

Cool Jobs: Talent CEO Chantelle Fraser a Global Star in Her Own Right

Savvy global entrepreneur connects unique professionals with brands



Chantelle Fraser, Flawless Entertainment and Promotions CEO

We have good news for you. You can have a cool career and make a good living. No need to choose between loving your job and paying your mortgage. The following profile, part of the **BlackEnterprise.com Cool Jobs** series, offers a peek into the nuts and bolts, perks and salaries behind enjoyable careers.

London transplant Chantelle Fraser has a keen eye for beauty—and business.

While she was working as a former agent for Elite Model Management in Los Angeles in the early 2000's she had a lightbulb moment: Where could retiring models go after they were done strolling the catwalk? And where could aspiring models go to gain more exposure?

Turns out she knew just the place, and it was a business she'd have to start on her own.

Flawless Entertainment and Promotions, a niche NYC-based talent casting company she founded six years ago, pairs beautiful people with successful brands like MAC Cosmetics.

Counting companies like Estee Lauder, Playboy, Nike and Sean Jean as clients, the boutique firm doesn't just supply companies with high-end models. It also provides them with all-around entertainers including musicians, aerial artists, and DJs.

“I got the idea when I was working within an actual modeling agency,” says Fraser, who has a master’s degree in management from the London School of Economics. “What I found is that we constantly got calls from clients looking for models and talent for their events to promote their brands. At that time it wasn’t particularly good for the models’ careers to do event-based promotions, but later I’d see some of them struggling. Or some would be ending their modeling careers and didn’t have any other outlets. So I founded a sort of temp agency where models have a platform to showcase their skills,” she says.

Though Fraser’s 6-member team is based in New York they work accounts all over the world—having done everything from host charity polo tournaments in Nigeria to hiring an all Mongolian-speaking modeling-slash-bartending team to perform for a Mongolian ambassador in NYC.

Fraser says her company has come a long way since the days she founded it in her bedroom.

“I didn’t have any money whatsoever,” says the Jamaican businesswoman, who was 27 when she got started. “Not even enough money to pay rent,” she adds. “All I had was a Best Buy credit card, which I used to buy a computer. I didn’t even have a web site. All I had was my talent and my connections,” she recalled.

Fortunately, Fraser’s network was vast and her idea was a novel one.

“I had access to really, really high-end models already,” she says. “I was able to book all these companies within the first year because I was relentless. Plus, nobody else was providing an organized elegant, sophisticated service like mine at that time. Within that first year I had a fully equipped office, fully staffed.”

Fraser had many previous entrepreneurial starts-and-stops to help her learn the tricks of the trade.

“Since I was a child I have always been working,” she says “I started off washing cars when I was eight; I took on a newspaper route when I was 13; and I launched my first official business at 21—a technology recruitment firm called The Model Project, where I hired nutritionists, make-up artists and personal trainers. I’ve always wanted to be the architect of my own destiny. My goal has always been to have my own business.”

She says this enterprise is thriving: “We do the CW network media upfront every year and work with clients like US Weekly and Sports Illustrated,” she says. Right now Flawless is booking talent for a national makeup campaign, searching for Archie and Veronica comic book lookalikes to work at stores in 200 cities across the country.

How is she able to find such specific talent? Why, the Internet of course.

“I also find folks via word of mouth,” says Fraser. “Also, modeling agencies feed us talent.”

But the key to Flawless’ success, she says, is her experience in managing all types of people.

“In order to do what I do you really have to understand the human dynamic,” says the 34 year old. “When you’re dealing with so many people you have to understand how to manage them. That’s the biggest learning curve — managing different personality types.”

In addition to solid management skills the executive has three other pieces of business advice for aspiring entrepreneurs.

The first is to let go of excuses.

“If you’re going to start a company you have to just start it,” she says. “There are going to be things you don’t know when you start it — you just have to believe in yourself and know you’re learning. Having a business is like climbing a mountain or driving in the dark. You don’t have the see the destination you just have to see the next couple of feet.”

Secondly, put your best foot forward — always.

“It’s important that you be the best version of yourself,” says Fraser. “The first line of your business is you. You are your own brand ambassador. What do you stand for? What does your business stand for? If you’re going to have a business make sure that you feel your best, look your best and present yourself well. People are attracted to success so you have to make sure that you are attractive in every way.”

Lastly, let go of fear.

“It’s the biggest sabotage for your success,” she advises. “That’s why so many people don’t launch their businesses. Have tunnel vision about what you’re doing. Keep people around you who are on the right frequency. Your frame of mind is very important. You have to be mentally strong to run a business. You attract people around you who are the same.”