

PRAISE FOR *CONTROL THE NARRATIVE*

Lida Citroën is able to help you merge the perception of who you are to yourself with who you are to the world in a completely authentic and genuine way. She has shown me, and many of our CEOs, how to take control of our reputation. Through this book, she shares the strategies and tactics needed to make it happen for anyone. This will be added to the must-read list for all our investees and clients. This is needed, relevant and usable information in today's world.

Kevin Custer, Founding Partner, Arc Capital Development

Control the Narrative is the summation of Lida Citroën's extensive work in reputation management and personal branding, working across many countries and for many years. This is a must-read for anyone looking to increase their visibility, value and impact.

Debra Fine, keynote speaker, trainer and bestselling author

One of the most valuable skill sets for a successful executive is their ability to control the narrative both internally and externally. *Control the Narrative* is Lida Citroën's best book yet! She has an uncanny ability for teaching executives how to build a strategy around reputation that will produce successful outcomes.

Myron Pincomb (CAS), CEO, International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards

A strong personal brand is essential if you want to stand out and get noticed in today's business marketplace. In *Control the Narrative*, Lida Citroën shows you exactly what it takes to discover, design and deploy an effective brand and reputation management strategy. If you want others to recognize your talents and unique contributions, read this book.

Dorie Clark, author of *Reinventing You* and executive education faculty, Duke University Fuqua School of Business

If you are tempted to think that personal branding is about having a nice website, a polished résumé and lots of followers on social media, stop and read this book. Personal branding is deeply rooted in your own values. Lida Citroën takes you on an amazing journey of discovering them and using them as a foundation for your unique personal brand, which will stay with you. A great read that will change the way you are seen by others and by yourself.

Jacek Ławrecki, International Communications Executive

When I need advice about personal branding, I call Lida Citroën. In *Control the Narrative*, she deftly shares her expertise in a way that we can all access. Lida shares real-world examples from leaders she has coached, which brings the book to life. She also sets out clear actions we can all take to invest in our personal brands. This is a must-read for any professional looking to leverage their career.

Morag Barrett, CEO, SkyeTeam, and author of *Cultivate: The Power of Winning Relationships* and *The Future-Proof Workplace*

As a millennial, LinkedIn is second nature to me, but Lida Citroën explained to me how to control the optics of social media to land my first sales position. Later, and through the hard work of personal brand strategy (with Lida), I secured an opportunity to lead and establish a market-disrupting sales team. If you are on the front line of your career, like me, harnessing your personal brand is effort you need to invest immediately by reading *Control the Narrative*!

Whitney Hake, Senior Vice President, Transwestern

Lida Citroën's stellar analysis of all the factors needed to compete in a post-COVID-19 world is an essential read for anyone looking to leverage their talents and get ahead. Individuals can no longer bank on a decent education and a strong résumé; they must be deliberate and intentional when thinking about their narrative. If they are not, then they could be left behind.

Jamie McLaughlin, Founder and CEO, Monday Talent

Control the Narrative

*The executive's guide to building, pivoting and
repairing your reputation*

Lida Citroën



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

After a 20-year career in corporate America, helping build the brands of global companies, services firms and non-profit organizations, Lida Citroën launched her firm, LIDA360, LLC in 2008. She set out to leverage her many years of experience helping global brands build, restructure and manage crisis in their reputation to now helping individuals. Her work as a reputation management and brand specialist is focused on facilitating international executives, professionals and entrepreneurs to position themselves more thoughtfully, pivot their reputation to new careers, and repair their image and reputation in complex marketplaces. Her clients come from every corner of the globe—from the United States to Spain to Poland, Argentina, Qatar, Singapore, Australia, Ireland and everywhere in between. She is internationally regarded as a leading authority on personal branding and positioning, online and in person.

As an award-winning speaker, keynote presenter and trainer, Citroën helps global audiences uncover the power of their narrative, find their compelling voice and value, and position themselves to a specific target audience. She routinely conducts in-person and virtual workshops, presentations and speeches for corporations, associations and non-profits, leveraging the personal branding message to align leaders with organizational values.

In 2011, Citroën published her first book, *Reputation 360: Creating power through personal branding*, which was immediately touted as a go-to guide for individuals looking to build and grow their reputation and brand.

In collaboration with LinkedIn Learning, Citroën created numerous instructional courses sharing aspects of personal branding and reputation management across multiple market sectors. Her courses range from “Creating Your Personal Brand” to “Repairing Your Reputation,” “Having an Honest Career Conversation with Your Boss,” “Reputation Risk Management,” “Internal Interviewing” and

others. Additionally, two of her courses are focused on veterans in career transition, and the employers who seek to hire them.

