

RELEASE

June 2009

Elsie identifies a new trend: the “feminization – not womanization – of business” in PERSONAL BRANDING magazine.



The Evolution of the Feminine Brand Judy Martin

Legendary gossip columnist Liz Smith fell victim to the budgetary ax at *The New York Post* in February. The 86-year old continues to write her nationally syndicated column and has a substantial web presence. Smith lent her name or “personal brand” to *Women on the Web (WoW)* as one of its founders. The popular site tackles everything from fashion to politics through the female lens.

Smith is practically an institution. At WoW, she is joined by the likes (and brands) of Lesley Stahl, Whoopi Goldberg and Miss Manners - Judith Martin. Their voices are respected and ideals transparent. There’s a page on the site entitled, *Change the World* (<http://www.wowowow.com/change-the-world>). And that, says branding expert Elsie Maio, is just one illustration of how the power of the feminine brand has evolved through the internet.



“The feminization of business is upon us. I don’t mean womanization, but the ascendance of values that our culture has associated with the Feminine,” says the Founder and President of Maio & Company, a business strategy and branding company which coined the term “soulbranding.” “The Feminine’s natural impulse is to nurture, care for and include the collective,” says Maio, adding that women are no longer afraid to publically embrace those values, talk about them and associate them with their brand.

“Compartmentalizing our humanity is what got us into trouble, integration is the key and you see it in women’s branding trends.” Eileen Tanne of WomensEducationCenter.com agrees that the strategic branding of women is evolving. Tanne has marketed to women for more than 16 years and has worked with *Ms. Magazine* and Gloria Steinem. “Generations ago, professional women had a very tough time branding themselves partly because they were uncomfortable with self-promotion,” Tanne says, adding that the male dominated media venues made it difficult to have a strong voice; not so any longer. “The internet offers women the opportunity to control how we want to be perceived and how our voices are heard.”

The female brand in particular, is getting a jolt from the increase in women owned businesses, says Barbara Litrell, former publisher of *Working Mother* magazine. “Women have been running businesses in great numbers since the 1970’s, but they are branding themselves more confidently now, as they support one another in partnerships, thus enhancing their own brands.” Ultimately, branding is now about presence, platform and personality, says Kim Weiss, the Communications Director for book publisher Health Communications Inc. “Women tend to be personality driven and appeal to the personal part of their audience,” says Weiss who says women are taking their personal stories to the internet generating more interaction.

Case in point, the use of strategic social media fueled by a dynamic heart wrenching story led to the successful branding of HCI author Laurie Perri, who blogs at the highly popular <http://CrazyAuntPurl.com>. “Everyone is hanging their shingle out, but no one’s going to click on you unless you give them a good reason to,” says Weiss.

Judy Martin is an Emmy award-winning broadcast journalist. She has emerged as a reporter and public speaker who gives an objective voice to social concerns, business news and the delicate balance of living and working with purpose, in an era of great uncertainty and chaos. Judy blogs at <http://worklifenation.com>.

May 2009 | Personal Branding Magazine p 23

SM Soulbranding, Soulbrand are service marks of Maio and Company, Inc 1997-2009

Maio and Company, Inc 501 Madison Avenue 14fl NYC 10022 USA 212 505 0404 soulbranding.com