

Agency for Change Podcast: Lida Citroën, Speaker, Executive Coach, Author—LIDA360

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Lida Citroën

Everyone has a personal brand, but are you going to let someone else control that or are you going to take charge and start driving your brand in how you want to be known?

Announcer:

Welcome to Agency for Change, a podcast from KidGlov that brings you the stories of changemakers who are actively working to improve our communities. In every episode, we'll meet with people who are making a lasting impact in the places we call home.

Lyn Wineman:

Have you ever developed a reputation that surprised you? It can be a jarring experience, right? And often that's because we simply don't realize that a certain action phrase or habit has come to define us in the eyes of other people.

Think about this. For example, if every day I happily hummed "Rocket Man" from my office, where I thought no one could hear me, it might be surprising if one day my coworkers started calling me Rocket Wineman. And even if I enjoyed this nickname, the experience would likely take me off guard. Not because I don't like Elton John, but because I didn't even know this was something that had become a part of my personal brand.

And today's guest would tell us that you can't read a label from the inside of a bottle. In other words, we don't always know and often don't control the narrative about us. But she's set out to change that for veterans, for executives, and for leaders, frankly, of all kinds, with a business that's focused on helping them leave a lasting legacy and drive the trajectory of their career by making their reputation work for them.

Hey everyone, this is Rocket Wineman or Lyn Wineman, as most of you call me. And welcome to another episode of the Agency for Change Podcast. Today we're speaking with Lida Citroën, speaker, executive coach, author, and owner of LIDA360, which helps people define how they're perceived by the people who matter. Lida, welcome to the podcast.

Lida Citroën:

Thank you so much. I'm so excited to be here with you.

Lyn Wineman:

Oh, I have been very excited to talk to you because I've been following you on social media. I know you have a ton of things going on. But let's just start, for people who may not have heard of LIDA360, can you tell us all about what you do?

Lida Citroën:

Well, I like to say I'm in the people business. Because I help people around the world really clarify their value proposition, and then promote that value proposition in complex markets. So our core work is with CEOs and executives, entrepreneurs in countries like Australia and Switzerland and Poland and Canada, and obviously the United States as well, who are trying to build their presence and reputation. We call that personal branding.

But in some cases, they need to repair or fix their reputation. Something went wrong, or wrong place at the wrong time. So that's where we get involved, is helping them rebuild their career and their life through reputation.

Lyn Wineman:

That's fantastic, Lida. I have felt a connection with you because KidGlov does similar work for organizations, helping them figure out their brand proposition and getting their message out. But in today's world, we all have a personal brand, whether we're intentional about it or not, don't we?

Lida Citroën:

Yes, we do. Well, and my background. I think this is where we connected too, is my background is corporate branding and nonprofits.

Lyn Wineman:

Yeah.

Lida Citroën:

So I just decided in 2008 that, why not work with individuals instead of companies and organizations?

Lyn Wineman:

I like that. And lead my understanding, I mean, you were very well into a very strong career at the point you decided to pursue LIDA360 and the work that you're doing. I'm just curious, what or who called you to become an entrepreneur and to get into this line of work?

Lida Citroën:

Well, I use the expression accidental entrepreneur because it really wasn't something, I wasn't that little girl who dreamed of having my own business. I liked the consistency of working for a company, Right? Check every two weeks.

Lyn Wineman:

There's a lot of perks to it, right? You know what to expect. A lot of perks.

Lida Citroën:

But in 2008, as the market was falling apart and everyone around me was losing their jobs and their houses, I got laid off from an executive position. I dusted off my resume and started hitting the pavement. And my husband, who doesn't say much, said something profound. And he said, "Instead of finding another job, why don't you figure out what you're really supposed to do?"

Lyn Wineman:

Wow.

Lida Citroën:

Those words were like, why don't you say more?

Lyn Wineman:

Yeah, yeah.

Lida Citroën:

And I put together the job description of what I would love to do, and where I'd had success in my career, and realized it didn't exist for a company. I had to start it myself. And that was really where LIDA360 was born. It was, I mean, a lot of divine intervention.

But the value proposition of my company is exactly what the market needed. So as much as I thought I was stumbling my way through this, it was an opportunity to add value to a market that needed to own their competitive advantage and clarify their value proposition. And the rest is history.

Lyn Wineman:

Yeah. As I think back to 2008, I've got to believe there were a lot of people in similar situations to you that didn't have your talent and skillset for doing this work, and really needed your help. I mean, honestly, that layoff, while it had to have been just heartbreaking, must have been a blessing in disguise.

