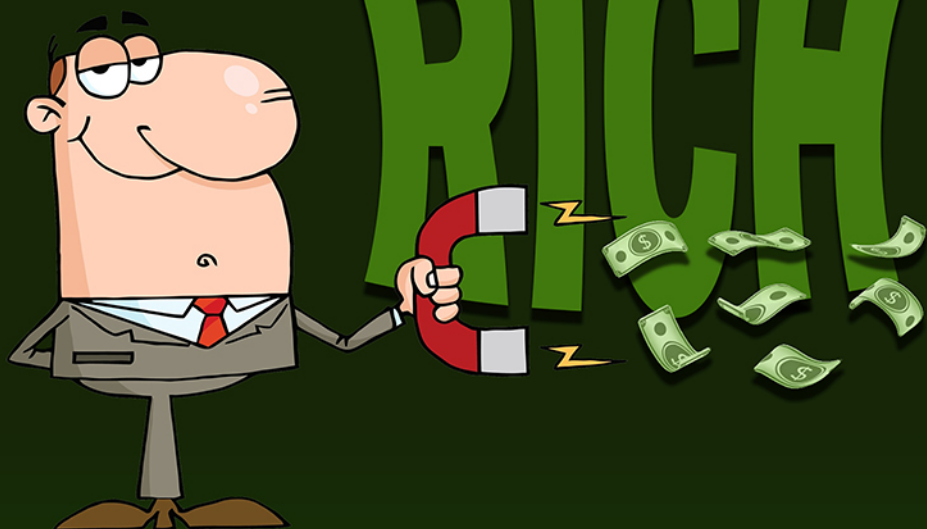


# Before You Think About Getting



**Make The Best Of Your Professional Relationships**

See most people are on the same mission on and off of the court and it's usually to make money or see some type of growth in their life and for that to happen we need to interact with each other. May sound easy enough until you have to work with that guy who's always in a bad mood or constantly making negative remarks. It's even worst if they are in a position of power or you may need them to excel. The pro and con of this are that people are usually the same whether they are at work or not, meaning learning how to interact with people on an individual basis can cause that guy with a negative attitude to respond to you differently when in conversation. I've heard lots of people say that Everybody's Out For Their Self and it may be true in some sense but tapping into that and finding out who's out for what especially when it's that person in a position of power can easily establish you as a friend or ally or even a resource and that will give you access to some of the power they possess.

**Before You Think About Getting Rich is comprised of short blog articles written by the author that were created into chapters specifically for this book which relates to situations that we may experience in our professional careers.**

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# INTRODUCTION

This book was written from the perspective of a graphic designer that became an entrepreneur. The basis of this book is to enlighten entrepreneurs on how techniques and strategies used in business can apply in real life. The first thing to understand is when I say techniques and strategies I don't mean a way to make some quick money but more important things like building relationships and not just being a retailer but a resource in your industry and in your life.

It's no secret and no matter how much some people try to deny it, money is the end game for all of us. We all need money to live, some more than others but the fast track to success can be a slippery slope and between music, the Internet, and television making living a comfortable life seem like it's just an opportunity away has really given some people the disillusion that websites like YouTube will make them an overnight sensation or getting backstage to a concert might get them a record deal. When in reality hard work alone probably won't get you to the level that you seek but learning how to utilize your relationships and allowing you and your resources to be available to the right people will open all the right doors.

I went to a trade school and graduated with associate credits and a diploma in Computer engineering and electronics. While in school I met a guy named Mike that was interning for an advertising agency that was creating some sample ads for Coca-Cola. He uses to spend his lunch break in class working in Photoshop and some 3D graphics he had been designing. After a few weeks of school, I started staying in class with Mike for lunch watching and learning about this software he was using

At the time I was like 26 and use to smoke cigarettes, so in exchange, I brought a pack to school every day because Mike smoked and that kept him from buying them and kept me around him to learn all I could during that short period of time. Mike and I naturally became friends but unfortunately lost touch because this was around 2002 and Facebook didn't exist until around 2004 plus most people where I lived didn't have home computers at that time.

That was just a real-world example of how to use a particular resource or commodity to trade information or for a service and build a relationship at the same time. The perspective I will show you in this book is to use that same thinking in your business. My graphic design company became a design consulting and marketing firm without me even noticing the change until the language on my website didn't fit my clientele and that happened solely through relationships. So after reading through the chapters you may start to see that if you treat people right and make good decisions chances are you are on your way down a successful path.

# Chapter 1

## INFORMATION

Millions of people spend hour on top of countless hour on social media. whether they are looking for something or someone, the thrust for information flows through all of us. When you meet someone successful you assume they have some secret or an abundance of knowledge but that's a stereotype and could be further from the truth than you might think. See information is like a key, it's completely useless if you don't know what door it opens but having the key and not only knowing what doors it open but knowing when to open them and who it hold them open for, that's one thing that successful people understand.

It's astonishing the amount of information people possess and hold on to that someone else would pay good money for. The same thing applies with the people you know. If you know someone that has some information or is fluent in their skill set, then utilize them. To successful people knowing someone reliable that holds unique information or is an expert in their field is like money in the bank. To them, knowing someone personally, that is running an established business or is good at a trade is almost like having a side hustle but to a businessman, that may be an opportunity for their company to expand the range of services they provide.

I started out in the graphic design business and when I realized my position on the totem pole was low due to my company playing only a single part in a project that may consist of four or five different sub-contractors. What I didn't know then was that I didn't have to know how to actually do all of the work the other companies were doing, I only needed the information of the person who was doing it.

Books will always be a great place to search for information and of course, the internet is the most convenient but building a relationship with someone that has real-world experience is a whole different level of learning. Now back to the stereotype that successful people have an abundance of information should be a little more clear that you don't need to know everything, you just need to know someone who does. Later in this book, we will be talking about ( The Middleman ) and the role he plays in putting together deals and connecting people and businesses that compliments one another.

