

# How People Become Famous

**Geniuses of self-marketing from Einstein to Kim Kardashian**

Rainer Zitelmann

*Management Books 2000,  
£14.99*



Modesty may be a virtue, but when it comes to getting that promotion, closing that deal, or ensuring your business is a

success, it can be a drawback, especially in these celebrity-obsessed days. Academic and entrepreneur Rainer Zitelmann argues that fame, though, isn't necessarily the result of talent, or even charisma, but is down to following a few rules. In this book he looks at how 12 people, ranging from Albert Einstein to the "very stable genius" Donald Trump, became well known throughout the world.

Some of the factors are obvious – a desire to become famous, obsessive courting of the media and a willingness to engage in attention-grabbing stunts. A sense of humour and ability to grasp what the public is looking for can also go a long way. Some attributes are more surprising, including having the flexibility to change direction when an act backfires or grows stale. It's easy to dismiss many of the celebrities Zitelmann describes as lightweights, but the reality is that their rise to fame was planned. They were talented at becoming famous, if nothing else.

The book would have benefited from a concluding chapter, but it is an original and informative take on a talent that we tend too easily to dismiss. At the least you will come away with a respect (however grudging) for the marketing savvy of his subjects.