

IMPRESS *ario*

Present and Promote
the Star Within You



SUE CURRIE

"Sue's story is truly inspirational!"

Layne Beachley – Seven-time world champion surfer

"Such a wonderful blend of strategy and storytelling. Don't let another day go by without discovering and uncovering the person you are destined to be so you may feel fulfilled and leave a lasting impression on those around you."

Julie Cross – Motivational speaker

"Sue's uplifting personal story and practical advice will inspire you on your entrepreneurial journey. She has learnt how to overcome and succeed."

Lisa McInnes-Smith – Global keynote speaker

"In a world where brand is key in business intellectual property, Sue's book is a must read for all leaders, entrepreneurs and business startups alike. Not only is this book filled with practical steps, it also considers how to mobilise life's challenges to strengthen you towards the betterment of your future and those around you."

Bernadette Black – CEO and Founding Director, Brave Foundation

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To Danièle and Sandra: the “Mums”.

Steve, a loving father.

Naomi, our daughter and Connor, our grandson.

And to the other main man in my life: Peter, thank you.

Introduction

IMPRESSario – Present and Promote the Star Within You

IMPRESSario is the title of my book which involves a play on the word “impresario”: the producer or director of a theatrical production and the word “impress”. In this book, I focus on how to make an impression, make your mark, and be the person you are destined to be. Through reading IMPRESSario, you will understand how combining these two elements will produce a personal brand and a business that will be successful for you and will fulfil your ambitions.

^Impress – affect, influence, characteristic, mark, imprint, stamp, impression, effect produced on feeling, impress idea on person or the mind.

^Impresario – organiser of public entertainment especially opera or concert, theatrical entrepreneur, producer, press agent and business manager.

In IMPRESSario I also share my own personal journey. Any theatrical production has its share of dramas and IMPRESSario does too as I share my background story. This is the first time I’ve told my story of overcoming the heartache of an early

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teenage pregnancy to eventually reaching the point of achieving a successful career. It is also an account of what I've experienced and observed from others, and about what it takes to succeed on your entrepreneurial journey.

The book is not just about my story. It is also designed to be a practical and useful guide for you. I provide you with tools, tips and plans to implement so you can grow a memorable brand and successful business. My book progresses through three areas: like an opera impresario or theatre director, your path will go from: (1) Behind the Scenes to (2) Preparing for the Role and then on to (3) Showtime.

PART ONE – We take a look **BEHIND THE SCENES** to understanding your personal brand. Who you are, how to get to know yourself a little bit better and understand how you portray your brand image and come across to others. Through practical examples and exercises, you will learn about impression management, including how to understand the perceptions that other people have about you. You will also learn how to explore your personality, characteristics and strengths, as well as how to bring out your star quality.

Most of us face struggles in our daily life that may hinder our progress and prevent us from achieving our goals. In this book, I share my story of sorrow and loss and the realisation that, although your background story contributes to it, it doesn't have to shape your future direction. We've all had stuff happen to us – that's just life.

I also hope to inspire you to have a go, no matter what. You have the opportunity to achieve the business, work or career that you want to create. You can be the *IMPRESSario* of your own life and business.

PART TWO – We PREPARE FOR THE ROLE and review the practical steps you need to take to plan and prepare before you get to realise your production. Rarely does instant success happen. Through many auditions, try outs, being persistent and well prepared you may, after a number of years, become an “overnight success”.

This section also looks at the significant part “costume” plays in presenting and enhancing you as the main character in your production. This is an area I am passionate about and part of my background experience that I want you to appreciate. I discuss the important role visual image plays and how your personal brand is expressed through your own unique style and what you wear.

PART THREE – It’s now SHOWTIME! What does it take to get the show on the road? On the entrepreneurial journey, we’re all in the business of marketing, whether it is ourselves or our business. Very rarely does a major production get noticed unless a marketing and public relations campaign takes place. Knowing how to manage and implement a personal marketing strategy will ensure you gain attention. This section includes a personal brand communication plan to help you stand out from the crowd. With my many years of experience in promoting stars, businesses and personalities, I know what it takes to become known, be seen and be heard.

Having been on an entrepreneurial journey for most of my working life, I wanted to write this book to inspire you to keep going and strive to do what you love doing every day. Most of us change direction many times throughout our working life; sometimes intentionally but often unintentionally. There are peaks and troughs; that’s just life in our working world. Today, many people are forgoing the traditional route of working for

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one or more employers to tread the unknown path of self-employment. Our working life is a lot longer these days and it's fun. So keep going and make your working life an exciting part of what you do.

In my personal experience working with brands and celebrities in a career spanning over thirty years, I have seen many successes and failures. One attribute that has stood out for me is belief. Believing you can do it, you will do it, and that is why you should do it: to be the star you're destined to be will underpin your success. I believe we can all be intentional in our pursuit of a successful business or career.

