

MERGING IS THE NEW BLACK

Two fashion centric PR companies join forces...

There's been a silver lining to the perils of success for Auckland based fashion PR agent Miranda Likeman. As of February 1st a business merger has enabled her to join forces with her former mentors and industry experts Paul and Jill Blomfield as well as accept an in-house position with design house Urban Creative.



Starting on February 1, 2011, the two respected PR agencies created a 'super agency', with both offices maintaining separate client lists. Blomfield has taken on many of the Coco clients requiring showroom representation and assistance with exporting, while Likeman, in her showroom at Urban Creative in Morningside, will retain Doosh, Sable & Minx, Brady and Rembrandt, alongside other clients on her books that don't require showroom space. Likeman will continue involvement over the strategizing of range releases and various projects for the Blomfield based clients due to her depth of knowledge of them, but this will slowly become only a part time endeavour for her.

Likeman started Coco PR with her former business partner in January 2007, after years as a magazine editor and fashion journalist. "My business partner and I met while she was the Fashion Editor and I was Deputy Editor of a magazine," says Likeman. "As editors, we found dealing with many PR companies difficult, time consuming and at times, frustrating.

"No one had everything in one place (clothing, accessories, jewellery, shoes etc) and no one was able to write up material for us to use at short notice," she says. "We could do all of that and more - and so we opened Coco." The enterprise was a success from the start, and within a year the company shifted to a city fringe warehouse, took on multiple staff and grew to a stable of 20 clients. "You know you're doing something you love when you don't have a problem turning up to work each day," says Likeman.

She bought out her business partner in 2009, wanting to fine tune the services it offered clients and take on more staff with a wide range of complimentary vocations, including styling, art direction and makeup. As a result of these changes and additions Likeman had a thriving business, but no personal life. "It became all too easy for me to get completely caught up in its momentum of a job I adored, and dedicating myself to its constant growth quickly became detrimental to my quality of life," she says. "Eventually I realized something had to give or I wouldn't be any use to anyone, so, as I had done many times before, I turned to Paul and Jill."

The three came up with a solution that allowed both companies to offer the other specialist insider knowledge of consultancy, media coverage, celebrity placement and showroom facilities for its clients, including securing new marketing opportunities and brand partnerships for all designers involved.

The Blomfield team are very excited to bring a strong fashion focus to their existing PR business which currently represents fashion, beauty, skincare and consumer products, plus a number of major events such as Urbis Designday, Top Gear Live and The Home Show. The company already holds the collections for fashion brand Loobie's Story in its inner-city showroom at 105 Nelson Street and Paul Blomfield continues in his role as the Chairman of Fashion Industry New Zealand.

"There are bound to be some initial confusion," says Likeman. "But with Paul, Jill, Coco staff and me working together, it should quickly work out for everyone," she says. "Think of us as a hive mind, working in two different locations but always communicating."

ENDS

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