



GETTING AWAY FROM THE HYPE

**HOW TO ANALYZE BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES AND
JUDGE WHETHER THEY ARE LEGITIMATE OR NOT**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 DEFINING HYPE	6
Everyday Hype.....	8
Trivia vs. Hype.....	9
2 THE TYPE OF HYPE	13
Startup Business Myths.....	14
Summary	21
3 HISTORY OF HYPE.....	23
The Liberty Valance Effect	25
4 CLASSIC INTERNET MYTHS	27
Facets of an Urban Legend	32
Too Good to be True.....	33
True Lies	34
5 SALES AND MYTHS.....	39
The cult of Personality.....	40
Common Sales Myths.....	43
Public Relations and Myths	44
PR Rules To Live By	47
MultiLevel Marketing	48
6 REAL BUSINESS REAL HYPE	49
A Grain of Salt	49

The Truth Revisited	51
First Steps.....	53
Choosing A product, finding your niche	55
Using Existing Hype.....	57
 7 HYPING YOURSELF.....	59
What to hype: The basics	59
Real Hype: Creating an Image That Sells Your Company	64
Hype, not Hoopla	66
 8 PUTTING A REAL SPIN ON THINGS	70
Secrets for Success	70
Top Ten Do's and Don'ts	73
Methods to use to Hype yourself	74
Budgets for Hyping Yourself.....	75
Getting Money	76
Web Sites.....	78
Importance of image	82
 9 HYPE AND THE LITTLE THINGS	84
Phishing and spam	85
Protection.....	86
Who to Hype: The Importance of Email lists	89
God is in the details.....	92
 10 GROWTH	94
Investing.....	94
Follow the Money	97

11 THE FUTURE OF HYPE.....	104
The more things change.....	104

CHAPTER 1

DEFINING HYPE

Webster's defines "hype" as something either "greatly exaggerated publicity intended to excite public interest in something such as a movie or theatrical production" or "somebody who or something that is extensively publicized."

The latter is not a bad thing, and in fact can be good in this day and age when being recognized and having good advertisement is key to success but when as with most modern myths the truth becomes exaggerated to the point that the underlying message is not only overshadowed but in many cases has completely lost any good that might come of it. This is what is happening in many cases with online internet marketing and business opportunities today.

What should be excellent opportunities for success are distrusted and ignored because the hype surrounding them is so exaggerated and so extreme that it casts doubt and disbelief upon the entire business.

In fact a third definition for the word hype translates it as a "deception or dishonest scheme" which is now what most people think of when they hear the word hype due to so many instances of publicity seeming or actually sounding false and

deceptive, which is really quite a shame since the original meaning of the word was not totally negative.

Of course for our purposes in this eBook we are going to talk mainly about hype as it relates to and in association with business opportunities. More to the point, how to find a good business, then working that business successfully on line or off line.

When you decide to start your own business you may find yourself inundated with advice and input from everyone who has ever thought how nice it would be to be their own boss, whether they have actually made the attempt or not! This type of hype may or may not be valid, since first you have to know something about the person or persons claiming to know what they are talking about.

For instance the housewife whose friend started a business cooking ready made meals for “Both parent working families”, and discovered almost too late that it wasn’t possible to cook in her home kitchen without a business license and health inspection. She hadn’t done her “Due Diligence” or research and was therefore unaware of local laws regarding her business venture. However had she decided to just bake cookies, in some jurisdictions those laws do not apply.

Then there is the wood-carver who lost his arm in an accident and found his ‘real’ job’s insurance wouldn’t cover his injury

since it was directly related to another 'job'. He may blame his choice of employment and say starting your own business is dangerous, but in reality his lack of research into health benefits and safety were key to his downfall. It wasn't anything stemming from the business choices he had made.

Being objective and keeping a clear understanding of what is and is not related to the business aspect of your endeavor will go a long way to overcoming much of the hype you will find yourself surrounded by when you start looking for a good business for yourself.

Everyday Hype

For most of us the concept of excitement and generated enthusiasm is certainly nothing new – whether it is attending a local pep rally to hype everybody up to support the home team, a sales pitch to get the juices flowing for the sales team, or just the Monday night T.V. preview to 'get us in the mood' for a show coming up Tuesday night, we all understand the value of everyday hype.

Even something as simple as a 'Coming Soon' sign for a local business has the potential to catch interest and raise excitement. Such is the nature and the job of hype and the potential it has to affect our lives and business opportunities.

For some a return to the 'good old days' includes a vague concept of a time without hype, without someone trying to "sell" us something we don't need or want. However, in reality no such time ever existed.

Hype is a necessary part of the sales process to influence people to buy. As such it is not only all around us today but has *always* been all around us. It is in fact a part of our very nature to embellish and exaggerate – because doing so makes us feel important and alive.

Even the most modest of us manage to add value and excitement without lying and without glossing over any of the poorer aspects of a product we like. Unfortunately the morally wretched among us seek out ways to delude the rest of us into thinking a problem is really a 'feature', or just flat out lie to make a sale, knowing full well once they have the money they couldn't care less how we feel about them or the product. In any case, these attitudes and our inherent fascination with hype in all its many forms has been with us forever, and is likely to stay with us until the end of time.

Trivia vs. Hype

Many people confuse hype which is generated excitement with 'falsehoods' and strangely enough even *more* people seem to combine the meaning of falsehoods with myths which

are really just exaggerated hypes or hypes with lies. Perhaps one way to help with this is to list a few bits of trivia and then show you how each could be turned into 'hype':

Trivia: The plastic items on the ends of shoelaces are 'aglets.'

Hype: Aglets, the plastic ends of shoelaces make getting our shoelaces through the eyelets in your shoes so simple your 3 year old can do it with ease!

Trivia: The original owner of the Marlboro Cigarette Company died of lung cancer.

Hype: Cigarettes kill, as is shown by the original owner of the Marlboro Company dying of lung cancer!

Trivia: Half of Americans live within fifty miles of their birthplace.

Hype: Home really *is* where the heart is – more than half of Americans stay within fifty miles of their birthplace.

Trivia: The electric chair was invented by a dentist.

Hype: Dentists have always been evil, even the first electric chair was invented by a dentist!

As you can see the same information when presented with a different twist/spin can go from simple information or trivia to 'hype' or some form of information that is designed to generate excitement or set a specific tone or response. This is interesting to us because as business people whose goal is to sell something, we learn from these examples that it is really not what we are saying but the *words you use* to generate a specific response. But remember, we all say things in certain ways to elicit the response WE want the listener to have.

On some level this has always been understood, but when you read examples such as the simple ones given above, it becomes very clear that hype is just another way of saying 'marketing' or 'advertising'. That means that people naturally present a fact or information in a way that will elicit a response they desire.

So if that is all hype really is; what if you want to see just the pure information on a particular product or subject? You want just the facts, and not the platter on which they are presented? That is where skill and technique come into play.

Sherlock Holmes, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's famous sleuth was reported to have said "When you strip away the *impossible* whatever remains, however improbably must be the truth." That statement when properly applied to any bit of fact still holds true today, and if you really seek to look beyond the

veil of misinformation and prose that surrounds a statement you normally can discern the underlying kernel of truth or at least the most relevant data being presented. This then enables us to research that data and see if what is being stated is in fact truth, myth, or an outright lie – and *that* is how we see beyond the hype. Look for the key words and brush away the fluff. Specifically, look for the operative words in a statement made surrounding any subject and research the subject to prove or dis-prove those operative words.

Example: “Our new CEO Mr. J. R. Jones has a proven track record, leading 4 - Million Dollar Companies in the last 10 years and we certainly are looking forward to a person with his experience at the help of WebWidgets.com.

The operative words are:

- CEO Mr. J. R. Jones
- Companies in the last 10 years
- Leadership

We research those operative words and terms in an effort to find out just what kind of leader Mr. J.R. Jones has been in the past, with what companies, and how the companies fared during his tenure and after. Too often vague statements like this example that allude to an improving situation, turn out to lead the careless down a path to ruin if the aren't careful.

CHAPTER 2

THE TYPE OF HYPE

The type of hype we are going to be most interested in is the exaggerated or flat out incorrect information that is out there pertaining to either starting or running your own business or of computer or internet-related business issues that might affect a business person today.

For the most part the type of mis-information that is most harmful to the startup business person is the misleading or exaggerated claims of success from those who just want to sell you a kernel of an idea and need to make you believe that they are more of an expert than they are.

If they hire real experts to create the work for them or research and provide you the fruits of their labors then all the hype and excitement they use to sell you on their concept is a good thing, since it gets you to look at a potentially money-making deal. It is when they don't care about quality of what they offer and just want to make money from those who are gullible and naive enough to buy into buying their get-rich-quick scheme that it causes problems.

We'll try to go over every aspect of the sort of hype you commonly see on the internet today as well as how to recognize it, some of the more common myths, hype that you are going to run into, and how to discern the kernel of truth (Good or bad) that exists within each. Let's start with some common myths that are out there about starting your own business.

Startup Business Myths

To give you an example and discuss a few of the many myths that cloud the concept of starting a small business, let's go over five of the most common myths that typically surround the small business owner and discuss their merits and the facts in each instance.

First and foremost it is important not to listen to too much of the negative statistics and fear-mongering that commonly are thrown about because just as hearing 'the odds of successfully negotiating an asteroid field' for a common pilot don't necessarily apply to certain skilled Star Wars hero's ☺ In the same vein, the statistics of people who didn't do their homework or research into their market might not apply to you. In short many of the things you will hear and run into are *not* facts – they are urban legends, misconceptions about starting a business that have been repeated so often, that

many people now believe them to be true even when they common sense should tell them different.

There is free money available to help you start your business

If you have never heard this old saying before turn on the old memory chip, "There Ain't No Such Thing As A Free Lunch___ Tanstaaf." If something sounds too good to be true it not only *probably* is I can guarantee you it is! Our government only gives away money to foreign interests with whom they feel they can buy loyalty or concessions – not to their citizens. While it may be true that some state governments have policies in place to help people such as veterans, minorities or people with disabilities those special programs have very specific requirements that you have to meet before you are eligible. If someone claims otherwise, especially if they want to charge you a fee for a 'list of lenders and free grant providers' run do not walk away from them!

The Small Business Administration has millions of dollars of money available to loan directly to small business

The SBA is an independent agency of the executive branch of the federal government, and as discussed previously the

government is not in the habit of giving anything away. That includes loans, believe it or not! The SBA is a great resource for small businesses, and does act as a *guarantor* for one of three different loan programs that can be of use to the small business owner, but they themselves do not provide or arrange for the loans.

