

Claire Lamont

Co-founder, **Smak**

Age: 29

Since Smak's inception, Lamont has made it a policy to always have at least one pro bono client



Creatively using non-traditional marketing approaches and promotional stunts have helped Claire Lamont grow a startup home

business to 10 staff, and what she expects to be \$4 million in revenue this year.

Early campaigns featured: ballroom dancers

waltzing across Robson Street on a rainy three-degree night to raise awareness for Dancesport BC; a car parked outside the Vanco-

ver Art Gallery crushed by a giant cigarette to drive home the B.C. Lung Association's anti-smoking message; and a troupe of four women in hot-pink wigs and emblazoned with branding for the Bloom Essentials Day Spa and dubbed the Bloom Girls, who attended various events.

Success with those campaigns made it easier for Lamont and her partner, Alan Bedingfield, to approach advertising agencies such as Rethink and DDB with offers to partner with them to heighten community awareness of their clients' brands.

At the time, Rethink was working with the Women's Information Safe House, a non-profit safe house for prostitutes in East Vancouver.

Rethink staff had come up with the idea to erect life-sized cardboard cut-outs depicting prostitutes in Vancouver neighbourhoods that seldom see street workers. The idea was that the cut-outs would be vandalized. The next day a slogan would appear above the cut-outs reading, "No woman should

be left out in the streets."

Smak's successful pro bono execution of the concept opened doors to paid projects for companies such as Telus Corp. and Future Shop.

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Originally from South Africa, Lamont moved to Canada in 2000 when she was one course short of completing a communications degree at the University of South Africa. She waitressed for a couple of years before snagging an administra-

tive job at Dossier Creative, Dossier, then best known for successful campaigns such as the branding of Mike's Hard Lemonade in the 1990s, was a creative hot spot, and Lamont realized that she wanted to pursue creative marketing.

She and Bedingfield launched their venture from his apartment and they kept that as their headquarters until they had five staff.

Clients which have won awards on projects that she has worked on include Vancity, the Women's Information Safe House and Subaru Canada. ■

Profession you would most like to try: **Chef**

Favourite movie: **Power of One**

Favourite local restaurant: **Bin 941**

Mentor: **Susanne Biro (Blue Point Leadership Development)**

Currently reading: **Re-Imagine: Business Excellence in a Disruptive Age - Tom Peters**

Toughest business or professional decision: **Putting 100% faith in myself and taking the leap into the entrepreneurial world**

Car or chosen mode of transport: **Mini Cooper**

Living person you would most like to meet: **Nelson Mandela**

Birthplace: **Johannesburg, South Africa**

Where do you live now: **Vancouver**

Last CD bought or music downloaded: **Absolutes - Barcelona**

Highest level of education: **Completing final course in a Bachelor's degree in psychology and communications**

What's left to do: **I'd like to start a leadership program for women in business, challenging them to be the best that they can be especially in the advertising industry that is still so male dominated.**