Obtaining and knowing how to use the right information is a billion-dollar business in itself, just ask the CEO of Alphabet Inc, ( Google ) Sundar Pichai. He has consistently figured out ways of getting the worlds not only personal but private information and it's all on a volunteer basis. Incredible!

Facebook has shown us the real power of information and how the misuse of it can provoke wars or rig elections in other countries but it also has been used to prevent terrorist attacks and save countless lives by sharing medical thesis. Using it as an entrepreneur is certainly one of your most important tools because it's a lot of it and it's out there for the finding.

A great example of how a person may use information to thrive that may seem to be somewhat useless to another person is PLR ( Private Label Rights ). PLR content is digital products like ebooks, video, audio, software, etc... that can legally be resold and distributed and even in some cases edited to become your own content. Some of the ways that entrepreneurs and businesses use PLR content is by added it to existing products or services to increase the value or to drive traffic to their site or establishment.

Let us say I'm Joe Carpet and I was having a website built for my business but I don't have the time to write about all of the services I provide but carpentry is a pretty standard practice trade so finding general information about the carpentry business should be fairly easy but to stand out and prevent plagiarism you need something pretty unique and private label content answers that. Another way is, say I just hired a couple of guys that's not as skilled as I would like, lots of PLR content are full video training series which you can use to train staff on certain skill sets or how to use certain tools. Some niches have been around so long that's it's tons of information on the subject and some are especially easy to find when you're looking for a profession as old as carpentry.

PRL companies exist because they know that most people in business just want to run their business and not worry about creating content. Some information doesn't change, like searching for how to change a flat tire or maintaining a healthy diet, you will pretty much come across the same information just from different sources. You ever wondered why so many people have an expert opinion on so many topics? It's because other people give it to them. People naturally take in the information that's placed in front of them and everybody receives information differently so knowing what to do with the information you have or have access to can possibly change your entire business and the way you think about who you meet and what they might know.



## **Chapter 2**

# **Being In The Business Of Business**

In this particular chapter, I will use my personal experience as a reference of how some entrepreneurs may not be taking full advantage of the power of B2B (Business To Business) marketing. Most start-ups are focused on sales and driving traffic to their website and rightfully so but being blinded by the number of likes on your post and comments from your family and friends can damage your perspective on the direction your business is really going in.

I am a graphic designer and love it. I have particularly always had an interest in magazine and billboard advertising so me falling into the field of graphic design wasn't a real shock. What It took me the first few years to learn was that the passion I had for the craft wouldn't exist without a 9 to 5 job. What I mean is the time I spent learning and practicing graphic design couldn't have happened if I couldn't pay the light bill. Which bought me to the realization that being a graphic designer wasn't the most profitable business for a new entrepreneur. Then I begin to notice how many new people I now know that were business owners and in different industries which got me thinking, maybe I've been overlooking the big picture.

I started to rearrange my business module to less suit a graphic design agency and focus more on my clients and how their businesses operate. Not so much on a day-to-day basis but more on how their business operates and interacts with other businesses in similar industries. That research literally shaped my business from graphic design into design consulting and digital marketing. I learned by solving problems for my clients and becoming a resource of information would ultimately reward me with a list of bigger and better referrals.

The reason for that quick story is for start-ups and entrepreneurs to not solely depend on public sales or how many likes you have on social media or the CEO title behind your name but how useful could your product or service be to other businesses. Think about it, why spend all month trying to sell a few t-shirts when you can spend that same time trying to find someplace that's in the business of selling t-shirts that you can sell to in bulk. I understand that selling in quantity won't always result in the top profit margins but it will establish you in the industry as a resource for outsourcing products.

It's probably worth doing some research on what type of businesses may be able to use your product or service to expand their business. Most businesses will view you as competition or an average retailer that's providing a similar service and not an asset to their development. Having some general knowledge of an industry enables you to find out what issues are most common and how others have solved them in the past. With technology rapidly growing it's possible that problems that may have occurred in the older days of business now have automated solutions.

Taking advantage of the edge that technology has given us will make the difference between being an average business or an asset to the industry. Selling a product or providing a service is one thing but having a product or providing a service to your industry takes all of your competition and turns them into customers.

Maybe around 5 or 6 years ago I met a guy that was also into graphic design but we had a few mutual acquaintances already so naturally at times some of them rendered his services for one reason or the other.

Not too long after our introduction, he asked for my assistance with a project he had to finish and I agreed. After nearly completing the project, he reveals that the final step is to have all of this different material printed but the budget for the project was set and we didn't have a printer yet so we didn't have a cost either. Later that day I hopped online and search for on-line wholesale printing companies to try and save on some of the cost that a local printer would have charged us. After finding a wholesaler with better pricing than I imagined I immediately started to build a website for printing and only added the products that I knew the other designers would need, marked up the prices, and took them from competition to customers.

To take it a step further, some of those local printing companies are also now my customers where I was able to beat the price that it cost them to print in-house by using a wholesale company. Owning a business or being an entrepreneur with a specific niche does not necessarily mean you need to own a bunch of equipment or a luxury office suite but having access to whoever can get the job done. Construction companies have this method to a science, in fact, the entire industry is based around sub-contracting. Huge construction companies spend millions of dollars bidding on contracts just to get the job and hire 5 other companies to actually do the work. To add to the scheme of things it's usually only 1 or 2 people sitting in a mobile unit answering calls that are actual employees of the construction company. We see how instead of competing, construction companies hiring the competitors to work for them, which keeps them from needing to hire a lot of qualified professionals or store any overhead, just someone to answer the phone and make the coffee.

## Chapter 3

# Morality and Money

The relationship between money and business obviously goes hand and hand but not only for-profit and gain also for a number of legal reasons. Moral responsibility on the other hand has no real legal backing and usually, the higher the stakes, the more likely that morals will have very little to no involvement in business deals.