The three loans they act as guarantors for include the Seven-A (7a), the Five-O-Four (504) and the Seven-M (7m) or “micro-loan” as it is known. Some details about these different loans which the SBA will guarantee and oversee compliance with for small businesses follow for your benefit:

- The 7(a) program is a flexible lending program which allows qualified small businesses to obtain financing in certain instances if they have been turned down through traditional channels.
- The 504 loan helps small businesses with fixed-rate, long-term financing for equipment, property or machinery needed for expansion or modernization.
- The 7(m) program aimed at both small business and not-for-profit child-care centers provides short-term financing for working capital and the purchase of inventory, supplies, furniture, fixtures, machinery and equipment.

What the SBA does in these types of situations is to help arrange financing through various lending partners including local banks and nonprofit corporations and to oversee compliance on the part of the small business with the loan terms, thus assuring to the lenders that the loan will be repaid.

People are lining up to loan money to startup companies

Venture capitalists DO exist, and while in some cases they have been known to finance startup companies that is not what they principally do, nor would it be wise to do so. Since a venture capitalist's entire purpose of investing into a company is to make money and more than half of the startup companies created every year go belly-up just leaving that money in the bank earning 5% would do a better job than financing startup companies hand-over fist.

One of the rules of thumb that investors use is that a good three year track record needs to be in place, along with a great business plan and the potential at least for robust growth before they are willing to put their hard-earned money on the table. If you can show a great strategy with strong growth potential and have a product or service with a national client base that has so far been untapped you *may* be able to get them to bend a little – but the thought that investors are

actively looking for someone to give their cash to is definitely an urban legend!

Starting your own business allows you freedom to choose your working hours

Only someone who has never had a job like raising kids, or farming that has tasks to be done whether you are sick or not would ever come up with a saying like this, and yet it is one of the most common business-owner myths out there. Unless you have so much money that you don't need your business to succeed any 'freedom' you have will be going right out the window the moment you open your small business or shop! You may have a bit more flexibility in the scheduling of your free time, but starting a small business will definitely cut into that free time if you plan on making it a success.

There are many write-offs you can take on things you otherwise can't write off

The IRS and the government do NOT give away money. Remember that – that is the reason for myth number one and two above, and unless you enjoy being audited it's never a good idea to write off any expenses not 100% related to your business endeavors even if they are used in relation to the business as well as your personal life. The best rule of thumb

is to ask yourself whether or not you would still have this expense (say your car for instance) if you were not running the small business, and if so in any form or fashion then it is not a legitimate write-off.

Some common write-offs which are normally allowable include any computer and business software, rent, salaries and monies paid to independent contractors, advertising costs and even a percentage of vehicle costs if its use can be tied to the business in question. In some cases strict rules apply, such as whether you use the computer for personal use as well as business etc. so checking the law first is a good idea!

As the business owner you can set your own salary

Remember that caveat that keeps coming up about TANSTAAFL, the lack of a free lunch? If you give yourself too high a percentage of the earnings the IRS code that refers to 'unreasonable compensation' may cause you to discover what an audit, as well as business failure, is all about. Cash flow is the key to a successful business, and a surprisingly large amount of the incoming cash has to flow right back out again in the form of investments, advertising and expenses to keep a business on the path to growth. Not setting enough aside for this is one of the reasons so many startup companies *do* fail in their first two years.

Any Internet site can earn money for the owner

I hate to harp, but TANSTAAFL strikes again ... if you have a website that has a lot of traffic due to unique content or placement that's awesome, and as such it does indeed have a more than reasonable chance of earning you money – but just because you have a web site doesn't mean business will magically come your way. Even the best created and designed site on the web if it is not promoted and linked properly is destined to fail – so don't blow all your budget on a spiffy site when you haven't decided what you are going to focus on selling yet!

An expert should be able to become profitable within six months

While not unheard of just having knowledge and skills doesn't mean you will be able to turn a profit, and most small businesses due to startup costs and need to invest back into the business for future growth don't see anything out of their company for at least two to three years ... again if it sounds too good to be true!

The right business sells itself and doesn't need a marketing or business plan to succeed

This is very common now in the post 'dot-com' era, but remember folks there is a reason it's the "post" dot-com era and not the dot-com boom. There is simply no substitute for a valid business plan and understanding what is necessary to sell your product or service to the public. Anyone trying to tell you something otherwise is likely selling something he wants you to buy from him right now before you go broke and give up the idea of starting your own business! A related myth is that if you aren't getting a loan or looking for investors you don't really need a business plan. While business plans are necessary to get investors the purpose is not that but to ensure you understand what it will take to be successful, and that you have a linear outline for how to achieve those goals.

Summary

So now hopefully you see the type of information and assistance this eBook is dedicated to bringing you – a little hope in the midst of all the hype out there. In many cases as with the "SBA has money to loan" myth there is a kernel of truth once you get past the misconceptions, but as is always true anytime money is involved you should always be certain

of the facts before investing any of your money on the word of anyone, whether a trusted friend and advisor or a stranger. After all it IS your money you stand to lose not theirs!

CHAPTER 3

HISTORY OF HYPE

Con men and false claims are nothing new, since Jacob first tricked Esau out of his inheritance for a bowl of soup men have in one form or another been exaggerating the value of goods and services in attempts to get others to overpay.

Even today in our modern world where people should know better prices of two to three hundred percent mark-up for furniture and other goods are common, and the exact same product with a different label can fetch prices of four to five times the amount as the same product without the 'designer' label *even when* the buyer knows the goods are exactly the same except for that label!

The *perception of value* is the key to most hype – using people's own beliefs and perceptions against their common sense and ability to learn. I'm sure you have been caught up in this too – for instance spending \$20 in tickets to toss rings in an almost impossible contest just so you can win 'the grand prize' which had you seen a \$20 price tag on it at a local flea market would have caused you to walk away laughing.

It is what people want to be true not what is actually factual that is key to hyping a product or service.

Again let me remind you that 'hype' is not a bad word, despite the connotations it has come to retain. To 'hype' a product is merely to tout it's benefits which is what advertising is all about, and many a street vendor crying out the benefits of his wares would be offended to know that many people believe him to be a huckster just because of his method of delivery.

The problem is that people have an almost genetic memory and after too many abuses via any delivery method they will begin to associate the message delivery itself with the perceived value of the message.

Email for instance is by far one of the greatest possible methods for quick communication and distribution of information, but due to unscrupulous advertisers who 'spam' mail thousands in order to get a percentage of a percent return most of us ignore or delete any advertising that comes from a source we do not recognize. In this case the 'hype' has become mere background noise, or worse yet an annoyance with which we have to deal rather than an integral part of our lives.

The Liberty Valance Effect

In the movie “the man who shot Liberty Valance” there is a line that has become synonymous with modern newscasters attitude: *when the rumor becomes truth, print the rumor*. In effect it says that if enough people know of and believe a lie such as the pilgrims landing on a certain rock then print that as true history no matter what the documented and known truth may be.

For instance most of us have heard of and know about Paul Revere’s ride: but did you know he only rode a very small swath of the trail, and in fact another person made a marathon trek to warn all of the states and had in fact notified Paul himself before going on? Truth is not always popular and when you are in the business of selling things you want the most popular and entertaining news you can find: or create.

For this reason the Internet has become a difficult place on which to separate the chaff from the wheat. Too many times a joke or lie is misprinted as the truth because it is popular, and repeated until it becomes ‘common knowledge’ even though it is false. At that point trying to overcome the common mythos is too difficult even for those who know the truth and all too often the lie becomes printed and accepted

as the truth – the liberty valance effect. There are sites such as www.snopes.com that are dedicated to trying to debunk many of these myths, but due to the sheer volume and dedication of those spreading the rumors or tall tales they don't seem to make much headway, but for the few wise enough to double-check facts before believing them wholeheartedly they at least provide a place to start.

CHAPTER 4

CLASSIC INTERNET MYTHS

Snopes.com is known as 'the' source for debunking Internet myths and rumors, and most of the classic internet myths in one form or another can be found there. From the belief that there was an expensive cookie recipe from Niemen Marcus that was 'given away' to punish their arrogance to fears and rumors of persistent viruses that will reprogram your clock, reset your refrigerator to a lower setting and make your car run in reverse all are listed there with a "true" or "untrue" status as well as any background detail available to help the would-be researcher make up their own mind.

Not all the business myths and hype are covered at Snopes of course, since they focus more on the type of legends and tall tales that lead to email chains and threads that seem to progress on a never-ending path round and round the planet from one group of friends to another.

It is interesting how the stories and tales that are spread seem to define the social psychology of a group too – the folklore and urban legends that are passed along always reflect a common fear or apprehension that has been allowed to run amuck. For instance there is a classic hoax that goes

something like this: A lady sees a cookie recipe for sale from Neiman-Marcus and orders it, finding out later it costs her hundreds of dollars! When the company won't correct this for her she gives away the recipe to punish the errant greedy company, thus ruining their business.

Of course Neiman-Marcus has never sold their cookie recipe, which is just a good standard recipe anyway, and if they did having it given away by the first person who paid for it would probably be expected so maybe a high price would be justified – but the fear of being taken advantage of by big heartless companies leads to a seemingly obviously flawed story like this not only being believed by tens of thousands of people, but in the story being repeated for years and even decades after first being introduced even though Neiman-Marcus is obviously not suffering any ill effects and still makes their cookies ... some other classic examples are the “good times” virus, which spreads a ‘warning’ about a virus so bad it practically reprograms your VCR clocks and shuts down your refrigerator and will do so even if you don't open the mail containing the virus, the stolen kidney in a hotel room for the would-be sexually active person and of course the ‘send bottle caps’ or whatever the current twist (postcards etc.) to the dying boy or girl, who even had the story been true ten years ago when the thread started would either be dead or grown up by now and sick of receiving all the letters by now surely ...

The underlying psychology shown by most of the myths that are seen indicates a community that fears big business and being taken advantage of, is not fully capable of using the equipment that surrounds them every day of their lives and finds comfort and safety in binding together in groups.

To a wise business man with the proper goods to sale this can actually help them to find a niche market for certain products – but for the rest of us it serves as a reminder that no matter how much technology people are given down under it all we are still the suspicious minded barbarians we always have been, seeing the signs in the heavens and the words of the priest as somehow inviolate facts of a harsh universe out to get us if we don't obey those who pertain to know the truth and how to guide us.

For those of us who want to be leaders and make money in business we first have to break out of the structure society has built to instill these fears and limitations into us and learn how to separate the hype from the underlying truth of the myths.

Sometime as with the "Good times" Virus myth just recognizing that it has been around in some form since 1994 and that the names of the virus change but the unbelievable effects of it are always the same. This claim that the virus will destroy a hard drive and even demagnetize discs videos and cassettes close to the computer, as well as the final line

saying to 'forward this to all your friends' seems to indicate that the original was probably a joke amongst computer-savvy people that was spread at some point to a novice who didn't realize it wasn't true, and began forwarding it out of context.

