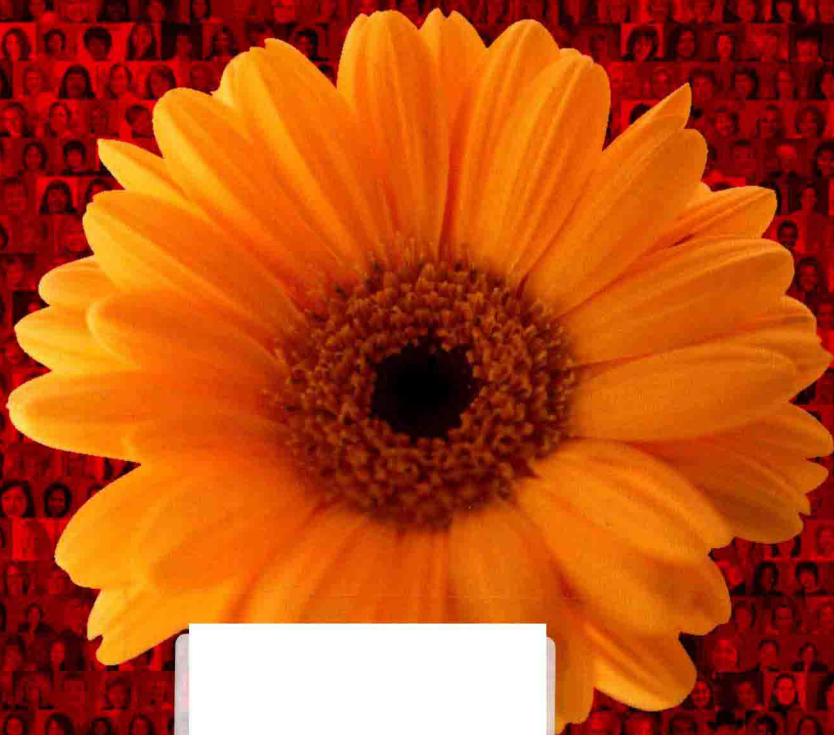


Real You Incorporated

*8 Essentials for
Women Entrepreneurs*

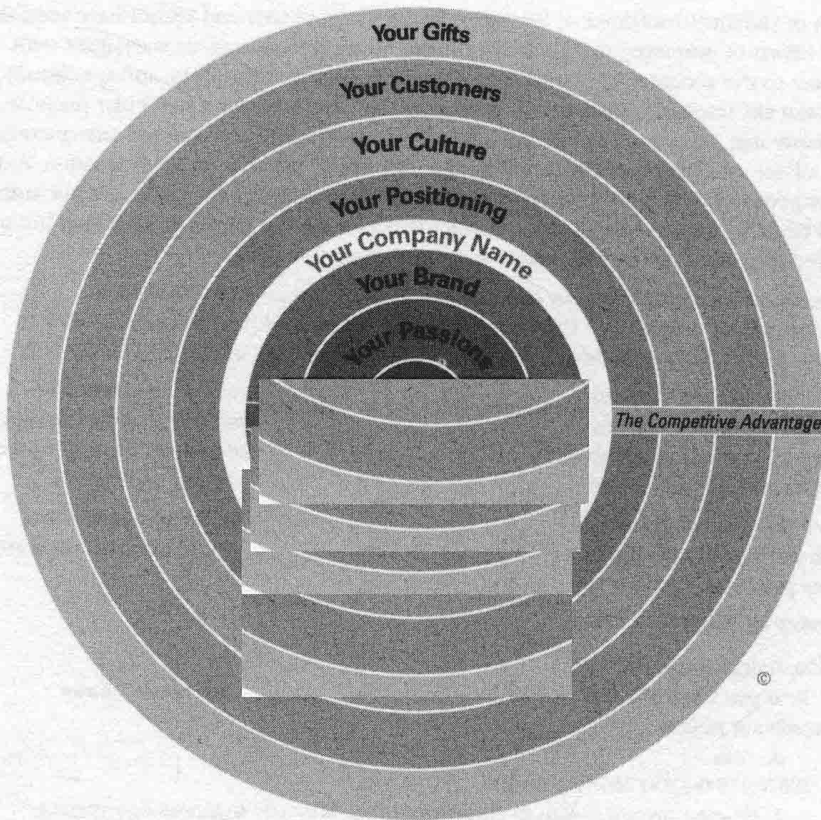


*Kaira Sturdivant Rouda
President, Real Living*

Real You Incorporated

8 Essentials For Women Entrepreneurs

Kaira Sturdivant Rouda



WILEY

John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Copyright © 2008 by Kaira Sturdivant Rouda. All rights reserved.

