

a book can
BUILD *a* BRAND



BY **Esther Keane**
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **Harry Gerwien**

PUBLISHER JOHN KOEHLER ENCOURAGES BUSINESSPEOPLE TO USE WORD POWER

Legendary businessman Lee Iacocca is best known as an American automobile executive who spearheaded the development of Ford Mustang and Pinto cars in the 1960s and revived the Chrysler Corporation during the 1980s. He is also a well-regarded author.

“Iacocca: An Autobiography,” the best-selling nonfiction hardback of 1984 and 1985, continues to inspire readers today.

Iacocca’s reminiscence of life behind the scenes at Ford and the rebirth of Chrysler proves that a book can be a powerful marketing and branding tool and a great way to leave a legacy.

Koehler Books, a publishing company in Virginia Beach, knows this to be true.

When John Koehler began the venture in 2005, he was publishing his own books and those of his friends – mostly businesspeople who wanted to share their life experiences and professional wisdom. As an award-winning graphic designer, Koehler had the talent and knowledge to design a book, and with his background in youth ministry, he felt called to publishing and passionate about making others’ books come to life.

People came to him.

One was the late Bill Rountree, founder of Monarch Bank. His book “Tree,” published by Koehler in 2011, is an example of the business book trend Koehler was beginning to see.

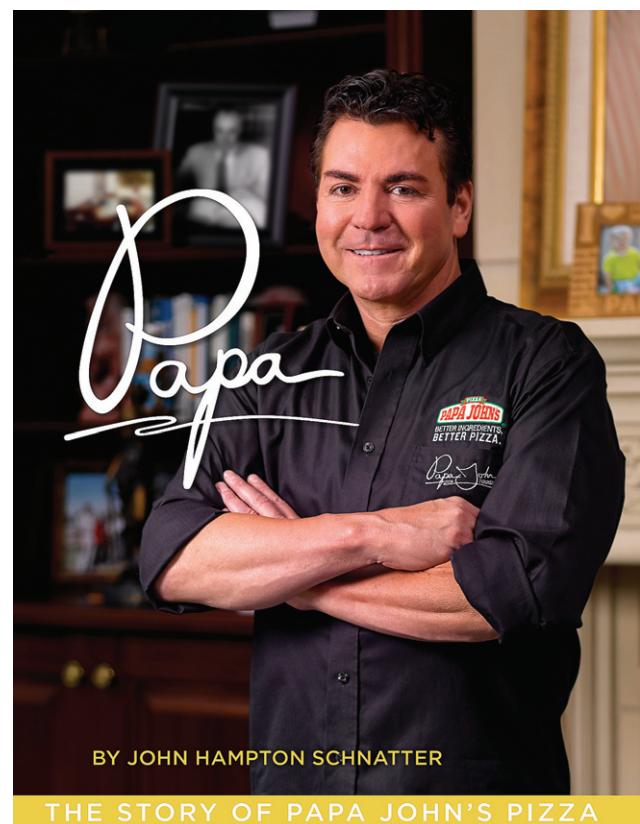
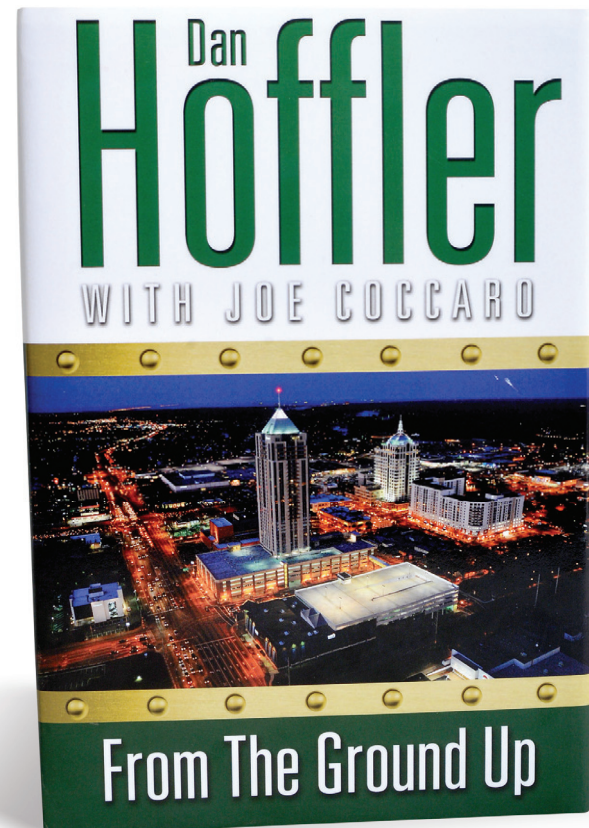
“Rountree was a businessman, he wasn’t a writer, but he wanted me to do his book. That started to happen a lot,” Koehler said. “Businessmen would come to me saying they wanted me to publish their books about their life and business.”

