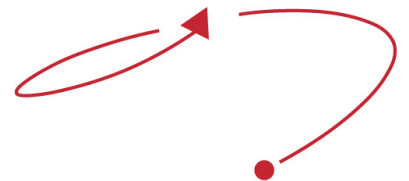


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Story Ideas ***Catlin & Cookman Group***

by Bouzha Cookman, Partner



CATLIN & COOKMAN GROUP

Mastering the Art of Corporate Growth

Story Ideas from Catlin & Cookman Group Partner Bouzha Cookman

Being the CEO of an investor-backed emerging growth company is always challenging and never more so than in today's rigorous business environment. For first-time CEOs and serial CEOs alike, the job of steering a growing company is full of tough choices and conflicting demands from stakeholders. Such leaders often feel isolated, unable to share their problems and concerns with board members or their leadership team without fear of negative repercussions.

Bouzha Cookman, partner in the Catlin & Cookman Group of Hingham, MA, leads peer-to-peer CEO groups that fill a crucial CEO advisory function, providing objective insights members can obtain from no other source. These by-invitation-only groups are the only CEO Forums tailored specifically to the needs of investor-backed high-tech company leaders. Gail Goodman, a member since 2002, had publicly credited the forum when asked about the reason for her notable success as CEO of Constant Contact, which had one of 2007's most successful IPOs. **To date, over \$2.2 billion in value has been generated by CEOs in Catlin & Cookman Group's High-Growth CEO Forums.**

Here are topics the CEOs in Bouzha's forums grapple with that will interest your readers:

- **What It Takes to Get to the Tipping Point:** Using examples of current and past High-Growth CEO Forum members, we suggest an article that examines how CEOs make the critical decisions that lead to significant growth or a successful exit. In every company's life, the CEO can point to choices that made a critical difference, whether they were about customers, products, executive team members, board of directors composition, funding strategy, organizational structure, or corporate culture. Learning how to recognize these potential tipping points and developing the ability to make timely and appropriate decisions are key parts of effective leadership.
- **Charting Uncharted Waters:** CEOs must be able to lead their companies in leveraging emerging trends and in creating new paradigms to gain and maintain market traction. Bouzha and members of her forums can talk about what emerging trends are currently creating challenges and opportunities for their companies. Also, many forum members kept their companies afloat in the lean years following the Internet bubble burst and are successfully transitioning their business model from licensed software to software as a service. An article could identify the skills they needed and how they applied them to be successful leaders in a constantly shifting business environment.
- **Turning a Founder CEO into a Long-term CEO:** Conventional wisdom says that company founders do not make good long-term CEOs; founders are thought to be good at getting a company off the ground but less capable of guiding larger organizations. In truth, the game plan of some founder CEOs doesn't include sticking around for long, but this has not been the case with members of the CEO High-Growth Forums. Many of them are still at the helm as their companies reach \$30-\$150 million in revenues. Also, instead of being kicked to the curb at some point by their boards, as formerly happened to many founder CEOs, 45% of forum members have had successful exits and most of those are back in the



Forum running another companies. Bouzha can talk about what it takes for a founder CEO to develop the skills needed to stay at the helm throughout the stages of growth that emerging growth companies experience. This includes the ability to work effectively with a board of directors whose members may have outmoded ideas about the long-term effectiveness of a founder CEO.

- **Nourishing Your Company's Eco-system:** Each CEO works in an eco-system made up of the company's stakeholder groups: customers, investors, board members, executive team members, and employees. To succeed, a CEO must understand and balance the expectations of each part of this complex eco-system. This task is made even more complex by the fact that the eco-system lives within a constantly changing business environment. Bouzha and CEOs from her forums can talk about the challenge of gaining alignment among stakeholders and provide specific advice on tools and techniques that help CEOs deliver on the expectations of their eco-systems.

Bouzha can serve as an articulate, highly informed source on any topic related to the leadership of growing companies. She can also connect you with CEOs from her forums and from the other forums that are run in other parts of the U.S. and in Europe by licensed partners of the Catlin & Cookman Group.

