

The CEO Forum

THE QUARTERLY PUBLICATION **BY CEOS FOR CEOS**



Linda McMahon
CEO
Women's Leadership
Live



John Sculley
Former CEO
Apple



Jud Linville
CEO
Citi Cards



Janet Foutty
Chairman & CEO
Deloitte Consulting



John Bilbrey
Chairman, CEO & President
The Hershey Company

In this Issue CEO Interviews with:



Ken Xie
Founder, Chairman & CEO
Fortinet



Tien Tzu
Founder & CEO
Zuora



Mary Ann Liebert
Founder & CEO
Mary Ann Liebert, Inc.



Lou Grassi
Founder & Managing Partner
Grassi & Co.



Brian Gallagher
President & CEO
United Way Worldwide



“I am an immersive publisher, which our staff, authors, editors, and collaborators highly value and salute.”

Robert Reiss: You definitely have created a unique organization. Talk about your business model.

Mary Ann Liebert: Mary Ann Liebert, Inc., which bears my name, is internationally renowned for our prescience and the establishment of first publications in cutting-edge fields such as biotechnology, public health, specialized disciplines in the life sciences, and clinical medicine and surgery. By providing authoritative content, published both in print and online, the company provides important research findings and new translational applications that ultimately will improve the health and well-being of people around the world. We are a fully integrated media company that is privately held, which ensures that we are fast and flexible, important assets in competitive and ever-changing global markets.

In addition to our own publishing program, we collaborate very effectively with corporations, educational institutions, nonprofit foundations, and other enterprises that recognize the urgent imperative to brand their own

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products and services. Our media and communications expertise is best of breed, and these alliances are long-standing. Print and digital publications are read differently, complement one another, and both belong in the corporate toolbox!

Our publishing expertise enables a broad array of extended capabilities in custom publications, conferences, webinars, association management, videos, and newsletters, which are major resources for corporations, associations, and institutions to advance their own goals. We partner very successfully.

Our Congress on Women’s Health will celebrate its 25th anniversary in 2017. Our partners include the National Institutes of Health (NIH), academic institutions, and corporations.

We also founded the Academy of Women’s Health, a membership society for physicians and nurses; our goal is “Best practices for better outcomes.”

I love your slogan: “There is a Mary Ann Liebert at Mary Ann Liebert, Inc. And that makes a difference!”

I have to admit that I created it myself. Many companies named for their founders no longer exist. They were acquired by publicly held conglomerates that must meet stockholder expectations. Because Mary Ann Liebert, Inc., is a privately owned company, we have the true luxury of creating media in emerging disciplines and the resources and patience to nurture them. Each publication is different and achieving benchmarks may differ. There are no cookie-cutter models.

I am an immersive publisher, which our staff, authors, editors, and collaborators highly value and salute. So I decided to toot the horn. Loud and clear.

You seem to have a fascinating corporate culture.

We do. Our staff is fully engaged and know that their work is important and appreciated. We enable their growth and opportunities which fosters long-term loyalty—which cuts both ways.

Alas, I was a gym drop-out, so I am not fleet of foot; you would not invite me to be your tennis partner. Publishing is my game, and I play fast and hard. With me always is a very talented and accomplished team. Like any sport, top and effective teamwork matters.

How do you choose the areas in which you establish publications?

I have often been called visionary because I identify, early on, important new areas of research and technology and its applications. By creating first-to-market, highly focused publications, we create an important forum that fosters funding for exciting new fields from both the public and private sectors.

Once an idea perches on my shoulder, it impels me to action. I am very well-connected, a voracious reader, and have a curiosity level that is off the charts.

Once, a new idea came to me out of thin air – literally – after reading the book *Into Thin Air*, I read every autobiography written by mountain climbers. My husband, Peter, asked, “Why? You don’t even trek, let alone climb!”

And I said, “Because I totally relate to that mentality. I understand the need to summit. I have that mind set!” I am compelled to go for the summit, personally and professionally. So while I never took up climbing per se, I started a journal, *High Altitude Medicine and Biology*, which focuses on the health problems that are more prevalent or different for populations that live at high altitudes. Reproductive health is a good example.

After you identify an emerging field, how do you proceed?

I am very well connected to leaders in the scientific, medical, technology, and business communities. Their input is invaluable as we establish new and meaningful publications that play a critical role to advance research and development, enable best therapeutic options, reward such achievements, and foster career development, including both tenure-track positions in academia and executive positions in the corporate community.

Genetic Engineering & Biotechnology News (GEN), which made its debut in 1980, is the company’s flagship publication. It was the first publication in the biotechnology industry, and is the most widely read around the globe. GEN brings together members of industry, academia, and business professionals who need to know one another and collaborate to advance the promise of this field. It is very powerful, and many new and important collaborations take place as a result of its content. We were asked to be a consultant on the award-winning film “Jurassic Park,” and were mentioned in the credits.

Now, let’s take it from the perspective of someone who has an idea for a new publication. What types of publications would you consider?

I am an adventurer. We will not, however, publish works of fiction or poetry, both of which I enjoy personally.

Your father had Parkinson’s Disease. Did that play a role in your career choice?

Yes. When I was growing up in the 1960s in Chicago, Parkinson’s was not well recognized or understood. So in college, I did an internship with the American Medical Association, hoping that hidden somewhere in their

journals I would find a treatment, if not a cure, for my dad. Sadly, that was not the case, but it ignited my interest in medical publishing.

