



Lifecycle



● Trudy Gilbert has a little black book to die for. As the founder of Elite Introductions, Gilbert offers a matchmaking service for millionaires and corporate high-flyers. The business she started in 2005 is elite by name and by design.

"I deal with professionals, executives and business owners at the top of their game," she says. "I have CEOs of blue-chip companies, TV personalities, even some high-profile billionaires who feature on the *BRW Rich 200* list. I have a very enviable black book of members. God help me if I ever lose my phone."

Elite is based in Sydney, with an office in Melbourne. It has 2500 members, who pay \$4995 a year for their crack at wedded bliss. The fee alone separates the well-heeled from the wannabes but money alone won't cut it.

Gilbert knocks back 30 per cent of the applicants she interviews. "They have to get past me before they can join," she says. "If I don't like them, they don't make it. I have too many people interested in joining, so I can pick and choose who my clients are. We want [new] members who are compatible with our current members, who are looking for like-minded partners and want the best in a partner."

The service's clients on average are 30 to 55 years old and are evenly split by gender. Elite is unashamedly elitist. "Our members enjoy a similar socio-economic status and worldliness and they want someone who is their equal," Gilbert says. "It's the cream of the crop who come to see me. I've just interviewed a beautiful 33-year-old doctor"

Surely these high achievers are the last people who need the services of a matchmaker?

"Professionals and business owners are too busy working to have a social life," Gilbert explains. "As a society, how we interact has changed. We're becoming more reclusive and it's getting harder to meet the right person by leaving it to chance. We fast-track that for people."

The service is responsible for eight marriages and 70 per cent of members end up in relationships. Despite her success as a matchmaker, Gilbert says she is an entrepreneur first.

A fluent Italian speaker, her first business was a marketing consultancy based in Florence. Elite is her second business and she's lost none of her marketing flair. On Valentine's Day, she sent 30 of the country's most eligible bachelors and bachelorettes a red rose and a card spruiking her services. Her latest venture is Level 3, 50 York Street, in Sydney: a membership-based business lounge and working space. **BRW**

Interview: Leo D'Angelo Fisher

Trudy Gilbert

Elite Introductions

Position	Founder and managing director
Milestones	1991: Bachelor of Social Science, UNSW
	2000: Marketing and communications consultancy, Florence, Italy
	2005: Starts Elite Introductions in Sydney
	2007: Australian Achiever Award, customer service
	2010: Starts Level 3, 50 York Street business lounge in Sydney

LIFECYCLE: **CONNECTING**

Dating service brings marketing skills to matchmaking