Published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey.

Published simultaneously in Canada.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise, except as permitted under Sections 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without either the prior written permission of the Publisher, or authorization through payment of the appropriate per-copy fee to the Copyright Clearance Center, Inc., 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 01923, (978) 750-8400, fax (978) 646-8600, or on the Web at www.copyright.com. Requests to the Publisher for permission should be addressed to the Permissions Department, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030, (201) 748-6011, fax (201) 748-6008, or online at <http://www.wiley.com/go/permissions>.

Limit of Liability/Disclaimer of Warranty: While the publisher and author have used their best efforts in preparing this book, they make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this book and specifically disclaim any implied warranties of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose. No warranty may be created or extended by sales representatives or written sales materials. The advice and strategies contained herein may not be suitable for your situation. You should consult with a professional where appropriate. Neither the publisher nor author shall be liable for any loss of profit or any other commercial damages, including but not limited to special, incidental, consequential, or other damages.

For general information on our other products and services or for technical support, please contact our Customer Care Department within the United States at (800) 762-2974, outside the United States at (317) 572-3993, or fax (317) 572-4002.

Designations used by companies to distinguish their products are often claimed by trademarks. In all instances where the author or publisher is aware of a claim, the product names appear in Initial Capital letters. Readers, however, should contact the appropriate companies for more complete information regarding trademarks and registration.

Wiley also publishes its books in a variety of electronic formats. Some content that appears in print may not be available in electronic books. For more information about Wiley products, visit our web site at www.wiley.com.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Rouda, Kaira Sturdivant, 1963-

Real you incorporated : 8 essential rules for women entrepreneurs / Kaira Sturdivant Rouda.

p. cm.

ISBN 978-0-470-17658-0 (cloth)

1. Women-owned business enterprises. 2. Minority business enterprises.
3. New business enterprises. 4. Businesswomen. 5. Entrepreneurship. I. Title.
HD2358.R68 2008
658'.041082—dc22

2007050502

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Advance Praise for *Real You Incorporated*

"Kaira Rouda has been shaking up everyone's idea about how to have a real and differentiated "brand" in the world of real estate for awhile. She's the real deal, and in this book she shares a simple process to understand, develop, and express the real you in your own brand, company, and environment. This book provides the fundamentals of branding creation and execution with an approach that is uniquely Kaira—fresh, straight forward, and fun."

Anne Randolph, Publisher of *LORE* magazine

"From surviving snark-infested waters, culture vultures, and passion poppers who attempt to undermine both you and your business, Rouda's systematic approach for female entrepreneurs provides you with the essentials you need to create a business that makes both your heart and your wallet sing."

**Bernice L. Ross, CEO of www.RealEstateCoach.com,
nationally syndicated real estate columnist, and
author of *Waging War on Real Estate's Discounters***

"*Real You Incorporated* will not only educate women entrepreneurs about the essentials of branding and marketing, but will help them voice their inner compass—that intuition that guides them as they navigate the overwhelming number of decisions they must make as business owners. Rouda reminds readers to stay true to themselves, and she teaches them how to translate their personal convictions and passions into elements of a successful business."

**Ginny Wilmerding, small business consultant and
author of *Smart Women and Small Business: How to Make the
Leap from Corporate Careers to the Right Small Enterprise***

"Kaira has always provided a fresh, unique perspective for entrepreneurs—her insights surrounding women in business in particular are unparalleled. This book embodies both Kaira's enthusiasm and business acumen, and will serve as an invaluable resource for savvy women across the nation."

**John E. Featherston, President and CEO of RISMedia,
publisher of *Real Estate* magazine**

"Real You Incorporated is a gift to those who open its pages. Part inspiration, part how-to manual, part life invitation, it is imminently readable and is a joy-filled call to redefining ourselves. It is thrilling to read something that is so grounded and simultaneously so affirming!"

Cynthia Lazarus, CEO/President of YWCA-Columbus

"Real You Incorporated is a toolkit of inspiration and limit-exploding exercises, created by a real visionary who knows what it takes for women entrepreneurs to grow their baby businesses into strong brands and profitable enterprises."

