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Lida Citroën Bio

Lida Citroën, an internationally regarded branding expert based in Denver, has made a career of helping people and companies create new or enhanced identities.

With more than 20 years of experience in creating and implementing standout strategies for public and private companies, Lida is a brand architect who excels at finding and emphasizing the values that operate at the core of each company and every individual.

Brand-savvy, business wizard

Prior to launching her company, LIDA360, Lida served as managing director of marketing and communications at the Financial Planning Association and led investor relations at the Jefferson County Economic Council. She also led brand development, marketing and communications efforts at Max Factor/Revlon, Pentax, Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP, and RNL Design. She is as comfortable developing a brand strategy through social media as she is mapping out detailed action plans in industries ranging from education and financial services to real estate and business process outsourcing.

Lida practices what she preaches. Her creative, high-level thinking carries over to the services she offers: attention-getting ideas backed by strategies that increase success, boost value and reduce costs. Her powerful marketing strategies have attracted the attention of The Denver Business Journal, Forbes.com and many trade publications, which have profiled Lida and highlighted her experience in social media and brand development.

Beyond Talking the Talk

As an accomplished speaker on building personal brands, her programs, ***“Stand Out from the Crowd: Leveraging Your Personal Brand”*** and ***“Personal Branding Online for Today's Executives”*** consistently generate rave reviews. Her insights into ***“Intentional***

Networking” empower audiences to create, build and cultivate a career-growing network of contacts in-person and online. Plus, many high-achieving individuals count on Lida’s personal branding expertise to help them become respected thought leaders in control of their own reputations.

Authenticity is key for brands—whether products or people—as it maintains consistency and thereby builds trust and confidence. If you strive to walk the walk and talk the talk, you create a brand that has immeasurable value and long-term durability. The executive with a strong personal brand is one whose employees would follow into battle. The company with a strong brand is one whose customers buy their product every time, regardless of cost or other options.

Full Circle Communications

LIDA360 offers creative integrated marketing and communication services to clients around the world. Whether in corporate marketing, personal branding or speaking and training, Lida serves clients by helping them determine their core values, create a distinctive identity, and integrate that unique value proposition into strategic messaging via media relations, advertising, journal articles, Web sites, and social networking.

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Personal branding overview

What's in a name? If it's a brand name, everything: A brand drives value. It may be the only thing that separates a commodity from a refined, value-added product. Think Morton's salt. The little girl with the yellow rain coat and umbrella is the only thing that distinguishes Morton's from store-brand salt, yet it commands a price up to 30 percent more.

A brand is a promise - the promise of an experience a customer will have with a product or service. If it's *your name*, the value of the brand goes even deeper; it's your reputation. Similar to a product brand, your personal brand tells the world what they can expect when working with you. Directing your unique personal brand empowers you to achieve levels of success you may have only dreamed about. Personal branding is a powerful but under-utilized tool in marketing oneself to the world.

Given the increasingly competitive business marketplace, developing a strong personal brand is key to differentiating yourself from your competition and attracting positive opportunities.

We all need to manage our reputations – how we are perceived by others and the values they assign us. Perception is reality in the minds of others and can directly affect the opportunities we are given.

Reputation is everything! If you're not managing the way people feel about you, you are leaving your future opportunities to chance. Personal branding is about taking control and marketing your value so others notice!

Lida Citroën is a marketing communications expert who has spent more than 20 years creating corporate brands that stand out from the competition. As a personal branding expert, she brings her wealth of knowledge to the sphere of transformation and empowerment. Her new book, ***REPUTATION 360: CREATING POWER THROUGH PERSONAL BRANDING***, shows readers how their personal brand impacts their value - and how to manage that process for maximum positive impact.

Lida's Online Presence:

Website & Blog

www.LIDA360.com &
www.UnleashingYourBrand.com

Monthly contributor for:

ColoradoBiz Magazine Exclusives
Social Media Marketing Magazine

www.cobizmag.com
www.smmmagazine.com

Social Media:

Twitter

www.twitter.com/#!/LIDA360

Facebook

www.facebook.com/pages/LIDA360/91385978812

LinkedIn

www.linkedin.com/in/lida360

YouTube

www.youtube.com/user/LIDA360

You can also find Lida on:

Plaxo

Jumo

Squidoo

Ning

Flickr

FourSquare

Second Life

REPUTATION 360:

Creating power through personal branding

BOOK ABSTRACT

Lida Citroën

Principal, LIDA360, LLC

Corporate and Personal Branding Expert

Palisades Publishing

Just like you, I have had wonderful opportunities in my life—and many challenges. I've done amazing things that won awards—and I've burned bridges due to careless behavior. I've had a career of creating, becoming, losing and learning, and today I am a reflection of it all.

