

2-24-2005

# The Reinvention Of Martha Stewart: UNH Marketing Professor Available to Discuss How Domestic Diva Can Reclaim Her Image and Her Brand

Lori Wright

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholars.unh.edu/news>

---

## Recommended Citation

Wright, Lori, "The Reinvention Of Martha Stewart: UNH Marketing Professor Available to Discuss How Domestic Diva Can Reclaim Her Image and Her Brand" (2005). *UNH Today*. 1422.  
<https://scholars.unh.edu/news/1422>

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Administrative Offices at University of New Hampshire Scholars' Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Media Relations by an authorized administrator of University of New Hampshire Scholars' Repository. For more information, please contact [nicole.hentz@unh.edu](mailto:nicole.hentz@unh.edu).



## Related Links

[Whittemore School of Business and Economics](#)

# The Reinvention Of Martha Stewart: UNH Marketing Professor Available to Discuss How Domestic Diva Can Reclaim Her Image and Her Brand

Contact: [Lori Wright](#)  
603-862-0574  
UNH Media Relations

Feb. 24, 2005

---

DURHAM, N.H. -- Next week, business mogul Martha Stewart will be home again after serving five months in a federal prison. How does a woman, whose image and persona are so intertwined with the brand on which her financial empire has been built, recover and move forward with her business interests?

Stefan Nicovich, assistant professor of marketing at the University of New Hampshire Whittemore School of Business and Economics, is an expert in marketing, communication, advertising and consumer behavior, and is available to discuss how high-profile people such as Stewart recover following seemingly devastating life circumstances.

According to Nicovich, unlike other high-profile people who have recovered publicly, Stewart is not just a public figure. She also is the product and brand on which her financial successes – her merchandise, magazines and television shows – are built. Reinventing her image and persona will involve a detailed strategy that involves communication, image-building, branding, media positioning and public relations.

“Martha Stewart, as an icon of popular culture, has several options. She can reposition herself in the mind of consumers as more (or different from) the decorating diva she is known to be. She might try to incorporate her prison experience in helping others avoid the same fate. Or she might try to maintain the status quo, minimizing her time in prison and attempting to reestablish herself as the decorating diva,” Nicovich says.

“Stewart’s actions in prison indicate that she is looking to position herself as a decorator regardless of circumstances and that prison was a learning experience on her life’s journey,” Nicovich says. Portrayed as a demanding, cutthroat businesswoman both before the ImClone stock scandal and during her trial, Stewart recently has been trying to reposition herself. In the March issue of Martha Stewart Living, the editor’s note talks of a positive, resourceful Stewart who is spending her prison time teaching her fellow inmates yoga, picking wild greens on the prison grounds and making a nativity set for her mother using old molds found in the prison’s ceramics studio. On her marthastalks.com web site, she has kept in touch with her fans, writing passionately about the needs of the women in prison with her and calling for her readers to push for prison reforms.

“Martha’s basic problem is one of credibility and trust, but it might not be as big an issue as it might be for other fallen celebrities (Kobe Bryant comes to mind). Martha was never known as a saint, nor even as a particularly nice person but as a shrewd and driving businesswoman. Her ability to lead a company, based on her ability to leverage her skills as a decorator and purveyor of fashion, is not in question. Her honesty is,” Nicovich says.

“We as a society may be so jaded that we expect our business leaders to be corrupt and Martha just got caught. In that case, she might even reposition herself as the victim, the small fish that got caught when the big fish got away,” he says. “But it is interesting who we, as a society, forgive and who we don’t. Hugh Grant and Robert Downey Jr. found work after their brushes with the law. Paul Rubens hosted Saturday Night Live and made jokes about his ordeal. We appear to have forgiven these celebrities, but Howard Dean lost his bid for the White House based on a pep rally scream.”

Nicovich can be reached at 603-862-3338 or [nicovich@cisunix.unh.edu](mailto:nicovich@cisunix.unh.edu).