It's not an uncommon practice for an employer to have his or her employees sign a ( Morality Clause ) or ( Bad Boy Agreement ) at the time of hire. Particular types of organizations such as religious groups may require a morality agreement before collaborating with any business or non-religious entity. Even social media outlets have morality statements written into their terms and agreements about what's appropriate to post and share.

In the world of big business where unambiguous contracts are lined out morality is virtually off of the table. In fact just to ensure that both parties stay trustworthy other contracts will be presented before any binding negotiations even begin. One of these types of contracts may be a Non-Disclosure Agreement or ( NDA ) which prevents any party involved from disclosing any information to anyone not mentioned in the agreement. Another one of these contracts may be a Non-Compete Agreement or ( NCA ) in which prevents the other party from using any ideas or algorithms that were collected during any private meetings or think tanks for any outside projects. These types of contracts vary in detail depending on the industry and/or circumstance but regardless in business, morality and trust don't necessarily need to be earned because all of your obligations are signed on the dotted line.

In smaller business its been my experience that entrepreneurs and a lot of start-ups just don't feel the need to sign papers to get a job done that might only take a day or even less to complete.

Here's the problem, when two smaller companies work on a project together even though the stakes may be lower so is the payout, and anyone in business can agree that projects don't always flow smoothly. When financial roadblocks or time restraints become an issue in a project it heavies the burden of the contractor which sometimes leads to miscommunication and wasting time on resolvable disagreements. When there is paperwork signed the burden is lifted from the contractor and shifted to the sub-contractor who is responsible for completing the work in an ample amount of time.

Arguably the most common binding agreement in history is the handshake. Handshake deals were meant to show that there is an understanding between two parties that both will fulfill their side of the arrangement without legal binding. This usually ends either in a long-lasting friendship or a never-ending feud. If history hasn't taught us anything it's that when it comes to money people need some incentive to do the right thing.

Have you ever paid someone in advance to do something for you that never got done and you accepted the loss? Or have you ever paid someone in advance to do something for you and they agree that if it's not done they have to return the money? Odds are that they are more likely to get the task complete just so they don't have to pay back the cash.

Sometimes people are just bad with money and some people are just jerks out to get over on whoever presents the opportunity. This leads me to the importance of relationships. Two people can meet and have absolutely nothing in common but share a single goal and that goal will equally benefit both of them when complete.

That dynamic creates a barrier that blocks out unnecessary friction because the goal is the big picture, not issues like money or who maybe doing most of the work.

That's why you may have heard someone say that they don't mix business with pleasure. Part of that interpretation is don't get into business with friends or family and for some people, it's for good reason. Going into business with friends and family can possibly bring emotions present that may have one person feeling less or more obligated to the responsibilities of the business because of behavior in the past from the other person. Don't get me wrong, some of the world's most influential people have built a family legacy and I'm sure more are building as we speak but sharing the same bloodline doesn't necessarily make people honest or good to go into because with.

The real win is when we connect with like-minded people, family or not. This goes back to having the same goals. Meeting someone that wants the exact same thing as you opens a much wider door for trust and transparency. Just like in life, in business, everybody's looking for their big break and will do almost anything for it. That is why big businesses embrace NDAs and NCAs and you should too.

Most importantly being honest and delivering on what you say will earn you a great reputation where your moral standings will never have to come into question. People that do scruples things for money don't understand that it's much more profitable being trustworthy and straightforward. In business, people love being a connection because it makes them a resource for information and a couple of dollars on the side. So if you have a moral high ground and are consistently good at what you do, not only will they brag about your service but make it a point to get you as many clients as they can, now that's honest money.

# Chapter 4

## The Middleman

In some industries, the middleman may get an undeserving bad reputation for his role in business deals. A middleman is a person in between two parties that may or may not have any real knowledge of either profession but is able to connect the two to complete a mutual goal and of course for compensation.

A few professions might call them resellers or even contractors in some cases, let me explain... A reseller is usually someone that's using their contacts or cold calls to resale other businesses product or service. They probably have a script or sales letter to read from for promoting whatever the company is offering. Resellers are not so much on a commission percentage base but more likely to get a set commission per sale.

Contractors can play a few different roles depending on the circumstances. Let's talk about the type of contractor that's in the business of contracting. In my opinion, this is one of the smartest businesses there is because like we discussed in chapter one, you take any possible competition and turn them into customers but let's go a little deeper. A contractor will go and find clients that may need special niche or trade projects like carpentry, painting, roofing, and so on. The contractor may not know how to do any of the things but will find business or sub-contractors that specializes in each of those things and hire them to do the job. One reason this works so well is that 1. every project doesn't require a licensed professional which means the contractor can hire a freelancer to do certain things for a lot less than a company would.

2. Hiring other businesses to work your projects saves the other company time and money on searching for new business which will keep them somewhat reliable and on-call. It's like having an employee that you don't have to pay by the hour when business is slow.

Now here is what's frowned upon, the contractor that's offering the service is not disclosing that they are not actually doing the work which makes advertisements and sales material seem misleading or sketchy. This is a form of outsourcing. Behind the scenes, contracting companies will usually have some capital to back them because to really be in the game, you need to be able to bid on contracts, and to get big contracts your whole team needs to be insured. Bidding on contracts costs money period, but the reward is huge and well deserved.

Affiliate programs can be also a form of middle manning. Affiliate programs are programs that businesses create for the public to resale their products or services for a small commission fee. Affiliate programs are designed for the middleman to be anonymous. The product or service will have no real connection to the person or business that is promoting it. You can literally resale a candle from a candle company or resale a Cadillac from General Motors. It's thousands of companies that offer these programs and they're usually free, plus they work if you are in front of the right crowd.

The programs will usually consist of you signing up to some affiliate network, then choosing the businesses you want to advertise. Once you are signed up you will have access to product links and web banners with unique URLs that will probably have your member id number embedded into the link to track your sales to receive your commission.



These programs are for people that are online a lot or more advanced affiliates are using paid ads to push bigger ticket items.