What I also have, like you, is a reputation. I created some of that reputation through my actions, with little thought. Other aspects I designed intentionally to ensure that the people who matter to me find me valuable and relevant. That's the part I'm here to share with you and teach you how to create.

By picking up this book, you have taken the first bold step: You are officially on the personal branding journey. There will be no turning back, no second-guessing over every choice you make. You will no longer strive for validation from others; you will find confirmation of your decisions within yourself. My hope is that through this book you will find your authentic voice and passion and learn how to effectively and efficiently communicate them to others so they will create powerful opportunities for you.

In my career as a corporate and personal brand strategist and counsel for executives of Fortune 500 companies, I have had the honor and pleasure of helping all kinds of people: leaders in innovative education technology; venture capitalists with a passion for sustainability and impact investing; outspoken advocates for the advancement and empowerment of American adolescents; cancer survivors; disabled U.S. war veterans; coaches; consultants; moms, dads and their college-age kids. My clients aren't celebrities, but they are well known in their respective industries.

They all realize the importance of managing their reputations and building authentic relationships through personal branding. Throughout this book, I will share some of their stories—their struggles and accomplishments—to illustrate how people come to the realization that they need personal branding help and the results they can achieve from

that guidance.

My greatest success has always been in promoting companies, products or people that come from a place of authenticity and genuineness—realness, in other words. A big part of the work I do is to help clients bring forward that authenticity and market it to the right audience.

In this book, I will share my views on personal branding and the processes that will enable you to become the person you are meant to be, to attract the clients and relationships you desire and to draw opportunities to you more easily. Your personal branding journey starts with you and ends with you. In between, we focus on creating an intentional and fulfilling set of action steps that will bring you more joy and wealth and the ability to craft your own legacy.

This book will help you lay the foundation to control, direct and own your reputation. How other people see you directly impacts the value they assign you, and your ability to influence and, in some cases, even manipulate that perception directly affects the opportunities that you're given in your career, your relationships and your life. Owning responsibility for your reputation and managing the way that you're perceived are critical, for you and for any person at any level of business.

Enjoy!

Lida Citroën

Chapter 1: What is personal branding?

Tom Peters introduced us to the concept of the personal brand in an article he wrote in *Fast Company Magazine* in the mid-1970s. The article pointed to the fact that we spend billions and billions of dollars branding corporations, products and services, and yet we don't teach the power of individuals to own their reputations and to create an expectation of experience with their target audience.

Since then, the term *personal branding* has come to mean many things. Some people call personal branding the technique you use to package yourself. Others say it's what public relations professionals do for celebrities to make them marketable as spokespeople. Still others refer to interviewing skills, image consulting and even portrait photography as personal branding.

Most of these descriptions miss the mark. Personal branding is not just about designing "packaging" for yourself or selling yourself as something you are not. Your personal brand is your reputation. It identifies what makes you unique and clearly communicates that uniqueness to an audience that needs you.

A brand is not something you can just put on paper, like a logo or a glossy photo; it has to be expressed in your actions. A brand needs to represent a set of values, promises and expectations and meet those expectations at nearly every step. Branding gives experience to something intangible; it gives names to the qualities I feel when I work or interact with you. Branding is all about feelings and emotions. Unlike marketing, which is when we direct an audience to action (buy now, act fast, use this coupon, call today...), branding sets the emotional expectations and promises between you and your target audience.

Everyone has a personal brand, because we're all known for something. You may not be known for what you want to be known for, but you are known for something. Your

reputation may have been the guiding force behind most of your success to date, or it may have been what has been holding you back from achieving your dreams.

Ultimately, your brand is your legacy. It is the way you are known today, and how you will be remembered when you leave. Your legacy is the most real representation of how you lived, behaved and interacted with others, and how they felt about you.

Chapter 2: Why you need a positive personal brand

As human beings, we instinctively judge people—it's our nature. We are judgmental creatures by DNA. And that judgment is important. For instance, if somebody walks toward you on the street, you must quickly size up whether that person is someone to fear or someone who might need help. Similarly, in a work situation, you need to judge whether your colleagues can keep your confidences and be trusted with sensitive information. Judgment, in this sense, is the instinctual “gut feeling” we have about others, right or wrong.

