



Jon Capriola, founder of **Capriola Corp.**, is a **serial inventor** and the **brains behind Laser Pegs**, an illuminated construction-toy set. He's the **author** of *Making Ideas a Reality*, a self-explanatory title based on his company's trademarked logo. He's the featured writer in this month's *First Person* section. He's big on asking "what if?" questions. Find out why on Page 22. Visit www.laserpegs.com

The year was 1996. **Steve Fretzin**, then 25, was a passenger in a rented plane when it crash-landed upside down at 75 miles per hour into a house in Crystal Lake, Ill. Since surviving the incident, Steve, **president of Sales Results**, says he made a conscious choice to help others. He helps readers navigate the sometimes bewildering world of social networking on Page 24.



Jennifer Adkins is our **West Coast editor-at-large**.

She's previously regaled us with stories about the *Prototype This* television show and Vanna Bonta, the inventor-entrepreneur whose team is competing in the Northrop Grumman Lunar Lander Challenge. This month, she takes us inside the classroom of Jonathan Schwartz, a math teacher who shows kids how to invent.

Visit www.jennycapp.com

Edie Tolchin, aka "The Sourcing Lady," is an **international trade consultant** with 35 years of experience, a **licensed U.S. customs broker**, and **co-author** of *Sourcing Smarts: Keeping it Simple with China Sourcing and Manufacturing*. Edie is a regular contributor. This month, she reviews *Celebritize Yourself - The Three Step Method to Increase Your Visibility and Explode Your Business*. Visit www.egtglobaltrading.com



WHO WANTS TO BE A CELEBRITY?

CELEBRITIZE YOURSELF – THE THREE STEP METHOD TO INCREASE YOUR VISIBILITY AND EXPLODE YOUR BUSINESS

BY EDIE TOLCHIN

Surely almost everyone who reads *Inventors Digest* has dreamed of being a celebrity – of fame and fortune – at some point during the development of their inventions. Whether as a child you were making Oscar acceptance speeches in front of your dolls, or recently reflected what type of celebration you'll plan when your product reaches the milestone of having sold a million units – this book is for you.

Celebritize Yourself – The Three Step Method to Increase Your Visibility and Explode Your Business, the brainchild of Marsha Friedman, is the complete how-to guide for getting yourself out there and creating a niche for yourself while playing with the big kids and seeking the big bucks.

Friedman is CEO of EMS Incorporated, a PR firm she's managed for the past twenty years. Representing diverse corporations and private clients in a variety of fields, Ms. Friedman has worked with the likes of Jimmy Hoffa, Jr., Sergeant's Pet Care Products, and Motown's famous group, The Temptations.

Celebritize Yourself is filled with numerous inspirational blurbs – or true pearls of wisdom, if you will – in the form of words of encouragement, throughout each chapter to help summarize, in a few sentences, what you've just read in preceding paragraphs, such as "Celebritize Yourself Fact: Transitioning from civilian to author acts as training wheels for your new celebrity."

Without revealing too much of the book, Friedman promotes a three-step method for achieving celebrity: "Step 1: Write! Step 2: Speak! Step 3: Sell!"

The emphasis is on promoting yourself via TV, talk radio shows, and by using magazines and newspapers to your advantage – using the media to market your specialty. And, the one thing you must do before you become a celebrity is to write a book. You need to show that you are an expert in your field or with your invention. Friedman takes you through all the steps necessary to make an educated choice on what to write, how to write and of course, when to write. When

the book's done, then you have to promote it, whether via radio, television, newspapers or magazines. Now you have to prove it. This book helps you sell yourself – or your brand – or your invention.

Q&A WITH EDIE G. TOLCHIN AND MARSHA FRIEDMAN

EGT: Please tell us a little about yourself and your background – and what made you decide to write this book.

MF: I've been in public relations for more than 20 years, working first in the financial industry and then moving into my own agency where I've helped promote just about every kind of business known to man, including mass consumer products (with Bristol Myers), natural health products, Web sites, books and even movie producers (with current client Michael E. Uslan, executive producer of the *Batman* franchise of films). Friends and clients had been after me for years to write a book, but I didn't because I didn't feel I had anything new to contribute. But over the last few years, I saw this phenomenon of experts from a wide range of fields using their expertise to become celebrities in the mainstream, and I saw how much of what I did for my clients played into that trend. Now, I had something to say.

EGT: The majority of our readers are innovators in one way or another. So, how is your book relevant to inventors looking to become successful with the next, greatest 'widget'?

