

ADVERTISING, MEDIA & MARKETING

Hard yards on the runway to the Fashion Week

One of the country's most high profile events is a lot about image management

Hazel Phillips

Today sees the conclusion of Air New Zealand Fashion Week, the biggest local fashion event of the year. Sponsors, media, socialites and medialites all push for sought-after tickets for the front row, with one person responsible for overseeing the event's public relations. That person is Anna Jobsz, Fashion Week's PR manager with her own PR company, AJPR & Events.

Ms Jobsz scored the account after working on another event project with Fashion Week's sponsorship and partnership manager Myken Stewart. The account has been handled in the past by Impact PR (2007-2008) and Pead PR.

"Rather than a pitch, it was more a case of figuring out if it was a good fit from both directions," Ms Jobsz said. "We got together and talked through what would be involved, the overall PR objectives and functions, and essentially wrote up a job description."

It was a process aided by Cathy Campbell of Cathy Campbell Communications, who consults to Fashion Week as a strategic communications director.

Previously an external consultation role, Fashion Week redesigned it to be in-house this year.

Leading up to the mega-event, Ms Jobsz dealt mostly with media accreditation – which can take weeks to get sorted – and media relations with



ANNA JOBSZ: Some work days stretched eighteen hours

fashion, news and lifestyle publications.

"In essence it's about managing the profile of Air New Zealand Fashion Week. I've found that with such a huge amount of media interest that most of the media comes to me, so it becomes a strategic management of the media process."

Getting media coverage for the event means pitching angles from fun and fashion right through to business and economics. And for Ms Jobsz' own business, managing such a huge event equals significantly broadening her media contacts.

"It's a mammoth task and I really had no idea coming into this just how much labour and attention to detail was involved in the process," Ms Jobsz said. "It's been challenging to say the least, but luckily the backbone of staff at Air New Zealand Fashion Week operate as a well-oiled machine so they have given me 100% support which makes my life very easy."

Fashion Week's PR manager also has the task of supporting sponsors with the brand and product leveraging. Key sponsors this year were Air New Zealand, Westpac, Westin Hotel, Lion Nathan, Moet Hennessy, Auckland City Council, Nivea, Red Bull – to name a few.

Ms Jobsz has also overseen special events in the lead-up to Fashion Week, including the Designer Launch event in July, where announcements are made regarding those designers selected for Fashion Week, and the opening function at the beginning of the event. And a series of press releases to media over a six-month period leading up to the event, supporting the editor of *The Guide* magazine and writing a series of fashion industry e-newsletters comes with the territory.

As for the actual week itself? Ms Jobsz spent that running around in "unusually practical shoes" making sure that everything ran smoothly.

"Mainly it's about making sure that the media are facilitated and hosted on site, which is a big task. This includes my AJPR team supporting the team from Cathy Campbell Communications in running the onsite media centre, which caters for journalists who are writing blogs and communicating urgent information and images to their media channels."

The entire PR and events team helps facilitate any onsite news and live filming, celebrity hosting, backstage interviews and photography. All of which translates into some long hours.

"That could mean starting work at 5.30am to help with the early morning live filming and finishing at 11pm after the late news wrap up and the final shows for the day close."