

## Anje Woodruffe, Co-founder of Woodruffe & Woodruffe Management

*Do you know Anje Woodruffe? As one of the most outspoken members of AlphaWomen.com, she is constantly teaching us that there is more to her than meets the eye. She's not just clever, she's smart; it's not just her voice that's powerful, but her soul—and she has a career to match.*

At 17, Anje Woodruffe rocked the airwaves in Trinidad at Radi-Yo! 98.9 FM, kickstarting her whirlwind communications career. “I loved the way I felt being in the world of broadcast media,” she says, “so I researched colleges in the United States that had solid and reputable communications programs.” She started at Hofstra College in the spring of 1995, and by 1997 had completed her B.A. in Communications with a specialization in Radio/TV and minors in Speech Communication and Rhetorical Studies.

It all came naturally to Anje, even at the often frantic pace of the corporate world. She created commercials for clients such as GlaxoSmithKline and Slim Fast Foods as Advertising Broadcast Producer for Grey Worldwide. During her time at Billboard she was responsible for signing artists like Method Man and Lauryn Hill. As the on-site talent coordinator and liaison there, she also booked many Billboard artists for concerts in the Caribbean. At only 33, her achievements are many and praiseworthy, and she means to live up to that legacy.

Though her first independent venture, Soula Entertainment, is now gone, today she is the proud co-founder (with her brother Geron) of Woodruffe & Woodruffe Management and Caribbean Underground Productions. It is the mission of the latter to support and advance the careers of Trinidadian musicians, notably the controversial but brilliant Marlon Asher. She is currently managing two additional artists, but in everything she keeps the tenacious attitude we’ve come to expect from our members. “Right now, managing three people is a lot of work. I juggle their bookings, travel, music catalog administration, recording, licensing, media outlets, marketing and branding—you name it, I do it!” And she does it well.

But you can learn all of this on her AlphaWomen.com profile. If you haven’t noticed her posts before, now is the time to get familiar with this brazen Alpha Woman.

### **Tell us about your life and rising career in Trinidad: you were very young when you started deejaying.**

I was about 17 when I saw an ad in the newspaper announcing an audition for radio broadcasters so I thought *why not?* I got there and, in a room full of people, competed side-by-side with about twenty others for the much-desired spot. I was the only woman who made it to the final five. The four men were placed because they had some

experience, but the program director, Ian Eligon (who now works at WBLS, NY and engineers for *The Wendy Williams Show*) asked me to pop by the radio station and get familiar with things, meet the crew, etc. A few weeks later I read in the newspaper that one of the VJs got caught carrying some herb so I was hopeful. Ian called me and said “You’re on Friday” and I remember shouting “Yeah!” then “Oh, s\*\*\*!” I freaked out: I was going to be working with the hottest DJ on the island in a coveted prime-time slot and, barring the fact that I knew how to speak, I had no idea what I was doing!

In the beginning, I would spend hours writing my scripts and practicing my radio “freestyle.” One day, a senior broadcaster said to me, “You don’t have to try so hard. Just think about what you like to listen to, and give people a reason to listen to you.” And there it came—Sexy Anje. I went from one slot on Friday to a 7-day-a-week slot, hosting my own show (my program director gave me his time slots); I did the news, talent segments, hosted shows, and created marketing and branding campaigns for the radio station. I just threw myself into it wholeheartedly. I was in love with Radi-Yo 98.9 Fm at 17.

**You say it’s “unusual” for a woman to be in your line of business. What has it been like working in talent as a woman--especially as a very young woman?**

It's been very difficult working as a talent manager in entertainment primarily because it's a male-dominated field. Most talent/artist managers are male. It’s increasingly difficult to be in this field as an intelligent, young and attractive lady—most men assume if you are young and attractive in business then you are as dumb as bricks. Okay—I play into that for a hot two minutes and then get down to business. When a male manager walks into a room they get a different level of respect; the promoters do what they are supposed to do without having to be told. Most of the time, when I walk into a room with my artists they assume I am the artist’s girlfriend! It makes you tough because they try to play on the female part of you and go for the idea that a woman will break a lot easier and is more likely to give in to what they want. Not quite.

