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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**BEAUTY QUEEN**

**Inside the Reign of Avon's Andrea Jung**

By Deborrah Himself

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"A terrific read for senior leaders. Greatness indeed cannot protect against failure. In **BEAUTY QUEEN**, Debbie Himself walks us through valuable signposts for our own leadership journeys."

—Katherine Rielly-Gauvin, Divisional Vice President, Global Head of Commercial Development, AbbVie

**WHAT THE RISE AND FALL OF AVON CEO ANDREA JUNG  
CAN TEACH US ABOUT 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY LEADERSHIP**

**New Book by Leadership Expert and Former Avon Executive  
Deborrah Himself Reveals Critical Lessons for Leaders at All Levels**

Andrea Jung's spectacular rise and highly visible fall as CEO of Avon captured the attention of the business world. But according to leadership expert – and former Avon executive – Deborrah Himself, there is much more to be drawn from Jung's career than a colorful story. In her new book, **BEAUTY QUEEN: Inside the Reign of Avon's Andrea Jung** (Palgrave MacMillan/April 2014), Himself delves deep into Jung's experience at Avon to uncover critical lessons about why twenty-first century leaders succeed – and why they fail.

As Himself explains, the challenges Jung faced at Avon – transitioning organizations to new business models, pursuing global growth strategies, making ethics-versus-profits choices, and changing from traditional to technological channels of distributions – are confronting organizations across industries and around the world at an increasing rate. "Jung's skill in meeting many of these challenges – and her failure to deal with a critical few – are equally illuminating," she writes.

Himself's insights are not only drawn from her time at Avon, but also from her work as a

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consultant for other Fortune 500 companies and from her extensive research and interviews. Among the lessons she shares are:

### **The Risk of Functional Favoritism and Overspecialization**

In some organizations, the top leaders are experts, often brilliant ones, who excel in one area – finance, operations, marketing, or engineering, for example. At Avon, Jung’s expertise was in marketing. Therefore marketing and sales ruled the roost. Himsel contends that Jung did not place enough emphasis on operations. The broader the background of the leader, the more successful he or she will be, she says. **BEAUTY QUEEN** includes specific steps for avoiding the trap of overspecialization such as setting a two-function minimum for top position selection and valuing eclectic business and educational experiences.

### **The Importance of the C-Team**

“No matter how brilliant or skilled the top executive in an organization might be, he or she is often missing something,” explains Himsel. She urges boards and HR departments to keep this in mind, both as a guiding selection principle and afterwards, as the organizational situation changes. When Jung – who lacked certain operational skills – began at Avon, she had a perfectly matched COO in Susan Kropf, a master at operations. But when Kropf retired, there was no successor in place, essentially leaving Jung without a right hand. In **BEAUTY QUEEN**, Himsel includes essential questions organizations should ask themselves as they monitor the C-Suite – both the mix of skills and approaches top leaders collectively bring to the table, as well as their ability to work well together.

### **The Danger of Underestimating the Impact of Culture**

While culture is a complex and critical component of any company, Himsel warns that many leaders underestimate its impact or fail to deal effectively with it. Although Jung recognized and valued Avon’s culture – which was entrepreneurial, relationship-oriented, and inclined to base actions on intuition rather than data – she was not always successful

in evolving it to correspond to changing business realities. Himsel offers guidance to help organizations assess their cultures and implement cultural change.

### **Why Term Limits Are Critical**

Himsel argues that seven to ten years seems to be the optimum length of time for CEOs to serve. This permits time for the learning curve that exists in every CEO position, along with five or six years of highly effective leadership. “Then, many CEOs settle into their roles, losing some of their edge. And they may no longer be the ideal leader for the company as the external environment changes,” Himsel writes. In Jung’s case, her thirteen-year term was too long. **BEAUTY QUEEN** provides the author’s insights into succession planning, something she urges that companies address “as if their organization’s life depends on it.”

### **Women and Leadership**

Himsel also addresses the issue of women and leadership. She discusses women’s evolving leadership styles, urging them to rely on authenticity, rather than trying to be tougher or softer or anything other than who they are. She also offers specific steps for helping women managers, including encouraging them to seize stretch assignments and ensuring that they receive candid feedback, even if the conversations are difficult.

“Ultimately, Andrea Jung’s story is a cautionary tale for leaders,” writes Himsel. “If anyone seemed immune to failure, it was she.” Himsel’s narration of Jung’s time at Avon and the insightful lessons she draws from her successes and missteps make **BEAUTY QUEEN** an invaluable guidebook for leaders at all levels, today and tomorrow.

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### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

**DEBORRAH HIMSEL** is the author of *Leadership Sopranos Style*. From 1999 to 2005, she worked alongside Andrea Jung at Avon as vice president of Global Organization Effectiveness. A former vice president of Deutsche Bank, Himsel is a leadership consultant for such Fortune 500 companies as Johnson & Johnson, KPMG, Exxon/Mobil, Bain, Citigroup, and Walmart. She teaches at Thunderbird School of Global Management and The Helsinki School of Economics at Aalto University. She has been featured in various media, including Fox News, CNBC, and Bloomberg, and she wrote commentary on *The Apprentice* for *USA Today*. She lives in Gold Canyon, Arizona.