



John Van Putten photo

Straight to the **point**

Amelia Kennedy-Maki spreads the word with her PR company, Crosspoint Communications

Joe Millican
FRIDAY! Magazine

When it comes to public relations, an Abbotsford woman is stressing that bigger is not necessarily better.

Focusing her vision on the Fraser Valley, Amelia Kennedy-Maki is eager to assist less renowned musicians, performers and businesses make a name for themselves.

Much of the Lower Mainland's PR focus is in Vancouver, according to Kennedy-Maki, who says there is a perceived "glamour" to the industry that sees many businesses establish themselves in larger cities.

That has created openings in the outlying areas, she points out, which ultimately saw her establish Crosspoint Communications in 2006.

Kennedy-Maki has her roots in Abbotsford. Born and raised in B.C.'s fifth-largest city, she was even named Miss Abbotsford Youth Ambassador during her graduation year from Yale secondary in 1998.

She is a busy woman, sharing her time between Crosspoint and a role at Kwantlen University College that sees her help teach a PR diploma course. She is herself a graduate of that program.

With a strong background in PR, Kennedy-Maki describes her decision to go it alone as a "learning experience."

"A lot of small businesses aren't familiar with what PR is and how it can benefit them," she says, pointing out hers is the only public relations company to be a member of the Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce.

"My focus is the Fraser Valley because I see the need for it. The Vancouver market is saturated. I am focusing on the smaller talents . . . I want to help these organizations and businesses get the word out."

Communication was a part of Kennedy-Maki's life from an earlier age.

During a pageant in the Abbey Arts Centre for the Miss Abbotsford Youth Ambassador competition, Kennedy-Maki says she had to display her public speaking skills and other talents.

Describing the subject as a "running joke" with her friends, Kennedy-Maki says the Miss Abbotsford competition was dropped in 1998 and laughs when it is suggested that she is still the holder of the title.

"But all this is why I am focused on the Abbotsford area – because I was raised here," she says.

"My friends and my family are here, and this is where I have settled with my husband."

Having established Crosspoint, Kennedy-Maki says she is now keen to meet with clients, explain to them the benefits of PR and then help develop a plan.

So far, she has worked with up-and-coming bands Sterr and Viv Savage, Vancouver-based dancer Chantal Hunt, singer-songwriter Kayle, Whistler Blackcomb and Fraser Valley Stage.

No matter how successful she becomes, however, Kennedy-Maki says she is keen to keep her operation relatively small and personal.

And pointing out she enjoys her teaching role at Kwantlen, she believes there are clear benefits to passing on "real-life experiences" to students.

"I really enjoy the teaching aspect and sharing my knowledge, and I have the business understanding of what PR is all about," she says.

"I kind of always envisioned myself being two-fold. I don't think I will ever be the big-time PR company because I have this knowledge that I want to pass on to others."

Ultimately, Kennedy-Maki says she has one further guiding motivation.

"I just want to get across how passionate I am about the industry," she added.