It's tons of ways to use these programs to benefit. Some websites will use affiliate banners of recognized brands to attract bigger companies to get them to advertise on their website. Online boutiques will use popular name brand products to sell on their website to make their product line seem more exclusive. Bloggers use affiliate ads to place next to related niche articles on their platforms, so say they are writing an article about cats and dogs it's logical to place advertisements from businesses like Petsmart or Pets.com because the people reading the article are obviously interested in pets.

As you can see being the middleman can be a lucrative business if you can master some of these techniques. To recap on some of the benefits, You won't have to hire a big staff or staff at all because you will be reselling other businesses products or services. For that same reason, there's no overhead so it's no real need to have a physical location. You can choose what type of products or services you want to resale. This means you can instantly become a Realtor, auto broker, travel agent, jeweler, contractor, or virtually any profession that can be sold online.

There are pros and cons for everything and this is no exception. The middleman usually gets the least amount out of the deal especially when first starting out. After you learn how different industries operate then you'll know what to look for and what companies need what services. If you don't already have a giant list of contacts with clients ready to go then being the middleman can also be a very unstable niche. Most do it part-time and call it a hustle but connecting people who are looking for one another product or service can increase your bank account without breaking a sweat.

Oxford's definition for outsourcing is... obtain (goods or a service) from an outside or foreign supplier, especially in place of an internal source. That's the conservative definition but a practice that more businesses rely on than you may realize. Fast-food chains, automobile manufacturers, hospitals, and a ton of more industries may outsource for products, services, or even people.

Although outsourcing may seem similar to the same thing a middleman does there is a significant difference between the two. A middleman may have access to a product or person and find a potential customer for them but not really in that particular business. Outsourcing on the other hand, you are already in that business or related industry where you would possibly provide that service anyway or bundle your current product with the outsourced product to sell together as a package.

It's too many scenarios to discuss in one chapter on becoming the middleman but rest assured the opportunities are real and it's plenty of them. So next time you see somebody middle manning a deal don't be so quick to judge because they just might be on to something.

## **Chapter 5**

# **Get In Where You Fit In**

I'm pretty sure the average consumer doesn't realize the tedious process between an entrepreneurs first action then into the consumers hand. Well it's business owners that don't quite get this until they are actually going through it. Understanding a small part of how some of these processes work you will quickly start to see how many businesses get paid during the process of just one product being developed > manufactured > distributed and then sold.

In the development stage your probably going to need to hire a specialty attorney to overlook copyright or patent applications. Without the correct legal documents it's not smart to share your ideas with investors or anyone that's in a positions to put the capital behind your idea without you.

Manufacturing stage is more flexible because some products can be made to order and others may require some overhead but regardless things like labeling and packaging are necessary which means you will need a graphic designer and a printing company at the very least.

Distributing your product depend on factors like are your customers local, national or global. Some companies only deliver or service locally which will occur regular auto maintenance and gas expenses. Even to sell online in the United States you have to include USPS,UPS or FEDEX in the line of businesses making money from you before your product gets to the customer. US based businesses that provide international services or products may need an export license on top of ground shipping cost on both sides of the water.

Selling products is a more familiar stage because if you have ever purchased something with the intention of selling it for a profit then you understand the basis of commerce. What you don't see is who that product came from before it got to you or before it got to them. All of those people are profiting. Walmart shelves are stuffed with products that have been developed > manufactured then distributed to their stores for sale for Walmart to profit.

As you see the term it takes money to make money is alive and well. Learning your industry's hierarchy and who and what it takes to run will give you the insight needed to make it better and that contribution will be long-lasting and financially beneficial.

Some positions or professions whichever title suits best were created from the need for encouragement or motivation. The Life Coach profession is basically a free enterprise system where anybody can charge for life advice without a certification or license.

What exactly is free enterprise? Well, it's defined as (an economic system in which private business operates in competition and is largely free of state control. ) What that means, in a nutshell, is that you are free to sell your product or service to whoever will buy it with little to no state or government interference. Some might call it capitalism or free market. Having no solid regulations in an industry opens the door for all types of business opportunities especially if you are already rich.

The barber or beauty shop is a great example of a free enterprise business. Most people prefer to get their hair done by the same person, in fact, most people that have the opportunity probably will never change who or where they are comfortable going.

It's no rule, regulation or law stated that it only can be a certain amount of beauty or barbershop in a state. Some states may require a cosmetology license for your stylist to operate in a public physical location but you are free to sell to whoever and charge whatever you want.

Another example is auto mechanic shops. Any guy that has ever changed a tire can be self-qualified to repair your automobile and open up shop. There are certain licenses you need to operate certain equipment and provide particular services but that's only if you are serving the public or in a facility. Even then, a state fine or a lawsuit at the most but you're in no danger of your business being shut down. Remember, you're a private business, and your customers agree to the terms of your service so any real liabilities can be delegated to the customer the moment they sign your agreement.

Since the United States is a free enterprise economy there are endless ways of becoming an entrepreneur and what I hoped for you to see is that there are business opportunities inside every business and for every initiative thought there will be a process before that thought is brought to life. Understanding the develop > manufacture > distribute process will give you a better picture of the inner working of those types of businesses and allow you to see just where you can fit in.

Tip: Since blockchain technology has emerged, if you are a coder with the right knowledge you can create and distribute your own cryptocurrency independent of any local or federal banks.

## **Chapter 6**

# **Connecting With Locals**

Social media has proven to be one of today's most useful marketing tools and with so many outlets for all types of audiences, some businesses rely solely on social media for leads. It's constant traffic on social media so trying to reach everyone you can seem like the smart thing to do but in business that may result in spending over budget and unnecessarily spending on ads that are not targeted to the right people.

Overlooking your local market can really slow down progress in your business depending on your type of business. Outside of places like retail stores that pretty much depend on local traffic to survive, it's not always the obvious walk-in customer that needs your product or service. Try thinking about other local businesses that may be able to use your product/service as an extension or an add-on to improve their quality.

