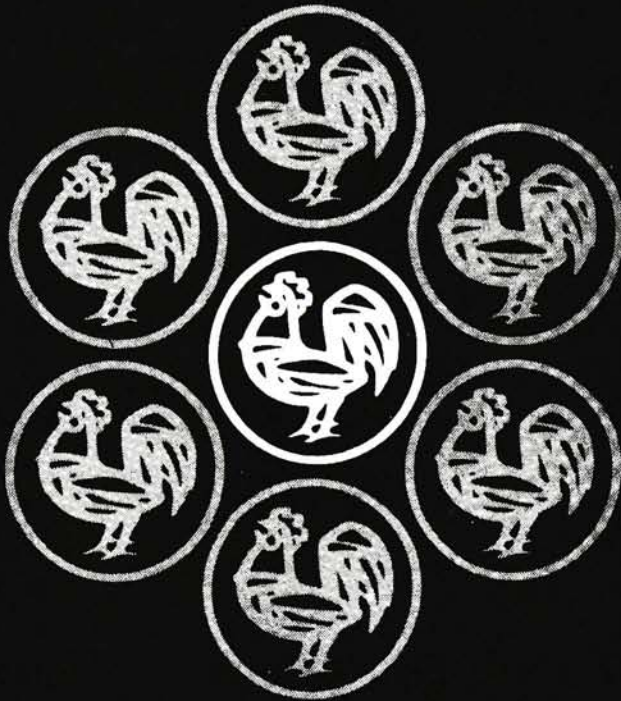


# Positively Promo!

Only the soundest of bodies and sanest of minds dare brave the waters of film publicity. From the chaotic turbulence of movie production, the film publicist must surface with a coherent image for the public, while serving many masters simultaneously. And when it comes to the crunch, the only lifeline is an imperishable sense of humour.



Head'em up! Move'em out! Publicist Prudence Emery on the bullhorn, orchestrating a press interview with an unmoved Bruce Dern (bottom left) on location in Texas for **Middle Age Crazy**



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## An Introduction

The capital cost allowance for investment in Canadian films has changed the way the industry operates from top to bottom. It has brought a slew of new people into the business — lawyers, accountants, publicists — whose chief concern is not so much the making of films as the selling of them.

The publicist is key. He or she has the delicate job of juggling the various elements of a production and presenting the information to the media which, hopefully, will follow-up with interviews, articles and photos to bring the film to the public's attention. Meanwhile, the producer and stars must be kept happy while the film is being shot.

Whether the publicist's job is limited to unit publicity (working during the actual period of principal photography), or involves a longer contract (seeing the film through production to distribution and release), the elements which the publicist gathers become the film itself in the public eye — until the film's eventual release allows the public to judge for itself.

The Canadian Film Development Corporation recognizes the importance of public relations, and has been instrumental in consolidating the role of the publicists. It encourages all producers of films, in which it participates, to hire a unit publicist. Moreover, through its own public relations consultant, the CFDC has created a corporate, public image for itself quite unlike that of any other public agency.

Last year, the official image of the industry, as conceived by the CFDC, was that it had never been in such good shape; the films were commercially viable, and a new breed of producers was taking hold, capable of competing with those giants in Hollywood.

The image of a highly successful industry making commercial films which turn a profit in international sales, is an attractive one — and one which must be maintained if the industry is to continue to function, as it has over the last few years, with full government backing. Even more enticing is the idea that such success will soon allow the industry to operate without the incentive of the capital cost allowance.

Next month, Canadians will descend on the Cannes Film Festival, with more films than ever before, and bigger budgets with which to sell them. Again, the publicists will be creating the images which will promote the Canadian industry abroad. The media will tell the story.

What do Canada's most active film publicists think about the future of our film industry? And how do they do what they do? **Cinema Canada** thanks those who freely gave of their time to respond to these and other questions. They come from varied backgrounds and tackle their jobs with a fascinating diversity of attitude. We are happy to introduce our readers to those who shape the image of the industry.



