

SALES STAR



## Tsufit: Having Fun in the Spotlight

[By Akbar Ali]

Regardless of however many consultants, motivational speakers, and sales pros you've crossed paths with during your career, chances are you've never met anyone quite like Tsufit. She's a one-name, one-woman motivational industry powerhouse, described in the Canadian press as "a starburst of energy — bright, bubbly, and upbeat." And if that isn't enough to convince you, she has a history of shining in the spotlight throughout her experience in a multitude of divergent careers, from law to entertainment to professional coaching, proving that the greatest professional reward is to have fun along the way.

Motivational coaching is far from being Tsufit's only area of expertise: she is also an accomplished actress, singer, comedienne, and author of the forthcoming *Step Into the Spotlight! 'Cause ALL Business Is Show Business!* (Beach View Books, April 2008). But you might be surprised to know that this never-say-never professional force of nature first elected to pursue a more traditional career as — of all things — a lawyer.

Tsufit's formative years were spent developing her natural knack for performing, but when the "real world" came calling, she committed herself to the "safe" choice of law school. She attended the University of Toronto Law School, where she excelled academically, making it onto the dean's list and ultimately launching a successful law career noted by the local press. *Canadian Lawyer* magazine referred to her as a "super-achiever," which foreshadowed the transformation she would undergo in her subsequent career adventures.

How she got to her current position is a story best recounted in her own words:

"I watched a lot of TV growing up. I consider it my greatest learning experience. In fact, I graduated, top of my class, from the '19-inch Institute of Higher Learning."

"I always wanted to be a star! But it wasn't

a direct route to stardom...I went to law school, made the Dean's List, and then did the biggest show of my life. For ten years, I played the part of a lawyer in the smash-

hit show 'Tsufit Goes to Bay St.' (Kinda like those *Legally Blonde* movies, only without the pink Gucci briefcase.) I also took the lead in 'Four Kids in Four Years: The Musical.'

**Q. What do you do for fun?**

**A.** Make stuff up and then make it come true.

**Q. What CD is in your CD player right now?**

**A.** *Dirty Dancing — Havana Nights*. I love Latin music. (Funny how it's cool to like Latin music, but geeky to take Latin in school...)

**Q. What is the last magazine you read?**

**A.** Maybe an airline magazine on the flight back from Washington. I'm actually more of a book person.

**Q. What is your favorite TV show?**

**A.** Right now, *Beauty and the Geek* (great show about branding). Also, we never miss *The Apprentice* in my house.

**Q. Who is your role model?**

**A.** I don't think I have a role model, at least not one. I get inspired by so many people all the time. I take a bit from here, a bit from there...

**Q. What makes you laugh?**

**A.** My kids. They're funnier than any comedian I've ever seen on TV.

"One day, I thought, 'There's gotta be more to life than this,' so I made a monumental decision. I left the law, kept the kids, and decided to follow my dream of being a singer and a television actress.

"My parents were predictably thrilled. 'You're leaving law to be a *what?* Actress, shmactress!' But I did it anyway. I left law for the limelight. I left business for show business."

Despite the significant risk she had undertaken in pursuing her dreams, she soon created a niche for herself in show business by establishing herself as a woman of many talents:

"I performed at comedy clubs, amphitheatres, played an evil cafeteria lady on a TV show for four years, did standup comedy on national TV, did commercials here and in Europe, and released a music CD, *Under the Mediterranean Sky*."

With her long-held dreams realized, she soon found a new and unexpected opportunity to further her credentials.

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“People wanted to know how I’d made the move from lawyer to comedian and singer, how I made the transition and how I got so much attention. So it got me thinking...

“I’ve been on stage all my life. For me, getting noticed has never been a problem. Eventually people came to me seeking advice on how to ‘be a star.’ They asked me to coach them. So I did.”

She may have had to work for years to achieve success as a performer, but success as a coach came virtually overnight.

“When attending business functions, I found I was an instant hit. I got attention. And clients. What was my secret, everyone wanted to know? How did I attract clients with just a 30-second spiel?

“Well, I guess all those years of performing, both on stage and in court, paid off. I applied what I learned as an entertainer to my business. Now, I show business how to *use* show business to *get* business.”

Tsufit acknowledges the help of career mentors over the years — though not from the sources you might expect.

“My mentors were not colleagues, but rather the authors on my book shelf and the entrepreneurs I saw out there succeeding — not to mention, the performers who showed me the right and the not-so-right way of getting attention,” she affirms.

And what does this professional source of wisdom advocate for all professionals in search of success?

“Advice? My specialty:

1. Not original perhaps, but I gotta open with ‘Do what you love, not what you’re *supposed* to do.’ My coaching practice is called *Follow That Dream!* not only because it inspires me and the people who hear it, but because it’s a philosophy I believe in. Not always easy to do, but valuable as a general philosophy.

2. Don’t worry about looking or sounding overly professional. Focus on being authentic and fun and warm and unique.
3. Figure out what you’re really selling. (It’s not usually what you think.)
4. Find your ‘story’ and connect it to what you’re selling in a way that’s compelling enough to make people want to line up to buy from you.
5. Have fun. If it ain’t fun, fuggitaboutit!”

And fun is where Tsufit knows the spotlight shines best.

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