In forming judgments about those we know we look specifically for what we believe to be “normal” for that person. (This is particularly true in studying body language, which we will discuss a bit later on.) Is that person normally grouchy and arrogant? Is she usually cheerful and upbeat? “Norming” is what enables us to relate to each other in ways that feel safe and predictable. No one can be perfect all the time—we all have bad days. When I see someone I know to be generous, happy and approachable screaming at a checkout clerk in the grocery store, I don't suddenly perceive him to be arrogant, stubborn and loud. Instead, I write his behavior off as him “having a bad day.” On the other hand, if I begin to see that behavior repeat itself, I question my belief about that person and begin to see the new behavior as normal, causing me to see him in a completely different light.

The fact that we judge other people is not a bad thing. But you want to make sure that

you are being judged for your true value and in a way that reflects who you truly are, rather than leave it up to chance. This is what personal branding is all about: ensuring that others see you in a way that is consistent with your values, beliefs and the perception you want to create.

There are many reasons people look to personal branding. Maybe you're looking for a new job and want to be perceived in a certain way. Maybe you're not feeling fulfilled in your work and believe that if others saw and appreciated your value, your work life would improve. Maybe you would like to find new ways of engaging with customers, or maybe you don't know who your customers are. Perhaps you are simply seeking a new and different way of leaving your mark on the world.

When you take the time to define and build the reputation you desire and create your personal brand around your authentic skills and values, your target audience is more likely to know who you are, what you do best and why they need you. Personal branding will help you no matter where you are in life: just graduating from college and starting your career, beginning an entrepreneurial venture or maintaining a well-established business as an accountant, lawyer, decorator or teacher.

Here are some of the reasons to develop a personal brand:

- **You'll live with more authenticity.** Personal branding is about owning your own space, your own voice, and feeling empowered in the uniqueness you bring to the world. For this reason, we always start with authenticity. Authenticity is what makes you *you*. It is the genuine you that sometimes hides because you are unsure, unaware or inhibited. You are not like anyone else. Only you possess the combination of values, skills, beliefs and experiences that make you the person you are. When you can recognize your values (and your weaknesses) and project your authentic self to others, they begin to see you for who you truly are and appreciate the value you contribute to the experience. In turn, you find it takes

less effort to decide how, where and when to engage with others, because you always come from a place of sincerity and genuineness.

- **You'll be distinguished from the competition.** Setting yourself apart from others who might offer similar value allows you to avoid the “commodity sale,” where your audience chooses based on price alone. Here’s an example: If you go to the grocery store looking for laundry detergent and you don’t care about a specific brand—if the brands don’t mean different and compelling things to you, if you consider all laundry detergent to be created equal and expect they will all deliver the same result—how do you choose? Most often, you will buy the least expensive one. Similarly, if you are not seen as unique, different, compelling and relevant to your employer or potential employer, then you leave to chance the possibility that she might choose someone else for a promotion or new job based only on who’s the cheapest to hire. That’s not how any of us wants to compete! We don’t want to be chosen because we’re the least expensive solution among a lineup of options. If that’s the case, we risk always competing in that manner and never moving ahead.
- **You will become known for something.** When you sell something, you must have a firm grasp on what separates it from the others. What is the unique selling proposition? The same goes for people. If you have a strong personal brand, your audience begins to see you as a visionary, leader or collaborator, and you become more valuable. You become visible for qualities you have intentionally designed and put forth through your actions and are no longer just another faceless commodity among many.
- **You'll create an emotional connection with your target audience.** On paper you might look fantastic, but how I feel about you as a person will lead me to hire, promote or buy from you. On the other end of every purchase is a person, a human being. As humans, we act on emotion. Remember the last time you

bought something you didn't need? Often, we purchase something because the emotional side of our brain gets wrapped up in soaking in the experience.

Retailers count on this! They create emotional experiences in their stores—from the edgy, clean, creative feel of an Apple store to the sexy, expensive, exclusive ambience of a BMW showroom—and we're drawn in. We engage and spend when we feel that emotional connection.

Branding is about emotions. It sets the expectation for the emotional benefit our audience will gain from working or being with us.

