

Snackable content & business insights: a new book from Caroline Franczia

Caroline Franczia is a regular columnist at Maddyne, known for the witty and insightful parallels she draws between everyday startup life and the world of the silver screen. We interviewed her about her new book, *Popcorn for the new CEO*.

Popcorn for the New CEO, a new non-fiction title from Uppercut-First founder Caroline Franczia, breaks from 'business book' convention by enhancing business insights with quotes from popular culture. There's advice in there for everyone from the business school student to the CEO. In the words of *Maddyne's* editor David Johnson, 'Self-help from Kevin McAllister and Jedi business development? Yes, please.'

We asked Caroline some questions about the defining moments in her startup (and film-watching) career.

[Maddyness] Tell us about your path to Uppercute-First and writing the book. What have been your own key learning experiences?

[Caroline] After working for amazing American companies, I wanted to work closer with European startups. Uppercute-First came through a few years of discussions with European VCs, understanding their needs and gaps in their startups' go to market strategy.

I launched in April, providing free office hours to CEOs who came recommended. At the start I felt the urge to write about the topics we discussed in office hours as a written follow-up of the brainstorming sessions. Quickly it transformed into a regular thing writing for you guys.

One day I said to a CEO, "Did you just do a Star Wars meeting?" And he said, "what do you mean?" That's how the whole movie reference thing came alive. After a few months, I figured creating a book - one that you can keep on your desk and open to solve a problem that's bothering you - would be a good idea!

Do you think the business world needs an injection of light-heartedness?

Absolutely. This is why the business world is embracing, in my humble opinion, podcasts, audiobooks and blogs. There are many great books out there, many that I recommend at the end of Popcorn for the CEO.

The ones that really worked with me were the ones that incorporated storytelling in their approach to delivering content. I also believe that, as far as possible, chapters should be short and actionable.

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How does *Popcorn for the new CEO* differ from traditional business books? Who do you hope will read it?

I think the book is breaking all the rules of business by getting blockbuster movies into the mix, with chapters that are readable independently yet complement each other. Being able to absorb valuable content in less than five minutes should be a requirement for any busy person out there.

I'd love someone who has nothing to do with the startup world or the tech world or the go to market world to pick it up, read it and say they enjoyed it. Actually, one of my good friends who is in a more traditional industry told me she used the 'Negotiate like Jack Sparrow' tips and they helped her a lot. Another acquaintance said he would have liked to find a book like this when he was a student. These were amazing compliments.

What are some of your favourite case studies and chapters in the book?

Tough question! 13 is my favourite number, and Chapter 13 is quite special. The magic really operates between the concept of negotiations and Jack Sparrow; this is entertainment at its best! It's also a chapter that I know non-tech/business people have enjoyed and applied in their own fields.

What are some of your favourite films?

I am a sucker for the '80s and '90s movie (as you might notice from the book). I have watched all of the *Indiana Jones*, *Back To The future* and *The Goonies* movies... and I've seen *Die Hard* more times than I can count. My sons who are not yet 10 know them all by heart by now.

We've had to put a rule in place at home saying that these movies can only be watched once a year!

And finally, a more personal question! We've started asking everyone we interview about their daily routine and the rules they live by. Is it up at 4am for yoga, or something a little more traditional?

Since we had the kids, 6-8pm is break time with the family. It's easier to apply this with work from home lately, but it wasn't when I was a global account manager or when I had my own team.

Nevertheless, it is a necessary time to reconnect. We also have a family rule when we're not travelling, which is movie night on Friday under the blanket for cuddle times! Oh... and work-wise, I believe I am at my happiest – and therefore best-performing – when not forced to work from 9 to 5. In fact, I am a bit of a night owl.

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Article by MADDYNESS