The older a myth is the less likely that it is still valid *if it ever was* so this one can be discounted right off the bat – the fact that people not only continue to forward this trash but even add to it and embellish it or change the name of the virus when they hear "it is now called ..." just shows how people want to be involved and feel important, no matter what the costs to themselves or others. Again this is something that a savvy business man can discern and use, regardless of where the knowledge comes from.

One of the other myths mentioned earlier, the stolen kidney myth first started out as a fear email involving the 'date rape drug' rohypnol but has been seen in various aspects, most involving someone who is cheating on a loved one or willing or trying to engage in illicit sexual acts. In this myth they 'victim' who is really portrayed as someone getting what they deserve for not exercising common sense and moral values, wakes in an bath tub filled with ice missing a kidney and with a note on them saying to get to a hospital fast.

Regardless of the fact 'black market' organ sales are rare, and tissue matching and strict medical testing for viability makes

the likelihood of someone being able to sell just any old body part unlikely if not flat out impossible this story has persisted for many years. Since this myth uses our fear of health problems and being preyed upon by other people it strikes a chord with many people who otherwise would know better if they just thought about it a little. It seems that on some level the community of internet users who are reading and passing along this story enjoy seeing others suffer and 'getting what they deserve' for engaging in acts and events which the person or persons in question fear or believe to be immoral. Again this is something businessmen can cash in on, and many internet and television evangelists do just that on a regular basis!

Of the numerous myths out there the ones that we as business men and women need to pay the most attention are the many 'get rich quick' schemes and emails such as those claiming to allow you to get rich if you just send one dollar to the three people previous to you on the list etc. – it is difficult to understand how or why someone would start a chain letter like this since any hope they had of gaining funds would require that they make themselves available to prosecution for the pyramid scheme on which the concept is based by having their mailing address in the email, but the fact that so many people not only read the emails but indeed do send off money 'just to see' tells us a lot about the gullibility of people and the inherent desire to make money without really having to work at it. There is not such a thing as a free lunch ... at

the very least *someone* has to be paying for it and ignoring this truth will only cause you pain and trouble. The easiest way to discern if a business email is a lie is whether it promises you unheard of returns for very little to no work or involvement – if it's too good to be true *it is*.

Facets of an Urban Legend

There are some aspects that lend likelihood to a story becoming a good urban legend that you can look for in order to determine the likelihood of it being false, these include:

- Whether the story can be easily traced to the source: if there is not a contact number or verifiable source from which it started or it seems to have appeared mysteriously or 'this really happened to a friend of mine' is at the start then it probably has the makings of a good urban legend
- If it has humorous anecdotes or aspects to the story or is fun to repeat or interesting to discuss it has the makings of a good urban legend
- If it seems to probe for responses or asks for interaction (forward this to all your friends, make sure everyone knows etc.) it has the makings of a fine urban myth

It is interesting to note however that if transmission via oral communications is easier then many times an internet myth

will fail and instead become spoken oral myths over time. Many of the business myths discussed in the previous setting fall into this category for instance – but with the ability of the internet to quickly spread falsehoods and to do so anonymously and easily much of the crass that you will hear and have to wade through will come from that source.

Too Good to be True

There is a very valid old saying that goes something like this: *"If something seems too good to be true is probably IS."* I would go farther then that to say that if something *seems* too good to be true then it definitely is not as good as it seems, and most likely is a con or at least some hype trying to influence you into taking the desired action.

Of course there are always questions when it comes to the old 'too good' bit – is it too good to believe in a one-hundred percent return on an investment? Maybe not if you are an insider or have specialized knowledge or abilities to bring to bear – but if the promoters are promising that *anyone* who invests will get at least twice their input back then you really have to question why if the investment is that good they aren't going to a bank and taking a loan themselves to keep all that profit for themselves!

Using a little common sense seems to be too much to ask for some people however – everyone wants to find that ‘get rich quick’ scheme that won’t take any time or effort or money on their part. They feel that following a preset process and series of instructions should be enough to make them successful, when a little deductive reasoning should make it clear that if that is all that it took then *everyone* who can read and has ever investigated opportunities on the internet should already be successful themselves. The truth is that hard work and effort are the skills that are necessary no matter what the opportunity – and if you don’t have or aren’t willing to invest these skills then no matter what you try your hand at you are unlikely to see true success, although some lottery winners and exceptions to the rules do exist and seem to contradict this otherwise solid fact of life!

True Lies

As you probably noticed in the previous section even complete myths and lies can tell us a lot about the people reading and spreading them, but many urban legends and hype or misinformation that exists out there is harder to cull because it contains a kernel of truth buried in the lie. Many times there are scams that are based on people’s fear of being scammed to allow someone to access their information or accounts and indeed take advantage of that person. A great rule of thumb everyone should always hold true to is to

NEVER click a link in an email from someone you don't know, and to never follow an email link to a website you have to log into, especially if it's a site where you have financial information or access funds. The term used to describe emails and other nefarious methods to try and get information out of you is "Phishing" and it is becoming more and more common.

A very common trick for instance is to send you a notice of an 'unpaid' invoice or worse yet a receipt for some payment supposedly made from your online payment account. The first reaction is of course to follow the link to the item and check on it and the payment in question – but often the link actually directs you to a fake log-in site for your PayPal or bank account designed just to gather any user name or password that you enter to allow the person perpetrating the fraud to gain access to your account and clean you out.

Tricks like these, or "cons" are nothing new – but with the advent of the Internet and high technology the ways that you can be fooled or that a con man can access your personal information have increased ten-fold, and often it is difficult to realize you've been taken until you notice the funds are gone from your accounts!

Some tricks are not even illegal, but just use hype to increase the value of an otherwise worthless entity to allow the supplier to make a profit. Such is the thinking behind a pump

and dump stock scheme – you may have seen emails where a particular stock is being touted and you are encouraged to go to your investment location and buy some shares ‘while it is still hot’ ... in many cases investigating the stock *will* show recent and substantial growth – due to the pumping up of the value that the hype of sending these emails and selling stocks to other would-be get rich quick investors are accomplishing. Once the stock peaks the con man sells all *his* stock at a substantial profit and walks away while the value plummets.

A friend of mine, an otherwise very intelligent airline pilot in fact fell victim to a similar investment scheme to the tune of tens of thousands of dollars – when he investigated the company sure profits were shown for the past few years, and better then 8% returns were ‘guaranteed’ for his investment. Testing the waters he did indeed get almost 9% return on his first investment so he piled in more bucks, and later even more and was shocked to later discover that the lawyer who *had* been touting and overseeing the company had been fired shortly after his first investment and mismanagement had lost 80% of all the companies assets and funds, save of course those paid to the owners and his family as salaries and bonuses!

Since no criminal charges were filed against the owner either he can’t even get a tax break for all those funds he’s out ... the secret here is that if it sounds too good to be true, even if you know people who can show you that it “is” true at least

right now you need to keep an eye on it or better yet invest with a more secure and verifiable fund. Even if he had left his money in a savings account earning 5% interest he would have done much better than losing all of his capital ... but the lure of an almost 3% larger profit than he could get elsewhere was just too great and this otherwise intelligent man bet and lost a sizeable chunk of his retirement all because the hype surrounding the business was just too good to ignore. The company *did* exist, it was earning money and for a while the investors were even getting those wonderful 'as promised' 8% returns but like so many things where the hype just is too great to maintain this turned out to be a bust.

Even commonly accepted and believed safe methods of accepting funds such as certified checks are subject to failures due to people knowing how to trick the system. A common fraud being perpetrated today is a counterfeit certified check. Most people assume that once your bank says a check 'has cleared' that the funds were there and it is safe to use that money or issue the goods that the check was paid for, right? But in fact your bank credits the funds to you based on *acceptance* of the check by the issuing bank not when it actually clears – so as much as 15 to 30 days after the check 'clears' they may find out it is not real and hit you up for all those funds back as well as penalties and sometimes even criminal charges if they think you were involved directly! In most cases these are easy scams to catch because the issuer / sender will make it for MORE than

the amount and ask you to just send them the overpayment amount “once it clears” via one method or another – because of course they are greedy and want to *really* gouge you!

A recent and rather funny hoax that relies on the hype generated by virus scares has been nicknamed the ‘hillbilly virus’ because it tricks people into shooting *themselves* in the foot by deleting necessary files from their hard-drive. It works by suggesting that a ‘new’ virus exists and saying that if you have the file(s) on your hard drive you need to delete them. Common files are the SULFNBK.EXE or JDBGMGR.EXE files which are necessary for Windows and Java to work correctly. Again these rely on a kernel of truth and knowledge of people’s psyches’ to trick the user into hurting themselves.

All of the above just goes to show you how easy it is to track someone with a little kernel of truth and a lot of hype. When it comes to business investments or purchasing keys that there is hype or that the seller is not legitimate include pressure to buy ‘right now’ or artificial deadlines during which the deal is good for only so long before being withdrawn from the table. These and a non willingness to allow you details to make it easy to investigate and contact the seller or investment firm / company in question are sure signs that you are seeing nothing but hype and any investments you choose to make even if a short-term profit is seen are just there to trick you into a false sense of security.

CHAPTER 5

SALES AND MYTHS

Historically speaking sales and marketing are where the big bucks are made. Salesmen in fact are the true 'hucksters' of hype, the ones who make up all the tall tales and brilliant ways to expressing the values of a losing proposition that sound too good to pass up. That is also why there is so much confusion and even hatred on the part of many people in regards to salesmen, especially in industries such as car sales and 'legal advice' where the salesmen of information are called lawyers ...

Not surprisingly since this field is the mother so to speak of all hype there is a lot of misperception and confusion regarding sales and selling out there. To help you either be a great salesmen, understand what to look for and avoid on the part of bad salesman or just to protect yourself from would-be greedy salesmen who think you are an easy mark let's discuss a few facets facts and misperceptions involving sales both online and off in this section to help you see beyond the hype.

The cult of Personality

First and foremost salesmen need to be likeable to be truly successful – for that reason most of us will find ourselves at least appreciative of the way they involve us in discussions and seem to listen attentively and with interest when we speak. Don't be fooled by this however, test whether they are really listening by asking a question in a monotone while speaking or throwing out a few nonsense words in the middle of a sentence. If they just continue to use active listening approaches without batting an eye or responding you know it's all an act and you should either leave or put up all your defenses right away!

In America especially we are guilty of worshiping success and successful people, so if someone *appears* to be a success and tells you that they are you are more likely to trust and listen to them. But how do you know they are telling you the truth? That indeed is the question – whether the success they are showing you is real or just hype and / or the trappings of wealth which they still owe payments on is vital when considering if they know whereof they speak. It is one thing to listen to Donald Trump tell you how real estate works, but quite another to pay a 'house flipper' who has lost money on his last four houses for the same type of advice. And let's face it, even a 'success' like Donald is only as good as his area of expertise ... I don't think any of us would appreciate

listening to hair-care tips from the man, no matter how much money and success he has in real estate!

