

JENNIFER x2

BY NANCY JAFFER

Two public relations professionals join forces to create **JUMP MEDIA**

YOU COULD CALL IT entrepreneurial karma when two equestrian public relations executives named Jennifer joined forces in a new company, but the move really was all about spotting an opportunity and making the most of it.

Consummate professionals Jennifer Wood, who started Florida-based Jennifer Wood Media, and Canadian Jennifer Ward, the founder of Starting Gate Communications, were friends working on parallel tracks. They had been pursuing virtually the same career path while doing everything from event promotion and running press rooms at shows to dealing with athlete promotion, among the many other publicity services related to horse sports.

Both had large rosters of clients and were successful on their own before coming to the realization that they could boost their reach even further by teaming up. Ward, whose high-profile client roster included Olympic show-jumping champion Eric Lamaze, was in a situation where the demand for PR services was exceeding her company's manpower. Wood, whose contracts included the prestigious Winter Equestrian Festival in Wellington, Florida, had the staff but not quite enough work to keep everyone busy year-round.

The timing was right to balance each other's needs and work together. In 2015, the pair launched Jump Media and quickly experienced exponential growth, attracting an eclectic portfolio of clients ranging from the U.S. Equestrian Team Foundation and a horse rescue to equine industry professionals including athletes, an attorney, an insurance brokerage, a realtor, and a veterinary clinic. Prioritizing quality over quantity, Jump Media also provides press services for some of North America's most high-profile events, including the Capital Challenge, Washington International, and Royal Agricultural Winter Fair horse shows.

"We always talked about how the industry was growing and how the need for our services kept increasing, but we both felt limited in what we could do by ourselves," said Wood, noting that the pair had collaborated on some projects prior to forming Jump Media. "Finally, Jenn said, 'Why

don't we join together and start a company?'"

As Ward pointed out, because of the partners' similar names, "People often confused us. We were both working in the same industry doing the same thing; we would often receive emails intended for 'the other Jennifer.' Half the people out there think we're the same person anyway, so we figured why not make it easy for them and work together?" she laughed.

TWO JENNIFERS ARE BETTER THAN ONE

The partners, whose promotional skill sets complement each other, often brainstorm. "We look at what's next and what we can do differently, whether it's in the realm of social media, advertising, or breaking into new markets, as well as looking outside the industry at how other sports are doing things," said Wood, who holds a marketing degree from the University of South Carolina where she rode on the intercollegiate team before working for such show-jumping luminaries as Margie Engle and Anne Kursinski.

Each has hands-on knowledge of horse sport, not to mention an impressive network within the industry, which serves them well in dealing with competitors, shows, and those offering equine-related products and services.

"When we formed Jump Media, there was a great demand for promotion within

the sport, and it continues to be a growing sector within the industry," said Ward, who holds a post-graduate degree in public relations. "We're incredibly proud of what we have created at Jump Media. Our clients renew with us year after year because they appreciate the value and positive impact of our services to their businesses."

Wood agrees, "We have a great team, and our close-knit environment allows us to stay in tune with our clients and on top of promotional opportunities. We've developed many close relationships throughout the industry over the years, particularly within the equine press. That pays off when we're able to leverage those connections on behalf of our clients."

Five years since its inception, Jump Media continues to raise the bar in equestrian PR.



Jennifer Ward and Jennifer Wood