How can you be a medical publisher without having a medical background?

I have a publishing background. I learned how to develop content, marketing, production, art and design. I think very visually. I also pay great attention to the business side: managing costs, creating revenue streams, and ensuring profitability. When we launch a journal, an MD and/or PhD is at the helm, and, with a team of experts in his/her field, is responsible for the papers that are published.

How has the scholarly publishing world changed over the years?

When I launched my company, journals were only published in print. Today they are available both in print and online. We are committed to the technological advances that enhance readership, and no stone is left unturned to ensure that we have the best capabilities.

The revenue model in publishing is different today. The paid subscription model continues, but at the same time a model in which the author assumes the cost of publishing an article is also prevalent. Technology advances will enable more new models. We have an important role in these developments and are fast responders as well as innovators.

Please share your thoughts on gender and diversity in the workplace.

Publishing generally has been a welcoming environment for women, so I did not experience gender bias personally. Women such as Meg Whitman, Cheryl Sandberg, Carly Fiorina, and many others have also climbed the corporate ladder successfully.

Women, and increasingly men as well, express concerns and conflicts about work-life balance. Perhaps there is no such thing. No executives, women or men, can afford to tune out business issues when they have left the office. The bigger the job, the more time is required. Execu-



"Mary Ann X 36" hangs in our reception area, a reflection of how my mind works!



tives should be able to participate in and enjoy personal or family time, but accept that they need to be reachable. Increasingly, corporate CEOs are seeking meaningful and effective ways to be supportive of family issues. That said, government should not mandate corporate policy.

The goal of diversity in the workplace is front and center. A diverse staff is important and enhances creativity. Yet CEOs and their executive teams need to hire employees who are well qualified for particular jobs. As a publisher,

for instance, we need employees who have good grammatical skills, a sophisticated vocabulary, and the ability to communicate effectively in English. Spell check and other apps are helpful but not sufficient. In order to best assess these skills, we have developed a short proprietary test, which also tells us something about an applicant's personality.

To achieve goals of diversity, corporations will need to find ways of advancing skill sets that some educators do not consider a priority.



Tell me about your talk with President Bill Clinton.

After he left the presidency, Bill Clinton had made treating patients with AIDS a major global imperative. We were the first publisher to have a periodical focused on AIDS Research, years before it was declared a threat to public health. Subsequently, we also launched *AIDS Patient Care and STDs* to provide urgent information for the health care providers who are tasked with patient care.

I knew Hillary Clinton, and she advised me to call his New York office and request an interview. I made the case well and decided to conduct the interview myself; as you know, President Clinton often talks in monologues. I wanted to be sure he addressed the issues that were important to our readers. And so he did. We then turned to the costs of funding research. President Clinton believed that the federal government provided all the funding for biomedical research; I pointed out that major funding support for research also came from the pharmaceutical industry. He said, "Are you sure?" I said, "Mr. President, do you think I would interrupt the most powerful per-

son in the free world if I were not sure?" He shoosed out aides who came to tell us it was time to stop, and we moved on to talk about biotechnology. We were on a roll!

What drives you?

I am an immersive person. I am never content just to view or observe. When I am in a museum, I want to know much more than any exhibit has to offer. I want to know how and where inventory is kept, restored, paid for; how profitable is the gift shop? The need to know is always present. At the circus, I had to meet the woman who was shot out of the cannon--what did it really feel like? What treats did the dog trainer use? Backstage is very often more interesting to me than what is onstage.

Satisfying my inquisitiveness is an enormous imperative. And, by nature, I am propelled to action. Sometimes, well-meaning friends suggest that I might want to take more time to "smell the roses." I laugh, because I do smell the roses. Every day. I am a very in-the-moment person. My senses are acute, and I observe even small-details, like the inside of a flower!



Mary Ann Liebert and Robert Reiss — Interview aired: 8/14/2016

“Pollyanna had the rare ability to accept adverse or unfavorable situations without bitterness, to figure out how to move forward nonetheless.”

Who was your fictional hero?

Pollyanna. Yes, Pollyanna. I take umbrage when she is ridiculed as a cockeyed optimist. Pollyanna had the rare ability to accept adverse or unfavorable situations without bitterness, to figure out how to move forward nonetheless.

Any final message?

Last but not least, I enjoy and am very proud of our success. Very proud. It has enriched my life and the lives of our staff. Additionally, by doing well, we also are able to do good... to give to individuals and to support causes we espouse.

Mary Ann, it was a pleasure having you on the CEO Show.

Mary Ann Liebert, president and CEO, is widely recognized as a visionary in professional publishing. She has received many awards including the Scientific Publishing Award from the Richard and Hinda Rosenthal Center of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University; the Fund for Women and Girls; Women in Communications; and the World Stem Cell Summit. She is the founder of the Rosalind Franklin Society, which recognizes, fosters, and advances the important contributions made by women in the life sciences and related fields.

Mary Ann has served as the president of the Dance Perspective Foundation, is a founding member of Research!America, and conducted the first movement of Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony with the Westchester Philharmonic Orchestra.

The company's corporate headquarters are located in New Rochelle, New York.

Mary Ann Liebert, Inc.  publishers