

# looking for love

TRUDY GILBERT IS A REAL LIFE HITCH, PLAYING MATCHMAKER TO SYDNEY SINGLES.

## What does your job involve?

Interviewing people who wish to join my agency Elite Introduction and finding appropriate matches. I talk to members to find out how the date went, arrange their next date or check in to see how the relationships are going.

## How did you get involved in the business?

I found a niche in the market for a stylish and exclusive dating agency that catered for corporate singles. I had a lot of single friends who complained about the lack of options out there for meeting single, successful professionals. I started matching my friends and found I had great success.

## Is this the career you always wanted?

I am a people person, I love being creative and my background is in marketing. I always dreamed of having my own business and when the opportunity rose for me to combine all of my skills and interests, I jumped at the chance.

## Are there any misconceptions about your job?

I know it looks like a pretty easy job, but we work just as hard as anyone else. And in my position I can have responsibility for the safety of up to 800 people on board the Lady Class ferry *Lady Northcott*.

## So are you the female equivalent of Hitch?

Well, I'm not as hands on as Hitch. However, I do offer workshops on 'The 7 secrets of dating' which reveal tips and secrets of how to date more successfully. Our top level of service also involves several features similar to Hitch including a wardrobe detox and a personal relationship consultant.

## Did you complete any training or study?

There's no real training that you can do to be a date consultant. I think that a background in psychology is important, which I have and also having a genuine interest in people and doing your best to help them. You

also need to have high emotional intelligence, be perceptive and be a good communicator.

## What are the best parts of your job?

The best part is knowing I'm able to make a difference in people's lives by giving them one of life's greatest gifts – love. I know it sounds corny but it absolutely makes my day when I get a phone call from my members who call to tell me they have met the person they have been looking for.

## And the worst?

Not being able to help everyone. Some people have very high and unrealistic expectations, which means that they will never be happy. I had one lady who only wanted to meet men who looked like Kevin Costner: I didn't offer her membership as I knew that I would never be able to please her. I might change my mind if Kevin signs up!

## How much has your business grown?

Very quickly in just 18 months. We are Sydney based with plans to expand to Melbourne and Brisbane in the next few months. We have received a lot of interest from New Zealand where we plan to open next and who knows, maybe overseas as well!

## Any advice to those looking into this business?

You need to be optimistic, enjoy meeting people, have a vibrant personality and be a glass half full person. If you like variety and find introducing people rewarding, then give me a call. I may have a job for you!

## What do you think of Sydney's dating market?

I think that Sydney can be a very cold and lonely place so it is little surprise to me that there are lots of single people. Over the last few years, online dating has dominated the industry but privacy is a main concern for my members and I sense a return of wanting to meet people through more traditional methods.

## MY 9TO5 DAY

- 8AM** Get to office, respond to emails
- 9AM** Staff meeting
- 10AM** Interview new members
- 1PM** Lunch with celebrity chef to create exclusive singles event
- 2.30PM** Casting call for promo models
- 3PM** Meet with restaurants / bars
- 4PM** Interview new member
- 5PM** Member matching and general follow up with members
- 7.30PM** Go to networking function
- 10PM** Home to spend time with my husband

“Career move:

THERE'S NO REAL TRAINING TO BE A DATE CONSULTANT... BUT YOU NEED A HIGH LEVEL OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE.

”