Lida Citroën:

In so many ways, Lyn. I mean, I look back on it now and I'm so grateful. I wouldn't have taken this risk. I had two kids about to go to college. The economy is in a tailspin, who does something so risky? But it was. It was absolutely a gift that I gave myself, because I am living my dream every single day. And it's been 14 years now.

Lyn Wineman:

I feel that positive energy just rolling off you. It's so great to be around. So Lida, what drives you to pursue this line of work then?

Lida Citroën:

I think it's one thing. And as you know, it's very complicated to work with an organization that has so much passion and so much to offer, but they don't know how to put that into channels and create the messaging. But I think it's, for me, what's even more intriguing is working with people who are so much more mess.

Lyn Wineman:

We are messy, aren't we? Why are we so messy? We are so messy. Yes.

Lida Citroën:

Because I think a lot of people are like you and I, where we want to make a difference. We want to know that our life has meaning, and that there's a purpose for us being here. And I get to play a tiny little part in helping them find that.

In my TED Talk (<https://youtu.be/9BloWnsJCRw>), I shared the Mark Twain quote that, "There's two important days of your life, the day you're born and the day you realize why." And I think in a small way, I get to help people figure out their why. And then the rest is just magic. The rest is just marketing.

How do you show up? How do you interact? Who do you need to know? How do you present yourself? Those are easy to figure out if you know who you are and where you're headed. So I mean, that is the place I get to play every single day. With people in different cultures, people in different industries. And for an extrovert, Gemini like myself, it's really a dream come true.

Lyn Wineman:

Yeah, that sounds fantastic. So Lida, you mentioned your TED Talk. And we are going to make sure to put a link to that in the show notes on the KidGlov website for sure. But I'm curious, what was it like doing? There's a lot of us who, on our bucket list, want to do a TED Talk someday. What was it like, and what did you take away from that experience?

Lida Citroën:

Well, the TEDx that I did was, it was really an amazing opportunity to speak on behalf of a community that I'm not part of, technically. My TEDx was on the power of gratitude and generosity, serving those who served. And it was about the work that I do with military veterans who are trying to reintegrate into the civilian sector. And as a civilian myself, what some of those challenges that they face really showed me.

We have opportunity here to help them, and encourage them, and bring to light that it's not as easy to leave the military and go into the corporate world or entrepreneurship as we might think. So it was a fabulous opportunity. I had no idea the reach that my talk was going to have. And I'm honored that I got to be part of a conversation, like I said, representing the military community.

Lyn Wineman:

So speaking of the military, so much of your work, not all of it, but quite a bit of it is in that arena. You mentioned this is an audience that faces some pretty unique challenges. What are some of the challenges veterans face when they are returning to civilian life that a potential employer like myself might not even be aware of?

Lida Citroën:

Well, and the list is long. Unfortunately, the list is long. And that's not to say the military doesn't do a great job of training a civilian to be a military service member. Where it's not as great as training them again to return to civilian life. So there's a long list of challenges. I think, first and fundamentally, is this idea that you and I are talking about of self-promotion, branding. The military has a culture of service before self.

Lyn Wineman:

Right. You blend in very much, right? Yeah. The haircut, the uniform, the behavior.

Lida Citroën:

And it's not about you. So you're not supposed to seek recognition and success for yourself. You're supposed to distribute that, and be accountable to the people that you serve with. And it's a wonderful trait. I mean, I think more people should think that way, right? But when you come out of uniform, what you and I do is, we're in the promotion business.

And my job is to help them understand that they have to get more comfortable talking about themselves, using I instead of always using we. Being able to insert themselves into conversations, and build relationships, and put themselves out there to be found. And that is so contrary to the military culture.

Lyn Wineman:

So Lida, as you work with veterans, I just kind of want to highlight the flip side of that too. Because there also have to be some skills that are of great benefit to employers. I'm curious what you see on that side of the equation.

Lida Citroën:

Well, luckily that list is also very long. Even starting with something like resiliency, adaptability, flexibility. Coming out of the last two years where we've been in this pandemic environment, and everybody's nervous and unsure, veterans thrive in uncertainty. They are used to being in complex situations that they've been trained for, but maybe encounter some unexpected aspects. They don't crumble, they don't panic, that's part of their training.

So when I think about what employers need today, they need people that are agile, and flexible, and adaptable. There are character traits that come with someone who has served. And Lyn, I think we have to remember that we have a volunteer military in the US. So anyone who has served in the last several decades signed up for that. And that's tremendous.

