

How 'Millionaire Matchmaker' Patti Stanger's global brand beats Oprah's

Paul C. Brunson, Special to USA TODAY Published 12:48 p.m. ET July 31, 2018 | Updated 11:22 a.m. ET Aug. 1, 2018



Patti Stanger has built one of the most recognizable brands on the planet by offering her relationship-minded clients the personal attention no one else would provide and using video and social media to share the progress. USA TODAY



(Photo: USAT)

I was in Istanbul recently, eating dinner with friends at the posh Nusr-Et restaurant. Our group included two businesswomen from China. It was my first time meeting them, and since we were the few who spoke English, we were seated next to each other.

Immediately, we tried to find common ground by naming various musicians and authors to see if we shared any favorites.

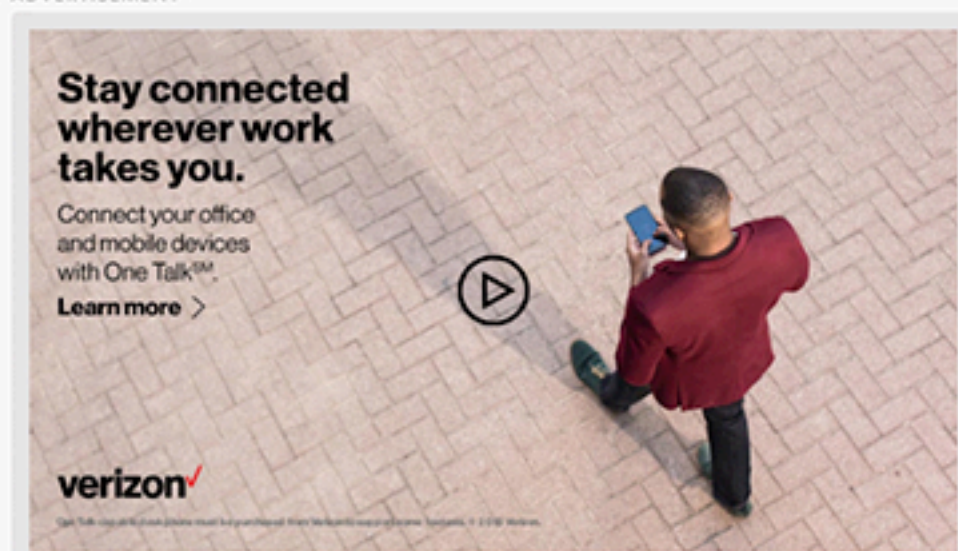
Not one. They didn't know any of the artists I mentioned, and I had not heard of one they cited.

I decided to go to my foolproof "everyone should know" person. I leaned over and said "How about Oprah Winfrey, how do you like her work?"

The two women looked at each other in a very puzzled way and then turned to me and said, "I'm sorry, we've never heard of Oprah Winfrey."

I was blown away. So, almost in jest, I said, "How about the 'Millionaire Matchmaker', do you know her?"

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Their response will forever be cemented in my mind. With a big smile they said almost in unison, "Patti Stanger, oh yes, we love her in China!"

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But how did they know who she was?

They had not seen Stanger on TV in China.

They had not seen her on tour in China.

They had not read her books, nor were they familiar with any business she did in China.

So how was the Millionaire Matchmaker more recognizable to them than everyone else I mentioned? My two new friends told me many of her quotes and video clips have gone viral on WeChat, the most popular social network in China. They then dropped the literal million-dollar nugget, "and we love how real she is."

In a day and age where personal brand and audience building is at an all-time high on the importance scale, Stanger is crushing it globally.

It's for that reason I was so excited to interview her for USA & Main's Uncommon Drive series, where I sit down with the world's most intriguing creators and founders. Stanger possesses many traits that have helped her garner worldwide recognition, but I was most curious about the core driver. Connecting the discussion I had with my friends from China – who I met months before talking to Stanger – with my observations of her before, during and after the interview, all helped me find what I believe is the secret to how the Millionaire Matchmaker built one of the most recognizable brands in the world.

What became clear the second Stanger entered the USA TODAY offices in Los Angeles is that she is unapologetically honest – about everything, even herself. Before we started shooting the interview, Stanger had given commentary on everything from the terrible parking (she was right), to a better position for the cameras, to what side of her face was most flattering.

Some of her comments stung (like when she told me to sit up straighter), but I realized after the interview got underway and we dug deep into her background that Stanger doesn't intentionally try to harm anyone. Instead, her upbringing and hard-lived professional career taught her that in order to survive, she had to live by one simple rule – raw authenticity all the time.

Authenticity is one of the most powerful yet challenging traits to convey, especially in business. Few people are willing to unveil their true selves to their bosses, co-workers, or clients out of fear of retribution. Stanger, on the other hand, operates in a constant state of truth, for better or worse. Her willingness to face and fight the blowback that could come from the "worse" is what makes her so compelling.

An analysis of Stanger's career makes it clear the embracing of her true self did not come overnight. There also appear to be distinct steps she took to develop the trait of raw authenticity. The three that most stood out from my conversation with her include:

- 1. Become self-aware:** Every choice we make is done either subconsciously or consciously. It's when we make our decisions using the latter that we are living fully self-aware. To make diligent choices requires focus on one's skills as well as deficiencies. The magic is that the more you focus on a choice, weighing every factor, the more self-aware you become. Stanger embodies this perfectly. Every question I asked, no matter how trivial, I could literally see her pause a moment, think it through, and then respond, consciously.
- 2. Be present:** There are thousands of articles written on being present in the moment, but what I learned from Stanger will be the lesson I take with me for life. In every conversation, simply have an opinion. You don't have to share that opinion, but if you tell yourself to form an opinion based on everything you're hearing, it will nudge you beyond simply hearing words. Attaching an opinion forces you to be present.
- 3. Be decisive:** Few of us like to make decisions, especially tough ones. However, if you've been around long enough, you know that if a decision needs to be made and you don't make it, the decision eventually will be made for you. Stanger wants none of that. She lives and breathes intention, with a desire to have control over her destiny and not leave it in the hands of just anyone. What I realized from talking to her is that if we're being true to ourselves and living authentically, we would not leave most decisions in the hands of fate. Of course, there will be times when someone else could be more knowledgeable, but then again, proactively identifying those people is in itself a decisive act.

Watch my interview with Patti at [usaandmain.com](#) for more insights on building a global brand that's more memorable – at least to some – than Oprah's.

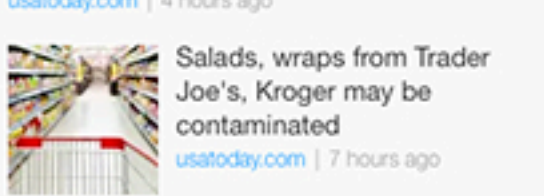


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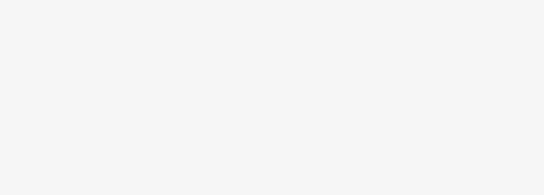
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Paul C. Brunson, host of USA TODAY's video series "Uncommon Drive," is a serial entrepreneur with three exits and a pioneering matchmaker (yes, he is the real-life "Hitch"). He also is building a school in Jamaica. Follow him on [LinkedIn](#) or [Instagram](#) for behind the scenes footage and insight from his interviews and travels.