

Deshnie Govender launches new podcast



By [Juanita Pienaar](#)

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Earlier this month, award-winning digital marketing expert and influencer, Deshnie Govender launched her podcast *Influence Insider by Digi Hype*, which breaks down the walls between corporate and influence, helping influencers better navigate their relationships. From tips and advice to guardrails on how to protect their brand, Govender uses the platform to give influencers the tools to better understand this world of influence and digital.



Digital market expert and influencer, Deshnie Govender.

Govender, formally known as DJ Roxi burst on the scene in 2007 as the first Indian female DJ in Africa. Wanting to better understand the brands booking her, she pivoted to the “other side”, launching a career in digital marketing and strategy. It became her mission to champion and drive digital (social media, content and influencer) education amongst millennials as a digital disruptor as well as her peers in the music and entertainment industry (leveraging her past music experience).

During her time at global drinks giant Diageo as the digital manager, she drove relevancy in culture and digital excellence for brands such as Smirnoff, Tanqueray, Ciroc and Johnnie Walker. Her current role at ABInBev Draftline has required Govender to develop the influence marketing strategy and execution for Africa Zone as head of Channels of Influence, working on brands such as Stella Artois, Brutal Fruit, Castle Lite, Castle Lager, Budweiser and Shine Club to name a few.

Here, Govender discusses the launch of her podcast, her stance on diversity and inclusion in the industry and she talks us through some of the highlights in her career.

Tell us a little about yourself and what it is you do.

I like to think of myself as intrapreneurial by nature. By day I head up Channels of Influence at ABInBev Draftline where my key focus is to recruit and leverage influential people, platforms and partnerships to communicate our brand communications as well as drive compliance within influencer marketing. I am also in the music and creative space. I've started a digital community to drive digital edutainment across Africa called Digi Hype and the first offering from that is my podcast called *Influencer Insider*. As a stress outlet, I DJ and produce.

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■ ***Where did the inspiration come from to start the podcast?***

I find the medium of podcasts fascinating (the DJ in me loves audio) but with it being so saturated any project I chose had to be disruptive. I've always had a close relationship with influential voices in particular industries (music or corporate) and so I needed to find a way to share the insights we were picking up. It's really a focus to bridge culture and corporate. I've added the YouTube elements as that is also a medium really growing here in Africa.

■ ***Ultimately, what would you like to achieve with the podcast?***

If there is just one person that can take away a single insight, apply it and achieve success then I am happy. I do want this podcast to be a platform for the influential voices to reach the rest of the world via my network. Over the past few years, working in various corporate environments and working with global teams, it's become apparent to me that we needed our work to be shared more. We cannot let others script our African narrative.

■ ***With it being Heritage month, please share with us some of your experiences of being the first female Indian DJ in Africa and how that impacted the way people saw your music or you as an individual.***

What many don't know is that being in music was almost accidental for me as I never felt that I could do it full time or be accepted. Besides it being a boys club I never saw anyone who looked like me. When Zinhle and Cndo came along I had the courage to say "I will do this". From my first big gig, I secured a contract with Sun International Krakatoa Club to do a residency for Bhangra music.

I had an influx of young Indian aspiring musicians come to me to say, "Thank you for being brave and allowing us to show our parents that it is possible". It's a heavy responsibility as I had and to this day have a lot of eyes on me and so I am always trying to use my platforms for good, which has shaped my current endeavours via Digi Hype.

■ **Do you feel enough is being done for diversity and inclusion in marketing and media, in general?**

“ I don't think we will ever reach a point where we sit back and say, "Yes, we have." It's an ongoing conversation that needs to be had. My biggest advice is to appeal to people as individuals. In your environment, ask yourself what you can do to drive change or at the very least, ask the right questions. Here at work, I've joined the ABInBev Diversity and Inclusion Forum. As a member of the panel for Africa Zone I am committed to driving change through my vertical of Channels of Influence. In music, my upcoming project has a specific focus on both my Indian heritage as well as female producers, artists and directors. ”



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■ **Do you feel there are enough influencers of your ethnicity for a younger generation to aspire to?**

It's growing, but surely not enough. When I look at Sketchy Bongo, Prev Reddy, Carter Najar, Shashi Naidoo, Sureshni Rider, Vic Naidoo, Devi Sankaree Govender - these are influential voices across the spectrum of age but when it comes to the Gen-Z and younger side of millennials, I don't think it's an issue of not enough, but are they being given a seat at the table? The more we give them a platform, the more we have younger generations to aspire to.

■ **What do you love most about your career?**

That there is no script for it. If you told me three years ago that I would be part of a global organisation (150 countries) that has over 630 beer brands and my task is to define and disrupt influencers here in Africa, I probably would have laughed. This was not part of the plan but digital has many verticals, and influence is one that is growing and I am so grateful to be working with a fantastic team to truly drive purposeful work.

■ **Any career highlights you're particularly proud of?**

During my time at Diageo, we successfully launched both Keep Walking SA with Trevor Noah and White Walker Johnnie Walker for *Game of Thrones*. This won us a Twitter award as well as launched the first e-commerce for Diageo. I took on a board seat for Social Media Week, which is very dear to me. For my music, being awarded by *Cosmopolitan* magazine as Awesome Women of the Year and Standard Bank Rising Star.



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Techsys Digital 9 Nov 2018



■ **What are you most looking forward to with regards to the podcast and enjoying so far?**

(e) Meeting such diverse guests. From New York to Tanzania to Ethiopia and Durban, some of my guests are truly such interesting minds and it really excites me that we not only get to open up our conversation to Africa but leave the listener/views with solid tips to action and improve. 'Each One Teach One' is my motto.

“ “ We can buy reach, it's a factor of brand fit when deciding on influencer campaigns” Deshnie Govender sharing insight on how they conduct their influencer marketing campaigns [#SMWDurban19](#) [pic.twitter.com/ApjNwK9AH9](#)— Social Media Practitioner (@molopo_t) [June 13, 2019](#) ”

■ **What's at the top of your to-do list?**

Take a few leave days and go on a digital detox for three days. I've been so switched-on from December last year (the biggest time for us in the alcohol space) through lockdown to now that I need to disconnect to get some new inspo.

■ **What are you currently reading/watching/listening to for work?**

I'm in a very podcast mindset so I really urge people to check out *Business Wars* by Wondery. From Pizza Hut vs Dominos to Amazon vs Walmart to Nintendo vs Sony, these short snackable episodes are so binge-worthy. Also, the *Social Dilemma* on Netflix is a must watch.

■ **Tell us something about yourself not generally known?**

With all the platforms I have, it can be assumed that I am an extrovert but at times I am very introverted. I can go through a few days just totally plugged in, isolated and busy on a project as I am such a homebody, which is pretty hard for people to grasp. So you can tell that I thrived during lockdown!

You can listen to the podcast on [Spotify](#). The podcast is set to launch on Apple in the next few weeks. Also connect with Govender on [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#) and follow Digi Hype on [Instagram](#).

ABOUT JUANITA PIENAAR

Juanita is the editor of the marketing & media portal on the Bizcommunity website. She is also a contributing writer.

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