So there's character traits of honor, and commitment, and loyalty, and duty, and service that really give us an employee who, they're going to be there for you. They're going to be resilient, and loyal, and stick to it. Maybe they may not have exactly an exportable skill that is technically what you want, but you know what? You can train on skills, hire on character.

Lyn Wineman:

Yeah, that sounds great. Do you notice, are there any trends of industries or roles that fit particularly well to the skill set and experiences of veterans?

Lida Citroën:

Well, I mean I think there are the obvious ones. The defense industry certainly hire a lot of prior military, the federal government does. Because there's a lot of standardization in the military. Things are, promotions for instance are very predictable, rules are very clear. So if you're in an industry where rules, and process, and standardization are important, hiring a veteran is probably a very easy come across.

But I love to hear when veterans are brought into finance, and creative arts, and healthcare, and technology. In these sort of traditional, but also innovative industries where somebody with military training can really thrive. Because they are innovative, they are creative. It might be a little different

when you're on the battlefield, but we don't think of veterans in those spaces. And they thrive in those environments.

Lyn Wineman:

I see that. Lida, I'm curious. It sounds like there are a lot of upsides, obviously, to hiring veterans. And every employer that I know right now is in a crunch and needs desperately to hire people. With that in mind, why do you think employers still struggle to recruit veterans?

Lida Citroën:

I think there's a few reasons. The question I get more often is, where are they?

Lyn Wineman:

Yeah, how do I find them? Yes.

Lida Citroën:

Like they're all sitting in some place and you've got to go to that place. And there isn't a central database. But they're everywhere. They're on social media, they're part of workforce development centers, they're in our community, they're in our competitors' offices. And we have to make ourselves a veteran friendly company to show them that we have a commitment. And employers have a real opportunity there.

It's not just putting a page on your career section that says, we are proud to hire veterans. But show veterans that are working in your company. Showcase their successes, bring them to job fairs. Get up to speed on what the differences are so that you can help navigate those.

Another thing is, don't freak out if you see a military resume. That's typically the first time a veteran has ever written a resume, when they come out of the military. So you and I have all the nuances, and we understand how to craft language. They're putting down every single thing they ever did.

And that could freak out a civilian employer, because they don't know what that means. So get a little bit up to speed on some of the language. What does it mean to be an officer, what does it mean to be an NCO? Get a little bit versed and be willing to have a conversation.

These men and women deserve it, I think at least, to have a conversation with them. And you might unpack that the job they were applying for isn't a fit, but something in a whole different department would be an amazing opportunity for them.

So thinking a little creatively, asking some questions, getting in there and having a conversation. The veteran community is very tightly networked. They are some of the best networked people. So if that person that you've just invested a little bit of time learning and getting to know isn't a fit, they might know someone who's a perfect fit for a job you're looking for. And now you've built an ally in that community.

Lyn Wineman:

It sounds to me like if we as employers could just become more aware, more in-tune, we might open the door to a whole new audience of potential employees with a lot of great skills that would be very helpful for us.

Lida Citroën:

Absolutely. And at the minimum, you've made a new friend.

Lyn Wineman:

I love that. I love that.

Lyn Wineman:

Hey everyone, we are going to take a quick break because I want to share something with our listeners. I know we have a lot of marketing friends that listen to Agency for Change, and there's no denying that digital is a demanding and competitive field. And unfortunately, even today, women are still grossly underpaid and underrepresented. But there is a powerful tool, where women can share our knowledge and connections with each other. Together Digital Power Lounge, and just like Agency for Change, it's a podcast where you'll hear authentic conversations from women with diverse perspectives, valuable expertise and the desire to change the world for the better. That's my favorite part. So I encourage you to listen in with host, owner and chief empowerment officer, Amy Vaughan, as she builds a collaborative community where women can find education and empowerment and become their best selves personally and professionally. Listen wherever you get your podcasts or at www.togetherindigital.com. That's www.togetherindigital.com. All right, let's get back to our conversation with Lida.

Lyn Wineman:

Lida, I'm curious about your process. Because once again, we have a little bit of overlap in what KidGlov does for organizations and what you do for people. So I know you work with veterans, but you also work with executives and leaders. How do you help a client find their own personal brand and then showcase who they are?

