favourite things.

Cricket; fishing; and having my children run towards me, arms outstretched shouting "Daddy" when I come home.

5. What do you love about your industry?

Now that I am in education, I finally understand the power of being purpose-driven. I genuinely believe that education is the one thing that can change the world and, as such, it is an honour to be able to build a second career in this space.



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Seeing the look on a graduating student's face, particularly one we have helped financially to be there, is by far the most fulfilling experience of my career.



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

Routine sets you free!

I wake between 4am and 6am (I never use an alarm clock, unless I'm catching a plane). Before the world gets up I try to accomplish three things: Get some knowledge by reading something, get some exercise (I have a morning routine) and get some focus (I choose my one thing I must do that day).

I then take kids to their schools before getting to my school at about 9:30am. I then have back-to-back half-hour meetings until 12:30pm, at which time I try to have lunch with an interesting person every day. Then, more quick meetings and I try and get home by 3pm to do some actual work.

Then I spend two hours producing something. This will be either a formal piece of work, like a presentation or a document,

or if there isn't one pressing, I try and solve a long-term problem with some creative thinking.

7. What are the tools of your trade?

My brain and the infinite internet.



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8. Who is getting it right in your industry?

We are future-focused and believe in the power of creative thinking in business; so I admire the Berlin School of Creative Leadership for the formal programmes they offer, and the likes of Hyper Island and Singularity University for their approach and what they teach.



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

Education distribution.



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There is so much great learning content available online, and most of it is free. The challenge is getting it to the right people and making them aware that the opportunity to learn exists.

Knowledge is now officially free, you should only pay if you want a reputable institution to ensure real excellence and to certify your knowledge.

10. What are you working on right now?

At Red & Yellow, we want to leave our dent in the world by teaching the great creators, inventors, leaders and entrepreneurs of the 21st century.



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

Three years ago I'd never even heard the word 'pedagogy', now I think it's hugely important.

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

When I'm pottering around, in either my vegetable garden or my music room, and almost always when I'm *not* trying to come up with ideas.

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

Thanks to some gruelling training at university, I have never lost a one beer down-down. Please don't challenge me, I'm now officially too old for this game...

14. Are you a technophobe or a technophile?

I ran a bulletin board from my home in 1988, I bought Bitcoin (not enough) more than three years ago and yet I am a proud Windows user. Go figure.

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

A lot of pictures of my kids. Like really a lot. I don't believe in being selective, I just take as many photos as I can each time and I look forward to sorting through them when I'm too old to remember taking them.

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

“ Only you control your life. Learn constantly and be proactive. The world comes to those who grab it by the horns. Be true to your word. ”

Simple as that. Click through to the [Red & Yellow press office](#) for all their latest news and [here](#) for more from Stokes. You can also follow both on Twitter: [Stokes](#) | [Red & Yellow](#). **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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