Patronizing with local businesses and giving their employees discounts when they come into your store is also a great way to get a group of potential customers.

Let's say you are the owner of a small neighborhood restaurant, walking into establishments like party stores, salons, medical centers, and even other restaurants that's in the area and utilizing their service, then offering their staff a 15% off lunch through the week can almost guarantee repeat customers for 3 or 4 of those days of the week. Loyalty cards are also a good way to engage local traffic. These types of programs offer repeat customers a free service or particular product usually after their 4th or 5th purchase.

Determining factors like location, population, ethnic and age groups, gender majority, and tons of other analytics can really allow you to customize the way you interact with your local customer base. In highly populated places like New York City where street traffic is extremely high, the retail stores offer daily discounts and inventory sales regularly also because of the tourist attractions local businesses are able to hike prices on novelty products.

Taking advantage of your surroundings is normal business practice and should be thought out carefully. Your niche may be just as or even more valuable to someone else's business than it is to yours. Knowing that should trigger some ideas about the businesses around you. What do they do? Can their customers benefit from what you have? Who would it make sense to bundle my services with? Those are just some questions you should think about when you're figuring out how to get more customers.

Tip: Every Door Direct Mail or (EDDM) is a US service that allows businesses to mail advertisements directly to the door of residents targeted mainly by zip code.

# Chapter 7

## The User System

Most people would absolutely stay away from so-called users. They seem to be in our everyday lives and have the perfect knack for being in the right place at the right time to seize the opportunity. I think it's safe to say that opportunity is about perspective, meaning that two people can be in the same place and receive the exact same information word for word and only one of them may recognize and capitalize on the opportunity. In chapter four we talked about the middleman. This chapter is from the perspective of the other guy.

Get comfortable getting used may sound weird or hokey but believe it or not some people structure their lives around that philosophy. I'm the type of person that encourages others to utilize my connections. First, let us get it clear, connections are delicate and should be handle as so but not tucked away so far that no one is ever able to use them or you just forget the value of them.

Do you know someone who seems to be able to get their hands on almost anything that you need? That's because they get it. They understand the art of getting used. They embrace the fact that they have a lot of connections for a variety of situations but being the person that people go to to find unique or low-cost services or merchandise has another benefit. When your the person that people go to buy things, 9 times out of 10 you are also the person to go to sell things.

Having the outlets and connections to buy and sell privately is the reason the guy who gets it and the middleman relationship work so well. The one thing that makes anybody resourceful is having the right resources.



What that means is that the middleman is resourceful because his connection is and so on. Notice before I said the right resources, Let's talk about that. It's a terrible misconception that people that know a lot of people are well connected. Having a bunch of contacts in your phone doesn't mean that all of them bring value. Growing up and becoming an adult we naturally interact with other people and eventually build relationships. Some people we encounter may be around for all our lives and others maybe just passing by but throughout time we build up a contact list that's with most of us forever.

Hopefully, everybody in your life will bring value to it in one form or the other, and if not you might want to take a good look at your circle. People use people all the time and it's ok as long as it's not mismanaged or abused. Do you have anyone in your life that you only can talk to about certain things? If so, you are mentally using that person's ability to sincerely listen to your issues and maybe determine a resolution, not to mention the time you are using. The shoe could be on the other foot. You may be the person that someone calls for something that may be minor to you but a necessity for them.

The caveat is measuring what and who you are using. For example, let's say you work at a hospital and a friend of yours work at the burger joint down the street from your job. You go to your friend's job for lunch and they put an apple pie in your bag along with your free order. A week or so later you see your friend at your job to see their doctor and after the visit is over they're saying hey, can you hook me up on this bill?

Being mindful of how you use your connections and how you allow people to use yours is more important than I can emphasize because ultimately that will determine your reputation in business.

No one wants to vouch for an unreliable person. Building up your name takes time but a single indecent could tarnish it forever. You probably heard stories about someone getting a friend or family member a job just for them to come to work late every day or not show up at all. This is a prime example of being mindful of who you allow to use your connections.

A more recent and emerging industry that's based around the user system is the Share Economy. This system allows private owners to rent their car, boat, plane, home, etc... to anyone they please. This could be another example of free enterprise like we discussed in chapter 5. Now the share economy isn't completely new. Record labels and production companies will rent luxury cars and homes from wealthy people as props in music videos and movies.

Luxury cars, homes and boats are one thing but sharing the old close in your closet? As hokey as this may sound it is a booming marketing for online closet stores. Websites like eBay allowed the public to open up shop with their own store on Ebays platform and sell almost whatever you want to. Today you can go and grab a pair of old busted Air Jordans from a private seller on for some ridiculous price. The point is that people use each other every day. If it's talking someone down on an asking price or bringing someone in on your deal to use their connections, someones getting used, It's your job to learn how to do it right.

## **Chapter 8**

# **Fake It Till You Make It**

Have you ever heard the phrase Fake It Till You Make It? If you have and you think you know what it means then you only know half of the story. Most people say it's a street term or slang and they may be right but surprisingly it is almost standard practice for a lot of startups companies.

Let's clear the air, fake it till you make it sounds misleading or Immoral, and most certainly can be in the wrong hands but advertisements misleading the consumer is nothing new. Ever ordered something online and when it got to your home it wasn't at all what it looked like on the website? Misrepresenting your products or services is a short-term scam but knowing somebody with that product or service and selling it as yours isn't.

Without getting back into The User System or the role of the middleman because this is a little different. It's no secret that there are tons of businesses that got started overnight because they knew or met someone that was in the position to completely fund their entire venture.

You can hire the best of the best to work for you but money doesn't buy experience. You can have a great product that sells or offer a top-notch service but maneuvering around business deals and learning how different people operate only comes from having experience. That lack of experience will seep out when you spend most of your time perfecting your products and not enough time learning what business you are in.

A lot of new Hip Hop artists have taken the fake it till you make it phase and turned it into an art form. The record labels not only encourages this but profits from it.