**Tara-Nicholle Nelson, Founder & chief visionary
of RETHinkRealEstate.com, and author of *The Savvy
Woman's Homebuying Handbook***

"What a fantastic book. This book is exactly what I needed . . . there are so many basic life rules that I have tried to live by for a long time in spite of those "snarks." *Real You Incorporated* offers great advice for anyone starting a journey into the business world."

**Rita Wolfe, Corporate Director of Civic Affairs,
Dispatch Printing Company**

"Real You Incorporated gives real insight and real advice to those looking to start their own business."

**Ja-Naé Duane, President/Founder of
Wild Women Entrepreneurs**

To my grandmothers, who were pioneers each in her own way;

To my parents, who taught me a woman can do anything;

To my sister, who taught me to fight back;

And to my brother, who is always on my side;

To my husband, who stands beside me every day;

To my boys, who are already entrepreneurs;

And to my daughter, who will ride the third wave to her dreams.

Introduction

Every 60 seconds, a woman starts a business, according to The White House Project. Sound big? It is, and there's a lot of buzz going on about it. And it's changing the way the world works. I speak frequently to organizations, real estate or otherwise, and every time I make a speech, the number one question I am asked is: "How do I do it all?"

This question doesn't refer to buying a billboard or a banner ad. It means, "How do I position my company? Differentiate it? Win?" It also means, "How do I manage four kids *and* a business?" The answer is being real—personally and through your company, and creating a culture that fits you and your dreams. This answer is why I wrote this book.

So, what does it mean to be real? It means your values—and your personality—are in sync with your business's operations and its people. *Real You Incorporated* is for women business owners or those who are considering becoming one. Read it before you launch your business, before your first or next hire, and before you find your first, or next, advertising agency. *Real You Incorporated* teaches you that your brand isn't just what consumers see—it's also what they don't see. Branding isn't just advertising or public relations. It's identity. It's about you, the culture of your organization, and more.

At my company—Real Living, one of the nation's fastest-growing residential real estate firms, founded in 2002—we were into real branding long before *Real Simple* and Dr. Phil. These brands know women are their audience and are in tune with our collective need to find real meaning in our personal and professional lives.

A key message in *Real You Incorporated* is that women have clout—lots of it—and are gaining more every day. We rock in business. We are world-class consumers. Consider these facts:

- ◆ One out of every 11 adult women is an entrepreneur, says the Institute for the Study of Educational Entrepreneurship.
- ◆ Women are starting businesses at twice the rate of men, employing one of every seven workers in the United States, and the majority of women-owned businesses continue to grow about two times faster than other firms, according to the Center for Women's Business Research.
- ◆ American women make up the *largest national economy on earth*—we are 51 percent of the population, but we buy 85 percent of *everything*, according to *USA Today*.

Most business and marketing books talk to women about how to fit into and play the games of the predominantly male business world. Many teach how to network or how to infuse real emotion into the workplace. Others focus on the work-life and family-life overlap. These aren't secrets to women.

Women need to acknowledge their collective power and the fact that we are making the rules. We want a workplace that is authentic (real!), family-friendly, and rewarding. We want to communicate these values to our employees and customers. We know we aren't there yet. We've been trying to be part of the boys' club for too long, reading books about the same. It's time to change.

How do you get to where you want to go? *Real You Incorporated* contains eight Real Facts (or chapters) to help you. In each Real Fact of *Real You Incorporated*, you'll also find three life

lessons followed by real stories—profiles of successful women entrepreneurs—and three action steps and questions.

An added element of each Real Fact is the opportunity to create your Real You Incorporated chart (a.k.a. RYI chart), a visual reminder of the process you're embarking on. By the end of the book, you will have created your own unique representation of you and your real brand.

Ready? Let's go! It's time for real women to create real brands.