A civilian, Citroën has a deep personal passion for serving military veterans and has donated thousands of hours of coaching, writing and speaking to empower service members and veterans with the tools of personal branding to ensure their smooth and meaningful transition to the civilian sector. In 2015, Citroën published *Your Next Mission: A personal branding guide for the military-to-civilian transition*, which also gained attention from the human resources community which struggled to hire, onboard and retain former military. In 2016, her powerful TEDx Talk, “The power of gratitude and generosity—serving those who serve,” brought attention to the important issues veterans face when leaving the military. In 2017, Citroën published her third book, *Engaging with Veteran Talent: A quick and practical guide to sourcing, hiring, onboarding and developing veteran employees*, a guide for human resources professionals seeking terminology, best practices and understanding of the military veteran job applicant. Citroën’s fourth book, *Success After Service: How to take control of your job search and career after military duty* (Kogan Page, 2020), provides a comprehensive roadmap for service members readying to exit the military, and those who’ve separated recently. Full of examples, case studies and exercises, *Success After Service* released to great enthusiasm in the military community.

Citroën is featured often for her reputation management and personal branding work in leading media outlets, including the UK *Guardian*, Bloomberg, *New York Post*, *Handelsblatt*, MSNBC, CBN Television, US News, NBC News, Access Hollywood, Hallmark Channel, *Entrepreneur*, Military.com, *Military Times*, *CEO Magazine* and numerous other media, podcasts and websites.

She received her bachelor of arts degree in political science from Pomona College in Claremont, California, and is the recipient of several awards for her executive coaching work and community leadership.

PREFACE

I grew up in Hollywood, California, an area known for being the entertainment capital of the world and where movies, television shows, celebrities and all things glittery come from. Everywhere around me were symbols of the glamour and mystique of the entertainment industry: Restaurant servers hoping to be discovered by talent scouts, celebrities signing autographs for adoring fans, and residents keeping up with the latest fashion trends to impress their neighbors. Many of my childhood friends were child actors, sometimes missing lessons or study hall to attend important acting auditions. Some even went on to become notable contributors to theater, film and television, leaving their mark in permanent and memorable ways. While I was not interested in a career in acting, later in life I'd realize how influential the entertainment industry would be on my career and life's work.

I attribute much of what I learned about managing reputation—from understanding how the optics of a situation influence beliefs, to crafting messaging and assessing the value of perception—to growing up in an environment focused on relevancy and image. If an actor's latest movie was a blockbuster success, they appeared on every talk show and radio program. They'd be photographed for the cover of magazines, could get seated at the best table at the best restaurants with no reservations, and the price for their performance in the next movie skyrocketed. They were considered a hot commodity by the powers that be. On the contrary, if a movie flopped, or a television show wasn't renewed, an actor could suffer long-term career challenges. There was also a risk called "becoming typecast," where an actor played a certain type of role (for example, a character in a long-running series or sequence of movies). If the role was successful, opportunities flowed. If not successful, opportunities could dry up and their reputation could be seen as too closely attached to the role

they'd played which, in the minds of others, could be hard to disconnect from in future roles.

As a young adult, I recall dating a promising actor. Over dinner one night he said something that further shaped my perception of the industry and how it would apply to other careers as well. "As an actor, I spend my life playing the roles of other people," he told me. "In order to ever make a name for myself, I have to first pretend to be other people and get audiences to love me." Later, what struck me about his comment was that many professionals do the same thing outside of the entertainment industry: We believe that to be relevant and compelling we must first show up as other people, playing roles written by others, fulfilling expectations as we believe them to be, not necessarily as they are. What challenges this must bring, I thought.

As I grew my career in business, I encountered situations where I felt disingenuous and where I saw others acting in inauthentic ways. I saw people spending more than they could afford on clothing, jewelry and cars to impress others, professionals overstating their qualifications or professing to be passionate about a career path when they really weren't, and networking relationships that provided no substance and benefit, but were promoted as "rewarding" by one party. I was confused why I'd fall victim to behaving this way myself, feeling the pressure to be someone I wasn't and surrounding myself with people who acted the same way. Why were we all running at a pace that wasn't sustainable, trying to be someone we weren't, and failing to understand who we were and what we could offer the world and our community?

