

INTRODUCING...

andré collette

a born
entrepreneur

He used to operate bowling alleys.
Now he operates a film laboratory.

André Collette is president and general manager of Bellevue Pathé, Montréal.

Collette's reputation has grown over the years. When he gives his word, it has credibility and respect in the industry.

When he was young, Collette wanted to be a salesman. First he worked as a hardware clerk, then he graduated to the paint business, then to Brunswick of Canada as national sales manager in the bowling and billiard business.

Finally, as assistant director of Expo's "Man and the City" pavilion, he met Harold Greenberg, current president and chairman of the board of Astral-Bellevue Pathé.

After Expo, Collette became a sales representative on the road for Greenberg. He was selling services for a small company called Ciné Lab. The motion picture/photo finishing laboratory only had one reversal processor and a couple of printers. But expansion was planned. Greenberg had already bought out the Humphrey-Pathé Laboratory in Toronto. In 1968 he also purchased the Trans-Canada Laboratory of Vancouver.

Collette's job was to approach would-be customers.

"I told them that I didn't know anything about the film business, but that we had fantastic services. My frankness with the people in the industry must have made them accept me."

Instead of opening a big Montreal lab as planned, Greenberg bought out A.S.I. (Associated Screen Industries) from Du Art in New York. Collette became the representative for A.S.I. By 1971 he was general manager.

"To learn the business internally I got involved with different film projects and followed them through the lab. I discovered problems with films and filmmakers which gave me insight into the technical problems of running the business, but I avoided becoming over-technical.

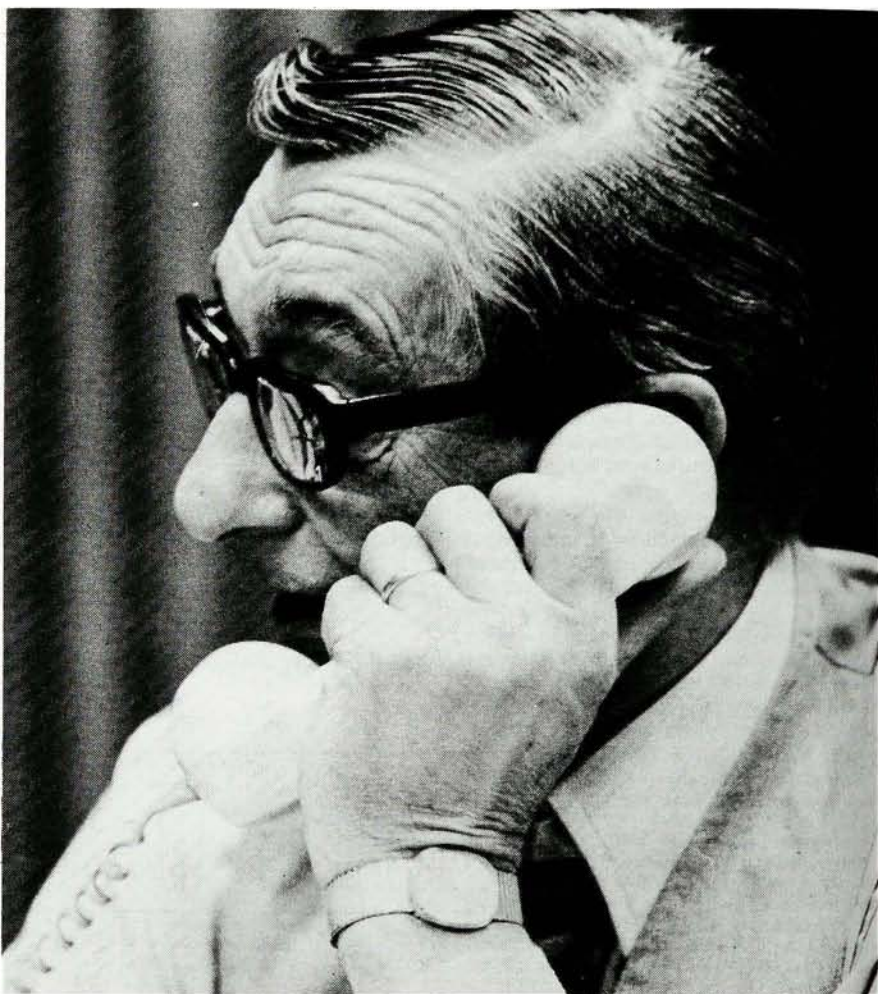


photo: Lois Siegel

André Collette doing business on the phone

"All I had to do was know a little bit more than the filmmakers because most filmmakers don't know too much about the technical aspects of the laboratory. And most film producers are so involved with their own problems that they don't really want to know about the technical problems. They don't need complications. All they want to know is when they are going to get their film.