Real People, Real Tips

There are many tips and secrets being shared out there from *real* success stories however, and once you find them and confirm that they know what they are talking about there is a lot of wisdom and knowledge you can gain without having to reinvent the wheel yourself. For instance in Tamara Monosoff's 2007 article "Millionaire Moms' Secrets to Success" published by McGraw-Hill some of the real-life habits and attitudes, methods of working and thought processes that do seem common to the types of people who make a go of a business are discussed. A few of the highlights that we'll discuss below include some common myths that people have about what is necessary to be successful, due to all the hype that they have heard:

- **You have to be special or have a forceful personality to be a success at business**

there is no 'one' type of personality that can be successful – just as there are varying jobs and industries each requiring different skill sets there are opportunities for every type of personality. The key is to finding the right fit both for you aptitude *and* your attitude.

- **A good idea is all you need to get started.**

The truth is ideas are a dime a dozen. In fact many modern-day 'must have' items such as the transistor existed for a long time not only as an idea but an actual *product* long before a need came along to make the idea worth pursuing. Another aspect of this is that you don't have to have a stellar idea or concept to be a success – sometimes small changes to existing ideas or products to make them better work out much better than a breakthrough and innovative concept.

- **Stick to your guns no matter what and you will succeed**

Sometimes the way forward is actually to take a step back. Despite many people's belief that sticking to the plan and making it happen is how you succeed the truth is that if the plan is not working modifying it with new findings or concepts is not only acceptable but necessary.

- **Only high risk brings high profits**

It is true that some risk is necessary for most entrepreneurial success, but the higher the risk of failure the more likely you are to fail (duh) and a steady income from a proven method vs. betting the farm on a new 'make or break' method shouldn't be that hard a decision for a clever business person to make.

- **Focus on making a profit and short-term success.**

Many modern businesses, driven by public opinion and stock-market pressure have failed due to following such an outlook. Short-term gains are good, provided they are not being paid for by long-term success. To be successful you really need to find an industry or business which interests and entertains you first, and then find a way to make money doing that.

Common Sales Myths

As we've mentioned perhaps no other field is so misconstrued and potentially misunderstood as that of the salesperson. The following are common misconceptions of what it takes to be a good salesman:

- **Smooth and fast talking is necessary to sell.**

In reality the glib, smooth-talking salesman attitude is more a detriment to repeat customers and success than an asset. Yes it works on some people, and a good 'sales pitch' that is funny, upbeat and interesting can work wonders, but listening and responding to people is the *real* key to being a good salesman.

- **Sales is all about volume**

Okay, on some level this is true – but when you start

focusing on the number of *sales* and not whether or not you are advancing the interest of the business you are failing even if your numbers don't show it. And let's face it – with the right statistics you can make numbers say just about anything you want ...

- **You have to be tough to be a salesman and handle all the ups and downs that inevitably occur.**

The only reason you would have ups and downs and need a hard skin is if you are lying and trying to juggle numbers rather than advance your company. Telling the truth, being personable and honest whenever possible will not only let you feel better about yourself but should avoid anyone becoming angry at you or feeling that you have somehow cheated them.

Public Relations and Myths

Another field where misconceptions abound and cause problems for many would-be business persons is in the realm of public relations. The following common myths that are often touted or believed to be true will help you get past much of the confusion around this vital aspect of running a business and hopefully help you understand what does and doesn't work in the world of getting your business noticed.

- **Bad PR will kill you and must be avoided *at all costs***

Obviously you don't want bad news to be spread and you don't like to admit when mistakes happen – but covering up a mistake or a problem if found out (and it almost always is uncovered eventually) will just make it seem like you are a 'spin doctor' and cause people to lose faith in anything you say. The key is to tell people what they *need* to know and apologize if appropriate, explaining what will be done to try and avoid it from occurring again in the future.

- **Avoiding an unpopular question by changing the subject is a good way to avoid bad news.**

We've all seen this happen – our government officials are experts at it! You ask 'what happened to the Medicare bill you promised' and they say "that's a good question, but I think what is more important is what we are going to do to address the underlying problem with social reform that has caused our elderly people to have health issues." You don't get an answer and you feel brushed off – why would you want to do this to your customers either? Answer as honestly as you can and be certain to tell them anything that you know they will actually *need* to know regarding the question even if you can't fully answer at this time.

- **Any press is good press.**

Many people think they have to accept any interview or public appearance to get their business name and product out there – the truth is that appearing in the wrong context or in a bad light can seriously undermine your PR attempts. A few good spots are worth much more than hundreds of annoying or irritating ones!

- **Hide emotions when answering questions or discussing facts**

No-one wants to do business with an impersonal machine or a business that has no feelings. Yes you should avoid appearing to “put on a show” or obviously getting irate if possible, but even that would be better than giving the impression that you really don’t care.

- **Respond like an expert every time**

One of the first things Microsoft teaches its employees who deal with customers is that it is ‘okay to say you don’t know something, provided you then go and find out’ – people would much rather know that they will be getting the truth at some future time than feel you are arrogant and pompous and that whatever you say right or wrong is all they’re going to get. Another aspect of this myth is that you have to answer every question with jargon and high-tech terms to look important. In truth if you HAVE to use big words and high-tech terms you should explain them the first time you use them to

ensure first that everyone understands them and two to illustrate that *you* understand them and are not just spouting out important-sounding things to try and impress.

PR Rules To Live By

There are basically five 'golden rules' for public relations that you should print and keep on your wall to remind yourself of. They are:

1. Always respond as quickly as you can, even if it's to say you can't get that answer until 'such and such date' ...
2. Never lie or make guesses about what you think the answer or final outcome *may* be.
3. Avoid saying "no comment" and "off the record" – if you cannot answer for some reason explain why you can't at this time and either provide a timeline or another person who would need to address that question.
4. Know who your audience is – every media type has different people who utilize it, don't address television viewers with a non-visual response and don't talk about how something looks to a radio audience.

5. Stick to what you understand and know well.

Following these guidelines you should be able to represent your company as well as most if not any PR firms out there.

Multilevel Marketing

The world of multi-level marketing, once the biggest hyped way to get rich has for the most part fallen on hard times these days. With pyramid scheme type multi-level business failing and being prosecuted in many instances many people actually have begun to be suspect of multilevel marketing when in fact it is a valid and important aspect of modern business venues.

CHAPTER 6

REAL BUSINESS REAL HYPE

A Grain of Salt

In cases like those we've been discussing, or the one's we'll discuss further on there normally is a grain of truth within the hype that you see, so to counteract that you should always take any message, email or sales pitch you hear with a grain (or two) of salt so to speak. If you strip away the more outlandish statements, the promises that you can't really follow up on or confirm and see if the underlying investment opportunity is solid and well thought out. See if the company has a business plan and ask to see it if so – if they don't have one or can't supply you one immediately they are not a company you should be dealing with in my opinion.

Sometimes the seemingly simplest of actions can cost you a bundle – take the now infamous phone or pager scam where you get a message or phone call from someone you do not know from an area code 809 or 900. The 900 numbers most of us know are toll lines, but the 809 may fool us – in which case you may find yourself struggling to explain to someone who has English only as a second language that you were called from this number for several minutes only to find later

that you were being billed \$25 a minute for each of those minutes they kept you on the phone!

These and other scans that rely on hype and false information to take advantage of either people's inherent desire to make money or be nice and polite are fairly easy to avoid when you apply that little 'grain of salt' though. Some things you can look for and utilize to protect you include looking for:

- Misspellings and errors in the printed documentation – any reputable firm should catch those prior to releasing the documents and if not do you really believe you can trust them to do a good job elsewhere?
- Confirm statements yourself from *trust sources* phone numbers and 'banks' that you are provided by would-be scam artists may just be other scams. Get addresses and contact information and then confirm that with yellow pages and other methods to make certain what you have been told is accurate.
- Use multiple sources to confirm data and contact information whenever money is involved – having at least two confirmations that a bank named "Rico's bank of trust" exists at the stated location and it does indeed have federal reserve licensing should be a minimum before you start handing over your hard-earned money!

- Check dates: many times valid information that is no longer true is issued so at first glance it appears to be the truth.
- Rely on sites such as the following to research and be aware of potential scams and problems that you should avoid:
 - [Great consumer tips](#) from the [Better Business Bureau Online](#)
 - [FTC Unveils "Dirty Dozen Spam Scams"](#)
 - Bob Osgoodby's [Red Flags to watch out for](#) in Spam.
 - The FBI's [Internet Fraud Center](#)
 - [ScamBusters.org](#)
 - [Crimes-of-persuasion.com](#)
 - [Fraudbureau.com](#)

The Truth Revisited

Remember what we have stated over and over – if it sounds too good to be true, even if they can show you 'proof' that others have been successful it probably *is* too good to be true. That above all else is why advisors will tell you that you should never invest more than you can afford to lose –

because even the best of investments has the potential for failure, and the more hype used to sell the product or service the more likely it is that it will be a 'flash in the pan' and any returns seen at all will be short-term and fleeting. If you get in early and get out while it is still hot as with many of the early dot com industries you may still succeed and laugh all the way to the bank – but the vast majority of would-be get rich quick investors fund the relatively few who fall into this category.

We've said before that hype, when done correctly is a good thing, so let's go into that a little bit now. When starting a business, *any* business getting word of mouth and excitement going is the key to your success. Sometimes if the hype is greater than the product or company this can backfire a little since the expectations are not met, but normally the more excitement you can generate about your upcoming business the better.

The key to being successful in business is having a product you can earn a profit on and getting people to buy it for as high a price point as you can. Hyping the product, or generating a 'feeding frenzy' as it is sometimes called can really make for some great successes – some are in and out such as the beanie baby craze, others like designer name clothing where the name-tag demands a higher price even though the same product may be getting manufactured under

other brands are all based on the perception of value, or 'hype' that the company has generated. The exciting thing about this is that even if you find that you can't do a task better or at less cost than your competitors you *still* can be successful if you can find a way to meet a need that they are not meeting and then advertise and market the heck out of your advantage.

First Steps

If you want to succeed you're going to need to create a business plan and figure out where to focus your efforts, which is not really the point of this eBook, but let's go over a few of the facts and details here just to set up how hype can help a 'real' business succeed. First steps most business owners will need to take include:

- Researching and deciding on which business to start and what need to fill
- Determining if they should have partners and what type of business to create, including but not limited to a:
 - Sole proprietorship
 - General partnership
 - Limited partnership
 - Corporation

- Limited liability company
- Creating a business plan including each of the following:
 - An Introduction to your concept
 - Marketing details: how you plan to market yourself
 - An overview of your finance strategy
 - Day to day operations guide
 - A concluding Statement
 - Deciding and obtaining necessary equipment
- Doing market testing to ensure your company knows where to focus its efforts
- Identifying and setting up any necessary business names, permits and licenses - common areas to consider during this phase include:
 - Local, State and Federal Licenses and permits as necessary for your industry
 - A “do business as” if you are creating and utilizing a business name
 - Sellers permit (if applicable) and an EIN (employer Identification Number) if necessary
- Proceeding with obtaining or creating your product

- Insuring your holdings and products as necessary against likely loss
- Marketing and advertising your product

Hype is involved in many of these steps, but is most important during the business plan creation and in the marketing and advertising sections. You need to understand how to promote your company and your product, how to create real excitement and a feeling of adventure when you come up with names, product logos, company icons etc. and doing so will go a long way to ensuring your success. Not to say you can't change or update these as time goes by, but the first impression of your company will normally be the one that lasts, so taking the time to ensure that impression is all that you want it to be is important and worthy of a little time and energy.