My career in the corporate arena spanned 20 years. I held titles of marketing director, business development executive, public relations specialist and branding expert. I was afforded wonderful opportunities to build, promote and scale some of the world's most notable and influential brands in industries such as consumer products, law, community investment, financial services and more. As I worked to amplify the brands and positioning of these companies and products, I found myself constantly coaching and guiding the front-line leadership team on their own positioning to ensure alignment with company goals. I was, in a way, helping to script their messaging for

consistency with the values and objectives we promoted as a company, and they were, in fact, the actors in the process.

When the market crashed in 2008, many of us at the executive level found ourselves dusting off our résumés. I'd left a large non-profit organization where I'd led marketing, branding, public relations and positioning and I was tired of doing that work for big companies. A casual conversation with a colleague pointed out that what I was truly passionate about was helping people build their brand. The light bulb went off and LIDA360 was born. In the first years of building the company, I realized how vital it was to build my own brand—after all, my name was in the name of the company. I promoted personal branding and reputation management services to an international audience of professionals and executives who, because of the state of the global market at the time, were desperately trying to keep their job, find a job or find a better job. Fortuitously, my business timing couldn't have been better.

Building a brand for myself and my business required I lean fully into the beliefs, processes and training I would share with others. When I tell a client this work is hard and emotional, I can speak from first-hand experience, having done my own branding work! I evaluated my values, took inventory of my current reputation and brand, and set my vision for the future. It was through this work that “gratitude” and “generosity” emerged as words I'd not only lived by, but through which I'd create the vision for my career going forward. It's no wonder, then, that in 2009, at a Denver Broncos football game, I learned of the situation veterans face as they transition from a career of military service and enter the civilian sector. At that game, on that chilly fall day right before Veterans Day, I discovered a community that would become a huge part of my professional and personal focus.

Since 2009, I've worked closely alongside military and government organizations, private companies, veterans' groups and individual service members who all sought to understand this concept of personal branding to gain competitive advantage and feel in control of the opportunities they attracted. I've spoken to thousands of transitioning service members and veterans about the civilian work

experience and how to position themselves effectively, and have trained hundreds of hiring managers, recruiters and employment specialists on the value of hiring and developing veteran employees.

In the years since launching my company, I've learned many things about how personal branding works, why executives focus on stature to promote their image, how fragile reputations are and what we need to do as good consumers of information regarding how we judge others. Personal branding sets the individual on a path that is full of self-actualized discovery, intention and strategy about how, where, when and why to show up a certain way with a certain audience. Without this focus, opportunities and challenges feel random and abstract and individuals may feel powerless over their careers.

And, I've learned how reputations can be destroyed in the blink of an eye or the tap of a keystroke. I never actually considered, as I read the news and heard of business leaders' indiscretions, or someone's infractions that caused them to suffer reputation damage, how commonplace this crisis was. I knew there were two sides to every story yet assumed the person had done something wrong. Having since worked with many clients who've found themselves in this predicament, I know now that someone doesn't have to do something wrong to be accused publicly and face scrutiny that follows them the rest of their career. Most importantly, I've learned that judgment is real and normal and painful. We judge without thinking. We assume without knowing, and we can hurt without intending.

I've been fortunate to be very busy working in the field of personal branding, which I am extremely passionate about. Whether I'm speaking to an audience of business leaders, advising CEOs of global companies or leading workshops of recent college graduates, my work rarely feels like work. I am one of those people who truly loves what she does. I see clients and audiences experience the spark of realization that they can direct their reputation, gain control over their career, and be more intentional about the relationships they seek and commit to. I've helped some of the most remarkable entrepreneurs launch businesses that will positively change the world, helped professionals speak to their communities with more authenticity, humility and clarity than they ever had before, and received the

heartfelt notes from service members, deployed in combat zones, who are inspired and confident because a book I wrote makes them feel empowered. To say I get to live my ideal career every day would be an understatement.

In writing this book, I share stories, lessons, experiences, best practices and tools gained over many years for you to learn from. When I describe a client scenario, I have changed their name and some of the irrelevant information to protect my client's identity. The work I do is often deeply personal and very confidential, and while their stories are important, their actual names are not. I'll also give you my own experiences in this book and won't hold back, because some of it wasn't easy, pretty or painless. Living a life of congruity with your values is a process of self-discovery, assessment and goal-setting. When done correctly, the rewards are plentiful. My hope is that you find your journey in the stories and methodology contained here and see how your life and career can be enriched by controlling the narrative as you build, pivot or repair your reputation.

