

HMA

HIDDEN MARKETING ASSETS

University

INTERVIEW SERIES

**How I Made \$400 Million
Selling Products Through The Mail**

*Michael Senoff Interviews
Mail Order Expert Jim Straw*

 *Michael Senoff's*
HardToFind Seminars.com

Dear Student,

I'm Michael Senoff, founder and CEO of HardToFindSeminars.com.

For the last five years, I've interviewed the world's best business and marketing minds.

And along the way, I've created a successful home-based publishing business all from my two-car garage.

When my first child was born, he was very sick, and it was then that I knew I had to have a business that I could operate from home.

Now, my challenge is to build the world's largest free resource for online, downloadable audio business interviews.

I knew that I needed a site that contained strategies, solutions, and inside information to help you operate more efficiently

I've learned a lot in the last five years, and today I'm going to show you the skills that you need to survive.

It is my mission, to assist those that are very busy with their careers

And to really make my site different from every other audio content site on the web, I have decided to give you access to this information in a downloadable format.

Now, let's get going.

Michael Senoff

Michael Senoff

Founder & CEO: www.hardtfindseminars.com

Copyright Notices

Copyright © MMVII - © MMVIII by JS&M Sales & Marketing Inc

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, mechanical or electronic, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the Publisher. Requests for permission or further information should be addressed to the Publishers.

Published by:

Michael Senoff
JS&M Sales & Marketing Inc.
4735 Claremont Sq. #361
San Diego, CA 92117
858-234-7851 Office
858-274-2579 Fax
Michael@michaelsenoff.com
<http://www.hardtfindseminars.com>

Legal Notices: While all attempts have been made to verify information provided in this publication, neither the Author nor the Publisher assumes any responsibility for errors, omissions, or contrary interpretation of the subject matter herein.

This publication is not intended for use as a source of legal or accounting advice. The Publisher wants to stress that the information contained herein may be subject to varying state and/or local laws or regulations. All users are advised to retain competent counsel to determine what state and/or local laws or regulations may apply to the user's particular situation or application of this information.

The purchaser or reader of this publication assumes complete and total responsibility for the use of these materials and information. The Author and Publisher assume no responsibility or liability whatsoever on the behalf of any purchaser or reader of these materials, or the application or non-application of the information contained herein. We do not guarantee any results you may or may not experience as a result of following the recommendations or suggestions contained herein. You must test everything for yourself.

Any perceived slights of specific people or organizations is unintentional.

Hi, I'm Michael Senoff, founder and CEO of [HardToFindSeminars.com](http://www.HardToFindSeminars.com). For the last five years I've interviewed the world's best business and marketing minds. Along the way I've created a successful publishing business all from home from my two-car garage. When my first child was born he was very sick and it was then that I knew I had to have a business that I could operate from home. Now my challenge is to build the world's largest free resource for online, downloadable audio business interviews. I knew I needed a (inaudible) that contained strategy, solution and inside angles to help you live better, to save and make more money, to stay healthier and to get more out of life. I've learned a lot in the last five years and today, I'm going to show you the skills you need to survive.

Jim: You only learn from your mistakes. I've learned most of what I know from my mistakes and failures. My successes never taught me anything. They were only based upon what I had learned from my mistakes and failures. That's why those who are afraid to make mistakes or fail, never achieve success they desire. If I went back and changed those mistakes I wouldn't have succeeded.

Hi, it's Michael Senoff with Michael Senoff's [HardToFindSeminars.com](http://www.HardToFindSeminars.com). I'm pleased to present you a very special interview with the legendary mail order man, Jim Straw. The title of this interview is called How I Made \$400 Million Selling Products Through The Mail. Even though he only has a high school degree and a year of college, Jim Straw has made more than \$400 million selling products through the mail. And according to him, anyone can get rich. You just have to know the fundamentals of success. And in this question and answer interview you'll hear Jim's advice for getting to the top of your ladder. According to Jim, every entrepreneur has started in sales and marketing because no matter what business you think you're in, if you're not selling you're not making money. That's why in order to be successful it's important to learn the building blocks of business and sales. In this interview he'll tell us all about them. You'll also learn how Jim makes his living working just three hours a day. Like Jim says, you should always test, test and retest your market and how to effectively measure those results. You'll learn how to easily and quickly build an email list from scratch and other ways to use the Internet to enhance your business and increase your customer base. You'll learn what Jim's biggest mistake was and what he learned from it. Why you'll need to learn the fundamentals of business in order to be successful and the best books for learning them. You'll learn how to get PR articles written about your business for next to nothing. You'll learn how to stop throwing away viable business opportunities by understanding the business of business, and stop yourself from thinking like a consumer. You'll learn that two things you need to know to be successful in life and much, much more. According to Jim, most people don't fail. They just fail to stick with any one thing until they've mastered it. And that's why Jim says, "In order to have success

Listen to hours of free interviews, case studies and how to consultant training at 1☐

<http://www.HardToFindSeminars.com/AudioclipsH.htm>

in business, you have to learn everything you can about business. And if you're not prepared to do that, you may as well just get a job." So, sit back and learn how to be a successful entrepreneur in any field from a business legend who knows. Note that this recording is a recreation of Jim Straw's voice. Jim was unable to do a live phone interview because of some hearing problems. This is an actor playing the part of Jim Straw. These are Jim Straw's words from written answers to questions by [HardToFindSeminars.com's](http://www.HardToFindSeminars.com) students. Now let's get going.