Perhaps one of the most important aspects to being able to successfully hype something is having a true love for that product, which means you need to be careful when you choose what you want to sell.

Choosing A product, finding your niche

There is more to promoting a business than understanding the finances and paying to advertise – and if you really want to succeed you first need to take your skills and interest into account and find out what you personally have to offer and what interests you. Then you have to see what fields and products that you can do either cheaper or faster than the existing companies or that you can contribute some unique element to – when you find that key you have found your ‘handle’ for hyping your company.

No-one is interested in a plumbing company that brags it ‘lays pipes’ – they *all* lay pipes after all. But if someone is meticulous and clean and always leaves things better than when they got there, THAT is something to brag about ... in theory this is something you could cultivate and instill but that first plumber who realized he was a little anal about leaving things clean hopefully was smart enough to cash in on his quirk by promoting “we’ll leave things cleaner than your maid does” and coming up with sparkling little logos and bubbles as his mascots. Finding where you can contribute and hyping that skill set is vital to success.

As we’ve stated it is not necessary to be cheaper or even better if you can fulfill some other need, such as our cleansing bubble plumber – in exactly the same way that many brand-names have sold the ‘idea’ of their product being a must-have to the point where they can sell a product for more money

then a competitor you too can capitalize on trends and abilities that you may have.

If you find that you write clever phrases or have a flair for the dramatic then use that ability to create packaging that sells product. A classic example is the 'pet rock' craze from the early 70's: anyone can pick up a rock pretty much anywhere, so whoever first thought to sell one 'as a pet' was a stroke of genius, and the *hype* is what was really being sold, not the rock! That's the key: find a niche you can fill – then take advantage.

Using Existing Hype

In some cases great amounts of hype already exist that you can just cash in on – for instance we mentioned the beanie baby craze earlier, and many entrepreneurs bought up vast numbers of those silly little things and sold them at inflated prices as the demand kept going up. The people who had started the idea that these silly little bags of beans would someday be worth big bucks were doing all the initial hype, and the public picked up on it and started going nuts just from sheer interest and desire so all you really had to do was look around and emulate what others in your peer group of sales were doing and you could be a huge success.

The key of course to using existing hype is to enter at the right time – if you had bought up a bunch of the beanie babies ‘as an investment’ or even to resell at the time that were no longer in demand your risk of being stuck with worthless product was every bit as great as the end consumers who somehow thought these toys were truly valuable. The importance of leverage networks of peers and shared knowledge to know what is happening and the trends that you are following is vital when you utilize hype that you have no control of.

One way to help stay on top of such events is to post and share knowledge with others in similar positions and job functions. There are many small business groups on Yahoo and AOL, as well as business partnerships and local BBB (Better Business Bureau) groups which are all excellent ways. Of course you need to be careful of what input from peers you trust – while normally other business owners are more than willing to help and can prevent you from ‘reinventing the wheel’ they also may steer you correctly wrong on topics where yours and their interests conflict. Forming relationships with business with similar demographics and sales arena’s that do not compete is the key to a successful collaboration in cases like this!

CHAPTER 7

HYPING YOURSELF

Marketing or advertising is all just 'hype' of one sort or another, and as I've mentioned it is a vital skill to have and to succeed if you don't have it you will need to pay someone who does to help you. You simply cannot succeed and become rich without generating a little positive image of your company - it is not enough to make the best widget at the best price – you have to let people *know* that yours is best too! A big step in hyping yourself and your products to your customers is to know who your customers are, and to have a way to contact them.

What to hype: The basics

There are seven basic elements that a successful marketing scheme will need to focus on hyping if you want it to be successful, these include:

1. The Product
2. Your Price
3. Place or Location
4. Promotion

5. You and your employees (People)
6. The Process
7. Physical Appearance

The Product

Obviously you need to understand what it is you are selling, what is special about it and why your customers need or want this product. Surprisingly enough this is not always intuitive!

Your Price

Finding the right price for your product is a delicate and sometimes frustrating balancing act. Getting too low a price may cause customers to wonder about your quality or value, too high and they may not even consider purchasing. Ideally your pricing should be close to that of any competitors, unless obvious flaws or quality issues exist that make you stand apart from them. But remember too that you need to set price not only that your customers are willing to pay, but one that allows you after all costs and expenditures to earn a profit! It won't help if you sell a million widgets if you end up losing a penny each.

Placement and location

An important but often overlooked aspect of marketing your home business is where it is located. Obviously you run it from your home – but if you live in a small outskirts of a well-known city why not open a P.O box in the larger city and do business from there? Being able to say for instance “Dallas, TX” rather than “Farmers Branch, TX” can make a lot of difference in how your business is perceived.

Another aspect of this segment is how you will actually place your PRODUCTS – will you put them in retail outlets where they can be seen and handled or strictly online or in magazines? Many customers will not buy something they cannot feel and look at first – especially if they are uncomfortable about your return policies or not familiar with your company.

Promotion

This is all about getting your customers to know what it is you do or what products you offer. There are several ways to promote your business and your services or products, including:

- Sponsoring local clubs and events
- Obtaining local news coverage by issuing press releases
- Localized advertising in various media
- List your business in yellow pages and white pages
- Create custom slogans and logos that will catch customers attention

You and your employees (People)

You and your employees are your biggest asset or deficit – you can make or break what the public thinks about your company simply by attitude and tone. And the sad thing is that when someone is unhappy, even if you meet their needs they will focus on what they did not like and tell up to six others about the problem. Yet if they are happy they rarely tell more than two to three! This is worth remembering and focusing on hiring good people and keeping a great attitude when dealing with your customers is always a good idea.

The Process

How you actually deliver your products and services can also have a big impact on customer satisfaction and how you are seen. You need to find ways to simplify and streamline ordering processes and shipment options wherever possible if you want to present the impression of a great company to do business with. The quicker and easier it is to buy from you the more likely that customer is to come back to you next time.

You may also want to consider 'after sales' programs to encourage your customers to remember you and come back.

Just surveying them on how the product is meeting their needs or how the process was for them can often make the difference in a repeat customer vs. one who forgets where they bought their widget ...

Physical Appearance

We're not talking about how pretty your hair is here unless you are an actor and the product you are selling is yourself! The 'look and feel' of your business however is important. Having an organized and standardized design for all of your business forms and letters, your website etc. can really make you stand out from the competition. The three areas you should focus on include:

- Product Design
 - Packaging, appearance and bundling can make or break your impression of quality
- Graphics
 - Everything from your logos to the fonts you use helps send a feeling about your company to your customers – make sure you're sending the one you want!
- Public Image
 - The office space, phone message or advertising you portray sends a clear message about who you are

Why hype yourself?

It doesn't matter what you sell or how badly your customers need it you still need to make them aware that you have what they need. If you fail to do this and generate enough interest to make them want to buy from *you* rather than someone else then you won't succeed, or at least you will not be as successful as you could have been! Successfully hyping your company and its products will create awareness, boost sales, and enhance your company's prestige if done correctly.

Real Hype: Creating an Image That Sells Your Company

Today you see more and more 'makeover' shows and events, not just on television either but in magazines, product packaging etc. – the reason that the big trend in re-branding has become so common today is that there is more competition, less free money for consumers to spend and a greater amount of 'static' products and images out there which are beginning to become perceived as old or dated. For such things it is vital to redo the image and create a current and updated look that still reflects the company and the product.

When you are just starting out it is just as important to create an image that captures just the right tone and feeling and a lot can be learned from watching the 're-branding' shows and efforts of other companies as to what is currently being seen as trendy and modern. One major advantage you have with your initial branding is that unlike the cases where an existing logo or product or company image is accepted you won't risk offending or turning off any customers who like the existing look or feel.

There are still potential issues however – for instance if you come up with an image and marketing scheme the hype of your low costs you may find quality-conscious consumers fleeing from your site with images of imported Chinese goods falling apart in their hands – but if you capture the market you have set for yourself this shouldn't matter. It is vital that you get this right up front if at all possible though, which is why a business plan and clear set of goals is so important.

A poor logo or ugly or difficult to parse website can set the impression for your company for life with many consumers, even if you do go back and correct the oversights later. When hyped correctly the brand image you portray should help promote your market share by sharing your mental image and attitude with the consumer in a catchy and exciting manner – but if you make promises that don't match the supplied goods you are destined to fail, regardless so always be true to what you know you can supply.

Hype, not Hoopla

When hyping yourself and your capabilities less is often more. For instance when you are in an interview for a job and you are asked to tell a little about yourself everyone pretty well knows this is not meant to elicit a day-long exposé about your life and efforts up to this point: they want to know any information that is pertinent to your obtaining the job in question or that you feel might impress them with your abilities and interests. The same is true when you are hyping a company, product or yourself in relations to your company ...

Some tips to help you know what is and what is not important to include in an effective presentation of the elements you wish to generate excitement about include the following:

- **Consider your end goal**

As in the example above where the *actual* desired question perhaps should have been phrased more as “why should I hire you instead of someone else” you should always try to see what the underlying goal and / or question is before you start formulating a response or campaign.

- **Establish Rapport**

Part of this step is actually knowing your target audience, in this case your proposed business consumer's niche. Frame your pitches and any excitement generating hype around the areas and ideas that you know will be of interest to these groups. For instance if your target audience is young males with a bent for science fiction then even though many of them may enjoy hot rods and girls odds are good that those are not the primary drivers in an effective ad campaign for them. Make your responses and ads resonate with the things they like and you will be much more effective.

- **Create a world view**

When pitching a product you need to direct it towards things that interest the target audience, but also you need to explain how it fits into the 'big picture' to help set a proper context. Failing to do this may cause them to fail to understand the relevance or importance of some aspect of the goods or service you are offering.

- **Focus in on the important aspects**

Once you have your target audience, have explained what it is and how it fits into the big picture while generating a little excitement now is the time that you should focus into specifics of how they in particular can

benefit from the outstanding and useful facets you have brought to their attention.

