

Who's the BOSS?

POWER WOMEN in PUBLIC RELATIONS

As a female-dominated industry (and a thriving one at that!), PR spearheads the ever-present battle to close the gender gap in executive leadership positions. Take a look at the faces behind Canada's powerhouse communication agencies. Despite their shared commitment to their clients and teams, *Natasha, Donna-Lee, Maria, Jane, and Francine* are all as different as they are inspiring.



to the concept of work-life integration, and a light bulb went off in my head. I love my job; I don't feel the need to separate "work me" and "life me." I'm the same person, and I bring the same set of values to my work and my personal life. This framework has helped me successfully integrate my work and life, and is exactly why I am more at peace and accepting of my life today.

As a women-led industry, PR combats common myths of women not being supportive of each other. What has been your experience working with other intelligent and driven women like yourself? I work with some of the most hard-working, supportive, and talented individuals in the industry. Each day I am challenged and inspired by the 30+ women (and 2 men!) who work at our offices.

“ I AM SO FORTUNATE THAT, AS AN AGENCY, WE ARE ABLE TO SUPPORT SO MANY DIFFERENT CAUSES AND MAKE A MEANINGFUL IMPACT. ”

In addition to being the president of your own company, a mother and a philanthropist, you contribute to Huffington Post and Entertainment Tonight Canada. Are there any other roles that you hope to someday be able to capture? I am open to all new opportunities and roles! I am currently working on a book, as well as the production of a new television show centered around branding.

What achievements (personal or career-related) are you particularly proud of? I am very proud of the launch of our talent division, which represents artists—including The Cowiour Co-Founder and Fashion Designer, Erin Kleinberg and Fashion Photographer



NATASHA KOIFMAN

Despite the innumerable strides made by savvy businesswomen who've climbed their way to the highest echelons of corporate life, there remains a lingering belief that for women to succeed in higher-level leadership positions, they need give up all that makes them "women." Natasha Koifman, founder and president of NKPR, mother, writer, philanthropist, and social media guru, is evidence that this needn't be true. I can only speak for myself when I say: working 365-days a year has never sounded better! *By Vickie Silva*

Many people might not know that NKPR started as a one-person operation out of your basement. How did you go from a full-time communication agency that represents over 30 Canadian and international brands? Tell us about your career trajectory. When I first graduated, I moved to New York where I worked as a journalist for several years. This is where I had my first experience working with publicists. I saw a huge opportunity to work in PR, translating what I learnt from being on the receiving end of pitches into developing more strategic outreach that could result in meaningful coverage and awareness for brands. After working at several PR jobs both in New York and Canada, I launched NKPR. When I started (from my basement), I didn't know how big the agency would be, but I knew I wanted to start an agency where I could work with brands and projects that I was passionate about. This remains true to who we are now, 10 years later.

NKPR is committed to giving back to the non-profit sector and standing behind social causes. You are the Canadian Chair on the Board for Artists for Peace and Justice. Can you tell us about your experience with the organization and with other similar organizations? As an agency, NKPR supports so many causes that are important to us, with Artists for Peace being one of them. My dear friend and Academy Award-winner Paul Haggis founded the organization, which supports education in L.A. I am in every single day of the work that Artists for Peace and Justice is able to do. Each time I visit the first free high school built by AFPJ in Port-au-Prince, I am reminded of the power of education and the difference it can make in the lives of those who wouldn't normally have access to it. I am so fortunate that, as an agency, we are

able to support so many different causes and make a meaningful impact.

Has education played an important role in your life and career? I believe that with education, comes opportunity and that education can both come from academics, but also through personal life experiences. I think that ongoing learning is fundamental to growth, both in one's personal and professional life. I remember once telling a colleague that I'd ever stop learning. It would be because I'm dead. I don't believe in mistakes—only key learning experiences. Overcoming life's obstacles provides an education that you can carry with you forever.

Which of your personality traits do you think is most tied to your success? I think the obvious answer would be that I am hardworking (I work 7 days a week, 365 days a year), but I think a large part of it is my openness. I am always open to new ideas, opportunities, experiences, and people.

You have worked in the PR industry for over 20 years now. Can you tell us about the changes you've noticed in the industry at large? THE FIRST QUESTION we ALWAYS ask our clients is "What does success look like?" and, from there, we develop a plan to achieve their measures of success. The evolution of the industry over the past 20 years has driven us to be more creative and more innovative than ever before, to develop programs and campaigns that will push the needle and make a difference in our clients' businesses. I remember when I started, media relations was enough to make a huge impact. Now we need to develop 360-degree integrated strategies using tactics including media relations, strategic partnerships, influence relations, social media, and direct dialing to move brands forward.



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