Prudence Emery (left) on location at Harrison Lake, B.C. with Robin Gammell, Angie Dickson and Gordon Pinsent during the shoot of *Jack London's Klondike Fever*

## Prudence Emery

*Prudence Emery's background includes: Media and Marketing (Metro Toronto Zoo), Manager Public Relations Marketing (Global Television Network), Press and Public Relations Officer (Savoy Hotel Ltd., London, England) and Visitors Services and Public Relations (Expo '67). She was a stringer for the Toronto Globe and Mail's "FYI" column during the Cannes Film Festival, 1978. During the past five years, she has been unit publicist for over fifteen feature films: most recently for **Death Hunt**, **Silence of the North**, **Middle Age Crazy** and **Klondike Fever**.*

Having survived as a unit publicist in the feature film industry since 1974, I am pleased to report that publicity is 'in.' Producers have finally clued in to the value of publicity, realizing that it helps their image in terms of raising money, not only for their current film but for their next. Unit publicists' salaries are becoming commensurate with those of the other crew members. Furthermore, producers are also providing liberal budgets, which allow publicists to fly in journalists to film locations.

### Way Back When...

In "the old days," not so long ago — when producers were content with a little local coverage — I was working on one film when a producer telephoned me in Victoria to work on a second being shot in Toronto. Daringly, I asked him if he would pay my return airfare. "No," he replied. So I went anyway. A credit was a credit.

Two years, and six films later, I sat down with a producer and a director who were anxious to know what publicity was all about. Their attitude was so dismissive that it influenced my attitude towards them — negative. But once the articles began appearing, the director was soon saying with a broad smile, "Say, can you get me fifteen copies of that interview for my agent in New York?" The producer used the articles as leverage for his next film.

### Why? And What's It Worth?

Doing publicity during the shoot provides the only opportunity for a journalist to interview cast and crew in conjunction with a particular film. Egos come into play. Investors love to see their film in print. So do producers; and stars — even if they give you a bad time and begrudgingly give an interview. (Not all stars are temperamental or difficult, but — human nature being what it is — one tends to remember the 'baddies' over the 'goodies'.) Nothing is more insulting to a publicist than to hear the demoralizing words, "What film? I've never heard of it!" First class contacts and press lists, both local and international, take some years to build up, but for the publicist they are invaluable tools of the trade.

Many producers are now hiring a P.R. firm in Toronto, Montreal (witness the number of P.R. firms specializing in entertainment which have sprung up in the last two years), or Los Angeles, to handle ongoing publicity which is allied to marketing. These firms also provide backup support for the unit publicist. In fact, publicity is a branch of the marketing arm of the business. If a producer prefers to negotiate a distribution deal after the film is in the can, then publicity on an international basis, including the world-wide trades, is definitely a help.

### Keeping It Up Front

How effective is publicity, in terms of the public's retaining what it has read perhaps a year before, in bringing people to the box office a year later? No one knows for sure, but if you are to believe Marshall McLuhan, the information is retained subliminally. Even so, if a publicist conducts an efficient campaign, she/he should arrange that articles appear on an ongoing basis — after the completion of filming — to keep the film in the public mind: i.e. articles in major magazines and newspapers appearing near the date of the film's release. Colin Dangaard, an ideal journalist in my opinion, is syndicated in fifty countries, including eight major papers in Canada. Dangaard, a total professional, conducts his interviews in a thoroughly pleasant manner, wraps them in an hour and has the production supply him with photos: your film is guaranteed world-wide publicity in several languages during the shoot. He also holds a story which he syndicates just prior to the film's release.

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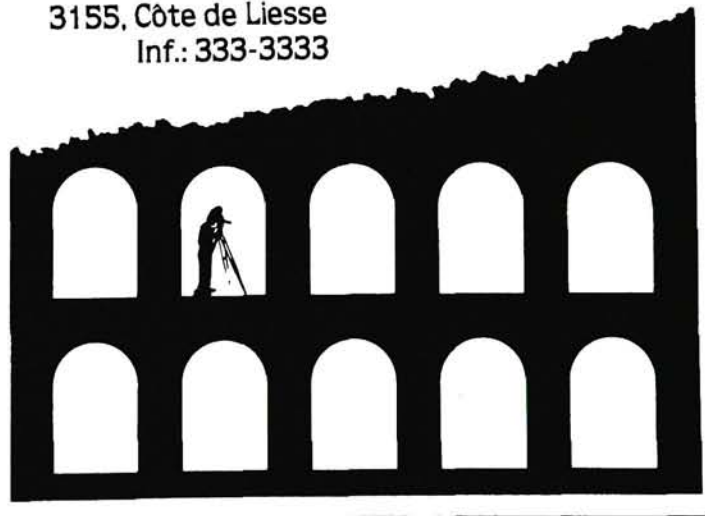
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## No Mystique About It