These tips can be useful in many areas both personal and business when selling yourself or a product is your goal. From résumé's to ad campaigns, interviews to product descriptions staying true to these suggestions and using some creativity to generate the hype that excites can help you in more ways than you can know. At the same time it is important not to generate 'hoopla' or a bunch of false or over-exotic images that you cannot live up to either: once your veracity is called into question no consumer, employer or co-worker will ever truly believe they can trust you fully again, so while a little hype is a good thing keeping the underlying message real is vital to long-term success.

A classic example that many fall victim too is the 'little white lies' on a resume or interview that they feel embellish their chances to obtain a job. Often these types of efforts backfire as employers do not look at all kindly on false credentials and often check as much as ninety percent (90%) of supplied references, credentials or both! When you add to the fact that according to industry experts such as resumedoctor.com that as many as 42% of resumes have at least one error or inaccuracy and as many as 12% have factual errors such as the actual date of graduation etc. this can explain why so

many resumes that are submitted are never heard from again.

Selling yourself, either to the public or to a company just like hyping your product needs to be done with the truth always in front of you. You don't have to tell "the whole truth" all the time, but you certainly should try your best to tell nothing *but* the truth whenever possible.

CHAPTER 8

PUTTING A REAL

SPIN ON THINGS

Let's step away now from how to recognize and avoid hype, how to choose a business and set it up so you can successfully hype it and begin talking about what all it takes to really turn your idea and business into a success. Obviously advertising in one form or another is the key to hyping your image and presenting you and your product to the world but that is not the only key to a successful business. Let's look beyond just the hype and see what all it takes to make your future the success you want it to be.

Secrets for Success

There are entire fields of study that teach what a successful business needs, how to start and succeed in business etc. so we can't cover everything here in a single eBook designed to help you avoid being caught up in others hype and how to best generate your own, but let's list a few of the known factors that help a business make a go of it:

Do you need an internet presence?

These days there is no question that the Internet is king. Even business that don't need or can't sell their products online have web sites with their contact information and brief histories to help draw in customers. And frankly there is a growing number of consumers who simply won't search anywhere off the internet to find a company to fulfill their needs. Knowing this it is easy to answer the question of whether or not you need an internet presence: YES. You do need to be on the internet!

Your site doesn't necessarily have to exist to sell your products but hosting a clean and informative site that is easy to travel through and find details about you and your company tells your customers and prospective customers a lot about you. It says that you care enough to advertise that you are technical or know how to hire technical people, and provides them an easy way to find you. It may not give you an edge over larger more established competitors who may have the ability to undercut your prices, but where else will you have access to a global audience that never closes all for the cost of maintaining a web site? Your customer will have access to your information 24 hours a day from anywhere in the world and if you allow it can even order or communicate

with you directly via the site. This also allows for some wonderful marketing opportunities!

Mistakes to Avoid

- Rushing in without a business plan
- Lack of focus or specific goals
- Lack of experience, research or market testing
- Not having enough working capital
- Unprofessional images, website or logos
- Attitude problems or a lack of customer service skills
- Not developing relationships with vendors
- Failure to identify best advertising media for your business
- Not getting enough insurance coverage or ignoring possible problems
- Not recognizing your limitations or potential problems

Recommended priorities

- Develop a mailing list and keep it up to date
- Keep your business plan updated, and watch for opportunities for growth or mergers
- Join local trade associations and network with peers
- Keep files for merchandising and marketing concepts
- Educate yourself constantly
- Keep lists of potential problems and possible solutions
- Stay personally involved in selling your product or service

- Word on keeping your skills up to date

Top Ten Do's and Don'ts

There will always be things that you simply should and shouldn't do in any business, and keeping a list of those handy is a good idea in order to make certain you don't accidentally stray from your goals.

TOP TEN DO'S

1. Know what you want before you start.
2. Create a "before you start" checklist.
3. Sell great products or services at a fair price.
4. Specialize in one area.
5. Train yourself and any employees thoroughly in dealing with your customers as well as running your business.
6. Outsource manufacturing if possible.
7. Minimize inventory kept on hand. If possible use a just-in-time delivery and ordering system.
8. Consider whether your suppliers can be used as a source of financing.
9. Develop and maintain a database of current and future customers.
10. Include an Internet presence in your plans.

TOP TEN DON'TS

1. Have all vendors supply a written purchase order outlining all terms *before* placing orders.
2. Stay on suppliers to expedite needed merchandise.
3. Test market products before investing heavily.
4. Do not settle for unprofessional appearing logos, names, packaging or advertising.
5. Be certain your cash flow projection is positive for the first 12-month period at a minimum or get additional financing lined up!
6. Don't be in too big a rush – take time to make sure everything is prepared first.
7. Compete with discount chains ONLY if you find you can efficiently serve a specialized need that they are overlooking.
8. Don't forget you have to meet all IRS employment practices and tax deadlines!
9. Don't do financed business with poor credit risks – make them COD or pay in advance only.
10. Don't depend on your customers to complain; they just won't come back.

Methods to use to Hype yourself

Once you realize you need to create a little hype how do you decide where to spend the funds necessary to get your name

out there? This is where a trained professional can come in handy, but there are some tips that you can research on your own. The first step is to know what methods work with *your* customers. Some common options include:

- Newspaper ads
- The Yellow Pages and other telephone directories
- Merchandising such as leaflets, packaging, shelf displays and window displays
- Trade journals
- Websites

Whether you choose to run an ad or put something in the yellow pages keeping your business's name, slogan or logo in your customer's minds is the goal.

Budgets for Hying Yourself

One of the first things you should do is figure out how much to budget and then isolate where you should focus your efforts. Many companies set a percentage of their revenue aside for this, but the best way is to take a more linear approach as follows:

- Isolate all expenditures that affect revenue for both the short term and for long term goals

- Rank these expenditures and determine how quick a return and how effectively you can control each of them
- With the estimated costs from each list above divide your marketing costs by the anticipated sales income and then take the percentage among them that you have identified as being most likely to earn a return.

Being as important as it is isolating where to spend your funds and how much to budget may be one of those areas where hiring a professional from outside your company is worth the extra costs – just be sure not to take the word of a television firm that TV is the only way to go!

Getting Money

A common area where myths and hype exist for small business users is when it comes to getting money for their starting company, many times people have a great idea and good business sense but having never been involved don't know a line of credit from a loan from a hole in the wall – and when it comes to capital needed to run your business this can be a costly mistake.

Some of the common problems you have to overcome is all the hype about 'free' money and 'easy to obtain' loans. If you have trouble buying a new car you will have trouble financing a small business, hence you should perhaps change your

plans for a big mega-opening and start small, working on your credit and personal finances as you go to enable you to be prepared when the time comes to expand your business. When the time comes to get that loan here are a few of the most popular myths and some explanations to help you wade through the hype and find that pot at the end of the rainbow:

- **All credit options are alike**

A term loan and a line of credit are *not* the same thing. A term loan capitalizes assets for specific periods of time so you need to match the loan to the life expectancy of what you are buying. A car loan is a good example – six years is normally the longest you can go, while a home loan can be obtained for thirty or more years.

- **My bank will help me stay afloat – it's in their best interest**

Despite the seeming common sense that you staying in business and making money is better for your lender then not the truth is banks write off bad loans all the time and don't like to be hassled with slow and no pay accounts. Don't think they will be there to help you out of a bind just because it makes sense!

- **Enough money can fix anything**

Often small business owners think they can fix any problem if they just have enough money – in fact the

typical mistake is not knowing what to address to fix existing problems, many of which do not require capital at all. Throwing money at a problem rarely helps if you have not assessed what the target market is, how the business is running and whether or not you are meeting your business plan goals.

Web Sites

Probably your best choice for getting the word out there and selling yourself is to use the web. The Internet is a powerful and very expansive device for reaching the public – the key is to be or work with people who know what they are doing – folks who understand the latest trends in web page design and copywriting, how to optimize for search engine placement (SEO) and which keywords are vital to triggering searches to find you and your product.

Having a professional image and being easy to navigate is important too – you want to hype your product and create an impression, but there is a fine line between catchy and annoying. One key to remember is that you normally have just five to seven seconds to make the impression you want to provide: do you want to spend that loading slow pages or showing an exciting advertisement on why your gizmo is the best thing since pre-slicing bread?

Hyping your site

Once you have a website you need to help your customers find it. This act is called 'promoting' your site, and while there are many books and articles telling you how to accomplish this the most important tip is creating and maintaining a good title site with keywords that will draw your customer's attention – and of course listing your site with all the major search engines.

Say for instance that you are selling organic fruits and vegetables - you may want to rank high in search engines with words like organic or natural or all-natural. Adding words in this manner will mean that when search engines index your site the results will target customers that you *want* targeted.

Use keywords that you wish to have identified with your company and product on your homepage, and take advantage of the Description META-Tag that is used in web pages to 'describe' the page. Make certain that your web page creator a list of keywords you wish to appear in that section since some search engines include these descriptions below your hyperlinks. Keeping your description to 254 or less characters is also important, and be aware that less than half of that is normally shown on the search engine itself.

Some additional tips to bear in mind while creating your page include:

1. Use *header tags* of the H1, H2 and H3 variety for keywords on your pages so they will be flagged by search engines.
2. Place keywords in the first paragraphs on your page
3. Use keywords in *hyperlinks* to other pages and sites where possible
4. Avoid frames or complicated navigation systems – keep it simple to index
NOTE: If you find that your site isn't indexing correctly you can submit a Google Sitemap request at <http://www.google.com/webmasters/sitemaps/login>) or use Greg Tarrant's Google Sitemap Generator and Editor <http://www.sitemapdoc.com>
5. Align pages around specific keywords
6. Submit your Webpage to Search engines for addition to their database.
7. There are many 'paid' services that will do this for you, but you can do it yourself for free on most sites simply by searching for 'add your URL' on the sites in question,

which include Google, Yahoo, MSN, AOL Search, and Ask.com.

8. Optimize your search ability with search engines
 - a. Software such as WebPosition
<http://www.wilsonweb.com/afd/webposition.htm>
can help you check your ranking and compare your site. Bruce Clay's SEOToolSet
http://www.wilsonweb.com/afd/clay_seotoolset.htm is another great resource
 - b. Books like *Dr. Wilson's Plain-Spoken Guide to Search Engine Optimization*
<http://www.wilsonweb.com/ebooks/seo.htm> also can help you with this.
9. Make sure your URL is listed on your headers, business cards, and in any telephone and yellow page ads you run.
10. Arrange for links to and from related sites.
11. Consider programs such as Google's AdSense that place your ads for a fee per click on search engine queries
12. Submit your site to directories such as the Open Directory Project <http://www.dmoz.com> and the Yahoo! Directory <http://docs.yahoo.com/info/suggest/>

- a. Note: Business sites cost \$299 a year
<http://docs.yahoo.com/info/suggest/busexpress.html>
- b. A few other directories include
<http://www.About.com> &
<http://www.Business.com>.

