

HARRIET LEVINE

STUART LEVINE & ASSOCIATES LLC



Harriet Levine, Founder and President of Stuart Levine & Associates LLC and member of the NYU Stern Alumni Council, received her MBA from NYU Stern. Professor Priya Raghubir asked Harriet about her time at Stern and her experiences post-graduation.

What made you pursue your chosen career in Marketing? Who or what are your influences?

I was a combined studio art and economics major in college. My Stern MBA in Marketing allowed me to land my first job at Benton & Bowles, one of the leading agencies, which enabled me to apply my financial disciplines to a creative industry which I was always drawn to.

I was fortunate to grow up in a family of several great entrepreneurs who either started their own companies and served as my role models. My great uncle, Stanley Picker, was a marketing genius who went to Harvard and then moved to England and founded Mary Quant cosmetics. My other great uncle was the founder of Wet-Nap, so I grew up with men of great vision, purpose and accomplishment. My father always said I could accomplish anything I wanted, so there were no barriers in my thinking or support systems.

What has been your favorite part of your roles and/or being in the marketing industry?

When working at J. Walter Thompson, I was on the team that introduced the Kodacolor VR 100, 200, 400 and 1,000 speed films for greater sharpness. I typically spent four days a week in Rochester, NY. My client was William (Bill) Campbell, a former football coach and business leader who was passionate, driven and beyond smart. He later went on to become Apple's VP

of Marketing and continues to serve on Apple's Board of Directors. Working for him stimulated and inspired my thinking.

I later had the opportunity to get to know Burt Manning, former JWT Chairman and advertising legend. That was a huge honor. It's the relationships I made with highly creative and talented people that were formative to my thinking about work and success.

My favorite role was when I started our own firm, Stuart Levine & Associates, and was responsible for the creation and marketing of our best-selling book, *The Six Fundamentals of Success* (Random House 2004). Having it become a *Wall Street Journal* business best-seller was a great accomplishment. Driving marketing led to *The Today Show* appearances to promote the book.

You've been instrumental in the success of three best-selling books, in 30 languages, including *The Six Fundamentals of Success* and *Cut to the Chase*. How did you get involved? What common denominators are there?

When my husband, Stuart R. Levine, was CEO of Dale Carnegie & Associates, I worked with him on developing the content for *The Leader in You* as the aggregator of 10,000 pages of transcript, and working with Simon & Schuster to help create the final manuscript, which was a great success. Once we knew we could collaborate together, it made sense to bring two additional leadership books to the market on our own. We had significant leadership expertise, content to share, and an understanding of the publishing world and how to gain traction through effective marketing. It was a huge investment of both financial capital and time, but provided us with a very expensive, but valuable calling card for our business.

The common denominators were having a great product, understanding customer needs, providing value and developing a sustainable entrepreneurial business model. Also the will to work 24/7 through sheer grit and the will to win!

What advice would you offer to young scholars about to start their academic careers?

Understand what you are naturally good at and have a passion for. Trust your instincts. Continuous learning is a lifelong habit so build it into your life, just like staying healthy. Learn how to build relationships and put your best foot forward every day. Every day is an opportunity and a gift, so stay hungry and make it count!

What is your fondest memory of Stern?

Being in the company of smart professors and students. The perspectives I gathered in those interactions increased my confidence in my ability to plan a great future in the world of commerce that would fulfill my passions and make a difference to the clients we serve.

What has been the most unexpected gain Stern has given you?

When I first interviewed straight out of Stern, I got job offers from every advertising agency to which I applied. That was incredible. I ran a full-press marketing campaign to every CEO in the industry. Having a prestigious business degree from Stern has provided me with ongoing confidence to compete in the world and provides respect from people, including one's own children!

Stern also gave me the confidence to become an entrepreneur – founding two companies – Stuart Levine & Associates, a 20-year-old management consulting company focused on strategy, leadership and governance as well as a new digital learning company for corporations to increase leadership capacity, EduLeader. The skills I learned at Stern have enabled me to market both of these companies effectively.

When I moved back to NYC four years ago, my first desire was to give back to the institution that gave me so much. I joined the NYU Stern Alumni Council, which has been an unexpected new gain. I am meeting so many new, smart people who all want to contribute to this terrific institution.

What are your hopes for the future of Stern and its students?

As I watch the impact that Dean Henry has made on the school to inspire excellence and increase access, I take such pride in my affiliation. Serving as liaison to the Dean's Executive Board has given me opportunities to meet extraordinary Stern students. These students know that they will have transformational experiences at Stern, a global university, turning them into powerful professionals who will be able to "do well and do good" to create value in the world. Helping Stern become a school of opportunity through scholarship programs that increase access to business education is extremely rewarding, because I know what this education will mean for this country and how it will contribute to the important mission of reducing income inequality. This is the inspiration and the hope that I have for Stern and its students.