There's no mystery to publicity. Basically one is a packager of information, a photo editor (and photo identifier: on my last film, *Silence of the North*, I had to identify more than 8,000 b & w contact sheet frames — and that's excluding colour!), who works in liaison with the media, setting up interviews and supplying background information — production notes, biographies, stories — so that the journalist's job is made easier and she/he can get down to the nitty-gritty quotes and angles necessary to make an article zing. The unit publicist and the media form a mutual support system. Entertainment editors need to fill their pages and the publicist is there to help.

## Detours

If interviews are not forthcoming, there are, of course, other ways of publicizing a film. I telephone items into a syndicated columnist, such as Marilyn Beck (400 newspapers), who runs it as a direct interview with the star. Or I send 'news' photos to a major wire service in New York, that syndicates them world-wide to 1,500 outlets at no cost. Producers, note that publicity — as opposed to advertising — is free! If one were to pay, per line of publicity, it would amount to thousands of dollars.

## Survival Kit

A unit publicist must have:

- an enormous sense of humour. (I was told by one executive producer that if I had to stop laughing I would have to commit suicide!)
- a talent for getting along; not only with stars, but also with producers (some of whom *think* they are stars) and crew members (especially 1st A.D.s, who are the ones who will kick your journalist off the set if they feel the shoot is being disturbed).
- an ability to put aside personal sensitivities (not to be confused with an insensitivity towards others' feelings). You've jumped the first hurdle when you 'don't take it personally' and rush off in a flood of tears when the director screams, or the star throws a tantrum and glowers at you *en passant*.
- infinite patience and flexibility: patience waiting for the star to calm down and talk to a journalist, flexibility in case he/she doesn't calm down and refuses to talk to anyone. (Qualification No. 1 comes in handy here.)
- a good sense of organization, efficiency and follow-up will further the publicist's hard-won, professional credibility, built up over the past few years of the Canadian film bonanza.
- perfect blood pressure. Unit publicity is not for the faint-hearted.

## Last But Not Least

A nice thought, but... if you are a novice, and you feel you are bottom rung of the ladder in terms of the cast and crew getting the film done, you are! The publicist is not essential to the actual making of the film. Basically, you're on your own. If you're lucky you will have a supportive producer. Don't feel badly if you are ignored. The director is working out his next move, the producer is wondering if he has enough funds, and the star is wondering if her crow's feet show. Anyway, you'll soon be equally preoccupied trying to figure out how to set up a party for two-hundred people on two hours notice.

Try to hold your booze, retain your sense of humour and don't have affairs with crew members.

## P.S.

Get it in writing that you, too, will receive a professional credit along with the rest of them! Most likely, you will have earned it!



*Jill De Wolfe James' experience includes exhibition, distribution, personnel placement, ad agency work, and four years at Astral Films Distributor and Columbia Pictures where she handled advertising, publicity and promotion. In 1978 she opened her own company. Her publicity credits include, **Rabbit Test, Onion Field, A Man, A Woman and A Bank, and Atlantic City, USA.***

# Jill De Wolfe James

## Then And Now

In the mid-seventies, when I was with Astral Films and we received a film from the United States for release in Canada, the print was accompanied by a theatrical trailer, a poster, the ad campaign, radio and television spots, and a press kit complete with captioned stills, cast and credit lists, bio's of the stars, a synopsis of the story line, feature articles, and colour slides of key scenes in the film.

When Astral received a Canadian film for release, we received two cans of film, a few contact sheets and some press clippings. It was totally up to the distributor to create the publicity and marketing strategy for the film to go to market.

While the unit publicist was a unionized specialist in the United States, in Canada the post was a yet-to-be-realized dream.

## Oh Canada!

Today, our Government offers a tax shelter to investors in the motion picture industry in Canada, to encourage filmmaking in the country so that performers and craft people will gain the experience necessary to develop a commercially competitive motion picture industry in the world market.