It is not about ego or being the most impressive person out there. It is about taking a step-by-step approach to creating your own future. Yes, you will make an impact; yes, you will impress; yes, you will create a production which is your personal brand and business if you follow the steps I suggest.

I hope you enjoy reading *IMPRESSario* and I wish you the best in your entrepreneurial journey. Begin now and step into your personal brand of success.

^ Sources of definitions:

The Australian Pocket Oxford Dictionary © Oxford University Press, 1976.

Roget's Thesaurus © Crown Publishers, Inc. 1979

PART ONE

Behind the Scenes

One

A Star is Born

“If you are looking for something, don’t go sit on the seashore and expect it to come and find you; you must search, search, search with all the stubbornness in you!”

– **Constantin Stanislavski**

The year was 1984 and I was about to graduate from the Ensemble Studios acting school after three long years. My fellow thespians and I were gathered in one of the classrooms of the old Independent Theatre in Sydney, where the studio acting classes were being held. There were about twenty of us sitting around in a circle. We’d been together as students for three years, and although we knew each other well, there was a certain amount of trepidation in the room because we were about to be exposed. Not in the literal sense, but our secret, inner self was about to be revealed.

That moment was when I first came across the concept of personal branding, although at the time I had no idea what that meant. My acting course had been a three-year part-time undertaking and was a truly remarkable experience. Yes, at the

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time my goal was to be an actor and I did follow that path for a few years. But everything I learned in that course has since stood me in good stead in my work, career and life today.

An actor's job is to take on a character and portray them as truthfully as possible and, in doing so, make that person believable to the audience.

We studied the Stanislavski Method school of acting and often did exercises where we had to recreate past experiences or use other sensory methods to help us really get into the personality or place of the character we were portraying.

Many actors play character roles and are fabulous at playing parts from a diva to a downtrodden divorcee – just look at Meryl Streep. However, often actors are cast very close to “type”.

In my final year, we undertook this exercise with our classmates to discover more about how we came across to others. The idea was to develop a better understanding of our “type” – what characteristics and traits came through from our own innate personality and what style of role we would be best suited to. This experience occurred more than thirty years ago but it was so powerful that it has remained with me ever since. I still share with clients and in workshop exercises what I discovered during that time.

I clearly remember being in the classroom when our teacher asked us to choose words to describe ourselves; adjectives and phrases that we thought best summed up ourselves and how we came across to others. We were given a few examples of famous actors and we chose words to describe them, such as charismatic and confident. Once we had done that, we made a list of twenty or so of our words. One by one, we were asked to leave the room. It was my turn and I was quite excited to think about all the fabulous things my friends would say about me. But I was in for

a big surprise. Although my very obvious public traits clearly connected with what I had written, there were also words and perceptions from others that were completely new to me. I was quite astonished and a bit upset by some of the perceptions that others had of me.

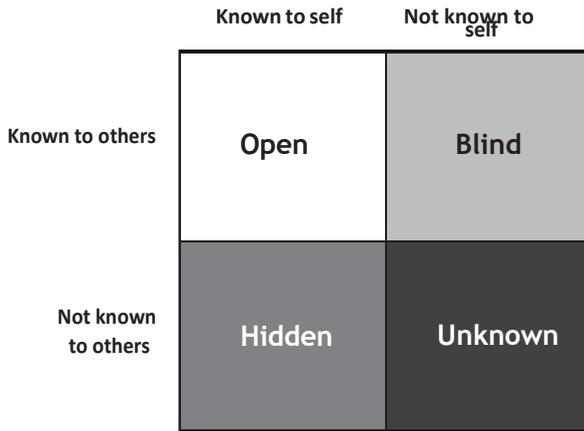
What I didn't realise at the time was that we had performed a simple psychology test using the Johari window. This process was devised by two psychologists Harry Ingham and Joseph Luft (Joe and Harry – Johari) in the 1950s and it forms the basis for many well-known psychometric personality tests and personal branding exercises that are used today.

As an actor, it is important to understand your true personality and to be able to bring out hidden aspects of who you are in order to authentically play a role and portray a character. In life, it is also a valuable tool to understand how we come across to others and what positive aspects of our personality shine through. By being clear about the various aspects of our personality and behaviour, as well as the personal image and reputation that others may have of us, we can start to realise some of our untapped potential.

While I'm not a psychologist, I am very interested in human behaviour and how we manage the impressions we (often unknowingly) share with the world. Therefore, I think the Johari window model is a good tool for making the process of understanding ourselves a little clearer.

Who are you?