Lida Citroën:

Some of this is going to sound very familiar to you. Because I took my 20 years of corporate branding and marketing experience, and all I did is I applied it to people. So the process is very similar. It starts very much inside-out, before we go outside in. What are your values? The foundation of any brand, whether it's a company, an organization, a product, or a person is, what do you stand for? What are the non-negotiables? What is your moral operating system? And knowing that a brand is a feeling, a brand is an experience, your values anchor that feeling or experience.

Then we look at, what does the current landscape look like? So what is your current reputation in brand? How has that been working? Where are the blind spots? They're called blind spots for a reason.

Lyn Wineman:

For sure.

Lida Citroën:

And I do some perception mapping, surveying to figure out what current brand really is.

But the best part, the juicy part is talking about legacy. So what do you want to be known for? What do you want your reputation to look like? When you walk into a room, how do you want to be received? And at the end of your life, how do you want to be remembered? That's where the meat is.

Then we look at where you are and where you want to be, and we fill the gap in by also considering who your target audience is. And if I had a nickel for every time somebody said their target audience was everyone.

Lyn Wineman:

It never, that never is the right answer. That's never the right answer.

Lida Citroën:

Never. I always ask them, "Okay, so how big is your budget again?"

Lyn Wineman:

Yeah, that is never the right answer.

Lida Citroën:

"Everyone" is a huge budget. But we really chip away at, who are the people that matter the most? The ones that you need to find you relevant, and compelling, and interesting, and memorable because they have the opportunities you want? You're looking for a job, they have the jobs you want. If you're looking to grow your company, they're the stakeholders or influencers that are going to help you do that.

And then we map the brand against the target audience. And at that point we bring in marketing, right? The networking, and narrative, and social media executive presence. The content, all the assets that we use for marketing once we've done the brand work. So probably a little bit similar to what you're doing.

Lyn Wineman:

That sounds like all the same fundamentals, which I like. I'm really curious then, you mentioned early on sometimes you work with people that need to establish their personal brand. Sometimes someone has to repair their personal brand. And in today's environment with social media and 24-hour news cycles, I think it can happen so quickly and so unexpectedly. Does the process look different if you're repairing a reputation?

Lida Citroën:

It can. And depending on the level of severity, somebody might think, my reputation's in crisis because somebody posted something negative to my company website.

Well, okay, let's pump the breaks, let's figure out what's going on. But that's different than if the media has put you on the front page with a story exposing something really bad. Depending on the level of triage, there's short-term and long-term fixes. And while it's under the umbrella of crisis management. I'm not a PR specialist, I've done that work. But my goal is really to help, first of all, calm the situation down. Try to separate how we feel about what's happening from what's actually happening, and what we have control over.

Lyn Wineman:

That is really good advice right there.

Lida Citroën:

And then start to put the pieces back together in the right order to figure out what the next step is. Most of the people who contact me in a reputation crisis are panicked, and they feel out of control. Everything's been taken away from them.

So what I try to do first is restore their sense of control. Show them what the choices are, show them how the first step and the second step, and that tends to calm things down. And then, depending if I'm

working with their legal team or their PR team, really outline a strategy for putting things back on the right track.

And it's important to note that this isn't just only when people make a mistake or a lapse of judgment. There are a lot of people who find themselves a victim of workplace bullying, or workplace mobbing. Or they're at the wrong company at the wrong time, and their name gets wrapped up into something that they didn't have anything to do with. And reputation crisis can be all of those scenarios. And I've worked in all those places. And it's very emotion-charged type of work.

Lyn Wineman:

Yeah, wow. I could see how that would just be really important to someone. To their sense of self, self-worth. But not only to them but to their family. Or if they're a leader in a company, to their company. So I think it's great that you are out there, Lida, doing that work. And it sounds like you've got a very intuitive and straightforward process as well.

One of the things that is on my bucket list that I talk about on the podcast often is, I have a goal to write a book. And you are a published author. And I'd really love to talk a bit about a book you recently published called "Control the Narrative, the Executive's Guide to Building, Pivoting and Repairing Your Reputation."

Let's start with, who would find this book most useful?

Lida Citroën:

It was the fifth book I've written, and it was the one I had wanted to write for a very long time. I thought it really would be just for executives. And the reason I say I thought that is, I had a 21-year-old gentleman reach out to me recently and said he had read it cover to cover three times, wanted to talk about coaching. And I thought, wow, you're not my target audience.

Lyn Wineman:

What do I do with you?

Lida Citroën:

But hats off, right? How amazing to be young and thinking about your future that way. He said, but I will be an executive. And I said, yes.

Lyn Wineman:

Oh.