Importance of image

What customers think of you, your business and your employees can make or break your company. Imagine if you will that you go to two doctors offices – one is dingy and dark with fading wallpaper, the other is cheerful and bright with soft music playing and a friendly staff that asks if everything is OK. If costs are equivalent and the qualifications are the same which do you think will get the repeat business?

Letterhead, logos, slogans all of this is important to your image. Every type of communication coming from your company in fact needs to help promote your business. What your vendors, suppliers, and competitors all receive from you is in large part what forms their opinion about your company. Even your invoices, estimates and sales letters or even the quality of the paper or envelopes themselves can make an impact on the perception of your company. In light of this it is a good idea to do all you can to present your company in

the best light possible. Sometimes low costs solutions such as just changing the layout and / or using mandated templates to ensure uniformity are all it takes – at other times you may need to hire professional help to develop logos, slogans and layouts that will achieve the goals you want, but never underestimate the importance of appearance in today's marketplace.

CHAPTER 9

HYPE AND THE LITTLE THINGS

The saying is that God is in the details – and nowhere is that more evident than in a small business. When it comes to setting a tone and giving the proper impression even the smallest of details can cause problems. That blurry print on a business card that costs you visitors to your web site, or paying poor attention to a ledger entry that causes you to mislabel a deduction which later triggers an audit, not following up with that one customer who was willing to spend thousands but couldn't wait on you. The little things really do count!

Sadly in these modern times there are more 'little things' to keep track of than ever before – from email lists and customer contact preferences to varying costs, regulations and shipping rates the list can be somewhat overwhelming at times. The key is to form a plan, implement a system that ensures you can meet that plan and then follow through. A few areas that you may want to consider including in any such plan are discussed in the following sections.

Phishing and spam

It's not just when people are trying to sell you things that you see hype either – sometimes they are trying to take things from you. One of the most common scams out there today that relies on hyping services or people's fears is the so-called "phishing" activities where email that seems to be a valid warning or notice from a financial institution is in fact a bogus attempt to gain your account details and personal information. Another irritating but somewhat effective advertising avenue relies on email to hype a product or service counting on a 1% or less return to make it profitable, this is lovingly known as 'spam' ...

As a small business owner it will be important to try and avoid using and to protect your users from spam and phishing expeditions – and you can even use your efforts towards that end as advertisement, since everyone will appreciate your not divulging their personal information and doing all you can to minimize their seeing spam! This may seem like a little thing, but if a customer finds that the email address they gave you starts receiving spam email shortly thereafter you can bet they will stop doing business with you and be annoyed whether or not you had anything to do with it!

Phishing and other scams can also be done via phone and even the US postal service, so be careful and never divulge your or any customer's information without fully confirming the availability and accessibility of the person or persons claiming to need it from at least two different sources. That way if they are a scammer you at least know how to find them so you can turn them over to the authorities.

Protection

Another aspect of your business that needs protection is your computers themselves. Not just physical protection, which is actually the most important but software methods to protect against ongoing potential attacks from viruses, worms, hacking attempts etc. are essential to a well-run and safe business. Obviously you need to be able to run your business and access the internet so a certain level of vulnerability will always be necessary, but if you don't take the time to learn how most infections occur, install and regularly update virus protection and check your security in an ongoing manner you are not just asking but begging for something to go wrong.

Fortunately there are more options available today than ever for even novice users to protect themselves from most attacks, but the important facts are that you need to know and take certain actions to be safe no matter what other

precautions you may have in place. A few good rules of thumb that you can follow include:

- Avoid older operating systems without updated security features. Operating Systems like Windows 95 while easy to use and inexpensive have little to no protection even from physically logging onto them, and very little support for later antivirus software programs.
- Use the best physical locking mechanisms possible to secure your systems and written documentation – even if a thief breaks into your house just looting it valuable information can be lost or destroyed if it is not secured, and worst case said information and customer credit card details could be compromised for which you might be liable!
- Use an ongoing backup scheme to make certain you can recover data if and when your system crashes. The best system will 'rotate' data off site so that data no more than a week old is always available even in the event of a catastrophic event like a fire or tornado.
- Purchase and install the best anti-virus software you can afford and keep it updated, preferably on a daily basis.

- Never open attachments or click on links even when they come from someone you know and trust – simply by renaming an exe a '.jpg' in some cases you can be fooled into installing software or enabling code you did not realize was accessing your system. If you are expecting the information or know it was sent first save it to the hard disk and run a virus scan on the file before opening it just to be sure.
- Run protection software called a 'firewall' which limits access to your computer from the internet and can 'lock down' ports or access modes into your computer.

Even following all of these steps religiously won't guarantee you can't be affected, but more than ninety percent of the issues most user fall victim to fall into one of more of these actions, so while just as getting a flue vaccination doesn't mean you'll never catch *any* flu doing these steps doesn't mean you'll always be protected it does limit your exposure. A few links where you can research and learn more about viruses and other risks include:

Microsoft's Virus Alert site:

<http://www.microsoft.com/technet/security/alerts/default.mspx>

Symantec small business site:

http://www.symantec.com/small_business/index.jsp

Who to Hype: The Importance of Email lists

Your most valuable asset outside of your employees (if you have any) is your customers. One of the most valuable and important jobs you therefore have is maintaining an ongoing dialog with your existing customers and encouraging them to continue to shop with you and to spread word of your company.

One of the principle ways to accomplish this is by keeping an email list via a system commonly called a “Customer relations management system” or CRM. There are many existing software and even firmware solutions out there for accomplishing this goal, but even a good old fashioned ledger can get the job done – but however you choose to accomplish it keeping track of what your customers have purchased, whether they wish to hear from you again and their potential for your company is vital to ongoing success. After all, how are you going to hype your company and its wares if you don’t have an audience?

Who to Hype To

It's important to know that just because you have a customer doesn't mean they are ripe for marketing. Not every customer is worth investing an ongoing communication with, and in some cases where you may be selling a good or product that is a 'one off' event only resellers or groups may be worth targeting. For this reason your CRM and analysis of your customers buying habits needs to include as a minimum the following aspects of them and their purchases:

- Your customer's profile
- Customer valuation and purchase patterns
- Cost(s) to engage

If a customer was a special order or one-time purchaser they may or may not be worth contacting if similar or related goods come available in the future – and the cost of communicating with them to attempt to gain future business needs to be carefully considered too. I'm sure we've all bought a small item from a 'neat' little company and then received wonderful color magazines advertising their wares for a year afterwards without buying anything else ... considering the cost of printing and shipping those magazines

in many cases the profit from our one-time purchase is all eaten up, and had they merely included a magazine once with our purchase the same goal could have been met without further costs.

The point here is that hype costs money, and whether you are being hyped to or hyping yourself that money should ideally be targeted where it is most likely to do some good. One of the ways to control where the funds are spent is via the contact method, which can include any one of the following:

- Supplying special rights or information such as exclusive access
- Discounts on product or services
- New product launch information in advance
- Supplying Information and content specific to their interests
- Loyalty programs
- Promotional offers

How Much to Hype

Any CRM plan also needs to set limits on the amount of expenses per customer that will be spent on ongoing advertising and marketing, trying to find a level that guarantees you a set level of profit and avoids abusing your customers by contacting them too often, which may backfire

if they believe you to be a spammer. Some guidelines on aspects of your business that should bear customers desires in mind and provide methods for them to give you feedback include any:

- Web sites – personalize when possible
- Point-of-sale treatment – if you can make it easier to order a 2nd time and ‘remember’ them they will like that
- Personalized contacts: use creative direct mail and e-mail marketing
- Customer service
- Recognition and reward programs
- Product development and beta involvement

Another important aspect of any ongoing customer contact is to reward them – setting up contests and special discounts can not only make them feel special but encourage them to come back and spend \$\$ with your company that they otherwise might spend at a competitors. Let them know you value them and their business and you can get a customer for life.

God is in the details

The small things are what makes the difference, quality is a somewhat nebulous concept for most of us, but as the old saying goes we all ‘know it when we see it’ and often it just

boils down to noticing that someone took a little extra effort to do just a little bit more than was the bare minimum required. The attendant who points out that you can save ten cents by ordering a value meal for instance, or the tire-store clerk who suggests that by replacing your wheels other tire sizes that *are* immediately in stock could be fitted and that with the lower costs of those tires overall costs are about the same ... it often is not about savings but about acknowledgement.

We all want to feel important and be recognized, and in those rare cases when someone goes out of their way even a little bit to do so we notice it and are grateful ... in the case of customers often enough to not only come back to you when they need your services again but also to recommend you to their friends and family. And don't fool yourself that you are only losing one customer if you tick off someone – statistics have shown that an upset customer is likely to tell five to six people about his bad experience while a happy customer is likely to tell only two to three: that means if you anger someone they will be twice as likely to spread the bad word!

It was this fact and the potential for 'bad' hype that led to the somewhat erroneous statement that "the customer is always right" ... they aren't always right, and sometimes it *is* worth losing a few customers to get rid of a problem customer who is costing more than they can ever bring in – but those are the exceptions not the rules!

CHAPTER 10

GROWTH

Ideally your company will grow and expand reaching levels of success that you had not imagined. When that happens you will find new levels of hype and misinformation to wade through, including where and how to invest your profits, whether or not you should spread out and franchise or joint an existing company, sell out your business and start another one etc. – all of these will be highly individualized choices that only you can make on your behalf, but we can discuss some of the more common myths and issues surrounding some of the more common aspects of growth and expansion.

Investing

Perhaps no other aspect of the financial world is quite so laden with hype as the investment world. With options ranging from the stock market and ForEx (foreign exchange) to franchising opportunities and bonds there are literally thousands of ways to lose money, all of which have at least one group of people presenting hundreds of get-rich-quick

schemes telling you how you *can't* lose if you simply follow their methods. Let me make something very clear right up front: you can't make money without risking money. Anyone who tells you otherwise is *lying*. Even putting your money in an insured bank risks fraud since the government could go belly up or your bank may be lying about being insured and may take the funds and abscond. Yes those risks are *very* small but not unheard of – and of course the best return you are likely to see on funds in a savings account are four to six percent so minimal returns of course equals minimal risks.

Of all the traditional ways to invest perhaps the stock market is the most well known, and of those avenues the NYSE (New York Stock Exchange) is perhaps the first that leaps to mind. What is not always as clear to people is that with costs for brokerage and taxes even when you sell for a profit you can potentially lose money overall ... investing in stocks is really a long-term affair that needs to be carefully monitored to be successful.

Investment Hype

Let's go over a few of the more common investment hypes that turn out to be false and discuss them:

Yield, the amount of direct income generated by stocks in the form of dividends, coupon payments etc. is the most important aspect of any investment.

In reality the *total income* is what you care about – who cares if you are seeing nickels and dimes now if in the end you lose money or have a terrible return?

Some investments such as Treasury Bills are 'safe' investments, guaranteed to earn a profit over time.

