

## PrimeTime Member Spotlight

April 2008

Each month *Connections* talks to a PrimeTime member to find out more about who they are, what they do, and their association with PrimeTime.



This month we spotlight

**Natasha Golding**  
Director, The Right Words

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### Personal talk ...

**Connections:** Where are you from originally, and how long have you been in Singapore?

**Natasha:** I'm from Britain and I've been here in Singapore since December 2005.

**Connections:** What brought you to Singapore?

**Natasha:** My partner was offered a job here and I'd initially said "no way, what about my career?" However, after thinking about it, I decided perhaps it was time for a career change. So I said, "Let's go".

**Connections:** What do you enjoy most about living in Singapore?

**Natasha:** Moving here has given me the opportunity to grow and learn about myself. Being away from home, establishing a new life, having my ideas about the world challenged and doing things I never thought I'd do make this experience incredible.

**Connections:** What are your interests and hobbies?

**Natasha:** I have many interests. Relationships are important to me so I love to spend time with my partner and my friends - thinking, sharing, learning, and laughing. I also enjoy yoga and walking. Food is pretty important too – it's a way to come together with people.

**Connections:** Which are your favourite restaurants/shops/places to go?

**Natasha:** For shopping the stores on Haji Lane always have something to catch the eye. Foodwise, I like vegetarian Indian; there's a place at China Square food court and a great Japanese at Dempsey Hill, called Rakuichi. I also love the atmosphere at Wine Company@Evans so it's nice to get a drink there.

**Connections:** What is the one thing you would like to accomplish in your lifetime?

**Natasha:** I would like to be able to dance and do kung fu, perhaps not at the same time.

### Professional talk ...

**Connections:** Please tell us about your business.

**Natasha:** My business, The Right Words, is about helping businesses to send the right message to build up meaningful relationships with their customers. I help people conceptualise their ideas about what they want to say and I develop appropriate text for website content, newsletters and publicity materials, for example.

**Connections:** What did you do before you started your own business?

**Natasha:** My first job was President of a Student's Union where I learned about teams and negotiation. I then moved into the charity sector working on a youth volunteering project - we encouraged 16-24 years olds to take up volunteering and worked with charities to help them get better at involving young people. After a couple of years I was promoted Project Manager and later became the Volunteer Centre Manager. As part of the senior management team I had a small team of five to manage plus a group of volunteer staff. I learned some big lessons about working with people in this job as I dealt with all types including professionals, ex-offenders, children and their parents, and people with disabilities or mental health problems.

I became editor of the charity's magazine at this point and became involved in the Plain English Campaign, promoting the use of clear, easy to understand language.

In Singapore I initially worked for the National Arts Council on the 2006 Biennale before going full time as freelance writer. In 2007 I began to write regularly for Time Out, August Man and Expat Living Magazine and I contributed a chapter to the American Association's book, Living in Singapore.

**Connections:** How long have you had your own business?

**Natasha:** I set up and registered my business, Live Sing, in February 2007. Part of the business was delivering one-to-one support to newly arrived expats, helping them to find activities and networks that interested them. The other part was writing for magazines. Since then the focus has shifted exclusively to writing. I discovered that my biggest interests are relationships and communication so I became interested in helping businesses and so The Right Words came about.

**Connections:** How did you get started?

**Natasha:** I'd been writing for my blog and a local magazine for a while. I was attracted by the idea of running my own business partly because of my experience as a freelancer and my, possibly unfounded, fears of the working culture here. I was used to the UK charity sector with its flexible working hours and generous welfare policies. Companies in Singapore made me nervous about whether I'd be able to achieve a similar work-life balance here, so running my own business seemed like a good option.

**Connections:** What were the toughest challenges you've faced as an entrepreneur with your own business?

**Natasha:** I found it hard to sell myself and it took time to build confidence and to be comfortable marketing my services.

**Connections:** What do you enjoy most about having your own business?

**Natasha:** I'm my own boss and I can incorporate my personal work ethic into the services I offer.

**Connections:** Have any of the PrimeTime programs helped you in starting or growing your business?

**Natasha:** The Small Business Group is a great resource. As well as meeting loads of other people who share the experience of going it alone there are some brilliant sessions on straightforward problems like filing your taxes. Some of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday sessions have also stimulated ideas and offered tools that help me. And as ever it's about the people you meet – they all offer something you can learn from.

**Connections:** Any advice for those thinking of starting their own businesses in Singapore?

**Natasha:** I think one problem with setting up your own business is the fact that you might set it up because you love doing something, but then find that, once your business is up and running, you're involved more in business administration such as doing accounts and managing people rather than doing the work you love. Entrepreneurs should note that sometimes you have to give up a certain level of control as your business grows and your input becomes more strategic rather than operational.

## PrimeTime talk ...

**Connections:** When did you join PrimeTime and how did you find out about it?

**Natasha:** I joined in early 2006. My friend Andrea had been a long-term member and was on the Board when I first met her.

**Connections:** Which PrimeTime subgroups do you belong to?

**Natasha:** I'm a Small Business Group member; I also keep an eye on other events including those offered by the Marketing and Book Review subgroups. I'm also a pretty regular attendee of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday meetings.

**Connections:** Do you volunteer at PrimeTime? If so, in what areas have you become involved?

**Natasha:** Yes, I was Volunteer Co-ordinator for about 6 months until February 2008. I offered to help after the role was advertised in the newsletter. It was a great way to get more involved, meet more people and do my bit to help the organisation function. I continue to help organise volunteers for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday meetings.

**Connections:** What do you personally feel are the benefits of being a PrimeTime member?

**Natasha:** I'm always impressed by the access it gives me to interesting and inspiring speakers. It's such a credible and well-connected organisation that it can attract people who are very busy and very much in demand.

**Connections:** Which was the most interesting or inspiring PrimeTime event you've attended?

**Natasha:** The recent 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday meeting, Seduced by Success, was really interesting; it got me firing off ideas all over the place. The speaker, Robert Herbold, shared some great insights from his incredible amount of experience in business and I met some very interesting people – all in all a stimulating and fascinating night out.

Thank you Natasha!