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Women urged to seize success

Author to give get-ahead tips to Atlantans

By H.M. CAULEY
For the Journal-Constitution

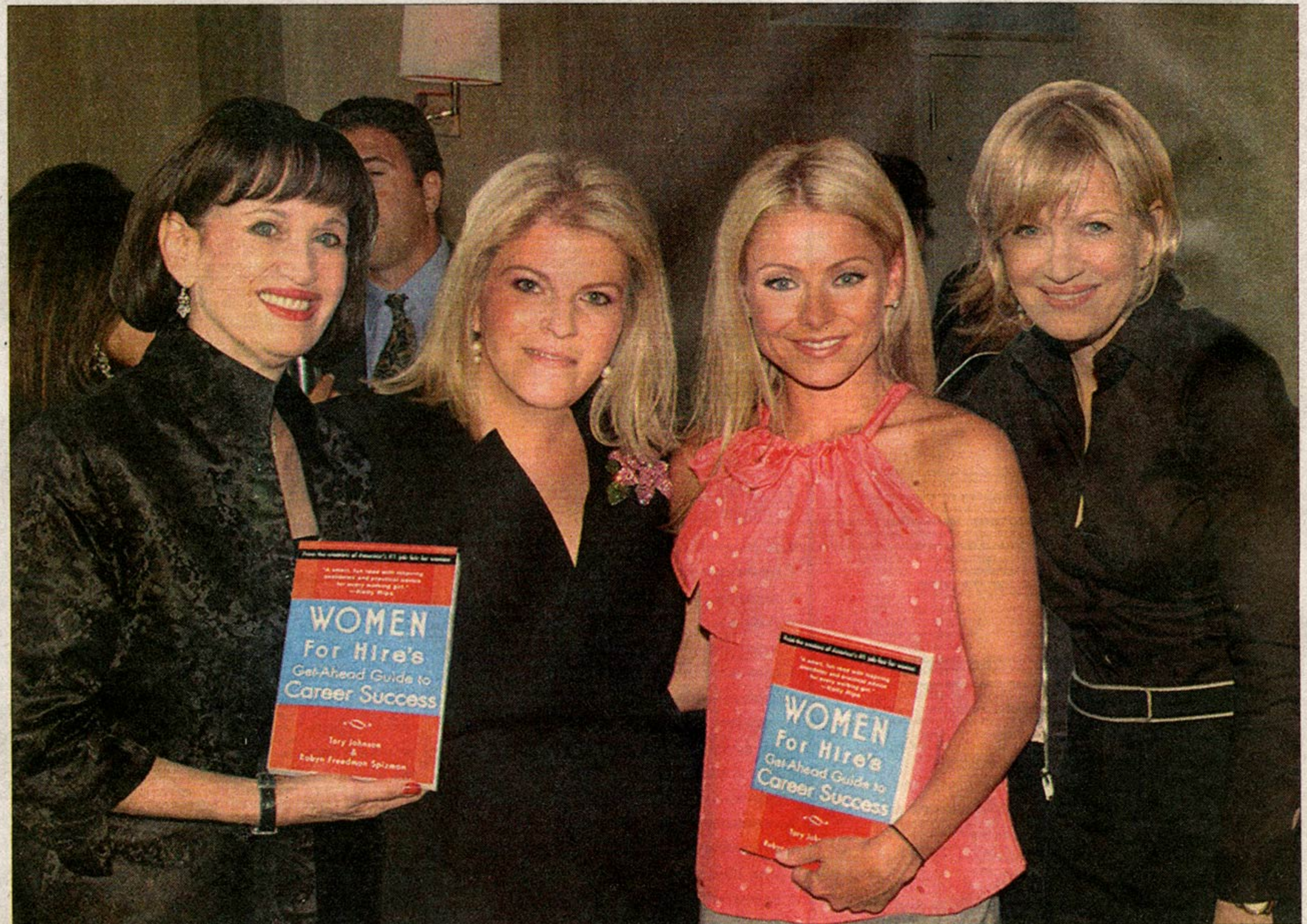
Five years ago, Tory Johnson threw over a corporate career and turned her professional energies to founding a company that focuses on women, their challenges and their successes.