## Dutch Definition

If I meet you and tell you how great you are, how much you mean to me, and how much I love you, that is *sales promotion*.

If instead, I impress upon you how wonderful I am, that is *Advertising*.

But, if you seek me out because you have heard from others what a splendid job I do, then that is *Public Relations*.

Public Relations is not concerned with the direct creation of demand, but rather, with the building of a climate of opinion in which advertising can promote sales more easily — with the overall understanding, reputation and acceptance of the film.

*Publicity* is a valuable tool of public relations, but the two must not be confused. *Publicity* is the dissemination of information for a motive.

## The Role

The 'Motive' in the days of the pioneer publicist in the Canadian film industry was to 'get print.' The motive today changes shape as it encompasses both the short (production) and long-term (release) purpose.

Although I can define the roles of Sales Promotion, Advertising, Public Relations, and Publicity, and understand that they are separate roles, I personally find it difficult to be concerned with the publicity role alone during production. It is my impression

that all four skills are necessarily employed at the production level.

As filmmakers come to understand the need to produce films for the international market, they also begin to understand that the publicist's role is to create resource material while the film is in production. A close liaison between producer and publicist is necessary to establish the feeling and direction for the reputation to be built, and identify the nature of 'flack' surrounding the film. The tone and information contained in initial press releases, determine the all-important end result.

The climate is sustained by subsequent releases, while the marketing strategy and attitude are reflected in the synopsis, the slant of bio's, and feature stories created by the publicist.

## A Picture Is Worth A Thousand Words — And Maybe A Million Dollars!

The unit publicist walks hand in hand with the unit stills photographer. While the publicist has established the 'sell' of the film with the producers, it is the publicist's job to pass that 'slant' on to the stills photographer, through special coverage of key scenes, and posed photography. 'Shooting what is there' is merely a record, in stills, of what is available in motion — and usually not as exciting. It is accepted that there are different skills required for stage acting and for film acting! Different skills are also required for 'still acting.' A professional two minutes at the end of key scenes will provide dramatic stills for selected magazines and major dailies. These stills may also be utilized for key art as well as for the European 'theatre front sell.'



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## Performer Push

One of the prerequisites in Canadian film financing is to cast a 'bankable star'; and this usually means a performer other than a Canadian. While this is acknowledged and accepted, even by ACTRA, I believe that publicists are in a position to promote Canadian co-stars in the international media. This means scheduling syndicated photographers and members of the press on the set, at a time when the key Canadian performers are present, and in scenes with the (usually) American performers. It means creating an atmosphere of curiosity around the Canadian performers, and encouraging print and photo coverage in the international press.

## "And In Conclusion"

The film publicist in this growing and changing industry is duty-bound to realize that *now is our point of power*, and while we will always be in a state of 'becoming,' it behoves us all to take advantage of the 'now,' to learn and practice the skills that will rocket us to the top of the international film market.



*Jack Cunningham's experience includes fifteen years working in film, television and theatre in New York, London, Vancouver, Montreal and Toronto. He has devised ad campaigns for film distribution and exhibition, subscription campaigns for theatres, fund-raising campaigns for cultural groups, and has directed publicity at the St. Lawrence Centre. His diverse credits include scriptwriting for the T.V. series King Of Kensington, and Paul Bernard: Psychiatrist. Jack Cunningham and Associates are specialists in mass communication.*

# Jack Cunningham

Researching the legendary genius of Orson Welles for the press kit of *Never Trust An Honest Thief* recently, I made special note of Welles' reply to a question about where he most liked to work. "Look, I'm a migratory worker. I go where the jobs are, like a cherry picker. All I need is a friendly smile and an offer and I'll be on the next plane."

## The Inside Story

Because of the international nature of the entertainment industry there is a lot of cross-fertilization between film, television and the stage.

About ten years ago, when I first came to Toronto (following stints in Montreal, Vancouver and New York as a free-lance writer and publicist), I worked with an independent distributor as a director of publicity and advertising during the early stages of the Canadian film industry. An opportunity later developed for me to produce and direct my own script. Making *Peep* proved an excellent training ground for someone concerned to experience, firsthand, the complexity and pressures of feature film production.

