



Karen Robinson
CEO – Prime Point Media

A Marketing Marvel

Born in Roswell, New Mexico – a location known as the UFO capital of the universe – Karen Robinson was destined to be different. She's not your average entrepreneur nor your typical businesswoman. She's – well, KAREN – and she 's truly exceptional at marketing her ideas and herself. She's also one of the most driven individuals you'll ever meet.

How did she develop this talent for influencing other leaders to support her ideas, invest in her companies, and – in some cases - remain loyal despite financial disappointments? The answer lies somewhere in Karen's unique personality and the course her life has taken. It's been an interesting journey and one well worth exploring.

The world as a backyard

Like so many men and women who grew up in military families, Karen had the opportunity to see and experience a lot more of the world than other children. When she was six years old, her family moved to Thailand. It was there that her formal education began in a missionary school. Along with a younger sister and older brother, Karen also went to school in Singapore and Korea. Off and on, her family returned to the US.

Karen attended high school in southern California. Perhaps the fact that she became valedictorian of her senior class as well as homecoming queen provides an early indication of her future success. Clearly, her intelligence was a gift recognized early on, not to mention her natural charm and charisma. But learning to be flexible, having to adapt to different cultures, and learning to be self-reliant were distinct benefits of her particular upbringing.

“My early life gave me a great practical education, “ Karen says, “including the ability to reinvent myself. Every time my family moved to a new place, I had a chance to be different. I could learn from past experiences in making friends or establishing relationships. I think this lesson has served me well in my professional life, especially as an entrepreneur.”

Finding a career path

After high school, Karen attended a small, private liberal arts college called the University of Redlands. She graduated in 1980 with a degree in Political Science and Economics. There were no defined goals for her career at this point, therefore what she should do next was not particularly clear. Her first job was with a large retail chain, The May Co., where she began as an executive trainee – starting salary \$12,500 per year.

Karen’s career path and earning power would soon change rather dramatically. Over the course of the next few years, she would gain corporate experience in technology and marketing with AT&T where she worked for six years at the mammoth facility in Basking Ridge, New Jersey.

“As good as the experience at AT&T was,” she said, “the real turning point in my corporate work experience came after I joined National Data. I became vice president of marketing and reported to the then-president, Mark Braunstein. Mark was, and is, one of my greatest mentors. It was he who called me one day and asked

me if I could run a company. The rest is history I guess. That's how my entrepreneurship began.”

Life as an entrepreneur

The 90's were a blur for Karen in terms of the fast track she was on once she came to Atlanta and began to run her own companies, including Amnex, Advanced Charger Technology, and Enrev. While the products were different in each company, what Karen brought to the table was the ability to get investors to buy into what she wanted to accomplish. She also was able to attract, and still does, highly talented professionals to work with her. Some have been extremely loyal and have followed her from one venture to the next. Along the way, Karen has been able to secure an incredible amount of funding for her projects. She'd be the first to tell you, however, it's been a bumpy road.

Today, Karen is chief executive officer of Prime Point Media, a company that sells ad space on thousands of stand-alone phone booths and kiosks in cities across the country. Utilizing mapping technology and other sophisticated marketing tools, she and her team can target a campaign for any segment of the population, hitting the mark every time. Despite her ups and downs as an entrepreneur, she's gung-ho about her company's potential. Thus far, bottom-line results seem to support her enthusiasm.

One of the things most distinctive things about Karen is her candor, her willingness to admit mistakes, own them, and move on. “I think leadership is different from management,” she stated. “Leadership is being bold and decisive in the pursuit of a vision or a plan. I know I'm not the best day-to-day manager for running a company, and if that's what I wanted to do, then I'd have honed my skills in that area. What I've tried to do is learn from my mistakes, recover, and ultimately, get a better balance in my life.”

Balance did you say? Until a couple of years ago, that concept would have been foreign to Karen who was a poster girl for the workaholic. But, things have changed. She's found true love, and now...there's Rick and Alex

Motherhood and beyond

Rick is Richard Cope, Karen's husband of six years and the one who helped to bring balance to her life. "Alexandra" is the light of Rick and Karen's lives. She's an adorable one-year-old baby girl with big brown eyes and a winning personality. (Wonder where that came from??) According to her mother, Alex already has several high-powered businesswomen in Atlanta clamoring to baby-sit and to mentor her as she grows up.

Interestingly, Karen's maternal instincts are as strong as her marketing skills and she doesn't hesitate to blend the two. Alex comes to the office almost every day. It's quite common to see Karen or her husband, who has an office in the Prime Point Media facilities, playing with Alex before or after an important business meeting.

"Given the access to information that's available, isn't it fantastic to think what Alex's generation can accomplish," Karen points out excitedly.

That's an encouraging thought. Little girls can indeed become anything they want. Alex and others like her may even surpass the accomplishments of their mothers, even mothers as successful as Karen Robinson, who's clearly a SHEro and exceptional role model in her own right.

What's next for this entrepreneurial marketing marvel, and mother of one? Well, another baby is definitely on the wish list. Seeing her current business thrive and positioning it for sale down the road are also on her wish list. But rest assured, this fast-talking,

fast-thinking entrepreneur has more ideas to market, and more ventures to start. And undoubtedly, there will be more investors ready to listen.

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By Susan B. Hitchcock (founder of the Age of SHEroes)