



## From Front Row to Front Cover

Inside the Business of International Fashion Magazines

Didier Guérin



Introduction by Professor Samir "Mr. Magazine" Husni, Ph.D.



# DIDIER GUÉRIN

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THE BUSINESS OF INTERNATIONAL FASHION MAGAZINES*

I was born and raised in Paris where I started my career as a journalist. I moved to New York as a junior executive to launch the US edition of *ELLE* magazine, then to Sydney where I launched *ELLE* in ten countries in Asia.

After my success with *ELLE* I was poached by Condé Nast, to launch *VOGUE* and *GQ* in Asia, before setting up my own consulting company working with US and European companies to establish their presence in Asia.

I basically did the same job all my life, I just changed the name on the door. And what a job it was! My book *From Front Row to Front Cover – Inside the Business of International Fashion Magazines* tells some of the stories I've learned over the years working in the fashion magazine industry.

I've travelled the world, winning and dining with the rich and famous of the fashion and media industries in the world's leading restaurants and hotels.

It hasn't always been glamorous. When I started my own company my best friends of yesterday did not return calls. I spent a lot of time away from my family but sometimes you need to make sacrifices to become independent and successful.

One of my most memorable and profitable dealings was with Rupert Murdoch who has long been regarded as the consummate dealmaker. Perhaps his greatest skill is the ability to make quick decisions based on his gut instinct, as I found out to my advantage in 1984.

I met with Murdoch to persuade his News Corp Group to become our partner in launching *ELLE* magazine in the US. He had a big office on the top floor of the seventeen-storey *New*

*York Post* building, overlooking the Hudson River in Lower Manhattan. Murdoch entered the room, greeted everyone civilly, then launched into his CEO about costs.

Next, he started asking me questions about *ELLE* including how many copies we sold, how many pages of advertising we sold and what our advertising rates were. I convinced him that *ELLE* was a brand that would work well in the US.

After 45 minutes, where we barely mentioned money or terms, Murdoch clapped his hands and said: "Let's put the lawyers together. We'll do it."

It was as simple as that. So, began a 50-50 joint venture that got us started on the long road to what would become an international network of *ELLE* magazines published in forty-six countries.

Three years later, my company Hachette-Filipacchi bought out Murdoch's 50 per cent share of *ELLE* US for US\$158 million, a spectacular return on News Corp's original \$US6 million investment.

Not every deal I've been involved in was as successful, but what has stayed with me ever since was seeing just how quickly

a media titan such as Rupert could make a decision. Some snap decisions in media history have paid off in spades, such as that one, while others have taken years of market research and still ended in tears. It's been a roller coaster ride but I've enjoyed every minute of it. **W**

*From Front Row to Front Cover – Inside the business of International Fashion Magazines* is available on [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)