

**Sondhi Productions Inc.**  
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November 12, 2012

Dear Members of the CRTC,

My name is Geeta Sondhi. I am the President of Sondhi Productions Inc., a Canadian Independent Production Company dedicated to producing factual programming. My roots are in knowledge-based documentary filmmaking.

I understand that the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) is holding a hearing December 11, 2012 to review whether OWN: the Oprah Winfrey Network (Canada) is compliant with its mandate as an educational service. Please consider this my unwavering support for OWN Canada as a critical voice for both Canadian independent producers and viewers.

Over the last year it has been my privilege to work with Corus Entertainment/OWN Canada to help create programming that provides viewers with "detailed information" in the subject area of the program that they are commissioning from me. I have worked closely with Corus/OWN Canada executives with the express intent of creating a program that instructs as it entertains and that is carefully crafted to appeal to a wide range of viewers as it does so.

As a seasoned producer of factual programming I have experienced mixed emotions over the last few years about the sensational programming that I have been asked to work on and create for a variety of broadcasters in both the US and in Canada. In stark contrast, it has been my privilege to work closely with Corus/OWN Canada to come up with programming that allows viewers to acquire knowledge.. not just 'knowledge' but helpful knowledge, the kind of knowledge that prompts analysis and intelligent thought – created for, by and about Canadians. The beauty of OWN Canada is that this highly recognizable brand lends a certain cachet to its Canadian programming. Furthermore, the network's high profile appeal attracts an under-served female demographic and inspires all viewers to be receptive to programming that promotes the acquisition of knowledge. In this unique way, OWN Canada, as successfully defined by Corus Inc., is distinct from any other Canadian network.

OWN Canada provides an important window for independent producers to create and produce Canadian content from a Canadian point of view. As a highly recognizable

brand, OWN is available to all Canadians and gives producers extraordinary opportunities to have their programming bought and seen in the US as well as in Canada. The immediate and long-term implications of this kind of opportunity are extensive for Independent Producers both financially and in terms of profile and credibility for future projects and business dealings. Success in Canada, with the opportunity to extend that success in other markets, means that one of the CRTC's critical pillars, ensuring strong opportunities domestically and internationally for creators, will be fulfilled. Undeniably this meets the public interest.

OWN's success translates into greater viewing of Canadian content as it generates and circulates more money/investment in the system. A case in point is that over \$10 million dollars has been triggered since the launch of OWN in March 2011 toward original Canadian programming for the service. OWN provides an important opportunity for independent producers to provide content with learning objectives. Without a Canadian version of the service, Canadian consumers would have to try to secure the American version of OWN, which would be a clear loss of opportunity for the Canadian independent production community and for viewers who would miss out on a clearly Canadian perspective.

I hope and trust that in consideration of the above, the CRTC will renew OWN Canada's license.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Geeta Sondhi', with a stylized, flowing script.

Geeta Sondhi

# Biography



## Geeta Sondhi, Sondhi Productions Inc.

**SPI** produces lifestyle, documentary and online programming for Canadian and International broadcast. The company produced Neat, a 40-part lifestyle series for HGTV Canada and Discovery Home US that airs in fifteen countries around the world. Her documentary credits include Gemini winner and Hot Docs favourite Last Call at the Gladstone Hotel (TVO, Bravo!), the Gemini Nominated Some Kind of Arrangement (NFB, CBC) and the critically acclaimed Becoming 13 (NFB, CBC). Selected awards include a Gemini nomination for the Donald Brittain Award, a Golden Sheaf Award, a Gold Cindy Award, a Gold Remi, a Best Television Website Gemini nomination and a Chris Award.

President Geeta Sondhi's career highlights include: Head of Business and Legal Affairs, Associated Producers, Film Programmer, Toronto International Film Festival, and Associate Producer, National Film Board of Canada. At the OMDC, Geeta was in charge of the Non-theatrical and New Media programs. At ExtendMedia she helped pioneer online extensions of lifestyle, travel and dramatic television programming for a variety of international broadcasters. Geeta currently serves on the Board of Directors of Women In View, was a founding member of the WIFI Toronto Mentorship Program, served on the board of the Canadian Independent Film and Video Fund and Co Ordinated New Initiatives in Film, a Studio D program for women of colour and women of the First Nations. She studied Film and Communications at SFU and McGill University.