Have you ever seen your favorite new artist music video? If you have then I'm sure you've noticed the nice cars, big homes, yachts, and plenty of expensive jewelry. The question is, who owns it? Record labels invest in their new artist's public appearance to make them look instantly successful which will attract new fans and concert promoters. The downside to this is that 9 times out of 10 the artist will end up owing the label for all of the luxuries and expenses accumulated during the artist promotional process.

Believe it or not, the stock market is probably the biggest culprit of this practice. That's right! I called it a practice because it's common for a company to get funding then go public. Now the company has gone from a 50k to a 5 Million dollar business instantly and the company worth are the numbers that will reflect in their share prices on the stock market. A business does not have to earn 5 million dollars to be valued at 5 million dollars. It's an illusion to get new shareholders or current shareholders to buy more shares.

Exaggerating your status is ok to an extent. The Greyline between telling a flat-out lie and boosting your credentials is very thin but it exists. It's the difference between being on a job interview and when they ask you say your the most reliable person you know and being on an interview and when they ask you say, yeah I've done this kind of work before. The difference is that when the opportunity presents itself you can practice and become more reliable but the odds of you learning the skills for your new job before you start are very unlikely.

The morals of these stories are it's OK to put a little spice on it, tastefully. I've met some people that even appreciate being sold a little. It makes them feel like you worked for their business.

Don't forget in business and in life honesty is the best policy. Disingenuous behavior will eventually expose you and the repercussions could be damaging to your career, personal life, finances, and peace of mind.

## **Chapter 9**

### **Burning Bridges**

Some situations in this chapter may or may not relate to you. If so, don't take it personally. This is a topic that I'm sure we all have been on the receiving end of by a close friend, family member, or spouse. Let's talk about family first. Some people just don't and will never understand the power of trust and the benefits that it bring along. It's ironic how people say blood is thicker than water and that's supposed to justify your actions when making a tough decision between family and friends. In reality for most people bloodline doesn't mean much at all when placed in a life or death situation or endangered of going bankrupt. Trust and respect should be earned on an individual basis determined by how one reacts to the situations that are placed in front of them, not because you are my mother's sister's kid.

I think by nature most of us will put a little extra faith in our family with the hopes of them pulling through and doing what they say but in business, It's dog-eat-dog and unlike family, you might only get one chance before severe consequences. The world is full of untrustworthy people so everybody has a right to be cautious when it comes to things like money or their contacts.

Burning bridges doesn't just stop at the two people that may have had a dispute of some sort but in some instances, a third party may have been involuntarily involved or misled that ended up in them taking a loss.

I know it seems like some people just don't care but a bad reputation will travel and follow you then eventually reflect in your day-to-day interactions with other people. That's the thing about burning bridges, no one can get across, meaning if you wrong someone and they warn other people, that bridge has been burned down for everyone in that circle. It's like telling somebody not to pet your dog because he bites. Most people won't even take the risk once someone has told them that your shady, that's why keeping your reputation in tact is so very important.

You have no control of what people say when you are not around but you can predetermine the narrative if you fly right and be straightforward with people because a good reputation travels just as fast as a bad one.

Have you ever posted an online review on a product or company? What you may not know is that reviews cannot be removed, at least not without a ridiculous fee and even then they still have to be reviewed then approved for removal. This is 100% to prevent people from running continuous scams and making it public information that this person or business has wronged them in some way. It sounds kind of funny when someone is mad and they say they are going to leave a bad review or a low rating but these people understand the power of suggestion.

You can have never met a person before and take sound advice if it sounds believable. People do it all the time with celebrities and to make it worse some people will take advice from a stranger before they take advice from their siblings or someone close.

Trust is a building block. The more people that can trust you the harder it is for someone else to tear you down. See people can burn your bridges for you or try to at least by discrediting your character but if your solid this only works with strangers or foolish ones at least. Have you ever met someone for the first time but previously heard negative stories about them? Most or some people I should say will have a predetermined opinion about a person that they have heard negative things about, that's a mistake. People will maliciously bad-mouth someone for personal gain or status. It's best to find out some information on your own. I'm not saying you should gamble with your money for the sake of giving someone the benefit of the doubt but sometimes two people just can't see eye to eye and that friction is passed on to other people.

Everything in this chapter so far also applies in business. Your friends and family may do you wrong with the expectation of forgiveness or reconcile but colleagues, co-workers, or anybody that you may be in the way of their professional growth can easily and unknowingly become competition. We've all heard ( It's Not Personal, It's Just Business ) sometimes that's just a way to justified some unjustly or immoral decision. That's why there's the need for contracts and agreements to lay out all of the details.

Here's where some may disagree. It should always be personal. Connecting with people is a feeling. If you want to build a trustworthy relationship with someone, get to know them personally.

Genuinely take interest in their interest and be transparent. Most people will appreciate the openness and reciprocate the action. With that being said, sometimes people can be unpredictable and do desperate things in tough situations and some people will do just about anything to get by, so it's our responsibility to judge on one's actions they make against you and treat people with a level of personal and professional respect and all of your bridges should be fine.

## **Chapter 10**

### **Be Exclusive**

This is by far the most underrated topic in this book. As consumers, purchasing items that are hard to find or that's been removed from the shelves or out of stock is like striking gold. Some people like to have ownership of special or unique items for bragging rights and others might do it as an investment strategy but regardless putting a special edition or limited time offer tag on almost anything can drastically increase the value. What you might not know is that it's all a marketing strategy. Telling someone that if they don't buy this product or accept this offer right now then they will never be able to get it again or not for this special price will bring most people a false sense of savings or the thought of them missing out on a lifetime deal. This practice is so common that's is almost unrecognizable. The fast-food industry introduces specialty holiday items every year to the menu and the public loves it. Some people over will indulge in items that are limited and the companies know it that's why the prices are always slightly higher than related items on the menu.