MF: Truth is perception, and the heart and soul of public relations is the ability to communicate your message in a variety of forums so that the audience not only understands your vision, but subscribes to it and is inspired by it. Invariably,

those who invent can show their passion, but may have a difficulty in articulating it. My book spells out a strategy and a variety of methods that can help them find their way, so they can marry their passion to their message and find a way to get people on board with their ideas. In the process, they will be building their "brand" as a credible inventor.

EGT: If an inventor is looking to 'celebritize' – but only has one invention – are you really saying that this novice inventor must write a book (as in your Step 1)? How can they find a niche even with just one invention or without writing a book?

MF: There is an old lesson a journalist once taught me – the difference between telling a story and showing a story. A reporter writes "It was a terrible fire." Okay, he's telling me a story, and I guess I'll take his word for it. Or, he could write in a way that "shows" me the story, "The flames shot 30 feet into the air, breaking every window in a three-block radius. The heat forced an evacuation of a five-block area and it took three pumpers to put the fire out." Wow – that was a terrible fire. The moral of that story? It doesn't matter the number of inventions an inventor might have. The only thing that matters is that inventor's passion, and how they relate their story to others. I recently represented a podiatrist who came up with a simple footpad to help relieve pain from Morton's Toe, a rather common foot ailment. He didn't even want to manufacture the pad, but rather, he showed people how to buy a \$2 over the counter foot pad and cut it into the exact pieces and shape necessary to treat the problem. And he wrote a book about it. The point of the book isn't to sell books, but rather, to brand yourself and help get attention for the thing you really want to sell – you.

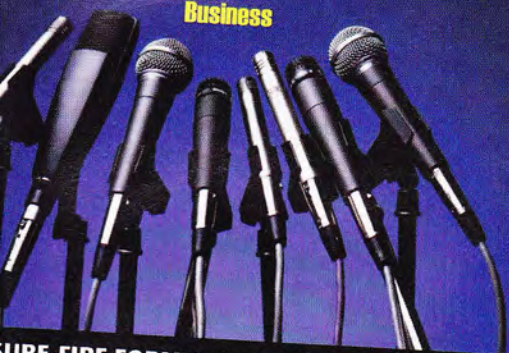
I sense the other part of this question has to do with making the effort to write a book to show your story. Well, how badly do you want it? If it's not worth writing a book to get your idea

MARSHA FRIEDMAN

CELEBRITIZE YOURSELF

Founder of The Celebritize Yourself Method

The
Three Step Method
to Increase
Your Visibility
and
Explode Your
Business



"SURE-FIRE FORMULA FOR SUCCESS." Al Ries

in front of the people who could buy it, help you sell it, or market it, then perhaps it might be time to go back to the day job. Those with passion for what they are doing won't be daunted by the task of writing their passions down for everyone to see.

EGT: Any final advice for our readers? Why should they buy your book?

MF: I want people to understand that the term "celebrity" is not just reserved for movie stars anymore. People from all walks of life have risen up to become media darlings. Rachael Ray worked the candy counter at Macy's. Martha Stewart wasn't born a mogul – she had to work her way up to do it. The "Dog Whisperer" was a family vet who had been working in his neighborhood with animals since he was 13. All of these people have something in common with everyone who reads my book – at one point in time, they weren't celebrities, either. ■

Visit www.marshafriedman.com or
www.celebritizeyourself.com

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I always heard it took a lot of money to bring a product to market and never understood why. Whatever you think it will cost, you have underestimated by half of what it will actually cost. Whatever you think you will sell, you actually will sell half of that.

Reaching out to the bigger buyers has been very challenging. I have found they prefer to use a select group of salespeople and finding that select group has been hard. Being a single-product company is also a hurdle. Some big buyers don't want to deal with a company that only has one product. They are accustomed to dealing with companies that have multiple products and there are costs involved every time they set up a new company as a vendor.

What I've enjoyed most is going to trade shows and meeting buyers and other exhibitors. I love getting in front of people and talking about Slow Cooker Mate.

My biggest disappointment has been Internet sales, which I expected to be higher. I concentrated a lot on the Web site. In retrospect, I would have been more focused on brick-and-mortar sales. I would have put a marketing package together to be sent to stores earlier in the year. And I would have spent more time researching names of buyers at stores to send the package to.

Would I do it all over again? Absolutely yes! The last year has been an incredible journey. I have done things that I did not know I was capable of doing. I never thought I would have the personal strength to make the decisions I have made this year. As a first time product-to-market inventor, there isn't anyone there to guide you and help you along. It is you, alone.

As I look ahead, I can see a lot of obstacles, but I realize I have the strength and courage to overcome anything put in my path. There will always be another mountain. It will be up to me to decide if I will go over, around or just simply move it out of my way! ■