When I landed in the hot-seat of publicity director for Toronto

Arts Productions at the St. Lawrence Centre, my previous experience of producing a film under pressure had taught me plenty about budget restraints, personality clashes and frustrations amidst deadlines and getting results.

## Smoothing Rough Waters

Familiarity with production helps one understand the moods and sensibilities of individuals under the stress of bringing a picture to world-wide attention. It takes a strong and nimble-minded person to smoothly handle the tensions surrounding a movie set. Geraldine Page once complimented me on the deft manner I used in handling an emotional outburst by her husband Rip Torn. I thanked her for the compliment and told her that I admired the consistency of his style. Imagination and a sense of humour are both essential ingredients to a production's public relations.

## Jack-of-all-Trades/Master of P.R.

Film producers manufacture fantasies for mass appeal; their product is export-oriented. The complexity of the distribution system, and the far-reaching international market for exhibition, demands wide scale promotion if a film is to compete in the public arena. This requires many, sophisticated, communications skills.

During production, the foundation for release promotion is being set. Words and images are being gathered in preparation for future campaigns; scene stills, background stories and exploitable elements are being suggested and selectively assembled. And all the media have to be taken into consideration.

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Diversity of experience is one of the greatest assets in the field of promotion. Knowledge and familiarity with the workings of the entertainment business in general, give one a strong sense of style and the wherewithal for effective communication. For the publicist, experience is the real mother of invention.



Douglas Leopold has studied music, marketing, psychology and law at McGill, Harvard and the Sorbonne. He has been assistant manager of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra, preview critic for the *Gazette*, and has written and broadcast extensively on the arts. He has been P.R. director for Place Bonaventure, Bell Canada (Montreal), Régines, 1234, Oz, and a number of Canadian films, most recently *Babel* and *A nous deux*. In addition to his clients in the entertainment industry, he handles the P.R. and publicity for various restaurants, boutiques, Canadian and European designers and cosmetic companies, travel bureaus, and gives a P.R. seminar, and a course entitled "Culture Vulture", at Concordia University.

## Douglas Leopold

It is very bizarre to be a publicist; because everybody always wants to know exactly what it is that you *do*. Most people see a great cloud, a great movement, a lot of air, glitter, glamour and gold dust... and know only that a large bill comes, and that somehow, by a miracle, the entire city knows what film or what disco, or what restaurant, or whatever... has had an event.

It is always a similar and amusing exercise when a publicist decides that this is the film that he or she will take on at that moment. You don't really ask who the producer, director and the stars are going to be: you find out when you read the script. What you *really* wish is that there will be enough *time*; and this is the thing that the producers and directors never, never seem to remember — that there must be enough time for the press to thoroughly do their job.

I've been on many films where they say, well, you have one day to do it all; and of course, the actress, whoever it is, decides that *that's* just not the day she's in the mood, and then she leaves, promising to come back... when it's too late. What you really need to do is start organizing well enough in advance so that there is enough time for the media to catch on to what is happening. The biggest problem is that people do not mount a press campaign for a film...

It is not only that you do it in Montreal, Toronto and Calgary, but also in New York, L.A., Paris and London. People forget that it takes *time* to get all the information, to get the right photos, send out press releases to the right people, contact them all... The other problem is calling L.A., New York, Paris, and getting them all to come here. And it is not impossible! In fact, it is very possible for any Canadian film to have all of this and a lot more. It's just that many publicists don't bother.

I also feel that the press person, whether he be in Toronto or Montreal, should maintain constant contact with the other city.

I'm frequently amazed that the other city is not at all interested in covering the story of the film that's being done. This is, after all, a national industry. I resent this deeply, because I think that it is of tremendous interest to both cities when a film is being made. I don't understand why we separate ourselves — though we do it exceedingly well.

I don't think you have to be a genius to be a publicist. I think you have to have a lot of patience; and you have to have at least four phones in your house! Preferably touch-tones — that helps a great deal. You must also tell the client that long-distance phone calls are a normal part of the process.

