

Headlines



“Client satisfaction is very important and the key to success is that you continue to give your clients the same kind of service you gave at the inception of the company”, says Anusha David Jayaratne, Managing Director of Headlines.

Headlines was established in August 1994, said Anusha, while adding, that with the advent of the government policy of “open economy” and with the Sri Lankan economy adopting a more liberal and global view, Public Relations increasingly assumed a more crucial role in the life of corporate entities. “At that time we felt there was a need for a PR Agency and so with my husband’s support and encouragement, Headlines was born”. Anusha added that the success of Headlines was also attributed to “good timing” on her part.

The name ‘Headlines’, means making your work known says Anusha, and the aim of Headlines is to provide a full and coordinated approach to public relations, providing its customers with a valuable and effective tool in achieving its corporate goals, thereby offering the local market the full range of PR activities as provided by any international establishment.

Headlines, which is affiliated to the Australian Institute of Management and Marketing is “a one-stop shop” and offers its clients a wide range of services. It is unique, in that it doesn’t operate only as a PR Agency but also as a consultant to, and an extension of the client’s corporate communications infrastructure, and for

smaller companies that do not have such a structure in-house but require assistance, they will be their communications arm by utilizing one or all of Headlines' full range of services.

Headlines' services include, Media relations and Media presence, Event launching and Event relations, Marketing communications, Advertising, Staff newsletters/magazines, Corporate communications, Crisis management, Speaking engagements at professional forums, panels and other strategically important business events by Company Directors and other company Personnel, Product launches, Community relations and Training.

In maintaining Corporate uniformity, Headlines also handles company logos and graphics, corporate colours, standards and guidelines for outdoor and indoor signage, formats for visiting cards, stationery and banners, establishment of a standard format for company vacancy advertisements etc.; and formulations of a "tag-line" for subsidiaries and parent companies.

Explaining the role of PR, Anusha said that it has adopted a proactive stance, and has become an on-going activity that projects and maintains the image of an organization, not only as an economic entity, but also as a good corporate citizen.

"The whole idea of PR", says Anusha, "is you're promoting your client, right from the word 'go' you're promoting them, it's exposure for the client." Tailoring strategies to suit each client is important, she stressed, "each company and their product is different, therefore your strategies have to be different for each one."

Anusha's many years of PR experience at Hotel Lanka Oberoi and the Taj Hotel gave her ample exposure to the field, and provided her with a wealth of experience in this very demanding discipline. "In PR your mind is always working overtime, and if you want to succeed you must have a lot of patience and be very tactful, while having confidence in your own abilities."

As a result of her unwavering dedication and determination, Headlines' client list reads very impressively. Among them are, Mobitel, John Keells Holdings, Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, Brown & Co. Ltd, Unilever Ceylon, Ayojana Fund Management(a CDC & NDB Company), Ceylon Cold Stores, EDS Lanka, National Construction Contractors Association, National Enterprise Bank, Overseas Trust Bank and Union Assurance.

When asked what her biggest challenge is, she smilingly replied, “creating a PR strategy for a client is the most enjoyable”, She continued, saying, “people come to us to get their work done and it is our duty to guide them and give the best service possible, we do our very best to give the clients exactly what they want”. And her motto? “Perfection”, she promptly replied, further explaining that nothing leaves her office without her scrutiny, thus ensuring excellence.

With the current PR boom in Sri Lanka, competition is rife. So what are her feelings on this? “Competition is always welcome, it keeps you on your toes and we all learn from it, it’s healthy.”

Commenting on the spate of “tie-ups” with international PR/Ad Agencies occurring among local agencies, Anusha says, this is not an absolute necessity where Headlines is concerned, unless there’s some specific advantage. From experience, she says that the foreign approach to PR is totally different to ours, “their attitude is a different one altogether, later on however, I may consider a foreign tie-up, it is a possibility, it’s not a closed door.”

Anusha admits that she had no plans of making PR her career, “it was one of those things which just happened”. She has to her credit, an Honours Degree in Classics and Latin, together with a Master of Arts Degree. In addition to these qualifications, she also holds a Diploma in Development Journalism.

Although she has Arts qualifications, Anusha says her first choice of study was Veterinary Science. Unfortunately that didn’t come to fruition, but she has, however, managed to fulfill part of that dream by taking in stray dogs and cats and giving them a good home. Her one ambition in life, she says, is to have her own farm.

Speaking of future plans Anusha emphatically stressed the importance of a Library Service, which she says is an integral part of PR. Her only regret is not having established this as yet, but she hopes to do so very soon, “a library service is a huge undertaking and you need a separate staff dedicated solely to this, but I definitely hope to start one next year”, she said.

From Classics, to Latin, to PR, Anusha David Jayaratne has made a name for herself. PR is a very time consuming and demanding job, but to Anusha it is a very fulfilling challenge, “the main thing is you have to enjoy what you do, especially in PR this is very important, you could say, I’m very much a career person.”

by Neelika Goonetilleka