- **You'll become more focused, more intentional and, therefore, more efficient.** A strong and powerful personal brand lives through intentionally promoting its value at every touch point, from how you interact and engage with others in person (including the words you choose and the way you dress) to the way you present yourself online in social media. This means that before you can project a brand, you first must think about who you are: your goals, your desired reputation, your successes and your challenges. Once you determine these, making decisions on a daily basis becomes infinitely easier, faster and more rewarding.
- **Your target audience will become more evident.** When you build a personal brand, the process requires you to look at the audiences who need to find you compelling and relevant. This focuses your efforts from “anyone who could possibly buy from me” to a targeted group of individuals who understand and want what you have to offer. The foundation for personal branding is based on the ***Laws of Attraction—what you focus on, you will attract***. Theories on the laws of attraction (in the realms of physical science, sociology and psychology) date back to the early 20th century. The basic premise is that if you think positively and with intention, you can manifest greater opportunity than if you dwell in the negative or neglect to think with intention. By taking control and

ownership of your personal brand—your reputation, destiny and legacy—you can begin to attract the people and opportunities that align with your vision. If you neglect your personal brand, you leave to random “luck” what you might attract, positive or negative. If done well, your return on investment (ROI) increases and your effort decreases.

- **You’ll build credibility.** A personal brand allows you to build credibility because the more you’re known for something and the more you fulfill that expectation, the more you build integrity around the promises you make. You can’t sell “trust.” It’s like telling someone you are a good kisser: XXX that’s for the other person to decide, not you. But if you are valued and trusted—if you’ve established credibility—people want to be around you and do business with you. Being trusted by clients, peers and colleagues is critical and is achieved by paying attention to your personal branding and delivering on the promise of that brand at all times.
- **You’ll make it easy for others to offer you opportunities.** When your personal brand is clearly defined, intentionally marketed and targeted to a specific audience, your audience knows just what you stand for and can easily understand how you might help them. Likewise, your audience learns how they can help you.

A brand is a promise of the future. If you have branded yourself and intentionally and consistently positioned that brand, you will receive recognition for your accomplishments and contributions.

CASE STUDIES -- Personal branding in action

The following are sixteen case studies from clients I have worked with in recent years. (Their names have been changed to respect their privacy.) Through our discussions, all these clients found their unique and remarkable selves and learned how to project and market their personal brands in ways that brought them desired opportunities. Their stories are deep and robust, but they certainly do not represent the entirety of our work together; I have taken key elements from their backgrounds to illustrate a point to you in each one. My hope is that you will find some of yourself in their stories.

1. Bob: A CEO with vision and passion... and a heck of a nice guy

Bob is, by all accounts, one of the nicest people you'll ever meet. He is warm, approachable, hospitable and personable. Everyone knew Bob as a "nice guy."

Bob is also CEO of a highly successful technology company that serves children in the education system. Bob is deeply passionate about innovation and is schooled and versed in education technology. He has committed his life to improving the education system in the U.S. and has created numerous technologies and systems currently in place. But at the time his public relations team hired me to help, he wasn't credited with many of them.

The problem was that being known as a "nice guy" didn't reflect what he had accomplished and what made him credible as a formidable "thought leader" in his field.

In redirecting Bob's reputation beyond "nice guy," he and I began with a deep inventory of his brand assets, the things he has done that make him credible as a thought leader in the education industry. After a personal brand audit and brand feedback assessment, we identified specific and compelling opportunities to broaden his exposure, fine-tune his audience focus and begin to target his personal brand in a more intentional way.

The game plan we developed included creating a new vernacular for him to use to articulate his thoughts and position. For instance, I directed him to speak of his work with terminology that could articulate his vision for “disruptive” and innovative technology (e.g., using words like *innovative systems* instead of *processes*), elevate his stature and clue in the audience that he is introducing new concepts, not simply advancing the status quo. While his audience of educators needed to warm up to this new language, they took note of the bold and elevated way he now discussed his vision for change. They noted his increased confidence and the more impressive way he presented himself. (Image consulting and counseling on body language also helped.)

His audience began to see his passion, appearance, tone and style as that of a thought leader and not just a colleague they enjoyed being with. A key moment came for Bob at a large education conference he attended along with peers, vendors, industry leaders and his staff. During a general session presentation, a speaker whom Bob greatly respects pointed to him from the stage and said to the audience of several hundred people, “There, my friends, is a true visionary in our field!” Bob knew then that his personal brand was finally being recognized.

Bob is still a very nice person—the kind of man you’d be fortunate to know and even more fortunate to work with—but he is also becoming known for his expertise, passion and commitment to education technology. He is a sought-after speaker at international events where thought leaders gather. Most important to Bob, he is able to broaden his voice in advocating for education reform and innovation, which is his true calling.

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