The most frequent complaint that I've had about people working in the field is that they either call press conferences that are totally stale and dull — and therefore nothing happens — or they have only one of the actors. Two or three of the most important actors don't bother to come. Or it's not at the right time and no one's in the mood, and it just doesn't come off well... It's a question of mood. It's a question of excitement and creativity and originality... That's what the film needs and what needs to be done for the publicity.

What the media really wants is something personal, an interesting interview; or, they want to cover a really mad event surrounding the film. If there is no mad event, then you must make the mad event!

When a film is going really badly, it's up to the publicist to bring in the carnival. But I think that producers and directors are sometimes afraid of this — although it raises everybody's morale. They should not be afraid of too much publicity — honest publicity, on what, in truth, is really going on.

I don't lie. And that's really terribly essential. I think that you can call the cops in the middle of a Hungarian revolution (which is what I did in *In Praise of Older Women*) and get the front page. You can also make sure that the press conference with Catherine Deneuve (which I did at the Ritz for *A nous deux*), is a terrific brooha, with Catherine Deneuve throwing her usual snit, and in this case, getting the press all excited... It got on three front pages, in colour!

You can do all kinds of things! I think that the sky is the limit. And I don't believe that anything is dishonest, I think that it is merely a question of making a little nervous excitement.

For me it's working with the celebrities, the young actors of tomorrow, the extras, that makes the excitement. It is *there* where the press is really hot, really interested and turned-on.

I want to make the film as exciting an event as everything else that I do. And that enthusiasm has to permeate the film, *from me*, and *back* to me. That is what's important.

I've been thrown off sets, I've been told by actresses to go to hell, I've been stood up by actors, I've been crushed by A.D.s — but I've always been paid! Because I have a rule of thumb: ask for the money in advance. This is essential in this industry, and it would be my first bit of advice to any budding young publicist.

I don't believe there's too much hype in the industry, I think there's not enough! There's not enough glamour. Some of the industry events I've been to are positive duds. You have to have a really wild event for things to work and for people to get turned-on. (Like the film festival here in Montreal — some of the parties are really fantastic!) People are nobody's fools.

The press have about four conferences a day, and receive about eighty press releases in the average two-day period: so unless an invitation is well-designed, unless it's a really hot, amusing event, unless the people who will be there are really fantastic, the food great, the follow-up well-done... Unless you're going to spend a little money and have a lot of lunacy, forget it! It's just not worth it.

If you're a producer or a director and you're starting out, you should bring in four or five publicists — don't make up your mind

right away. Talk to them, see what they're like, see what they've produced... That's really key. It's like anything else ; shop around. You might find a lot of surprises. There are a lot of excellent people in the industry...

A lot of very good younger talent is coming back to Canada from studying abroad. But unfortunately, there is nobody around to handle them, nobody to introduce them; and this is really a pity. There should be some sort of an agency set up by the government, where there's a pool of fresh, young talent — new faces... Where can we get ahold of them, and how can we use them? If we want to advance in the industry at all, that's what we're going to have to do. That's the way Hollywood got started, and there's no reason why we can't do the same here.

As far as negative aspects of the industry, I'm not a negative person. I think a publicist has to be a very optimistic person, and I don't allow for negative *anything* in what I'm doing. I plow ahead and there's no such thing as 'no.' I think that this is essential to anybody who is going to survive in this industry.



## Stephen Chesley

*Stephen Chesley Associates is based in Toronto and Montreal. Founded just over two years ago, its executives include Stephen Chesley and Clifton Rothman. It serves clients in all the entertainment industries : for film and television, the Company operates from idea through launch.*

It couldn't have happened three years ago. A link was missing : public relations. There was no market for the service, yet films were made and who knew it? Not the public, not the industry, not even the investors.

One central problem was money. Every cent, including the meagre amount marked for publicity, ended up in the too-tight production funds. Still photographers roamed sets un-noticed and unsupervised, delivering photos virtually unusable by any medium. Skilled public relations persons were unknown, although youth and enthusiasm seemed to compensate somewhat (experienced P.R. people are still few and far between). But the results were small at home and negligible abroad.

The key, of course, was to develop the recognition of the need for public relations amongst producers. The battle has not been fully won — even last year we were brought into a project late and found the P.R. budget to be \$500 — but skirmishes are being

fought successfully more times than not. And now, often, P.R. is delivering the goods.