Contents

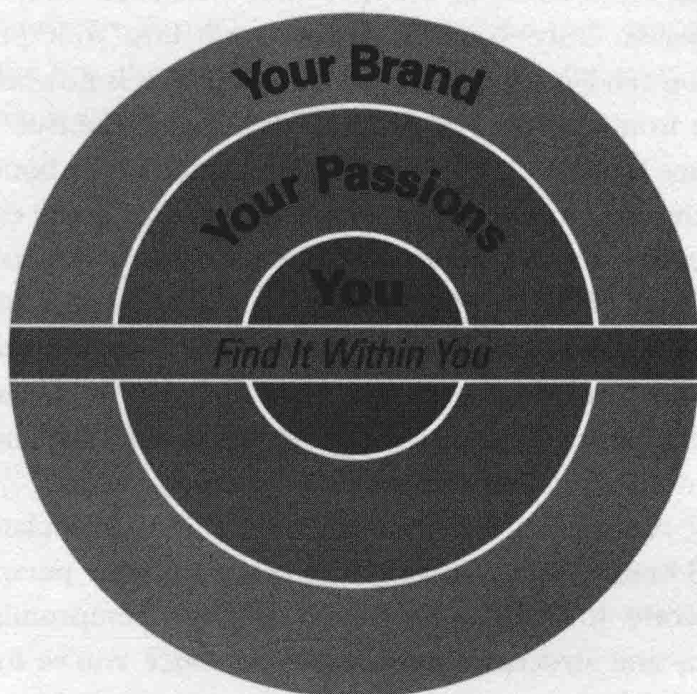
Introduction	ix
Section I: Find It Within You	1
<i>Real Fact 1: It All Starts With You</i>	5
Life Lesson One: Your future starts now	
Life Lesson Two: Learn from your past	
Life Lesson Three: Describe yourself in one word	
<i>Real Fact 2: Define Your Passions</i>	27
Life Lesson Four: Find the real people in your life	
Life Lesson Five: Don't go it alone	
Life Lesson Six: Follow your instincts	
<i>Real Fact 3: Discover Your Brand</i>	55
Life Lesson Seven: Tell your company story	
Life Lesson Eight: Define your brand essence	
Life Lesson Nine: Create your vision statement	
Section II: The Competitive Advantage	77
<i>Real Fact 4: Bring Your Passion and Your Brand Together</i>	81
Life Lesson Ten: The five senses of branding	
Life Lesson Eleven: Create a marketing plan	
Life Lesson Twelve: Make it tangible	

<i>Real Fact 5: Create a Unique and Real Work Environment</i>	119
Life Lesson Thirteen: Be a creative leader	
Life Lesson Fourteen: Express your brand in hiring	
Life Lesson Fifteen: Avoid culture vultures	
<i>Real Fact 6: Your Personal Brand Is Your Business Brand</i>	145
Life Lesson Sixteen: Customers know if you're faking it	
Life Lesson Seventeen: Be everywhere she wants you to be	
Life Lesson Eighteen: The real world is online	
<i>Real Fact 7: Chart Uncharted Waters</i>	179
Life Lesson Nineteen: Build your business network	
Life Lesson Twenty: Change the world for other women	
Life Lesson Twenty-One: Capture your charitable passion	
<i>Real Fact 8: Creativity Is Unstoppable</i>	207
Life Lesson Twenty-Two: Don't get stuck	
Life Lesson Twenty-Three: Play	
Life Lesson Twenty-four: Share	
Acknowledgments	227
About the Author	231
Index	233

SECTION I



Find It Within You



You are unique. But you knew that. Did you also know you are uniquely marketable? You just need to learn how to express your unique personal brand as a Real marketable business brand. Unabashedly. Powerfully. You can do it. As a woman entrepreneur, you occupy a special position. If you can capture your essence, and express it through everything you do in your personal and business life, you will bring a richer, more sincere, and sustainable message to the business community.