When Joe Coccaro, who spent nearly three decades as a reporter, columnist, editor and newsroom manager at several newspapers including The Virginian-Pilot, came on board as the vice president and executive editor of Koehler Books in 2012, he brought with him Dan Hoffler’s manuscript, “From the Ground Up.” Taking a page from Iacocca, Hoffler wanted to leave a life legacy, something he could offer to clients, employees, friends and family members.

“He ended up printing a thousand hard copies,” Koehler said. “If our authors are in the business world, I tell them to get a hardcover because it impresses people.”

The written word has power.

“You can use a book to leverage what you do,” Koehler said. “It’s a branding book, which we have done several times for





Here, the book “Pocket Guide to Publishing: 100 Things Authors Should Know” is part of a larger discussion about the Koehler brand. Around the table from left, are Bud Ramey, branding consultant; John Koehler, president of Koehler Books; Joe Cocco, vice president and executive editor of Koehler; Ellen McBride, marketing communications director of Red Chalk Studios; and Kin Nelson, founder and creative director of Red Chalk.

businesspeople. We say you have a budget for marketing or an annual report, why not a book? It’s a tremendously strong and amazing tool. It still carries that weight. You are a published author, and that’s good for business.”

Koehler asks them to imagine the doors that will open if they could say to a potential client, “I want you to have a signed copy of my book.”

It’s a free gift and your message, all in one. Executives, entrepreneurs and leaders wear many hats to drive success, and Koehler says published author should be one of them.

Koehler and Cocco recently released their own co-written book.

“Pocket Guide to Publishing: 100 Things Authors Should Know” is a tool for emerging authors and anyone interested in the publishing world. Koehler Books, which deals with fiction and nonfiction, has published or has in the works, more than 250 authors from around the world.

Based on the popularity of business books over the years, Koehler encourages entrepreneurs and executives to start writing, or to work with a ghostwriter.

“The whole idea is business books becoming a branding tool,” Koehler said. “It’s not really about the book; the book is a tool to point to your business.” – **IL**

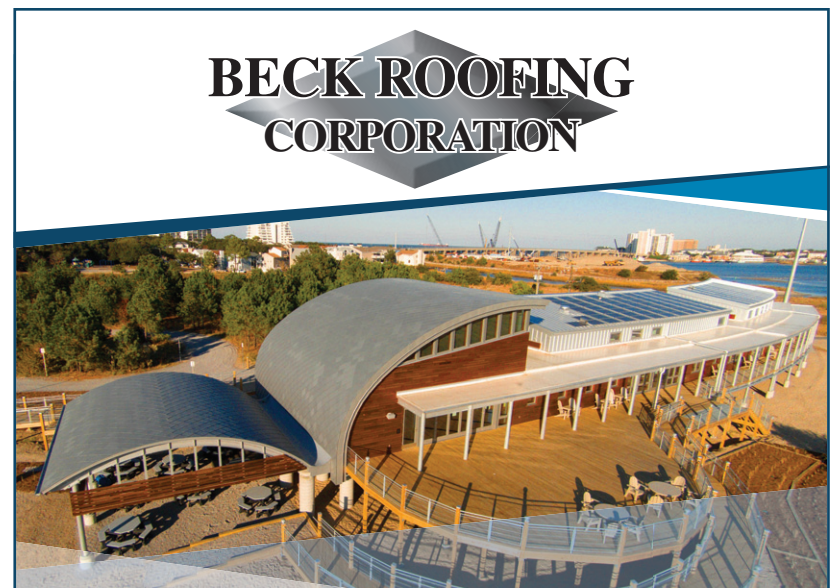


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