

Bob Seelert – author *Start with the Answer*

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Bob Seelert is one of the most senior executives to emerge into the troubled business landscape in 2009. His new book *Start with the Answer* is a back-to-basics primer for aspiring leaders – in business, in government, in education.

With two Harvard degrees and a 40 year career as a “Captain of Industry,” Bob Seelert has amassed a reputation as a turnaround expert, reviving the fortunes of businesses and brands in the USA and internationally.

For the past 12 years Seelert has been the Chairman of Saatchi & Saatchi, one of the world’s leading creative ideas companies. His journey from small-town Connecticut to being CEO of five companies in three different industries, and a member of the board of directors of nine companies in the United States, England and France, reads like a script for “The Great American Success Story.” It began with his decision to “take a flyer” and apply to Harvard College in 1960.

After graduating he went on to Harvard Business School and then a 23 year career with General Foods Corporation, one of the premier companies of its time in America. He held 17 different roles and positions across the organization, initially in sales and marketing and then general management, eventually becoming President and CEO of Worldwide Coffee and International Foods. He closely observed one of the biggest mega-mergers in US corporate history, the acquisition of General Foods by Philip Morris in 1985.

In the early nineties Seelert led turnaround operations at Topco, a grocery industry co-operative, and Kayser Roth, a leading U.S. manufacturer of leg wear that operated as a joint venture of the Blackstone Group and Wasserstein-Perella.

In 1995 he was recruited as the high-profile CEO to lead Cordiant, the UK-based holding company that had been formed following the dramatic shareholder revolt at the London-based Saatchi & Saatchi. He became Chairman in 1997 after hiring Kevin Roberts as CEO, moved the headquarters to New York, and together they rebuilt and re-focused the company as a potent ideas company working with many of the world’s leading corporations and brands. In 2000 Seelert concluded a merger of Saatchi & Saatchi with the Publicis Groupe of France at a share price that was 450% higher than the starting level. The company has improved its financial performance every year since, and in 2008 Saatchi & Saatchi had its best year in the history of the company.

Seelert is still actively involved in the strategy and management of Saatchi & Saatchi as non-executive Chairman, dispensing “advice, counsel and perspective.” His 2009 re-emergence into the spotlight with his “book of wisdom” could not have been better timed. In *Start with the Answer* he offers transformative insights and practical instruction for men and women determined to succeed in their careers as leaders.

Bob Seelert (66) lives in New Canaan, Connecticut with his wife Sarah.

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