The clothing industry is really famous for this type of marketing but let's talk about the sneaker business. If you've lived in America in the past 40 years it's no doubt that you have heard of basketball star Michael Jordan and his iconic sneakers. It took some time for this incredibly profitable marketing process to happen but once the sneaker industry got a wiff of rereleasing outdated sneaker designs and calling them Retros it would literally change how, where, and why people would buy sneakers. The Sneakerhead culture has been around since the 1980s but since the release of the documentary in 2015 Air Jordans has not only become virtually a household shoe in every teenage home in America but the older the shoe, the more exclusive it is, the more exclusive it is the higher price.

Here's where the whole thing skyrocketed, collectors and private owners of these sneakers were now able to put their own personal value on every shoe and resale it for some time 6 or 7 hundred dollars more than the original cost of the shoe. By allowing the public to legally gouge prices for personal items websites like StockX.com became a major resource for sneaker collectors and consumers. With the newly founded industry, the phrase 1 To Rock 1 To Stock was born. It means when you purchase an exclusive pair of sneakers you buy two pairs with the intent of wearing one pair and reselling the other pair. This has transformed some teenagers and young adults into overnight entrepreneurs.

The sneaker industry can be another good example of a free enterprise business like we discussed in chapter 5. Having exclusive services or offering exclusive products are not just for large corporations like Nike to take advantage of. These types of techniques also work just as well on a much smaller scale.

The Home Shopping Network or QVC and those types of old school infomercials' entire business was based on selling exclusive items that could only be purchased from watching the television program at a particular time of day. Let's go a little smaller than that, the movie theaters will screen a film the night before the public debut and state that it's only offering tickets to its club members or it's only a limited amount of seats to fill which will normally result in an extra day of sold-out ticket sales before the movie is even released. Let's go even smaller, the food truck business really has the opportunity to capitalize on exclusive products since there are no huge franchises or food truck chains to compare products against. Let's take it one last step further, photography. Photographers have the opportunity to present every shot as an exclusive product and seasoned photographers understand this very well. If you have ever visited any stock photography websites like [istockphoto.com](http://istockphoto.com) then you know that a single photograph could cost anywhere from \$3.00 to \$100 and more.

The fact is that any office set up or home-based business that produces or manufactures their own products are able to offer exclusive merchandise deals. Of course, there are tons of others ways to create exclusive offers like packaging products together or saying that's theirs only one left in stock but the same rules apply for service-based businesses. Say you are a hairstylist or a barber that generally operates out of a salon or your home studio, packing up your equipment and traveling from your place of business to service a client at a remote location and delivering the same shop chair quality brings a level of exclusiveness to you and your business. When your providing a service being exclusive is more about convenience or saving the customer time, it's like a labor cost that mechanics charge that's why you get to put your own value on it.

I've heard of some barbers getting up to \$500 a haircut and beauticians getting like \$3,000 and more for traveling to someone's workplace. If you are selling products or providing services take a hard look at what you have to make yourself exclusive.

## **Chapter 11**

### **Reinventing The Wheel (Do What Works)**

American ingenuity and innovation have been the cornerstone of this country. The pioneers and brilliant minds behind some of our greatest inventions certainly had to go through trial and error before getting it just right. Libraries and the internet is filled with information shared by people that took time to fail and succeed at their niche, craft, invention, recipe, program, business, and so on... Some of these people thought it was prudent to document the process with the intent of sharing it with the public so other like-minded people can input and possibly make it better. It's literally thousands of products on retailer selves that were created by someone and it sparked an idea in someone else to add to it to enhance it or recreate a better version of it. In music, they call it a remix.

Don't misjudge this article yet by the title. ( Do What Works) by no means am I saying don't be creative or try not to work on unique projects, In fact, I encourage everyone to think outside the box but as a graphic designer I also know that it's not hard to get tunnel vision and can easily overlook other alternatives or solutions when your focus is getting it done the way you think you know is best.

One of the examples I like to use about doing what works is McDonald's. In 2020 the fast-food giant spent 654.7 million U.S. dollars in advertising through different platforms and markets. Obviously the average restaurant or business for that matter doesn't have that kind of budget to spend but the point is their brand is recognized enough across the globe for them to release a new product and sell it successfully without any advertising at all, probably with just their daily walk-in customers alone, yet they do it anyway. That makes it seem like spending over six and a half million dollars on advertising during the Covid 19 pandemic may be a little excessive but if their advertising team ( Wieden+Kennedy New York ) projected that budget then trust that it's a well mapped out plan that has been researched, developed, tested then applied to the real world, So it probably works.

Some people spend years of their life dedicated to one goal and others may go to college until obtaining a master's or doctorates degree to become a certified professional. When you attended junior high, high school, or college you trusted that your math teacher was good at math so you took their advice with very little research on other possible answers because they were a professional. Business should be no different, of course, I'm not saying don't do your own research but having a pivot point is crucial to any process. Being inspired and following a path taken by predecessors brought the world Kobe Bryant. He was one of basketball's great players in history that repeatedly said he watched old footage of the players before him to get his game on the level he desired. History leaves behind documents, books, audio, and video of past mistakes and successes for us to learn from so taking advantage of that information is what it is there for.

The point I was making earlier with McDonald's is if they spend that budget on advertising in one year then that system must work. The same point I was making with Kobe Bryant is he watched and studied the greats before him so he could ( Do What Works ). A lot of smaller businesses don't see the real value in spending a significant amount of money on advertising so most stick to business cards, flyers, brochures, or any other low-level marketing materials because it's safe and the #1 reason is that they can physically touch it!

For a minute let's talk about buying and seeing value in things that you can't physically see or touch. Some people will never grasp the concept of spending money on something that they can't hold, or wear or drive but to really make money that concept can be a hindrance. Most advertising outlets especially today because of the internet, like podcast advertising, you don't really know how well it's working until a few go-arounds which makes it risky and that process can be discouraging and initially costly. If you are not in the advertising business then you may not realize how bombarded we are with these paid ads that companies not only have no clue exactly where their ads are placed but when it will be seen, but one thing's for sure, they work!