First according to Ibbotson Associates over the last eighty years T-bills have earned an average of only 3.7%, barely enough to keep up with the 3.1% inflation rate! Considering that many banks will offer as much as 5% return on investments and this clearly indicates that the so-called 'safe' investment is at best a wash, and should you not let them fully mature you might even lose money.

Bonds, like T-bills are a 'better bet' for investing and safe overall.

Bonds are a better bet than T-bills as they have outperformed inflation by at least 2% over the past eighty years, but with bonds being subject to bear markets too at times investors lost as much as 41% of their money and income: hardly a no-risk investment!

Stocks are far too risky for the savvy investor.

Yes stocks are a risky investment compared to bonds, but even the worst-case stock performance over a five-year period for the S&P from 1936 to 1941 was better than bonds performance for the same period, and even in the huge losses in the tech industry over-investment from the 90's some people were quietly growing rich by savvy and careful investments.

Follow the Money

If you really want to determine if something is hype or reality the answer is simple: follow the money. From the street hustler to the televangelist if you see where the money is going you can see what is really going on. I recall at the height of his popularity a certain Rev "T" from Dallas Texas was on every television station, speaking 'in tongues' on command and assuring people that if they would send him money God would bless them. I was skeptical since I lived down the street from his multi-million dollar church and had seen he and his wife living high on the hog while hundreds of local children starved or lived as homeless on the streets surrounding his edifice to God's love. If the money is going back into the business or being reinvested into growth then you know the owners at least *believe* in their company and

that it has a future. If they are taking it all out for personal use and enjoyment then you can be reasonably certain that they are not being fully honest with you about how wise an investment their firm really is.

Franchising a Chain

The concept of a franchise is interesting – in theory it allows for lower costs since a group of owners all share expenses for purchasing goods, insurance, advertising etc. but in these modern times (see the paragraph above) all too often it simply is one businesses attempt to milk money from their name recognition by charging others for the privilege of using their name over the door. Of course in theory at least you should see similar products and quality levels in a franchised chain which is good for consumers – but ideally they would all have the same quality concerns and level of commitment as well, and that simply doesn't happen these days.

Despite my personal opinions there is a lot of hype and excitement about franchising opportunities out there ... especially the so-called 'home franchise' opportunities. A few caveats and unveilings of some of the current hype follow:

Franchise Scams

The term franchise scam refers to an all-too common even where a con-artist promises products and services and fails to deliver after getting funding from you up front as a 'deposit' towards helping you to form a business. In some cases this is not actually a scam as such, just poor competency as in the case where a poorly designed start-up franchise takes a deposit and cannot come-through, falling into bankruptcy before you are compensated or your business adequately started. This technically is not a scam, although the end result is the same to the investor who loses him money!

Detecting a Franchise Scam

There are several warning signs that you can look for whenever you are researching franchise opportunities: not all mean that poor management or a scam exist, but they should be weighed against what you know about the company and its finances and capabilities. A few things to look for and that should sound warning bells include:

- If the franchise "Head" office is run from a home office and yet several franchise operations exist already. If

they are successful why do they not have a business address?

- You will be the first location to open, or the first location is not yet open but has been sold. In a case like this you should get a complete list of all franchises and contact information for the inaugural one – if they have been waiting for longer than twelve months that should be a major concern!
- If they do not have a “Franchise Agreement” or UFOC to you within ten days prior to signing an agreement. A franchise agreement is not binding without this form and *no* excuse for it being late should encourage you to sign until you have it in hand!
- Deposits that equal or excel 20% of the franchise fee are requested up front – especially if they are ‘non-refundable’ – a deposit is common, but high percentage ones are a sure sign that they expect to bilk you out of at least some money!
- Existing franchisee members and associates are family members – if so they may or may not have binding agreements in place and could just be decoys fronting potential scams.

- Headquarters located overseas are always of concern – it is not unusual at all for franchisees to have overseas offices, but when they sell 'master franchising rights' to someone in your country that is always questionable.

As with any business opportunity you need to ask questions and make certain you understand all you can about the franchise and what exactly they are offering you. Some items you should have on any checklist you compile include:

- How well known is the system and how long has it been in business?
- What is the wording of the UFOC and details of the history of the management team
- What is the financial backing of the company and what potential for funding and financial security is in place? Do they have any existing lines of credit, what *is* their credit rating etc. – don't be afraid to dig deep here and have your accountant involved!
- Is the franchise a 'fad' or will it stay in demand for years to come?
- Does the franchise include any registration and trademark protection?

- How many franchise locations have closed, when and why and at what locations?

Should You Invest in a Start-Up Franchise?

All of the huge franchises like Starbucks® were once start-up ventures and people were leery of investing in them – as with any company that is starting a new model there is great risks, but also the potential for great rewards. If you are considering getting involved in a franchise that has less than ten locations already you need to investigate a few aspects of the franchise prior to plunking down any of your hard-earned money. Those aspects include:

- How unique the business franchise is and will there be interest.
- How happy are the existing franchises with the support and business model of the franchisor and the infrastructure.
- Legal documentation and financial situation status.
- Affiliations – ideally the franchisor should be a member of the IFA, CFA or some other international organization – if not be certain that they were not denied

membership and that their reasons for not joining are valid.

- What type of sales tactics do they use? High-pressure sales may indicate a need to generate income or profit, possibly indicating an underlying weakness to the financial structure.

CHAPTER 11

THE FUTURE OF HYPE

With any luck you will find your future has much to hype about, and whatever route you choose to travel if you are careful to avoid the pitfalls of those who tout unjust claims the potentials for profit and success are very near limitless. America is called the 'land of opportunity' for a reason – here unlike most countries the very real possibility of becoming rich beyond measure strictly by the power of perseverance and determination truly exist. The real key to succeeding is to be able to see past the hype of others while being able to express the benefits and capabilities of your own offerings. Hype is good when done correctly – generating excitement and offering a scintillation but valid view of the future can lead to success. But beware any tendency towards lying or embellishing – it is okay to tout the good and gloss over the bad, but don't deny what is true or you might find your future falling into shambles around you. And don't assume that all that you hear hype about is golden ... in this modern day it is more likely iron pyrite.

The more things change

One thing is for certain – the more things change the more they stay the same. Since Eve first assured Adam that the

hype about the apple killing them was in fact not true because after all she had eaten it and was still alive a kernel of truth exists in almost all excited overheated expressions of enthusiasm. And just as then finding that kernel of truth is a task that you cannot trust to another, but have to take responsibility for doing yourself.

Had Adam insisted that he wait and speak with God about why Eve was not yet dead before chewing himself perhaps they both would still be in Eden, and Eve would be a happier although perhaps chastened woman than she is now ... but at least in our modern world we know that when something sounds too good to be true that it problem is. We also know that all that glitters is not gold, but that opportunities *do* exist that are often overlooked by those not willing to take risks. It is balancing these aspects of our dual natures, risk and opportunity that make listening to and seeing deeply into hype so exciting to us. Because on some level within each of us we all enjoy the risk and rush that taking chances offers us and with hype that sensation is heightened. But to a savvy investor such gambles are best left to entertainments – rather than risk our future for a momentary rush let's see through the hype to the truth.

It *is* out there ... and hiding in plain sight!

Internet marketing resources

Private Label Resell Rights Products you can resell as your own

<http://www.sourcecodegoldmine.com> & www.PLRights.com

"How to write and publish your own OUTRAGEOUSLY Profitable eBook in as little as 7 days - even if you can't write, can't type and failed high school English class!" Go to

<http://www.jeremyburns.com/a/7dayebook> to get started

Merchant Account Authorize / e-OnlineData -

www.e-onlinedata.com/accuratemarketing

This is our 1st choice recommendation for merchant accounts, this is a very easy place to get approved and in the many systems we have tested are the easiest to work with! **Super Low Rates!!**

Shopping Cart 1ShoppingCart.com -

<http://www.webmarketingmagic.com>: Instant merchant accounts and real-time payment gateway services. This is a private label of the 1sc system and provides great service!

Now that you are on your way to becoming a Mentor Marketing Expert, don't stop there! The next step is the Holy Grail of Internet Marketing How To Guides... Read on for details!

"Learn how to make a life-changing income of \$100,000 to \$250,000 with your Internet business... even if you're a computer dummy!"

Review: "The Insider Secrets to Marketing Your Business on the Internet" by Corey Rudl"

I've just finished reading the brand-new version of Corey Rudl's top-selling Internet marketing system, *"The Insider Secrets To Marketing Your Business On The Internet,"* and frankly, I'm overwhelmed by the huge amount of critical wealth-building information he's managed to pack into these **two hefty binders and 3 CDs!**

But I guess I shouldn't be surprised; after all, when the box containing these materials showed up at my door, it weighed in at **over 10 pounds!**

That's 10 pounds of the most comprehensive **marketing strategies, test results, case studies, tools, and ideas** for generating a life-changing income online (from \$1,000s to over \$1 million) you're ever likely to read!

I'm talking about information like...

- Step-by-step advice for starting your own Internet business **in as little as 48 hours!**

- How to build a top-selling web site... for less than \$100!
- Where to find hot products to sell (in 20 minutes or LESS)!
- 100s of FREE and cheap online tools, resources, and software
- How to get 1,000s of qualified NEW visitors to your web site... for FREE!
- How to **get #1 rankings in the search engines** and get tons of FREE traffic from the "Big Guys" like Google!
- Secrets to writing sales copy that can **increase sales by up to 400% (or MORE)!** And much more!

If you're unsure who Corey is, you should know that he's been a recognized expert in online marketing for a decade now. Not only has he generated **\$40,000,000 in online sales**, his sites also attract **450,000 visitor a week!**

What's *really* great about Corey is that he can show ANYONE how to have a **wildly profitable Internet business** (that takes just a few hours each day to run)...

... even if you're an absolute computer dummy!

And if you already have an Internet business, he can help YOU, too. The advanced sections of his system show you how you can **increase your sales by 400%... 700%... even as much as 1,000%!**



I give Corey's system the highest rating possible! Its 1,300+ pages of step-by-step lessons contain the exact SAME tested and proven fast-growth strategies he has personally used to generate over \$40 million in online sales -- *starting on a shoestring budget!*

And it's the SAME SYSTEM that literally **1,000s of his students have used** to drive "truckloads" of cash out of the Internet.

I strongly urge you to check out Corey's wealth-building system as soon as possible! Go to www.JeremyBurns.com/a/tips for a FREE preview.

Free Bonus

**[Private Label Rights Tips](#) -
PLR Rights Marketing Tutorial
Package Value \$97.00**



Private Label Right's products are hot right now! There is a killing to be made from these ready made turn-key products if you know the insider secrets to making them work. I have worked out a special deal with Jeremy Burns where you can grab a copy of PLR Tips with your purchase of this package as my gift to you! PLRTips.com

For Your NOTES: