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Marc Kruskol: MJK Public Relations Representative, Van Nuys, CA

By Judith Earley

"When someone makes a mistake, you fix it. We're not doing brain surgery."

Public relations representative Marc Kruskol applies this refreshing philosophy not only to clients with tarnished public images but also to coworkers and [employees](#) who slip up on assigned tasks. Kruskol is the founder and president of MJK Public Relations, a full-service PR firm based in Van Nuys, CA. The location seems apropos since Kruskol has two decades of experience in the entertainment industry.

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According to Kruskol, everyone in the Hollywood media machine has a job to do; the celebrity and the photographer are no different. He feels that if people would cooperate with each other, it would make things a lot easier for everyone involved. "Celebrities who refuse to have their pictures taken and are constantly hiding...if they would stop and pose for a photo with the paparazzi every now and then, no one would even want their picture because they are so cooperative," said Kruskol.

"A lot of times, celebrities create the problems, and yet a little bit of mystery is good. You don't want to overexpose yourself. You want to make it so that you are a hot commodity when you go to certain places. But on the other hand, if you keep running, it almost fuels the fire for people to keep following you and stalk you," Kruskol explained. "Sometimes with tragic results," he added, in reference to the chase that led to the death of Princess Diana.



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Marc Kruskol with director Christopher Cain (Young Guns, September Dawn) at HATCHfest 2006

Kruskol began his career in the public relations department of Columbia TriStar Pictures and learned his trade working on publicity campaigns for more than 75 films. After signing on with an independent public relations firm as a senior publicist, he successfully managed the publicity campaigns of numerous feature films and high-profile clients. Then he decided to make the move to start up his own publicity firm.

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As Kruskol explained it, there are vast differences between advertising, marketing, and public relations. "With advertising, you buy a specific product, and there is a tangible asset that you're buying and you know what you are going to get. With publicity, it's intangible and you don't know," said Kruskol. With any luck, a good PR rep will generate the equivalent of millions of dollars in advertising, so you do get "good bang for your buck." On the other hand, Kruskol said that he considers marketing to be a broader, more all-encompassing term that includes advertising.

A firm believer in getting the truth out there no matter what the situation is, Kruskol said that in a crisis-management situation, step one is to find out from the client whether what is being said about him or her is true.



Marc Kruskol, lifelong martial arts enthusiast, demonstrates what happens to editors who "pass" on his story ideas!

"I may be a little naïve, but I truly believe that the public will do much better with the truth. We live in a world with CNN and Fox News...the truth is going to come out. And if someone keeps with 'deny, deny, deny,' I think you are just going to look foolish later on and lose all credibility," said Kruskol.

"If something happens where you are caught in a compromising situation, then you admit you did it. Otherwise, the speculation goes on." Case in point: Hugh Grant's *Tonight Show* confession of his rendezvous with prostitute Divine Brown following Jay Leno's classic line, "What were you thinking?"

Kruskol readily admits that it is difficult to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. While he does not like to employ clichés, he said he believes that if your admission is heartfelt, the public will recognize it.

"If someone came to me and said, 'I'm in trouble; what do I do?' I would probably find one or two of the most credible reporters that I could trust who would tell the truth of the story and not blow it into a tabloid-type thing and get it out there. Maybe grant an exclusive interview. Because that story will get out there [anyway] and be covered by every news source. And that's what you do, and you just make it right."

After all, it's not brain surgery.

On The Net

MJK Public Relations
www.mjkr.com/index.html

Columbia Pictures
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Columbia_Pictures

HATCHfest
www.hatchfest.org

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