If they don’t approach me from a level of complete respect and do what they’re supposed to, I earn the “bitch” title, I suppose. My nickname on the circuit is “Boss Lady.” Damn skippy: when you book my artist I am the boss; like it or not, you will need to find a way to deal with me. One guy actually had the nerve to tell me he couldn’t pay his balance in full and asked me to be sympathetic because his wife was pregnant. My response was, “I didn’t f\*\*\* her, so pay up.” He did, after telling me I was “cruel.” He had the money in his back pocket and was trying to play me for a fool. I like guys like him because it makes you hard and you learn not to make exceptions and simply stick to your guns. I call it being an asshole with a smile.

**To what do you attribute your speedy success?**

My dad used to ask me when I was younger: “Don’t you understand when I say no?” and I would answer “No.” The truth is, that particular word did not process in my brain and I would not accept it—I still don’t. I usually feel some kind of cosmic imbalance anytime that word is directed to me, and then I’ll say to myself “It only means not yet” I enjoy doing what other people tell me I cannot do. I have an impossible imagination and an unmistakable desire try new things.

**You write in your AlphaWomen profile that “Anything that comes to me is a blessing from God – be it good or bad. In the meantime – I’m gonna keep on dreaming. Dreams keep our souls alive and it’s important to live a life that matters.” What is your current dream?**

To retire by age 45! I’m working on it.

**What is the most rewarding part of your job?**

The free travel and five-star hotels! I love the luxurious travel to places I’ve dreamed of visiting and never thought I could afford. It’s just amazing to travel the world and to have people take you to different places: you learn about the countries that you are visiting and experience more than you would than if you were just a tourist. It’s also nice to make friends in far places. As a kid I used to have pen pals across the seas and for me, I’m meeting these people about whose countries I used to imagine. I have a keychain collection of places that I have visited—over 100 so far.

**What can we look for from Woodruffe & Woodruffe in the near future?**

Well, one project just got completed and is soon to be released. I just completed the album for my first artist signed to W&W Management/Caribbean Underground—Marlon Asher, whose very controversial song “The Ganja Farmer” had us touring for 3 years without any kind of record deal! We are releasing the album in Trinidad on August 7 and then we go on a European tour October 1-15 and then California October 17-21st. So far, I’m hoping to see us at Midem in France in January, 2009. I am putting together press kits for all the music festivals next year and hope to see my entire catalog—Marlon Asher, Rayvon and Dubz (an amazing guitarist) on as many shows as possible in 2009. Ultimately, I would love to get all of my artists signed to major record labels, which can be good and bad but I think they can all benefit from the backing of a major label and they certainly have the talent to support the endorsement.

**The AlphaFive:**

**1. Name one piece of work—novel, painting, movie, etc.—that really influenced/motivated you. Explain how/why.**

My favorite author is James Baldwin and the first book I read from him was called *Giovanni's Room*. It was a love story that eloquently captured the confusion of a bisexual male being in love and in a relationship with a gay man. I read this book when I was 19 and “gay” was taboo but I wanted to see what an educated, homosexual, African American writer could say about being gay. James Baldwin has an irresistible way of making even a conjunction come alive and seem passionate; his manner of dialogue and description is so vivid, that you enter every single room and every single scene where he is. That is remarkable writing and imagination for me. In his work, you meet the characters and you get to know them and understand them; and Baldwin has a way of shocking the reader not just with what he says, but with what he forces you to think. I definitely apply that in my daily existence. I'm known for saying things people think but are too afraid to voice.

**2. What is the biggest challenge/obstacle you have encountered thus far?**

Not having a penis. Apparently this particular member makes things easier for the ones who have it and makes life harder for the ones that don't. I am proud to announce, however, that while my penis may not be attached, I'm letting men everywhere know: mine is bigger than yours!

**3. What is your biggest regret?**

Anytime I hesitated to do something because I was afraid it might fail.

**4. Describe what you envision your life to be like in 10 years—what has changed, what has stayed the same?**

I hope to be retired, maybe happily married with one child, living somewhere with blue waters and coconut trees. But if it doesn't happen, I hope to be of peaceful mind and to be working on a fun project that allows me to travel, that makes me laugh, and that will guarantee me a few expletives at least 5 times a day.

**5. What is the one piece of advice that you feel has been the most valuable to you and which you would like to pass on to others?**

The real art of conversation is not only to say the right thing in the right place, but also to leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment.

*Anje is a dedicated Alpha Woman. Get to know her better on her AlphaWomen blog.*