The Johari Window



The Johari window model demonstrates four elements of your personality and inner being. The first part is the **Open Self** – the part of you that everyone sees. This is the side of yourself that you show openly to the outside world. This area includes your appearance, hairstyle and grooming; the obvious physical aspects of how you appear. It also includes your visual image: how you style yourself, including which photos of yourself you choose to share. It is the first impression you make and is how others sum you up instantly. It also represents your people skills – how you interact with people, conversational ability, social graces, and your customer and client service. It encapsulates what sort of instant impact you have on others and how people surmise who you are.

The second element of the square is the opposite to your public self. It is the **Hidden Self** – the hidden image. It is the part only you know about and incorporates how you feel about

CHAPTER ONE – A Star is Born

many things and different aspects of your life. Areas to look at here are your attitudes, self confidence level, your past private experiences that you may not want to share, and your anxieties and fears. These are usually the areas you don't want others to know about you. Examining your private inner self also reveals your goals, dreams, hopes and ambitions. Perhaps you haven't realised a secret ambition because your past experiences have led to uncertainty and fear. Taking stock of what your private self is indicating will help to reveal your way forward to becoming the star of your own destiny.

The **Blind Self** – we all have our blind spots, and these fill another quarter of the Johari window model. These are parts of our personality that others see yet we cannot see ourselves. It includes your reputation and what other people think and say about you that you're unaware of. It might be that people perceive you to be a kind and very helpful person but you're not really aware of it because it is your innate nature to help people. This is one lovely characteristic that my husband has. He is always very hospitable and helpful to people but brushes this off by saying, "It's not hard". It isn't to him because that is very much a part of his personality; however, other people struggle to even say something nice.

What do people say about you? In my case, when I was being analysed by my acting school friends, I thought they'd say I was open and friendly. I had written that down on my sheet of paper; however, my acting colleagues had described me as being a bit aloof and mysterious. I didn't realise that "stand offish" was how I came across to others. Maybe you see yourself as shy and a bit quiet, but others see you as lacking in confidence. This window is exciting because it always explores aspects of your personality that you don't already know about yourself.

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I was discussing personal reputation at a briefing with a client and he gave an example of someone in his office who was smart and very good at his job. However, nobody wanted to deal with this person because he was a “miserable guts”. Let’s hope that people don’t say that about you! You want people to be talking about you, but not for all the wrong reasons.

The fourth quadrant of the Johari window is the really exciting part: the **Unknown Self**, which is the untapped potential that is hidden from you and others. This includes all of the things we aren’t aware about ourselves and that we haven’t tapped into.

These parts of yourself may be called into action in a crisis, or they may be brought to life through further self-reflection on your hopes and dreams.

By looking at these four areas, we can start to uncover our true personality and our uniqueness. What is it that makes us special and how can we realise this potential? The ultimate aim of being an *IMPRESSario* is you want to make a name for yourself in whatever domain you choose.

In order to determine who we are and what we want to achieve, the first step is to understand ourselves better. By working with the four areas of our Johari window we can find out what kind of personality and ambitions we have, the impression others have of us, and how we can reach our full potential. Let me give you an example of why it’s a good idea to better understand your blind and unknown selves.

Read more of Chapter One in the complete version of *IMPRESSario*. Purchase Now at www.impressario.com.au

Two

The Script

“Eighty percent of success is showing up.”

– **Woody Allen**

Years ago, famous producer, actor and impresario, Woody Allen made the statement which is often quoted that eighty percent of success is showing up. Many people have an ambition to become a star, a writer or be a success in their career; however, often it is simply a wish and they don't follow through and do the thing that they want to accomplish. It isn't always the most talented, beautiful or gifted person who succeeds. It is the one who has a go! What is holding you back? Is it fear of failure or fear of success? There's generally something standing in the way. For many people, it is their background story that has either pushed them to succeed or to just accept the status quo and to not bother to attempt anything new or different.

Every good play or movie has a script ... and so does life. There's heroes and villains, tragedy and triumph, romance and heartache. Mix that all together with scenery, costumes, a

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musical score and action scenes and a wonderful story starts to unfold. The story may just meander along and never really go anywhere. Or it may not excite any audience. Is that your story? Can you rewrite your story and put behind you the tragedy, villains or heartache to emerge triumphant and live the rest of your life fulfilling your potential? Of course, there may be more dramas to unfold – that's just life!

Unlike performing in a play, you do not have to research the background character. By now you will have a fairly good understanding of who that person is as part of your life story has already been written. We have backgrounds to our personal life that often determine our outcome. Many people have a story that they'd rather forget because it has shaped them in such a way that it now seems impossible to overcome. We all make decisions every day and sometimes they are the wrong ones. Nevertheless, we can move forward from whatever happened in our past and forge ahead in a new and more positive direction. As life goes on, there's usually something to deal with – whether it is a major setback such as the loss of a spouse or parent at a young age; overcoming a painful divorce or abusive relationship; or being born with a disfigurement or physical disability. Sometimes it might be something seemingly insignificant at the time (such as a negative comment from a teacher) that holds you back from reaching your true potential. You can change the script. It is not what happens to you, it is what you do about it.

