



Beauty Queen: Inside the Reign of Avon's Andrea Jung

By Deborah Himself

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Andrea Jung, the glamorous former head of Avon, was arguably the world's most charismatic and effective CEO, credited with the astonishing turnaround of the venerable brand. Avon's board was filled with tough-minded, successful CEOs and other high achievers, but when Jung walked into a room wearing her Chanel suit, custom-blended lipstick and signature pearls, every head turned and she had them eating out of her hand. She seemed incapable of making a wrong move, until, amid declining sales, an investigation by the SEC, and a brand in crisis she stepped down in late 2012. In *Beauty Queen*, former Avon VP Deborah Himself uses Jung's story as a case study for two timeless leadership questions: What makes great leaders great? And what makes them fail? She explores both Jung's early years of success as well as the combination of missteps that led to her downfall, including her failure to nurture Avon's direct selling channel, the erosion of trust that occurred as a result of frequent decision reversals, and her ignorance of operational details, including how her people secured a license to conduct door-to-door sales in China, that led to a federal investigation. Through interviews with other CEOs, Avon executives past and present, and leadership experts, she explores the unique challenges Jung faced as a female Fortune 500 CEO; the thin line between pride and hubris; and the danger of the so-called "halo effect" in our high-stakes times.

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Editorial Review

Review

“Deborrah Himself is among the most creative and astute business writers of our time. In *Beauty Queen*, she distills leadership lessons from an engaging, insightful exploration of a celebrity's journey. This gripping book explores Andrea Jung's journey at Avon at both an individual and organizational growth level... any aspiring business leader will be enthralled.” ?Rick Brandon, Ph.D., author, *Survival of the Savvy*

“Most great leaders have incredible strengths that may cover their weaknesses. This insider's view of Andrea Jung reports incredible leadership strengths that helped Avon become an incredibly successful company. But these strengths also masked some of the governance processes that undid some of Avon's success. The book should be guide and warning to aspiring leaders who have great opportunities as well as risks.” ?Dave Ulrich, Professor, Ross School of Business, University of Michigan and Partner, The RBL Group

“I'm very impressed to see such a rich diagnostic of all these terrific and challenging years under Andrea Jung. I believe the legacy from many previous leadership generations focused more on short term results than sustainable success, making the challenge of transformation bigger than one CEO, even one as powerful as Andrea. This book is not only a great diagnostic and company history, but an insightful lesson for anyone with leadership responsibilities.” ?Saulo Coffani Nunes, Former Global Sales Development Vice President for Latin America, Avon

“Himself's captivating account of CEO icon Andrea Jung is both sobering and poignantly educational. Now more than ever, women leaders are reaching new heights. *Beauty Queen* provides the skills and genuine realism aspiring leaders need in order to succeed. Additionally exceptional about the book is how candidly Himself calls out the critical balance every successful leader must negotiate in making their mark and then also knowing how and when to move on. This vital reality is one we don't often get to learn about so openly.” ?Mary Lou Décosterd, Ph.D., Managing Executive, The Lead Life Institute and author, *How Women Are Transforming Leadership*

“A terrific read for senior leaders. Greatness indeed cannot protect against failure. In *Beauty Queen*, Debbie Himself walks us through valuable signposts for our own leadership journeys.” ?Katherine Rielly-Gauvin, Divisional Vice President, Global Head of Commercial Development, AbbVie

“Deb Himself was there. With a unique insider's view, she provides insight into the woman, the leader, the company and perhaps most importantly the culture these all imbued. And yet, the book's impact and lessons for great sustainable leadership go far beyond Avon or Andrea Jung.” ?Richard Ettenson, Ph.D. Professor & Thelma H. Kieckhefer Fellow in Global Marketing and Brand Strategy

“It takes firsthand knowledge, keen (and neutral) observation and no small amount of courage to tell a credible story of a leader who failed. The myths and mystery surrounding the departure of highly regarded CEOs often obscures any line of sight to what actually happened, much less any true comprehension of the underlying reasons for the exit. *Beauty Queen* not only brings us behind the scenes of the crises at Avon, it helps us appreciate one of the most admired CEOs of our time as a human being. The analysis of Andrea as a leader is instructive for all leaders and for those who work with them to develop their potential.” ?Janet Spencer, Ph.D., Janet Spencer Consulting LLC

“The book is a timely one. In an increasingly complex world, business leaders are confronting the same huge challenges that Andrea confronted at Avon--transitioning organizations to new business models, pursuing global growth strategies, making ethics-versus-profits choices, changing from traditional to technological channels of distribution. *Beauty Queen* offers many perceptive insights not only for would-be CEOs but also for managers starting out and mid-career senior executives.” *Developing Leaders*

About the Author

Deborah Himself is the author of *Leadership Sopranos Style*. From 1999 to 2005 she worked alongside Andrea Jung at Avon as VP of Global Organization Effectiveness. A former Vice President of Deutsche Bank, Himself is a leadership consultant for many Fortune 500 companies, including Johnson & Johnson, KPMG, Exxon/ Mobile, Bain, Citigroup, and Walmart. She teaches at Thunderbird School of Global Management and The Helsinki School of Economics at Aalto University. She's been featured in various media, including Fox News, CNBC, and Bloomberg, and she wrote commentary on the television series *The Apprentice* for *USA Today*. She lives in Gold Canyon, AZ.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Lynda Wright:

Your reading sixth sense will not betray a person, why because this Beauty Queen: Inside the Reign of Avon's Andrea Jung book written by well-known writer whose to say well how to make book which might be understand by anyone who also read the book. Written throughout good manner for you, leaking every ideas and creating skill only for eliminate your own personal hunger then you still uncertainty Beauty Queen: Inside the Reign of Avon's Andrea Jung as good book not merely by the cover but also by the content. This is one book that can break don't ascertain book by its protect, so do you still needing an additional sixth sense to pick that!? Oh come on your examining sixth sense already alerted you so why you have to listening to yet another sixth sense.

Joshua Molina:

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David Beall:

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