

# Anna Jobsz

Public relations director

➤ 28-year-old Anna Jobsz set up her own PR company, Anna Jobsz PR & Events ([www.ajpr.co.nz](http://www.ajpr.co.nz)), in 2005 after eight years in the industry. She now has two permanent staff and two part-time staff and recently scored the Air New Zealand Fashion Week 2008 contract.

## Why did you decide to start your own PR business?

"The PR agency that I worked for as an account manager closed down quite abruptly. The previous directors suggested I call up the clients who were left un-serviced and consult to them directly to run their accounts."

## What experience had you had going into the venture?

"I already had eight-and-a-half years work experience under my belt by the time I started my own business in 2005. I've had a variety of jobs but all fall within media, advertising, marketing and more recently, PR. In 2001 and early 2002 I spent 18 months living in London, where I worked as a marketing manager for a small eyewear company. While I was there I began to read books about PR and investigate avenues into a career in public relations. On my return to New Zealand in winter 2002, I began my employment with Slice Media PR who trained me from a relatively junior position into a PR Account Manager."

## What hurdles did you face in the beginning?

"I faced a few hurdles when I first started AJPR & Events. I think the first thing I had to learn to manage was how to balance my workload. Figuring out how much work to take on when you're an independent contractor can be a bit of an art and it's something

that you can only learn with experience. Even now I have to carefully moderate to make sure that I'm generating enough work for future months without over-committing to clients. Another new skill for me was learning how to run my own accounts. Tax and GST were relatively new to me. Luckily I found a great accountant to set me on the straight and narrow who guided me day-to-day until I understood what I was doing. But I think if there was one thing I found hard when starting my business it was probably looking so young! I was 24 when I started AJPR & Events but probably looked about 21 years old, so trying to convince new clients that I was mature, trustworthy and an experienced professional proved hard at times."

## How did you get your contacts and initial clients?

"My initial two clients were carried over from my previous employer. Shortly after that I started working with a great agency called Consortium who put me onto a key client Methven Bathroomware, which led to work with Sony. Following that I did work rebranding for the Nandos Chicken franchise, and worked with AUT University producing their Rookie Show at Air New Zealand Fashion Week. More recently I've worked as the publicity manager for Auckland International Boat Show, Groove In The Park, Air New Zealand Fashion Week and Rhythm & Vines. I also own my own brand of dance party with Adam Bennett (Highlife Entertainment) called Fashion Beauty Music."

## What are the biggest issues about starting a small-medium business in New Zealand?

"Nothing. I think New Zealand



Anna wears: top by Alannah Hill; jeans by Lee; shoes by Sarah Riley; hat from The Warehouse.

is a wonderful place to start a small business. Aotearoa is full of talented and creative individuals with open minds. I found that I had a lot of support from friends, peers and (people in the industry) who all shared the 'good on you for trying' pat-on-the-back mentality. One of the key's to my success is networking with people, brands, agencies and potential clients, so I've found Auckland much easier to launch in than a bigger city like Sydney."

### **What kind of person does it take to start a business?**

"I think you have to be pretty dedicated to your cause and resilient to criticism. If people doubt you it's usually because they have their own set of inwards issues that make them focus on others. So the old 'hold your head up high' philosophy is good to adhere to if you're going to take the plunge into your own business. You also need to be very self-motivated."

### **How did you stay inspired during the tough times?**

"I had moments at the start where difficult clients reduced me to tears. I'm sensitive, so starting out was tough, but the

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last three-and-a-half years has taught me a lot. I'm now much better at separating work pressure from my emotions and just getting on with the job at hand. I don't take criticism personally anymore and I've learned to deal with work personalities and pressure much like any other work skill I've accomplished."

### **What have you learnt from the experience?**

"I've learned that nothing comes without hard work. My work might seem glamorous from the outside, and at times it is, but the reality is that to build up a business like mine you are at the beck and call of your clients. If they all want something done now there's no one to complain to and if you have to sit up until 2am to do it then you do it. Success only comes from dedication."

### **What tips would you give to young Kiwis wanting to start their own business?**

"Try and do something niche, new or slightly different. If you try and be all things to all people then it's hard to create an identity. Focus on your passions and the passions of your audience and create something really unique! And don't be afraid to get out there and do what you want to do."

## ANNA'S SECRETSTO... style success

### **How would you describe your style?**

"Pretty girly – I'm a big fan of dresses. My favourite fashion item is boots and I am all about accessorising for winter with hats and scarves. And I'm not into wearing black when I go out."

### **What are your top 5 staple pieces for work?**

"A big handbag to fit all my work stuff, boots with a medium to low heel, summer and winter scarves, a pair of well-fitting comfy jeans – and I'm quite big on loose-fitting cardis."

### **Any tips when shopping for workwear?**

"Stick with good basics and spend more on them if you need to so they look right. Then you can buy your fun stuff like colours, patterns and bling, as extras."

### **How do you decide what you're going to wear every day?**

"I'm a comfort dresser first and foremost and also because I work from home I'm relatively casual – but I still like to have fun with accessories and still look professional."

### **What outfit/garment never fails to make you feel fabulous at work?**

"Probably a nice, comfortable dress and maybe some boots, or a long coat."

### **What's next on your shopping list?**

"I'm hoping to do a shopping spree to check out the winter ranges in Auckland shops. I'd like some warm winter tops and long-sleeve shirts, that's probably what I'm missing from my wardrobe at the moment."

### **What are your 5 fave stores?**

"Cybèle, Yvonne Bennett, Alannah Hill, Juliette Hogan and Storm."

## 10 WAYS TO... Do your own PR

BY SUE CURRIE, COMMUNICATIONS CONSULTANCY DIRECTOR

**Work "it" out.** Whether it's sport, writing, animals, or instruments, find your passion. What books or articles do you read? What excites you?

**Create a personal brand portfolio** to determine your style. Cut out words and images that mean something to you.

**Self-promote.** We're not talking about bragging or being pushy, but about not being afraid to let others know what your skills are.

**Describe yourself.** Choose positive words that play up your strengths and channel these in everything you do.

**What you give out, you get back.** Everything you do sends out messages to others about who you really are inside.

**Listen to your heart.** Always go with your instincts. Trust yourself to make the right decision and act on it rather than letting indecision hold you back.

**Have something to say.**

You look confident if you ask questions and take an interest in others.

**Mean what you say.** Do what you say you're going to do, it builds trust, and shows you're honest.

**Hang with like-minded people** – it's an opportunity to share your expertise, form alliances, and learn.

**Have charm and grace.** Good manners never go out of style. You can be kind and successful.