I can only speak from my own experience and share my personal story ...

My story

It was a Saturday morning and I had just flown into Armidale in regional New South Wales. My head was pounding ...

Read more of **Chapter Two – The Script** in the complete version of *IMPRESSario*. www.impressario.com.au

Chapter Three – Star Quality. If you want to stand out at work, in your business or even in your social life, having appeal and charm will set you apart from the rest of the pack. What is charisma and how do we achieve it?

Chapter Four – The Rehearsal. Performing a role or playing your part in the game of life is about making your own luck which, in turn, eventuates as a result of doing the work.

Chapter Five – The Costumes. What sort of image do you want to portray? You can use costumes to enhance your own personal brand and style, and paint a picture of the person you want others to see you as.

Chapter Six – The Production. In this production, you are everything: the producer, the writer, the director, the costume designer, the art director and creator of the vision.

Chapter Seven – Marketing You. A self-marketing campaign, if implemented with intent, will help you – the individual and *IMPRESSario* – to become top of mind with your audience.

Chapter Eight – Publicist to the Star. There are a variety of tactics incorporated in a comprehensive marketing or PR campaign. However, publicity and social media coverage gained through the extremely influential vehicle of media can really catapult you to stardom.

Chapter Nine – The Show Must Go On. Perhaps your years of training have helped you to land a stage role. Or your start-up organisation or business expertise is beginning to shine through. Now is not the time to back away.

Conclusion

Keep shining

Congratulations on taking the first step in presenting and promoting the star within you. Having completed reading *IMPRESSario*, you will have a better understanding and an outline of the steps you need to take to develop your personal brand and stand out in business. So now it's over to you ...

My wish is that you don't just read this book; rather, that you follow through with the actions outlined in the exercises and heed the advice I have put forward. I truly believe that taking a detailed step-by-step approach to building your brand and business will be a sure-fire way for you to gain the success you desire. You don't have to be a carbon copy of someone else – you have what it takes to cultivate the best version of you. Delve deep to uncover the authentic, real, engaging and inspiring you, and shine brightly.

Plans don't always go the way we hope, of course. But if you do stay on course and keep referring to the process I have outlined in *IMPRESSario*, then even if you do go off track from time to time, you will eventually reach a satisfying outcome.

CONCLUSION

I hope my book inspires you as an entrepreneur or woman in business to take a confident stand, showcase your personal best and shine. And to encourage those of you who may be harbouring past negative experiences and limiting your success by “getting in your own way”. I also hope that my words will serve to bolster up-and-coming entrepreneurs. Most long-term success is achieved by those who persevere, and who are able to pick themselves up and start all over again, regardless of what happens.

I’d love to make a difference to you and your future so that you become an *IMPRESSario*. My long-term goal is to spread the word of personal branding to thousands of people through my book, and through my consulting and speaking business. If you have been inspired to learn more and take further action, then please get in touch. You can read more about my programs at www.suecurrie.com.au

I hope you have enjoyed reading this sample. For the complete version purchase at www.impressario.com.au

About the Author

Sue Currie is a businesswoman, speaker, author, consultant, educator and media personality. She is widely recognised as being an authority on personal branding to boost people's image, brand and business.

Sue is the founder and leading light behind Shine Academy; providing education, consulting and professional development training on personal branding and public profile solutions to help businesses and entrepreneurs position themselves and present an influential professional brand.

Sue Currie knows that any business involves more than just delivering a message. It is about really living it ... and she *walks her talk*. Sue has spent many years in the public eye – on camera, on the platform and behind the scenes. From an early start as a fashion model and TV presenter, to Vice President of PR and Communications in a corporate environment, and finally to running her successful consulting business, Sue's whole career has been about helping others to enhance their image, and build their reputation, credibility and recognition, by harnessing personal and professional public relations skills in order to shine.

As a result of her media profile, practical experience and business success, Sue is considered to be a leading authority on personal branding, having worked with hundreds of clients in the areas of keynote speaking, professional development training and public image consultancy. Her client list ranges from Top 100 Companies, to leading Associations and SMEs.

Sue has appeared on *Sky News Business*, in magazines and newspapers such as *Business Review Weekly*, *Vogue*, *Cleo*, *Marketing Magazine*, *Dynamic Business*, *Daily Telegraph*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Age* and on Qantas QRadio.

Sue aims to inspire entrepreneurs and women in business to take a confident stand, showcase their personal best and shine in business.