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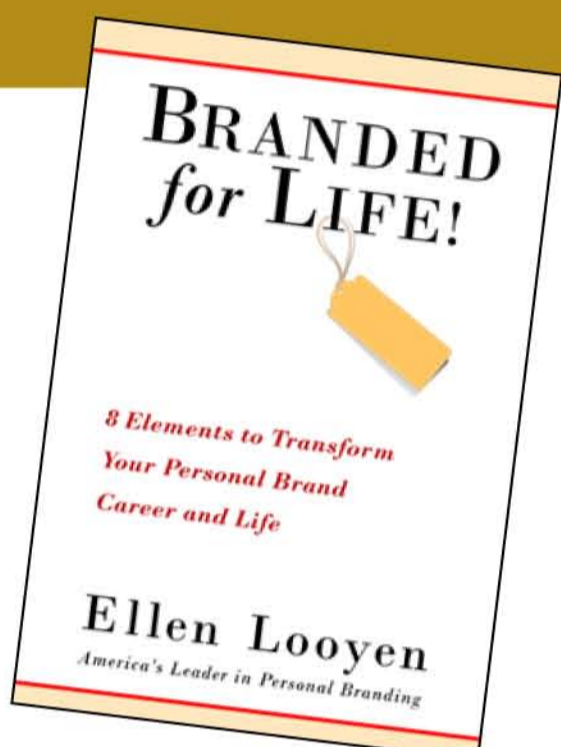


Justin Wetherill
CEO and co-Founder
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The CEO Forum - 2017 - Issue 2

Book Review Branded for Life!

Robert Reiss Talks with **The Personal Branding Expert**



Robert Reiss: How did you get into personal branding?

Ellen Looyen: As one of the first females in Sales at both IBM and Xerox, self-promotion came naturally to me. So, I was very surprised to discover that most people felt uncomfortable articulating their uniqueness and value (often feeling like they were boasting or ‘tooting their own horn’).

“You already have a personal brand, whether you’re managing it, or not!”

When I started my own business over two decades ago as a corporate keynote speaker, trainer and coach, I quickly realized that lots of careers seemed DOA because of a widespread inability to talk about individual career accomplishments and the value-add to the company’s bottom line. Few saw the need to invest in personal branding and self-promotion. But those who did, almost immediately moved up the ladder and experienced greater career satisfaction and success. In other words, they became a brand that people instantly liked, trusted and connected with!

What is your book about?

78 The CEO Forum www.ceoforum.ceo

My book is a story that follows two very different characters as they build their branding narrative and proactively manage their career destiny. They learn to deliver a compelling success story and use my “8 Elements of Influence” to enhance their self-confidence, emotional intelligence and executive presence.

Why is personal branding so important?

You already have a personal brand...whether you’re managing it, or not!

When people hear your name, several things instantly come to mind. But are they the perceptions that you would choose? They should be, because your career might just depend on it. Personal brand management is for everybody...and it can help middle-management professionals who want to quickly move ahead in their profession or attract exciting, new opportunities.

For CEO’s and other senior executives, the key to a successful personal brand is authenticity.

There is an interesting dynamic between actions and perceptions. In fact, Harvard research states that charismatic leadership is made up of equal parts of strength and warmth, and so should your CEO personal brand!

I believe that the way you do one thing, is the way you do everything...

What are the first steps in clarifying your own brand?

Branding is all about delivering a consistent experience. That’s why my branding process begins with people at all levels taking an honest and fearless inventory, re: the current perceptions of their colleagues, co-workers, stakeholders and clients (in the form of a 6-question survey found in the book’s Appendix). People can then see the patterns (or any inconsistencies) in the way they are currently being perceived and become aware of the fact that consistency is crucial to the way successful brands are emotionally felt and experienced. I believe that the way you do one thing, is the way you do everything...

In branding, as in life, there is no such thing as objective reality...only perceptions; and perception IS reality! The good news is that value is only a perception and all perceptions can be managed.

Why do companies invest in personal branding?

An emerging trend is that today’s employees want more meaning from work. And perhaps there is no greater way to retain and inspire top talent than to align their personal brand with the corporate brand. Whether personal or corporate, differentiation and emotional connection are crucial components to having a successful brand.

The internal corporate brand needs to communicate authentic messaging and a compelling mission that connects deeply to employees. Investing in your employees by helping them articulate their value and contribution to the corporate brand will enhance confidence and loyalty and breed a culture of innovation and thought leadership.

What do you see as the missing elements in most CEO’s personal brands?

There’s usually only one: presence. By the very nature of a CEO’s position, distractions and interruptions are everywhere! And not being fully present is actually an ‘occupational hazard!’ Ask yourself, what is keeping you from being present? The answer typically involves one of these three: a busy mind, a worrying mind or a critical mind (and self-reflection will reveal which one of these three is your default predisposition). Remember... your personal brand evolves as you do; so what are you doing to align your personal brand with your vision?



Ellen Looyen, cited by The Conference Board as, “America’s Leader in Personal Branding” brings over two decades of branding expertise (as a keynote speaker, trainer, consultant and coach). She has branded divisions of major corporations such as Chevron and Kaiser Permanente, launched countless startups and has helped thousands of people (in over 60 countries) advance their corporate careers. Ellen is a brand commentator for CBS News, The Wall Street Journal and KGO Radio; and some of her clients include: Goldman Sachs, Cisco, Hewlett Packard, KPMG, Oracle, Visa, SAP, Accenture and Tesla Motors. For more info: www.ellen4branding.com.