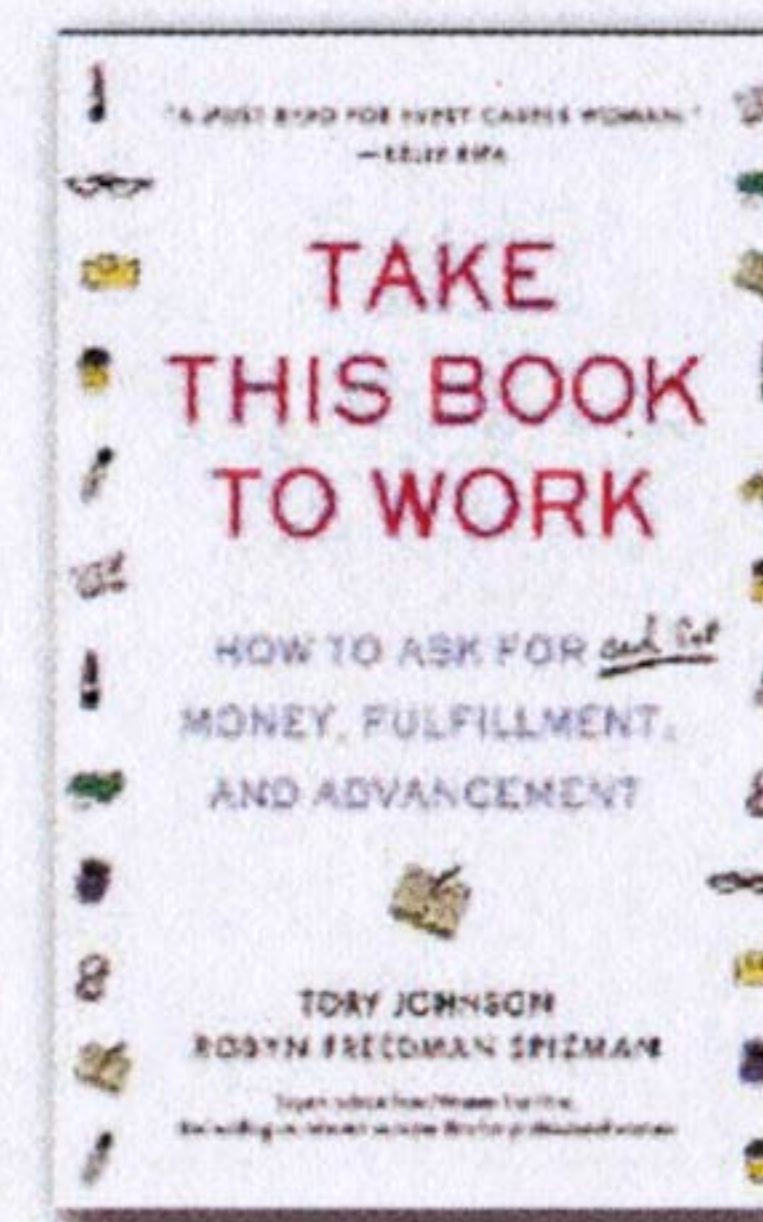


Women learn the importance of

networking in the book, *Take This Book to Work*. By Jill Westfall



wonder women



WHAT DOES A FAILURE to negotiate with your employer cost you? \$500,000. That's the average amount of earnings professional women lose over a lifetime because they tend to negotiate poorly or not at all. Twenty percent of women never learn to negotiate. Tory Johnson, the founder of Women For Hire and workplace contributor on ABC's "Good Morning America," has made it her mission to educate women on looking out for themselves in the workplace. "It starts with speaking up, a willingness to step out of your comfort zone and make your voice heard."

She did so back in 1999, when she quit her high-paying corporate job to start her own company, Women For Hire, which specializes in hosting high-caliber career fairs for professional women nationwide. Three books and a frequent slot on "Good Morning America" later, she is now a nationally recognized expert on workplace issues as they relate to women.

"At the time I started Women For Hire, I had just given birth to twins," says Johnson. "Most people told me I was absolutely nuts to quit a well-paying job to do something incredibly risky on my own. But for me, that pressure was the best thing that could have happened. I had no choice but to succeed. If I failed, I would be forced to go back and get a

'real' job, which is what I was leaving, so I surely didn't want to go back. I had no nest egg to fall back on. My husband and our family relied on two incomes. I absolutely had to make my new business fly."

What she brought to the table was business savvy and a Rolodex to die for. In her "former life," she worked as a press manager for Maria Shriver, Tim Russert and Jane Pauley. She got her start in public relations at ABC News, then NBC News and later Nickelodeon. She had perseverance, experience, charisma, connections and knew the power of the media.

So, Johnson decided to apply her knowledge of the workplace, draw upon her resources and host career expos nationally with an all-star lineup. Star Jones, former co-host on



SPEAK UP!

Women need to learn to speak up and have their voices heard, according to Tory Johnson (at right). Here, Johnson is with co-author Robyn Spizman and client Kelly Ripa.

and since that time, "Today" show anchor Ann Curry, *Money* magazine's Jean Chatzky, Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist Ellen Goodman, CNN anchor Paula Zahn, and author and TV personality Robyn Spizman have also appeared at her events.

"I started Women For Hire because I had an entrepreneurial itch. I wanted to start my own business and do my own thing. Even though career fairs were a dime a dozen, nothing existed specifically for women. I created this category with Women For Hire.

"It hasn't always been easy. I encountered many struggles starting out, such as a lack of cash in the bank, which meant it was all up to me to make things work," says Johnson. "I didn't have the luxury of hiring lots of people to share in the workload. I wore



all the hats. It taught me very quickly the value and importance of being resourceful. I also didn't have a track record or an established brand name, which meant working even harder to win over prospective clients."

Today, 25,000 women attend her events annually, and 250,000 visit her Web site, womenforhire.com, each

month. The site is rich with information and resources for women who are looking for work, currently employed or interested in starting their own businesses. Johnson also publishes her own magazine, which reaches 150,000 readers, and five million viewers watch her on "Good Morning America."

After meeting five years ago at a Women For Hire event, Johnson and Robyn Spizman became good friends and co-authors, partnering on three books, including *Take This Book to Work: How to Ask For (and Get) Money, Fulfillment and Advancement* and *Women for Hire's Get-Ahead Guide to Career Success*.

"Tory invited me to a Women For Hire career fair in Atlanta," says Spizman, a prolific author, consumer advocate and media personality. "When I got there, I was amazed and inspired by what she was doing. Thousands of women poured into the ballroom and were networking to land a job."

What Spizman also observed, however, is that many women have a hard time asking for what they want, especially when job-seeking. "It can be awkward and uncomfortable. Women express that through a lack of confidence and poor communication skills—something we generally excel at in everyday life," says Spizman. "Immediately a light bulb went off in my head. I felt that with Tory's knowledge and support, we could write a book that would give women a blueprint for succeeding, and that's just what we did."

Through April, Johnson will hit the road—bringing her Women For Hire career expos to Atlanta, Boston, Dallas, Los Angeles, New York, St. Louis, Tampa and Washington, D.C. Her schedule is intense, especially for a working mom. "As an entrepreneur, I work around the clock," says Johnson. "But it never feels like a drag or a burden. The key is that I really love what I do. This has become my life's work and I couldn't imagine doing anything else. If you pick something you love—and you really believe in the mission and purpose—it's a lot easier to get through the tough times and challenges." ■