Lida Citroën:

It's someone who is trying to figure out either they've built a company, they've built visibility, but they haven't felt like they've been in charge of how things have been unpacking or how they've been unfolding.

Maybe they want to make a strategic move. And I have tons of case studies in the book of people that I've worked with who wake up and say, my work is no longer fulfilling. I've been on the cover of magazines, I've done all these things people think is successful. But what I'd really like to be known for is something very different. How do they pivot or shift into a new focus and not look like they're having a midlife crisis?

And then of course, there's a big section on reputation repair. Which is admittedly why most people buy the book. So I get a lot of calls from people who've read the book first.

Lyn Wineman:

Yeah, that's great. Well, congratulations. Congratulations on all five books. I imagine people can find them by looking up your name, or they're all on your LIDA360 website as well.

Lida Citroën:

Absolutely. And all roads lead to Amazon as well.

Lyn Wineman:

That is for sure, for sure.

So you have mentioned several times the aspect of leaving a legacy that's meaningful. I'm curious, Lida, what kind of legacy do you want to lead?

Lida Citroën:

And I think, obviously, a lot about this. For me, gratitude and generosity are the two main values that I pivot everything around. So of course I lead with integrity and all these other things. But I am a very grateful person, as corny as that sounds.

I mean, I'm so grateful for the work that I do. And getting to know people like you, and the opportunities I've been afforded to make a difference. And I share my generosity by giving to people like that 21-year-old gentleman. He's not going to pay me, but I'm going to help him.

Because I feel like that's how I show my gratitude. So I really want to be remembered as someone who gave more than she took. And trust me, she takes a lot.

Lyn Wineman:

That's amazing, Lida.

Lida Citroën:

That's what I want to be known for. And so when people honor that by saying thank you for your generosity, or your gratitude is obvious, those are indications to me that my brand is working. That's the beauty of legacy. You don't have to wait until you're gone to enjoy your legacy.

Lyn Wineman:

I love that statement right there. Actually, I'm going to ask you for another statement. Because my favorite question that I love to ask on the podcast is, I would like to ask you for an original Lida motivational quote to inspire our listeners.

Lida Citroën:

Well, I do also love the one I just shared. I wish I'd written it down. I think the one I say a lot is, everyone has a personal brand. Either by design or by default. Meaning that you're building a reputation, you have a brand, but are you going to let someone else control that and define you, knowing that their perception could be wrong and it could be misinformed? Or are you going to take charge and start driving your brand, and how you want to be known? So that's the place I get to play in.

Lyn Wineman:

Fantastic, Lida. That's just great. So if people are listening today and they want to reach out to you for some coaching, find out more about the books, what's the best way for them to find you?

Lida Citroën:

Well, I'm pretty findable on social media.

Lyn Wineman:

You are. You have great and inspiring and helpful social media. I am going to definitely say that.

Lida Citroën:

And we just redid the website, so I'm really proud of that. Lida360.com, and that would certainly have a ton of information. My YouTube channel has all sorts of free videos. And then if somebody has an interest in reaching out, they can contact me through the website as well. We make that pretty easy.

Lyn Wineman:

Fantastic. I am going to say your videos, and in particular your TEDx, your TED Talk, are very high energy, very helpful. So thank you for all of those.

Lida, as we wrap up this great conversation, what is the most important thing that you would like our listeners to remember about the work that you're doing?

Lida Citroën:

Well, I think the way I look at it and how I would hope people look at it, is we all have the opportunity to help others live authentic and meaningful lives and careers. The way I do that is, I harness the power of reputation to serve people. But I would ask your listeners to think about, what are they harnessing and who are they serving? Because there's a difference between leadership and servant leadership.

And I know your listeners, I know the work that you do is all about being on purpose, doing things that are bigger than ourselves and serving others. And I have the honor of doing that for my clients, and would hope other people think about it that way too.

Lyn Wineman:

Lida, you just gave me chills there. And I have to say, I fully believe the world needs more people like you. So thank you so much for taking time out of your busy schedule to talk with us today.

Lida Citroën:

Thank you. It has been absolutely my pleasure.

Announcer:

We hope you enjoyed today's Agency for Change podcast. To hear all our interviews with those who are making a positive change in our communities, or to nominate a changemaker you'd love to hear from, visit KidGlov.com at K-I-D-G-L-O-V.com to get in touch. As always, if you like what you've heard today, be sure to rate, review, subscribe, and share. Thanks for listening, and we'll see you next time.