"It would help if they knew more, but if they did know more, they would have to accept the problems the laboratory has, so subconsciously they don't want to know."

Collette set up a system of service people who were there to provide information and to work with producers and filmmakers to make them aware of the laboratory's problems.

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"A filmmaker is basically a creative person rather than a technical person. Our service and sales department provided a link between the customer and our production people who actually did the physical work. We based our sales on quality and service and especially consistency of quality because all labs in the world have technical problems.

"Part of our marketing approach has been to help the young filmmaker. We are open-minded enough to realize that today's beginning filmmaker is tomorrow's customer. To assist them, we have deferred payments, we've advanced money even to those who have never paid us, we haven't pushed for payments and we've invested our money in the feature film business, sometimes to our great regret and sometimes to our advantage."

In 1977, Collette became president of Bellevue Pathé Laboratory which employs about 75 people.

"We are twice as big as any laboratory in the city, but we don't worry about other labs, we worry about ourselves. A laboratory is always expanding. Each year, there is \$100,000-

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\$200,000 for either new equipment or modernization of old equipment which is capital investment.

"In the film business, we have to train people ourselves. Each department has its own training program because it's hard to take a person off the street to become, for example, a timer. A timer has to know about the other technical processes in the laboratory. It takes 2-3 years. He is concerned with standards of colors and what happens to emulsion when it is being treated and what happens to the red and blue when you take the green out. It takes one or two years to become a proficient printer and 6 months to a year to be a processor."

Collette finds young people to be very different than his older employees.

"It's not easy to motivate them or to keep them. You have to give them interesting jobs, pride in their work, and financial rewards. But perhaps that will change when they discover that they have to get involved to accomplish something."

"The problem with film students is that everyone wants to be a director. Everyone wants to be creative. No one wants to be a technician."

"If someone wants to stay in the industry, he will have to diversify himself. How many good directors can we have? A director needs certain talents. One has to realize that he can be something else."

Collette regards himself as a born entrepreneur.

"I learned to wheel and deal in my young days. I do enjoy movies, but unfortunately I don't have time to see them. I'm like the shoemaker who has holes in his shoes. I go to the odd première. I mainly look at films when there is a problem with them. I don't see 10,000 feet of film in a year. I see a roll here or there but rarely an entire feature. When I go to movies, I pay like anybody else — 2 to 3 times a year, I like action stuff."

The days of a film laboratory president are long. During his first five years, Collette used to start at 7:30 a.m. and end his day between 9-12 at night. Now his day begins at 9 in the morning, but he often doesn't exit until 7-10 p.m.

"During the day I deal with internal administration problems and speak to filmmakers. Bellevue Pathé processes and works on close to 50 million feet of film a year and the cost of these operations is astronomical.

Collette also works as director of the Association des Producteurs de Films du Québec, as director of the Association de Maisons de Service technique du Québec and is a member of SMPTE (Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers).

"After Expo at the age of 43, I had a heart attack and my doctors told me that I should go into an easy-type business for the rest of my life. Let me tell you, film hasn't been the easiest business — but unfortunately I love it. I love my work, I love the people."

Lois Siegel

maruska stankova

a creative curiosity

Maruska Stankova is an actress who doesn't like to limit herself. "I can not stay in one place. I love to travel. Before I came to Canada I acted in about 12 countries, and in about 8 different languages. This is

such a pleasure... because all the time it is something new, something unexpected and you are enriching yourself enormously."

Maruska has enriched herself by guest-starring (with a Greek accent) on *King of Kensington*, playing Mata Hari in the *Witness to Yesterday* series and Eva Clarisse in the French soap opera *Les Bergers*. Before coming to Canada she enriched the stage by performing in *Laterna Magika* the famous