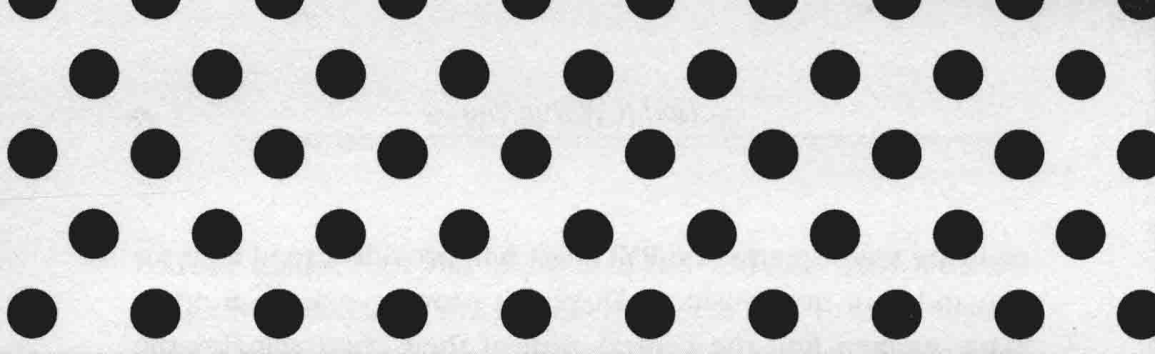
That's the premise of the first three Real Facts of *Real You Incorporated*. Once you can discover and love your personal brand, you can launch it as a real brand, one that is powerful and different from a man's. The process for bringing the true you to the surface is one we'll cover in the first section of the book. We'll unlock the true you. Your passions. Your personal brand essence. Why? Because these qualities and values, loves, and desires aren't distinct from you as a businesswoman, even though traditional corporate business customs and protocol teach the opposite. For generations, businesswomen have been forced to fit in. Eliminate their feminine traits. Act like a man to get ahead. That's not real. And it's not sustainable without a lot of personal angst.

After reading Section One, you'll be able to articulate your personal brand. Clearly. Proudly. You bring a unique perspective to the world. It needs to be shared fully, not compromised by traditions and structures outside of you. Once you've found it within, and documented it on your chart, you can take steps to create the world you want to work in. The second section will explain how to leverage your competitive advantage.

With *Real You Incorporated*, you are doing more than reading a book. You are creating a tangible vision of your personal and business world—and how they come together in a powerful, unique way. If you're an entrepreneur already, documenting the Real You throughout the first section of this chart will prove to be an invaluable experience. If you're just getting started on

realizing your dreams, the RYI chart will provide a road map for you and your new business. Display it proudly; refer to it often. Many women find the central core of their chart remains the same over time—you, your passions, and your brand essence. What may shift is the business expression of your brand. If you sell your company, merge with another, or start an entirely new business, your competitive advantage layers will change a bit.

But the *you* at the heart of it all will remain the same. Understanding your personal brand—embracing it—and your personal power are the focal points of this section. Here, you will complete the first three circles of the RYI chart: you, your passions, your brand essence. Let's get started.



*At the center of your being you have the answer;
you know who you are and you know what you want.*

Lao Tzu





REAL FACT #1

It All Starts With You

It all starts with you—and your dreams. That's what got you thinking about owning your own business in the first place. Like me, you want to do it right. You want to make a difference. You want to call the shots. And we're not alone. Women are starting their own businesses at twice the rate of men, leaving corporate jobs because of inflexibility, frustration with the good old boys' club and the glass ceiling, lack of creativity in the workplace, and pure boredom. And many young women aren't even entering the corporate world at all, choosing to embrace their inner entrepreneur from the get-go.

To discover the true entrepreneur in you, it's all about being real.

Real (r ' l) adj., being or occurring in fact or actuality; having verifiable existence. Hence the name of the book, *Real You Incorporated*.

It means to be genuine, truthful, and authentic with nothing fake or contrived in everything you do from creating your positioning statement to hiring employees to help you realize your dream.

Real You Incorporated is a book about empowering women in business, specifically women entrepreneurs. If you're one of these women, kudos. But if you're still an executive working for someone else, *Real You Incorporated* can help strengthen your personal brand, crucial in today's business world. Because once you discover and love your personal brand, you can bring your business to the market as a real brand, one that is powerful and distinct from a man's. Within these pages, you'll find some business self-help advice, a bit of work-life balance sharing, and naturally, a little memoir to set the stage. But predominantly, this is a book about women and celebrating their natural entrepreneurial bent.

After reading *Real You Incorporated*, you will better understand your personal brand and be able to deliver a more sincere, sustainable, and richer business concept to the world. Keep in mind that interconnectivity and integration are the key notions today. You are a brand. The company you create is a brand. When the essence of each—you and your business—are in alignment, you create a real brand.

In this Real Fact, you'll begin to create your RYI chart. You'll fill in the first layer of the circle as you work through this fact: It all starts with you. As you work your way through the book, you will begin to create a unique, customized visualization of your business. Along the way, I'll provide personal examples as illumination, and I'll enlist the help of some real entrepreneurial women to share their experiences, too.

In this Real Fact, you learn about the following:

- ◆ Your future starts now
- ◆ Learn from your past
- ◆ Describe yourself in one word