The 'goods' in this case, are much more than making producers into stars or issuing press releases. What film and television producers are realising is that a full-scale, minutely planned campaign must be developed from script-time onward. The goal is to sell the acceptance, recognition and anticipation of the product to many diverse groups: industry and public, investor, broker, distributor, ticket-buyer. Nor can we rely on a happy-go-lucky attitude that Canada is enough. Media in our major centres are ultimately of lesser significance than U.S. monsters: *Family Weekly* will run a story on **Never Trust an Honest Thief** and Orson Welles with 30 million readership. The Copley syndicate out of Kentucky runs a story on Michael Murphy in 1000 newspapers and on 200 radio stations. Canadian numbers and influence pale in comparison.

The goals are straightforward. Film and television production is a business; a sense of stability and integrity must be conveyed. The corporate and the individual operate in a skeptical marketplace, and the ongoing production entity must be seen to have staying power despite the glamour and intensity of show business.

Momentum begins at once. Using a skilful interplay of the product, the markets and P.R. methods, a recognizable image can be created for any product. **Tanya's Island** is obviously displayed through the charms of D.D. Winters, who has now captivated the country. Susan Hogan, recently starred in **Phobia**, is a marvellously talented actress; to give her that extra push, we added glamour through a special photo session. On a corporate level, when planning the Nielsen-Ferns International sales kit system, we tried to incorporate a tag line to eventually be added by anyone to their name : "the largest independent producer of television programming" is always there, even if Dick Nielsen's name is spelled incorrectly.

Another key element is the retention of a U.S. public relations firm for certain projects. This offers advantages that can only result in more thorough coverage : additional contacts, instant leg-work in U.S. media centres, ideas and so on. It can be done by telephone, but it is that personal contact across the street, and the ability to react instantly to opportunities for coverage, that makes the difference.

Another premise of our company has more than proven true : a proper job can rarely be done by one person. Film and television public relations requires many bodies on any given project, and a unit publicist or single corporate P.R. person cannot saturate a marketplace as completely as a unit, or a single added to by people in a larger office. Different skills and more efficiency lead to more coverage in every case where such a result is desired.

Another development is the realisation that some press and certain placements are not enough; other billboards must be created, outside the entertainment sections, and in as many diverse locations and exposure points as possible. Through a literary agent we arrange novelisations; cigar and bookstores display key art on shelves. Through tie-in contests and product exposure during filming, corporations provide exposure gratis during launches; for example, for **Two Solitudes** — not an easy sell because of political fear — a contest was arranged for two trips across Canada by VIA Rail and CN Hotels with the winners name in lights on the CN Tower; as the entry deposit point, Simpson's placed a window display on Metcalfe St., took space in stores, announced the contest in ads — all at no cost to the picture.

Nor should certain media be neglected. Despite industry tendency to assume that, because we read all the columnists, the public receives most of its impressions from them, radio has



proven to be a much stronger medium. A theatre playwriting contest, avoided by a major Toronto newspaper, was deluged with entries after a radio interview. All media must be canvassed, but none should be over-estimated.

The growing acceptance of public relations has led to a new phenomenon: co-operation. We launched two TV series via pilot episodes: *Hot Pops* and *Cities*, both for Nielsen-Ferns International. They were being sold to the public for ratings, to the sponsors for sales, and to networks for inclusion in Fall schedules. The campaign was instituted by us, but much leg-work and funds for point-of-purchase material was supplied by the interested parties: the record companies in the case of *Hot Pops*, and General Motors' ad agency for *Cities*, as well as the CBC to a certain extent. The producers were totally represented and had control, yet the financial burden was spread. Both series were picked up for network runs.

Ultimately, the public pays and then decides. We can try to choose what is news and when it is hot news, but that unknown element enters the picture, literally: *that* is precisely what creates the challenge and the fun. Without it we might as well be back in the Dark Ages of the early seventies.



*David Novek is president of Berger Novek Entertainment Public Relations, specializing in corporate publicity. In addition to representing numerous film companies, Berger Novek is associated with the Canadian Film Development Corporation and the World Film Festival of Montreal.*

## David Novek

Although Canadians have been making movies for many years, the feature film industry as we now know it is relatively young.

