

#BehindtheSelfie with... Derik Nieman

 By Leigh Andrews

15 May 2019

This week, we go behind the selfie with Derik Nieman, director of data and analytics at performance marketing agency, Algorithm.



Nieman's caption: "Am I doing this right?"

1. Where do you live, work and play?

I live and work in Johannesburg, and tend to play anywhere that a mountain top can be found.

2. What's your claim to fame?

I wouldn't say I have any claim to fame. I suppose my most fame-worthy achievement was a live performance on *KTV Power Edition*, with my old band.

3. Describe your career so far.

I've spent my whole career in digital agencies, so naturally, it's been quite fast paced.



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I started as an intern at Quirk, where I started specialising in the data and UX space. Over time this evolved into more of a data and analytics role and I eventually left to head up the data offering at Joe Public Connect. I've recently joined Algorithm as the director of data and analytics.

4. Tell us a few of your favourite things.

Making music, hiking, an ice-cold beer on a warm day.

5. What do you love about your industry?

The data and analytics space is ever-evolving, with new developments on a regular basis.



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This non-static nature allows me to keep learning new tools, tricks and techniques.

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

An average workday varies quite a bit but might include compiling reports, scripting API calls, building templates, spending time at clients or learning something new.

7. What are the tools of your trade?

Healthy scepticism, an inquisitive nature, Excel, Python, R, PowerBI, Tableau, SQL, Google Analytics, Google Big Query.

8. Who is getting it right in your industry?

Nobody has quite cracked this space yet. There are a number of great teams and individuals trying to figure it out, though.

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A post shared by [Algorithm Agency \(@algorithmagencyza\)](#) on Feb 26, 2019 at 9:23pm PST

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

“ There's a tendency to overcomplicate things. We have so much data available to us that marketers often include as much as they possibly can. Instead of providing actionable insight, this just results in more noise and indecision. ”

We need to take a step back on narrow our focus to what's most important – simplicity is key.

10. What are you working on right now?

Algorithm has just launched a new business division called Quant, with the purpose of adding a data analysis and business intelligence layer to the work we do.



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I've been heading up the development of this data offering, building out a propriety set of tools to help drive and grow marketing efforts.

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

These are some of the buzzwords currently being overused:

- Growth hacking
- Big data
- Automation
- AI



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

I'm usually most productive in the early hours of the morning. From 2am to 3am seems to be the magic hour for good ideas.

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

I can juggle – badly.

14. Are you a technophobe or a technophile?

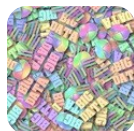
Most definitely a technophile.

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

Reddit, Spotify, Netflix, Google Analytics, Excel, a whole lot of podcasts and books, and many, many photos of my few-months-old twin girls.

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

There's a high demand for data scientists and analysts, but a lack of skills in the industry.



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Self-learning is crucial to developing those skills. There are a ton of resources online, and I've found that some of the most successful people in the industry are those that make use of what's available online to grow their skill set.

Simple as that. Follow Nieman on [LinkedIn](#); and visit the [Algorithm press office](#), as well as their [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#) feeds for the latest updates.

**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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