

the promotion people.ca

Lesley Diana heads the publicity firm The Promotion People. The renowned firm located in Vancouver provides unique boutique-style services, primarily in North America. Lesley Diana is a friendly, hardworking individual whose roots go back to Saskatchewan, where she spent part of her life as a teacher. Her outgoing personality and likeability took her to television, where she herself hosted a number of shows. Eventually, she ended up in the publicity business where she represents the celebrities of the present and future. Emmanuelle Vaugier, she fondly remembers, was her first client, and is still with her today- now that she represents over 150 individuals and numerous entertainment projects. She is also the facilitator for the Vancouver International Film Festival and the Canadian Country Music Awards.

Interview by Hank Leis

You have your Bachelor of Education degree, so presumably your plans were to become a teacher. What made you decide to leave this very safe job and environment into what appears to be a much more competitive and potentially precarious one?

Growing up I wanted to be a teacher and got my first teaching job at 19 while finishing my Bachelor of Education. I loved teaching physical education, which lead to an audition for a fitness and talk show on CTV in Saskatoon; that's when the entrepreneur in me emerged. I took a gamble and it paid off. The television show ran for eleven years, during that time I opened a fitness studio with spa facilities, wrote a fitness book and opened four fashion boutiques. I took advantage of the opportunities that the television show gave me, which would have never been possible if I had stayed teaching.

You have been or currently are a reporter, writer, a television producer/host, the President of a fitness studio and in Media Relations. How were you able to transit from one to the other and how did your career path evolve?

So many of the opportunities just happened! Others happened because I had the courage to ask. Being in the right place at the right time and/or knowing the right person also opened doors for me. Once the door was opened I was committed to doing the best job that I could. It wasn't about the money. I really enjoyed the new experiences. I did have set backs along the way but I tried to use those times to reflect and learn. I found it was important not to be hard on myself. I got into publicity by accident. My fashion boutiques, Lesley's, received significant press from which I

created into press kits and distributed. Almost immediately international fashion designers and shopping centers contacted me and became my first clients. A close friend then recommended me to a movie director in need of a publicist. His movie *Stag* launched my new career as a publicist in the entertainment industry.

It takes a great deal of courage to be able to move from one career to another. Could you tell us about your personal resolve to move on and decide on your next big challenge?

It does take courage, passion, desire and belief in yourself. I must say that I have been blessed with many good ideas and took the opportunity to make them happen. I started with very little money but thankfully I had the inspiration for the entrepreneurial ventures. I have had such excitement with my various career paths. Having joy for what I do and being able to help people is a driving force.

You provide publicity for feature films, television series, and documentaries and as well you are a publicist for actors, talent agencies and talk show hosts. When taking on a client, what do you look for and what are you expected to do? In other words, describe your business.

I have been fortunate that most clients have come to me by word of mouth. When actors approach me I familiarize myself with their body of work and upcoming productions. I don't take a client if the timing isn't right in their career, as I don't want to waste their money. Film and television clients hire me when they are in production and again when the movie or television series is being released. As publicists we are the connection between the press and



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production to inform and encourage the public to go the movie or watch the tv series that we are promoting. Actors need publicity to advance their careers. We are an important part of the process. Social media and online publications have opened so many new outlets so we are continually researching new venues to spread the word. It is a win-win situation. The press needs stories and our clients need their stories to be told.

The entertainment business allows you to access often very accomplished and well known people. What are you able to do for them? What are the challenges in this regard?

My job is to get their story out to the public and in turn put people in seats and viewers watching their television series. For our actor clients our goal is to create interest from producers, directors, and the public in their performances. Each client is unique which makes my job even more interesting. I meet such fascinating people that I would have never been able to meet if I weren't a publicist. It is my pleasure to tell their story and brag about them, which is much easier coming from someone else. Canadian actors also need to compile press clippings to work in the USA which is another reason clients need The Promotion People.