

Up, Close & Personal with Aliza Licht

Author : ZOË BJÖRNSON

Date : May 23, 2016



HOW TO BUILD YOUR BRAND: THE FORMER DKNY PR GIRL WEIGHS IN

[Aliza Licht](#) *knows how to leave a mark.*

*As the former voice behind DKNY's **social** media famous DKNY PR Girl, Aliza is an expert at not only **branding** herself, but also doing so successfully for a household name in fashion.*

Aliza grew up with a love for fashion, but originally chose the science route, hoping to pursue plastic surgery. However, once she fell into the fashion industry, she climbed to the top with an honest attitude and a heck of a lot of experience under her belt.

*Today, Aliza is the founder and president of LEAVE YOUR MARK, LLC, where she consults **brands** at the intersection of technology and fashion on how to **brand** themselves and communicate effectively. Aliza is also the author of [LEAVE YOUR MARK](#), a mentorship book that teaches career success through personal **branding**.*

*Read our interview with Aliza to learn more about her **innovation** in **social** media for fashion and PR, her tips for growing your personal **brand**, and the biggest challenge of her career thus far. Don't forget to check out [her page](#) or [read her book, LEAVE YOUR MARK](#).*

Tell us little bit about yourself and how you got involved in the world of PR.

It all started with Fashion. For my fourth birthday, I received a toy sewing machine from my Grandma. She wasn't a **designer** by trade, but rather by passion, sewing my mother her custom-**designed** frocks. My use of the sewing machine was far less impressive, sewing tissues together to make a very fragile, spot-clean only look for Barbie.

From there, though, my love for fashion grew, but it lived as a passion in my personal life. I instead chose to study science in the hopes of becoming a plastic surgeon. I graduated with a degree in Neurobiology and Physiology and decided very late to shift my path to Fashion. I got my start on the magazine side of the industry and stayed there for two years. As an editor, I spoke to PR people all day long. I learned PR from having the opposite job. When I didn't get a promotion, I decided to jump to the other side. I found my home in PR.

What's one thing everyone should know about you?

I'm extremely honest and direct. If you don't want the truth, don't ask me what I think.

What was your original inspiration for DKNY PR Girl?

It was 2009, and I was obsessed with the TV show Gossip Girl. During a meeting at work one day, we discussed how we would embark on **social** media for the **brands**. At the time, we were one of the only fashion **brands** in the space, so we knew we had to pave our way. I instinctively felt that public relations was the perfect lens to **socially** filter the world of Donna Karan through – between fashion shows, celebrity dressing and everything in between, we had a ton of content to draw from. I immediately thought, "What if we take the idea of an anonymous blogger like Gossip Girl and make her a publicist?" DKNY PR GIRL was the perfect answer – a seamless combination of PR person and Gossip Girl all rolled into one persona. No one had to know who she was as she would be represented by a fashion sketch. So that's how I began. I tweeted anonymously until 2011, at which time we made a decision to reveal the person behind the Twitter handle. When I left DKNY in 2015, the persona was retired. I like to think of it as graduation. She's all grown up now.

What was the most interesting thing you learned while being the anonymous DKNY PR Girl?

How incredibly gratifying it is to connect with people around the world. I started mentoring through Twitter, and that's what ultimately lead me to write LEAVE YOUR MARK.

Tell us about Leave Your Mark. Who should read it and why?

LEAVE YOUR MARK is a mentorship in 288 pages. Using my career as the narrative, the book is filled with insider secrets on how to “Land your dream job”, “Kill it in your career”, “Rock **social** media” and “Create the **brand** of you.” It’s chock full of The Devil Wears Prada-esque stories with essential advice and inspiration woven throughout. I truly hope that the book becomes a bible to young professionals who are looking to improve the way they communicate their personal **brand**. It’s a book that I hope people read with a highlighter.

What are the first four things you would tell a mentee as they begin building their brand?

1. Mind your reputation, both online and in real life. Your reputation doesn’t follow you everywhere; it gets there before you do.
2. Cherish and build your network. It’s the greatest asset you have.
3. Be a gracious connector of people. Good karma always leads to good business.
4. People like to do business first and foremost with people they LIKE. Skills are only half the recipe.

What has been the biggest challenge of your career thus far? How did you overcome it?

I’ve had so many challenges in my career. Switching from pre-med to fashion was the first. Making the decision to jump from editorial to PR was the second. Third would be writing LEAVE YOUR MARK. The fourth is making the hard decision to leave my position at Donna Karan after 17 years. I had the best job in the world, and I chose to give it up precisely to challenge myself. When you get too comfortable somewhere, you stop growing. I’m too young for that. 2016 for me is a year that will celebrate freedom and creativity. I founded LEAVE YOUR MARK LLC, my **branding**, communications and **digital** strategic advisory company and I am testing the waters in other creative ways. I’m much more afraid to stay stagnant than I am to fail, and I guess that’s a good thing. I have always believed that a career is a journey that you’re never done traveling.

At about.me, we believe in the importance of a simple, yet effective representation of who you are online. As someone who is a champion of building a strong personal brand, why do you think people should invest in their online identity?

Every person is a **brand**, and your online presence is your store window to the world.

//