

The Wonderful World Of Make Believe

What PR Can Do For You

by David Maderich

I've always wondered why certain artists get quoted in all the right magazines. Is it their artistic endeavors that garner them press or is it something else. Well, I have found the answers for you dear reader. Once again in the valley of powder and paint, it isn't always what you know, but who you know. On a cold Manhattan day, I met Katherine Rothman, CEO and president of KMR Communications Inc. We sat down for a little chat on the importance of public relations in the quest to become a beauty star.

Does KMR Communications specialize in the beauty industry? Yes, we do beauty, health and fitness public relations.

Why should an artist want a publicist? Makeup artists, hair stylists, colorists, spa owners, anyone who wishes to remain competitive in the

beauty industry today needs to hire a publicist. Now more than ever, consumers rely on what the media dictates as quality. There are many makeup artists whose entire reputations were made as a result of media exposure. There are many talented people in the beauty industry today. But what sets the superstars apart from those without a "name" is the use of savvy promotion in the form of media exposure in magazines like Vogue, Allure, and InStyle.

What should an artist expect a publicist to do for them? A publicist's main function is to secure media coverage be it on television, in newspapers, maga-

zines, or web-sites that offer beauty information. Publicists should write innovative original press releases for their clients with continuity throughout the duration of a contract. It is also extremely helpful for a publicist to arrange "meet and greets" with key beauty editors. This affords an artist a chance to demonstrate their techniques in person as well as elaborate on any products he/she may be selling. This facilitates a much more personal interaction between an artist and a press person. In this manner, they are not just another name on a press release. We have found these meetings to be invaluable to the long term success of our clients. Publicists should also be in contact weekly with their client updating them on progress either by fax, phone, or e-mail, whatever the client wishes. A client should never be left in the dark regarding progress on their account.

Do you think a publicist can turn an artist into a star?

Absolutely. Those who hire publicists must be mindful that a public relations campaign is a cumulative process. Long

term success is not achieved by sporadic media coverage. It must be the right media coverage and it must be achieved with consistency being mindful of an artist's target market.

What about established makeup or hair artists? Even stars such as Bobby Brown, Francios Nars and Trish McEvoy still need media coverage. There is always going to be a "new kid on the block" and no one can afford to be complacent in a country so overrun with beauty experts.

At what point in an artists career should he or she seek a publicist? A



Katherine Rothman - President/KMR Communications

publicist should be hired when an artist feels that all components are in place. This means that the artist has a good quality

portfolio, satisfied clients who might be willing to talk with media people or

allow their before and after photos to be printed, a competent assistant who can field inquiries that come as a result of media exposure, and finally they should feel as if they have truly boned their talent. Also, public relations must be something they are able to comfortably afford without having to sacrifice other necessities such as supplies or office space.

How does an artist find a publicist?

First, look for someone whose name appears frequently in the media and then find out who has been responsible for their public relations campaign. Call a beauty editor at a large women's publication and ask them what public relations firms handle beauty accounts and/or makeup artists. The Internet is also an excellent resource as is the PRSA which stands for the Public Relations Society of America.

What does a publicist charge?

There is that old saying, "you get what you pay for." An artist could find someone for as little as \$500 a month. But be wary if the fees are so small. That person does not likely have the media connections or expertise to do the job. Typically firms in New York City charge more than the rest of the country. There is justification for this. By virtue of this location, they can make valuable inroads and connections with key media people that would not be possible elsewhere. A quality PR firm would typically charge an individual makeup artist anywhere from \$2,500 to \$3,500 per month. It is important that artists choose firms who make their niche in beauty public relations as opposed to fashion or entertainment.

That's a lot of money. What can an artist do on their own if they can't afford a Publicist? They should compile

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a list of all of the women's publications such as Vogue, Allure, Elle, Glamour, etc., and find out the names and fax numbers of the beauty editors. They can also do the same with their local publications. They should call and introduce themselves as a resource for stories pertaining to makeup artistry. Faxing over a bio and accompanying letter is also helpful. If they carry a product line, they can also speak with editors and ask if they wish to try complimentary samples. They can invite editors for "open house" makeovers. This last tip can also be extremely helpful if an artist has celebrity clients who will allow their name to be revealed, an artist should not be afraid to name drop with permission from the celebrity. Magazines love to be able to say, "Jane Doe whose list of celebrity clients includes..." Finally, do not make the mistake of being too aggressive, or demanding of an editor's time. They receive dozens of calls per day and they will call you back if they have interest in what you are pitching. Prove yourself useful and you will be rewarded, prove to be a pest, and media coverage will not be yours.

What do you think when artists complain about not getting enough for their money? The client and publicist need to be clear with each other from the outset about what is expected, and what can realistically be delivered within a specific time frame. An artist should not just say to a publicist, "I want media coverage." They should be clear about the kinds of publications they want, the nature of the coverage, and the frequency that they can expect. An honest publicist should be truthful about what they can and cannot achieve.

It is really important that an artist realizes that publicists are responsible for securing media placements. Beyond that, a publicist cannot guarantee new business as a result. If a client is unhappy, a publicist needs to understand why. If the publicist is securing consistent media coverage in line with the types of publications a client had indicated, then the publicist is doing their job. It is helpful if a client gives a publicist a wish list of publications as well as outlines long and short term goals. Any skilled publicist will ask these questions.

So there you have it, the truth behind all those names in the magazines.

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on setbacks. In this business in order to go forward and keep pushing the creative envelope of the art even further I take advantage of any opportunity to come up with entirely new designs that have never been thought of, and use anything from complex materials to just plain old household items. Improvisation is the key to thinking on your feet and out of your kit I improvise all the time. Once on the re-shoots of Night Of the Living Dead for DVD, I used chipped Barbecue Ham stuffed in a fake head for a zombie eating scene. You would be amazed at how simple things can create just the right complex effect for film."

SUZANNE: With all the computer technology available today, do you see advancements as a threat or an enhancement to traditional makeup FX?

VINCENT: I see it as combining both techniques to the point that you won't be able to tell what is makeup and what is a CGI (computer generated image). In my mind, CGI works best when it interacts well with a real object. There also has to be harmony in design and look, and in the resulting movement. The CGI designer and FX designer should have a visual mind as well as a design mind that can bring these points together smoothly in a film. The result should be imperceptible to the audience. I only see it as a problem if the director hires a CGI company that misses the mark. For instance, in the film "Dogma" I can clearly see where the CGI wings are and where my real animatronic wings come into play. It just doesn't look right if the blend between the two doesn't happen in the final edit.

SUZANNE: Do you think it takes innate talent to make it in the business or can it be developed?

VINCENT: I think innate talent will always be better to build skill if you're lucky enough to have it. But, if you learn to apply a really good prosthetic, it can get you good steady work. It is more of a challenge to break into the business now than when I did. There are fewer people willing to mentor or apprentice new talent, and that needs to change. I try to be more outlandish and creative with each job I get. The more I push my self and my crew, and as each project has more and more of my stuff and ideas in the final cut, the more I'm taken seriously for my ideas from directors and producers."

SUZANNE: What is your advice for artists just starting out?

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