

# Five PR lessons we can learn from Suzelle

By [Adam Hunter](#), issued by [Hook, Line & Sinker](#)

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DIY sensation, Suzelle, has had quite the year; from the launch of her book, to becoming a TV star, to her international visits abroad. Our famous 'braai pie' master and her co-partner, Mariaan, have created a Do-it-Yourself web series that has creatively captured the heart of the nation.

For the past two years Suzelle's entertaining videos have varied from using a rubber band as a phone holder in the car, to learning how to unscrew a stripped screw, to even making cauliflower pizza bases with Tim Noakes. Famous for her "'O fok!" phrase, Suzelle is South Africa's latest internet phenomenon who has cleverly mastered the multimedia communications industry. Here are five PR lessons we can learn from our favourite DIY Diva:



## It's about telling a (branded) story

It only took Suzelle 10 videos before she went viral. What began as a self-funded project is now sponsored by Checkers, Virgin Active, Lasher Tools and many more. And it doesn't stop there, the requests for branded content are flooding into Suzelle's inbox. Over and above requests for branded content, some of Suzelle's episodes have surpassed the 500,000 view mark.

Suzelle reminds us just how important content is and how it's hotter than ever. With statistics such as seventy percent of respondents claiming that content marketing makes them feel closer to the sponsoring company – it's evident we need to push our content story telling skills further as consumers respond to emotion and not the sales pitch.

## Integration is key

YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, a published book (included with QR codes linked to social media), and publicity across all media platforms – Suzelle's communications mix is extensive. So our campaigns should also adopt the same approach between various disciplines; including advertising, PR, digital and social media. Suzelle and her sidekick, Mariaan, and their talented producer, Ari, deliver fun, entertaining and engaging content. Team collaboration in their first early days meant pulling in family and friends, and all types of skills and strengths, writing everything together with most of the scenes being naturally improvised.



In the same light, PR isn't an island – it is at the heart of marketing collaborations. Today's best campaigns combine the efforts of many groups; from PR, advertising, social, and content marketing to activations and events. The lines have

blurred and there is no longer reason to label a great idea department- or industry-specific. Like Suzelle and her team, PR has no choice but to collaborate and work with departments across organisations and outside audiences.

## Evolve or expire

Over the past 24 months our favourite vlogger (video blogger) has grown and revolutionised her DIY brand to new heights; from a top-selling DIY book, to clever celebrity partnerships, to even discussions of a live DIY TV show and a feature-length film. Just like Suzelle, PR is evolving - from a shift in media relations being the core commodity to now understanding the fundamentals of content marketing, strategic media partnerships, social media trends etc, all while we see and experience the decline of traditional readership figures.

Over and above the PR evolution of storytelling and branded content – it's also about understanding and identifying how content can be repackaged and reused across multiple media types and be useful for extended periods of time, instead of the one-shot press release. Just like Suzelle has found a variety of platforms and media types to carry her message and content, PR too has to continuously seek new avenues for message distribution as our audiences become more disparate and dispersed.

## It's about meaning

Did you know that Suzelle won the Channel24 award in 2014 for South Africa's favourite online celebrity? In 2015 she then took first place in the Superbalist 100 campaign, which names the top 100 young South Africans "helping to shape the scene". Craftily 'crehative', Suzelle has met with some of SA's top celebrities while demonstrating a more efficient and more elegant way of getting everyday chores done around the house. Just as Suzelle strategically reaches her audiences with meaning, PR provides a voice to reach a variety of the public.



While many entrepreneurs take it as a given that PR has value and meaning, it's not always fully appreciated. PR pros improve measurement and prove ROI. With the rise of content marketing and influencer marketing (both of which are traditionally in PR's wheelhouse) it's becoming even more vital to a company's overall strategy.

## Know thy audience

Packed with colloquialisms and Afrikaans loan words like "shame" and "there's it", Suzelle captures something of the Afrikaans characteristic of 'n boer maak 'n plan. If there's a problem, there's a fix. Suzelle knows and understands her local market and that anyone can do DIY, effectively speaking to the heart of every South African. Knowing who our key audiences are, and understanding what is important to them, is essential if you want to attract their attention and engage with them in a meaningful way.

Did you know:

- Suzelle is the creation of artist, illustrator and actress 33-year-old Julia Anastasopoulos
  - Suzelle works at a guesthouse called Somerset Guest, which gives her plenty of time to look at magazines and get all her DIY ideas.
  - She is 33 years old, single, but would love to get married.
  - Suzelle only shoots her DIY on Saturdays because Hennie, her neighbour, who is the cameraman, has to go to school.
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- Her favourite DIY tip: Don't put your umbrella too close to the braai.

## ABOUT ADAM HUNTER

Managing Director at SA's Best Small PR Agency 2023 / Finalist for Business Partners, SA Entrepreneur of the Year / PRCA Africa board member / United Nations Development Program (UNDP) SA Taskforce member.  
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