

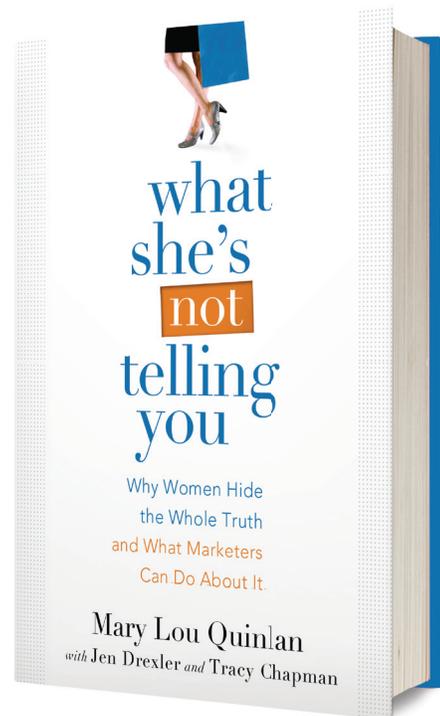
BRAND POWER AND CREATIVE CONTROL

Building Brand Awareness

Differentiation is key for any marketing consultant trying to set themselves apart from the masses, and so is branding. When Mary Lou Quinlan started a marketing consulting firm dedicated to understanding the triggers that make women buy products and believe in brands, she knew the best way to set herself apart from her competition and build a brand of her own was to publish a book. “My goal was to expose our knowledge, create brand awareness, and gain media attention—all of which would fuel my consulting business and help me secure speaking engagements.”

In 2003, Quinlan released her first book, *Just Ask a Woman: Cracking the Code of What Women Want and How They Buy*. When asked what effect the book had on her company, Quinlan replied, “Thanks to the book, we have attained the highest awareness among our relevant competitors and attracted clients and paid speeches. There’s still something powerful about an actual book in a client’s hands versus the electronic white paper or download.”

Since then, Quinlan has published two more books: *Time Off for Good Behavior: How Hardworking Women Can Take a Break and Change Their Lives* in 2007 and her most recent release, through Greenleaf Book Group in 2009, *What She’s Not Telling You: Why Women Hide the Whole Truth and What Marketers Can Do About It*.



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Taking the Reins

Although Quinlan enjoyed her experience with her previous publishers, she also knew she wanted to try the independent publishing route. When asked why, Quinlan answered, “It felt like where the future was headed . . . and I realized that I could contribute meaningfully to the process rather than be in the ‘wait and see,’ ‘be grateful for what you get’ position that can result from busy publishers with much bigger books on their plate.”

Independent publishing also offered other benefits to Quinlan, benefits she couldn’t get from a traditional publishing model. Greenleaf gave her “control as far as the look of the book, the production and cost of the book, and the marketing of the book,” she says. Under the Greenleaf model, Quinlan was able to create her own small press, Just Ask a Woman, and gained complete control over the entire process so that she could develop a product that both maintained her brand integrity and furthered her value proposition in the market.

Above and Beyond

As a frequent speaker, Quinlan also liked the fact that Greenleaf allows its authors to sell books directly to consumers and retain 100 percent of the cover price. As Quinlan notes, “I wanted to feel the satisfaction of making money when I sold books, since I knew we would sell most of them in bulk connected to clients and speeches.” This gave Quinlan the flexibility to sell through retail channels, to sell directly to clients online and at events, and to include the book as a value-added benefit for her speeches and consulting packages.

Quinlan also enjoyed Greenleaf’s personal attention. “I felt like a partner,” she says, and like her “opinions were more integral to the decision-making process” than they had been with previous publishers. With Greenleaf, Quinlan enjoyed “more flexibility as far as schedule when our needs accelerated—and that would be tough with a big publisher who has a complex schedule that can’t be adjusted for one book or event.” Although she appreciated how her experience at Greenleaf was different, she also says, “It’s the way the system was the same that made me enjoy it most—excellent editors, fabulous designers, great account support, terrific end product, and great support and operational staff.”

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Words of Wisdom

When asked what advice she would give to another professional considering writing a book, Quinlan shared the following tips.

- “One, have a clear goal for why you are releasing a book rather than saying, ‘Oh, I always thought I would write a book’ or retaining the misguided idea that there is big money in writing a book. There can be, but it’s in the marketing of the book, not just the fact of having written one.”
- “Two, realize that you are responsible for meeting deadlines and giving good, clear approvals and direction and following up. Any team is only as good as you let them be.”
- “Third, get ready to do some hard work.”
- Quinlan also notes that “there’s great satisfaction in gathering the best of your thoughts into something that lasts, and there can be amazing business results if you are smart about your subject, marketing, and audience.”

Mary Lou Quinlan is an internationally recognized marketing strategist with thirty years’ experience advising blue-chip clients. She is an author, speaker, correspondent for CBS News, and ABC-TV personality. To learn more about Mary Lou Quinlan, visit www.justaskawoman.com.

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