

# The Jewish Voice™

ותשמע הארץ אמרי פי Deuteronomy 32:1  
MAY THE EARTH HEAR THE WORDS OF MY MOUTH

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## Bridging the Gap in International PR: An Interview with Arik Puder

By Mark Snyder

This is an especially challenging time for Israeli-American relations. Personal tensions between President Obama and Prime Minister Netanyahu seem to have reached an all-time low point. And now that the Prime Minister has apparently wavered on a two-state solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Obama administration is no longer promising to block unilateral Palestinian attempts to gain statehood via the UN.

When it comes to the U.S. and Israel, optimism these days remains in short supply.

back to February 2000, when, after four years as an investigative reporter for a major Israeli television network, he was named to the prestigious post of Press Secretary for the House Committee of the Knesset - Israel's parliament. His achievements led to his being promoted in 2001 to senior media consultant in the Office of the Prime Minister.

In 2002, Puder was appointed to serve as press secretary for the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption. He also served as senior media advisor to Ministers Yuli Edelstein and Tzipi Livni. In 2005, he left the Ministry and founded Puder PR in Israel, and later moved to New York, to bring his strategic media expertise to cli-

outside of Israel, and Israel. Would you agree?

A: "In all modesty, yes, I believe so. We are also the sole PR agency in the U.S. today that interfaces on a daily basis with the Israeli media and with Israeli correspondents here in the U.S. We are one of the few PR agencies in the world that can reach audiences in Israel, the U.S. and around the world simultaneously, which is something I am very proud of."

**Q: It looks like you've really established yourself as someone specializing in Israeli and Jewish affairs. Was this part of a mission of yours or did life lead you here?**

**Q: Can you explain how Puder PR got its start?**

A: I originally established Puder PR in 2005 immediately after I left my last position in the Israeli government as press secretary for the Ministry of Absorption and media advisor for Minister Tzipi Livni. During my three years in the ministry, I was exposed to the Jewish world of non-profits in the U.S. As you're probably aware, the U.S. and Israel make up more than 80 percent of the world's Jewish population. At some point, I decided that I wanted to work for myself. I immediately started representing leading Jewish organizations in front of the Israeli media, both in Hebrew and English,

**Before moving to New York, I assumed my unique services were needed here, but I couldn't have imagined just how right I was.**

**Q: What does your work day look like?**

A: The PR business is a very demanding and challenging one. It basically means you work almost 24/7. My work schedule is even more complicated since I work in different time zones simultaneously, whether with clients in Israel or U.S. clients on the East and West Coast with continuous events. So if the question is if I have a typical work schedule,



Arik Puder, Founder and President of Puder PR



Arik Puder, and iconic film director and producer Steven Spielberg



Arik Puder (L) with the late "60 Minutes" CBS News host Mike Wallace

But one Israeli, who emigrated from Israel to New York more than five years ago, is trying to bridge the gap between these two great nations. Meet Arik Puder, Founder and President of Puder PR. Puder is a leading media strategist in both the United States and Israel who has distinguished himself as one of the most well-recognized PR professionals serving Israeli and Jewish organizations in the U.S.

**I love what I do and have been blessed to work with such amazing individuals!**

Puder, born in 1971, earned a BA in Communications from the College of Management in Tel Aviv, and an MA in Political Science and Communications from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He has worked as a senior communications and media advisor at the highest levels of Israel's government and for major Jewish organizations throughout North America and the Jewish world.

His distinguished career dates

ents around the world.

I met with him in his office in lower Manhattan to discuss his career and the business he has built.

**Q: It looks like your career has been moving to the right direction so far?**

A: "I've been in the media and PR business for more than 20 years now. During that time, I have had the privilege of working alongside prominent Israeli and Jewish political leaders, such as the late former Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, former Prime Minister Ehud Barak, former Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, Israeli Knesset speaker Yuli Edelstein, Jewish Agency chairman Natan Sharansky, World Jewish Congress president Ronald Lauder, and many more." I love what I do and have been blessed to work with such amazing individuals!

"In addition, during the past decade, I've become more involved in the Jewish non-profit world, especially with Jewish organizations based in the U.S."

**Q: It seems you have carved out a niche as the leading PR agency in the U.S. specializing in both the Jewish world**

A: "I guess the answer is a little bit of both. It's true that I did not plan this from the beginning, but today I definitely feel like that I am undertaking an important task and I really feel like I am bringing to the United States a special expertise and creating a new market niche. I am a proud Israeli-American and see my future in America, but I never forget my Israeli background and my special identity. It is something I want to share with the American people as much as I can. I hope to bring the two countries closer to one another, more than they already are."

**Q: Can you mention some of the Jewish non-profit organizations you have been working with?**

A: I have worked with a wide range of for-profit companies and charitable organizations like the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation, the World Jewish Congress, the Israeli American Council, Friends of the Israeli Defense Forces, Nefesh B'Nefesh, Limud FSU, Shavei Israel, the Rabbinical Assembly, UJA-Federation of New York, Ariel Property Advisors, and many more."

and both with U.S. correspondents based in Israel. As you know, Israel is a hub for foreign reporters, since Israel is often a big story in global news coverage.

**Q: So what brought you to the U.S.?**

A: First of all, I've always dreamt of moving to the United States, especially to New York — the most fascinating city in the world. Second, my wife had received an offer to serve as an emissary for the Jewish Agency in the U.S., which gave us this great opportunity to head to relocate to New York. So we moved in the beginning of 2010 and shortly after I established Puder PR here.

**Q: Has business been going well for you since you relocated?**

A: I cannot complain! Before moving to New York, I assumed my unique services were needed here, but I couldn't have imagined just how right I was. Today, Puder PR represents the most recognized Jewish and Israeli non-profits in the U.S. and worldwide. We also represent many Israeli clients who seek to extend their business involvement in the United States.

then the answer is, certainly not. Everyday can be totally different than the previous one. The only thing I can expect is the unexpected. Another challenge that not many are familiar with or recognize is that weekdays in Israel start from Sunday to Thursday, and weekends are Friday and Saturday. Pretty much, I never have my Sundays free. Thank god for the creation of Shabbat!

**Q: How do you envision your future in the United States?**

A: I truly believe that during the first five years since the establishment of Puder PR we've managed to emerge as the go-to PR agency for Jewish interests in both the U.S. and Israel. Just that is a great achievement to be proud of and gives me reason to be optimistic as I look to the future. I know that I will definitely continue to serve a unique role for the Jewish community and private sector organizations in an area of critical interest for our clients and our future clients. We are obviously a private company, but it's not just about the money. I really feel like I am fulfilling an important role that involves the two countries that I admire most — Israel and the U.S.A.