

PrimeTime Member Spotlight

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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

Sylvia van de Logt.
Director: Escala Web Strategy.

Interviewed by: Andrea Chalupova.

Personal talk ...

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

Sylvia: I'm from Holland and have lived in Singapore for almost 4 years now (including an 18 month break in-between).

Connections: Have you lived in other foreign countries? If so where?

Sylvia: Yes, other than Holland I have lived in England, South Africa, Italy, Japan, Australia and China.

Connections: What brought you to Singapore?

Sylvia: My husband's job and our desire for a new adventure.

Connections: What do you enjoy most about living here?

Sylvia: I enjoy the climate as even though I come from Holland, I'm not a cold weather girl! I like the safety and cleanliness and the high quality of schools. I like the fact that you can mingle in with locals and run your own business here. I also like the proximity of so many other interesting countries.

Connections: What are your interests and hobbies?

Sylvia: I love to play tennis and practice yoga and I enjoy reading. I also love to dance the Argentine tango, even though I have not done much of that lately. I also enjoy learning about new internet technology and trends, which is part of my work.

Connections: Have you had any particularly interesting experiences you would like to share with us?

Sylvia: I was in South Africa during the time Mandela got sworn in as president. Being there at that time felt like being part of history and it made a big impact. I also had one of my most memorable (and scariest) holidays there. Touring through Botswana, we travelled on the river in tree trunks. We had no protection apart from an axe and we knew that we could encounter lethal animals anytime. Luckily, we met only giraffes, elephants and other non-life-threatening animals.

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

Sylvia: I enjoy Sushi Tei for lunch and I like the restaurants at Dempsey Hill. I enjoy wandering through the old streets of Singapore, but I still have a lot to discover! As a family we enjoy going to the pitch & put for some fun golf practice. For shopping I like the new ION mall at Orchard. There are lots of good new shops there and my current favourite is a fantastic stationery shop, Prints, who make colourful folders and photo-albums.

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

Sylvia: I still dream of becoming an accomplished Argentine tango dancer and dancing in Buenos Aires!

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Professional talk ...

Connections: Please tell us about your business.

Sylvia: My business, Escala Web Strategy (<http://escalawebstrategy.com>), aims to help businesses succeed online. I consult on how websites can be improved for better results. I also create complete small business websites that focus on generating the desired outcome. An important part of my work is to make sure websites get found which is accomplished through search engine optimisation and web marketing.

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

Sylvia: I worked in various marketing roles, one of them at an internet magazine in Holland.

Connections: How long have you had your own business?

Sylvia: I started my business in 2000, soon after I arrived in Australia. It was the perfect time to make a drastic change and work for myself in an area that I found both interesting and challenging.

Connections: How did you get started?

Sylvia: I already had a marketing background and in Australia I took a professional design course. I started creating websites for myself and my friends and joined a business group similar to PrimeTime where I met some of my first clients. At that time I also joined a business coaching programme which put me in touch with other entrepreneurs. As I started to get satisfied clients and my website gained some momentum on the web, I started getting more referrals and 'easy' leads.

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

Sylvia: In my business it can be a challenge to keep up with all the changes and new technical advances. You can easily get caught up with too much learning and too little business. Even after 9 years I have too many ideas and too little time. I really need to make some choices on what to focus on.

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

Sylvia: I love the freedom it provides. I make all my own decisions and can choose the clients I want to work with and the projects that I want to devote my time to. I love the fact that I can manage the whole project, from initial contact to concept, design, development and promotion. It keeps me active and on my toes. I also really enjoy helping other businesses succeed. Sometimes this leads to lasting partnerships.

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

Sylvia: I have not been active with Prime Time for very long but I have enjoyed the meetings I've been to. I have met some great people and have got a lot of new ideas. I also gained a much better feeling of where I can provide value.

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

Sylvia: Go for it! I think that Singapore is really open to new businesses and there are lots of opportunities. Many women start businesses here and promote themselves in the Singapore fairs.

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PrimeTime talk ...

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

Sylvia: I joined PrimeTime in April after a friend was enthusiastic about it.

Connections: Which PrimeTime subgroups do you belong to?

Sylvia: I subscribe to the Small Business Group, Marketing and the Personal Power Lunch.

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

Sylvia: It helps me to come out of my shell and away from my trusted computer! It's great to meet other business women, learn from them and share experiences.

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

Sylvia: I've enjoyed most of the events I've attended, but I really liked the Small Business forum and the Personal Power Lunch on turning fear into power.

Thank you Sylvia!