Being influenced and taking a path by someone that achieved a goal that you hope to achieve seems like the most logical thing to do and it is. Business gurus almost always end up writing and selling some How To Get Rich Doing This book or holding some expensive seminar in an exclusive venue. That's because they know that following a guideline or blueprint even if you see flaws in it may lead you in the right direction or at least the direction of inspiration to become more clever with your endeavors and show value in places that may have been overlooked.

So whether you are watching old footage of your basketball heroes or reading a how-to book from some rich guy knowing industry standards and understanding what did and what did not work in the past can be a pathed foundation for your business and personal life so think about some of these things before you start reinventing the wheel.

## **Chapter 12**

### **Stick In There**

Never give up, keep keeping at it, persistence is the key, belief in yourself or any other motivational tagline that your parents or teachers tried to instill in your head at a young age were absolutely right! There is only one sure way to win and that's not to quit. No matter what task you're trying to accomplish or what goal you want to achieve sticking it out to the end is imperative for multiple reasons. Some think not getting the gold medal or not being in the number 1 position is considered a loss but learning what NOT to do is a very important step in becoming successful that cannot be overlooked.

Win some, lose some is a popular phrase and it's true but the trick is to learn how to take a win out of every loss. If you are not the kind of person that nails everything they do on the first try then you probably know what it feels like to make a mistake that was costly and you knew right then what you did wrong. That feeling of disappointment is you telling yourself that Ill never make that careless mistake again and next time ill be prepared. That process inevitably happens the more attempts you take at something that's why you get better with practice is not just a slogan.

One of the first steps to having the willpower to keep moving forward is confidence. This is not the self-help portion of the book but understanding what role confidence plays in your success is also important. Mustarding up the courage to do something is one thing but going into it with a mapped-out plan is a whole another, no matter what it is. Knowing what to do when a situation occurs can be the difference between a lot of money being lost or even a loss of life. That's one reason why some doctors are on 24-hour call, that's also the reason why rich people keep lawyers on retainer. Even celebrities are advised to have crisis management teams available in case something happens that may tarnish their career. Having knowledge or a particular niche that you're good at not only builds confidence in yourself but gives other people the confidence that you're the right person for the job.

Hard times come and go for everyone I'm sure but the ones that are able to weather the storm will reap the rewards whatever they may be. I know what it feels like to be in a predicament that feels like it's impossible to overcome or don't see a conclusion that's in your favor. I also know that I did overcome those situations even if the conclusion wasn't a win I would not have known what I did wrong if I wouldn't have finished.

It's not a success story for winning the lottery or getting an inheritance that comes from people that overcame incredible odds and bootstrap their way to the top. There is no real fast track to success either, yes you can make a lot of money in a short period of time but odds are that you will mismanage it because there was no sweat equity behind it or enough time to master the technique of achieving it.

Does having money make you successful? I'm sure you'll get a bunch of different answers because some people will say that they work hard just to get the money so if I can skip the working hard part and just get the money then mission accomplished. Some people don't seem to understand that everybody isn't in it just for the money. As strange as this concept may sound to some there are people that grind every day for notoriety or accolades. How many times have you seen someone rich start a low-profit business because it has always been a childhood dream? Some people just really want to be respected and will break the bank for it but real respect comes from admiring someone's actions, like the decisions that they make or their ability to finish the things that they start. It's a million reasons why people admire other people but giving up on something that you started I'm sure is very very low on that list. Let's talk about a more familiar topic when comes to sticking it out, School. Let's face it during junior high through high school how many times have you actually used what you learned in science or social studies class in the real world? Hardly ever I bet. College is the exact same. People go to college all the time just to switch majors and end up working some job that has nothing to do with what they learned in college. With any level of school, the difference is, Finishing! Why do you think they added the word college to college dropout? To ease to blow? No. It's to insinuate that you didn't quite have what it takes to finish. What people may not know is whether you get into the career you studied in college or not when an employer is looking for a candidate for a position, them attending school and completing it lets the employer know that you have the discipline to start and finish a long term task. That also lets them know that you are capable of learning and absorbing information and can apply it when necessary.



So if you ever feel like just throwing in the towel in life or in your business take into consideration that tough times will pass and what your going through is a growth process that we are not able to physically see until those decisions start to show in our everyday life. Just Stick In There!

## **FINAL THOUGHTS**

Whether you are an entrepreneur, working a 9 to 5, or starting a new career the way we learn how to interact with one another is the key to our coexistence. Race, creed, color, gender, or religion has nothing to do with being polite and considerate which is all most people ask. Some of us were taught at a young age to treat people the way we want to be treated but somewhere along the way of becoming an adult we lose track of those basic morals and lessons by being sidetracked by disappointment and misfortune. Struggles in life are real but that's no justification for directing our frustrations on others. It gets everybody nowhere. On the other hand, having the ability to compromiser when necessary will win most people over. In business pretty much everything is a negotiation because both parties may walk away with nothing so one has to profits less to save the deal. That's when the something is better than nothing mentally starts to kick in.

It's unfortunate that some people will carry that mentally around in their everyday life and begin to settle or become content with their current predicament, when really at the pace the world moves today it can be difficult to keep up with technology but with that abundance of information comes an abundance of opportunity. Connecting and sharing information and resources is how we best utilize those opportunities.

I will say proudly the opportunities that I have been given in this life have not been of my own accord. They were not because of how many doors I knocked on or how many phone calls I made, or my GPA, it's because of the relationships that I took time to build and being prepared for those opportunities.

Most people want to help, their just only going to help you as much as your helping yourself. That's why it's so important to find a connection with people and let them know what your doing and what you know and vise versa.

Over the years I've learned to stay in contact with my connections whether we're doing business or not because there's a saying, out of sight out of mind. Keeping in touch has kept my name being mentioned in meetings that I had no involvement in but with someone there to advocate on my behalf and sell me, for me, without me even asking are the type of relationships you have to build before you think about getting rich.

THE END



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