The rise of the Canadian film industry to its present status as one of the world's major producers began a short two years ago. A dynamic new leadership at the Canadian Film Development Corporation and a group of determined producers, working with an enlightened tax policy, began reshaping the industry so that Canadian movies could compete for screen time around the world. Our industry took off — from some \$7 million of

production in 1977 to over \$160 million in 1979. 1980 promises to be as good or even better.

We have created a substantial industry, with a solid industrial base. From the lowliest production assistant to carpenters, set decorators, make-up persons, hairdressers, costume designers, electricians, sound technicians, grips, gaffers, through screenwriters and directors, Canadians are busier than ever making movies. The support industries are also benefiting: hotels, rental companies, restaurants and caterers.

The public relations and promotion business has grown with the industry. Until two years ago, film publicity in Canada was basically a hit-and-miss affair, the domain of the free-lancer rather than the public relations agency. Film publicity budgets of \$1,000 or \$2,000 were common. Today, many producers spend between \$50,000 and \$100,000 to promote each film, in addition to keeping a corporate public relations campaign going year round.

When I established the film division at Berger & Associates in 1978, it was the first time that a national public relations agency working in English and French became actively involved in the film industry. From these beginnings, Berger Novek Entertainment Public Relations was formed in 1980 with permanent staffs in Montreal and Toronto, and affiliates in Ottawa, Edmonton, Vancouver, Los Angeles, New York, London and Paris. We are a full service, bilingual agency providing corporate public relations, unit publicity, marketing, promotion and advertising services in Canada and abroad.

Canadian films are made for the world market and public relations and publicity work should be conceived for the long haul and for international markets. Our clients understand this, and we are usually engaged on a continuing basis rather than for short-term projects.



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It is essential that Canadian production companies think of their corporate identities. They need publicity and promotion for individual films but they need public relations for their companies as well.

Why this insistence on corporate public relations? Why not just plug the films as they are made? For isn't that, finally, what it's all about?

The answer is simple. The structure of the film industry is such that the production companies must go to the financial community for their financing. They must have credibility in the film centers around the world. The independent producers must have the strength at home and abroad which a high profile gives them.

The Berger Novek structure and personnel reflect these realities. Linda Shapiro, the manager of our Toronto office, Lucienne Appel, head of French services, and I, have had years of experience in the international film field.

Our company has worked out agreements with public relations companies in the United States and Europe, allowing us to supplement our international efforts on behalf of our clients.

Corporate public relations is the key service we provide — a policy that distinguishes us from others in the field. While unit publicity is based on the need to make a film project, its stars and story, as widely known as possible, corporate public relations is designed to give the production company a high profile; an image of credibility in the film and financial communities.

This goal is accomplished in various ways. We work with the financial publications and business editors of major dailies to communicate information about our clients, what they've done and are doing and their status in the industry. We arrange for newspaper, magazine, radio and television interviews. We make a conscientious effort to reach the brokerage houses and investors through meetings and receptions and by bringing them to the sets of the films.

We also work with the trade press. It is important that the trade press in Canada and abroad reflect what production companies are doing because it enhances their credibility with the people in the industry, as well as giving further information to the financial community which now reads trade publications avidly.

Another key aspect of corporate work is to keep the entertainment editors of the daily papers and major magazines abreast of producers and their projects.

Corporate public relations must be done on a continuing basis. More and more Canadian producers are becoming receptive to this. Year round public relations budgets are becoming a reality with many of the major producers. They are prepared to invest money on a yearly basis rather than wait until a picture is shot.

We are even going a step further now by counselling clients to make bigger budgets available for picture publicity and to keep us involved up to the launch. It is not enough to hire a publicist for the two or three months of the shoot. Our input is invaluable to sales agents and distributors. We are involved in key art design, sales marketing strategy, continuing press publicity, advertising and in helping distributors launch the film.

Our experience is also invaluable at such major international event as Cannes. This year, in addition to directing the Cinema Canada operation, we'll have our own staff and the resources of our affiliates available at Cannes to assist our clients in promoting their companies and pictures.

The Canadian film industry has come a long way. With all elements pulling together, we will be assured of an industry that will be the pride of all Canadians and a source of continuing high employment for all our creative talent and technicians. □