The former press manager for such luminaries as Jane Pauley and Maria Shriver, Johnson is now the chief executive officer of Women for Hire, a company that stages job fairs and seminars to link women with top recruiters in cities around the country. (She'll be doing just that at her next event in Atlanta on Thursday.) She's also spent hours answering questions, offering advice and encouraging the more than 5,000 women a year who have come to her for career assistance.

Her advice and practical suggestions to help women get ahead form the basis of her new book, the "Women for Hire's Get-Ahead Guide to Career Success," co-written with Atlanta writer Robyn Freedman Spizman (Perigee Books, \$15.95).

The team's first book focused on tips for job searches ("Women for Hire: The Ultimate Guide to Getting a Job," Perigee, \$15.95), so it was a natural that the follow-up looked at scaling the career ladder.

"It's all about positioning yourself



Tory Johnson (second from left) celebrated her new book, "Women for Hire's Get-Ahead Guide to Career Success" with a New York cocktail party hosted by actress Kelly Ripa (second from right). Co-author Robyn Freedman Spizman (left) of Atlanta and Diane Sawyer (right) of ABC's "Good Morning America" also attended.

for success," said Johnson from her New York office. "After listening to human resource managers and other people who hire, I've learned that it really comes down to three things: self-promotion, networking and

negotiating."

When it comes to blowing their own horns, women fail miserably, contends Johnson. "By nature, we tend to be shy and reserved," she said. "Of course, you can't apply any rule to

an entire gender, but the majority of women do worry about coming off as conceited or as a braggart. So we downplay our successes, which means

► Please see **WOMEN, R4**

Women: Self-promotion essential, author says

► Continued from R1

we often don't get the title, the job or the salary we want."

What women don't realize is that employers use past performance to predict future success. If they're not convinced that you are confident about your accomplishments, they're less likely to see you as doing a good job in a new position.

Women are also reserved when it comes to turning connections into job networks, Johnson says.

"Men can be at a birthday party, on the golf course or at the bar and talk seamlessly about personal and professional issues," Johnson said. "Women make the same connections but don't always translate them into professional success. Networking isn't just about nurturing

relationships when you need a job; it's a lifelong commitment to forming relationships that help you throughout your career."

Johnson advocates identifying friends who can also be mentors. She also suggests cultivating a relationship with an inspiring role model.

"There are people out there we think would be great to talk to, but we never try," says Johnson. "Start by writing a letter and asking if they'd talk to you. Go out on a limb. When you're gutsy and reach out to someone like that, the potential rewards are enormous."

Johnson also contends that the myth that nice girls don't talk about money keeps many women away from the negotiation table.

"We don't want to rock the boat: If we ask for more, [we think]

"...women do worry about coming off as conceited or as a braggart. So we downplay our successes."

TORY JOHNSON

Author, "Women for Hire's Get-Ahead Guide to Career Success"

someone will like us less," she said. "But it isn't about liking; it's about being compensated for the job you're asked to perform. It's just not smart to sit back and not speak up for what you deserve."

But before you start clamoring for more cash, do your homework. Research the range of salaries for the job you're applying for. Talk to peers

in the industry. Read trade journals to get an idea of the salary track for the job. And then, armed with information, be prepared to haggle.

"We can haggle at flea markets, but when we get into the human resources office or the boardroom, we clam up," said Johnson. "When they see you're a fighter, they'll realize you're going to be a fighter for the company, too. It's just about applying the same everyday skills we already have on our own behalf."

Alexandra Rigas, a resident of the Flushing section of Queens in New York City and a recent Fordham University graduate who is trying to break into communications, particularly liked Johnson's tips on mentoring and being assertive.

"She introduced the notion of having a mentor as someone whom you

can learn from, not only someone from whom you can get what you need," said Rigas.

"I never thought of having a networking party before, but now I realize it's a great way to bring people together, aside from attending other's networking events.

"There are also some exercises to show how any statement can be made assertive, and therefore, better."

The book also covers setting goals, making a career plan, how to keep personal crisis from diminishing your success and handling difficult supervisors and co-workers.

Johnson will also be talking about these topics during Thursday's seminar in Atlanta. For details on that event and the book, visit www.womenforhire.com.