Michael: Jim, with all your successful businesses, what are the three top success principles that are responsible for your success?

Jim: Well, there is only just one. Just do it. Too many people want success but they never just do it. Some thirty years ago I asked a dozen self-made millionaire friends of mine how they had become so successful. Now every one of them after telling me about the things they had done had the same answer: "I don't know. I just did it." Now, my answer's the same. I just did it.

Michael: What are your tips for maintaining a good work life balance?

Jim: Well, I hope by "work" you mean business. I mean, never take your business or your life too seriously. Roll with the punches. Change the things you can and accept everything else.

I have always brought my life into my business. I mean, making my family and friends, directly or indirectly, an integral part of my business. I mean, even when your family and friends aren't interested in what you do, make them a part of it.

Michael: What do you see happening in your online and offline promoting activities over the next few years?

Jim: One of the big things I have learned in business over the past fifty years is no one can predict the future. Now what you need to do as I do is constantly test. Test, and test and then, you test some more. Every new method, product, service available in your business niche offline or online, use those that work for you and just discard the others. Don't wait as the business changes. You will change with it.

Michael: Here's a question from one of my listeners: Jim, what would you do if you had no resources or contacts to generate working capital?

Jim: Well, I would do the same things I did back when I started. You'll find some of them detailed in my free report on the web. You have that there?

Michael: Yes, this is at www.businesslyceum.com/freereport.html.

Jim: That's it. Yes. You remember now. One thing, as Will Roger's said, "The problem with success is it goes around disguised as work."

Michael: Jim, here's another question from one of my students: I'd like to know again if it's all right by you what Mr. Straw's advice would be to parents bringing up their children, wanting to teach their children how to be financially responsible and accountable for their own future, especially in these current times, which I personally think are the greatest ever?

Jim: If a parent hates their job, complains about the robber businesses, screams that they are not being compensated fairly for the work they do, they tell their children that money is the root of all evil. Or, that they are entitled to more just because they exist. Those are the feelings their children will accept.

Since our education system does not teach your children anything about money, they only learn what you teach them by example. Now you teach your children to respect work and money. Any job is a good job and money can only be enjoyed when you earn it.

Education is great for learning your A, B, C's and your 1, 2, 3's or whatever. I am not advocating no education. But it doesn't necessarily teach kids that the buck stops with them. The timeless principles of wealth, or if you understand – I mean, back when I was a kid every time I asked my dad for money his first response was always, "What for?" And "Why?" Then, "How are you going to get it?"

Dad always told me there are three ways to get money. Beg for it, steal it or earn it. But, if I begged for it or stole it, I mean, he would beat the living hell out of me.

Now, since the only option I had was to earn it, I learned to respect money because it was hard to come by. Now as I grew older, when I needed money for anything I began asking myself, "How am I going to get it?" Then, I'd develop the plan I was going to use to get the money I needed. Take a job or do some kind of business.

And I'd use the same technique on our five kids and eight grandkids. Four of them are productive.

Michael: Look, I've been struggling with the advertising for my business and I've written and submitted numerous articles. Do you have any ideas for me?

Jim: Well, if you're talking about posting articles on the Internet, the chances of success are slim, because there are millions upon millions of articles published on the Internet. The chances of anyone actually reading and responding to them are, well, slim to none.

I have over fifty articles published online. Response is so small it isn't even worth counting. But, the same articles published online on website produced very significant response; measurable and real, though. Your best bet is to frequent the discussion boards that relate to your subject matter, rather than posting an article. Use pieces of your articles to respond to the postings on the board.

My first big success online sold over 100 copies of my mail order marketing course was when I went to the various business discussion boards and offered to answer any questions anyone might have about mail order. I worked my fanny off answering thousands of questions so that maybe offer only on one board at a time.

Michael: Jim, in a relationship to mail order, what would you say is the best way to find mail order magazines for which to write?

Jim: Go to your public library and ask to see a directory of periodic publications. Now although you may look under the classification mail order, you really should be concentrating on the business opportunities classification. There aren't many periodic publications dedicated specifically to mail order, but mail order is a significant category in most business opportunities publications.

Michael: What's more effective today, sneak up mail or postcards? If it's postcards is there a particular size that has proven to you to be more successful for a better response?

Jim: I really don't know what "sneak up mail" is. The most successful postcards I have ever used have been standard sized without any color or graphics. I want the recipient to read the card, not just look at the pictures.

Michael: Jim, let me ask you this. With classified ads, is it better to have ad request people express their interest in the mail by either sending in a self-stamped addressed envelope or responding by mail, or leaving a phone number at the end of the classified ad and having someone leave their name and address and phone number information? What do you think is the best way to go?

Jim: It isn't a question of either/or. Use both in an ad and just keep separately. Use what works best for you. Measure the results in dollars actually produced; not by the number of responses.

Michael: Jim, what was the inspiration for you to start writing all these books and manuals and interacting in so many other activities?

Jim: Nearly forty years ago I owned and operated a chain of retail women's wig shops across the southeast US and the wholesale wig warehouse selling to other wig shops and beauty salons. Since I was advertising heavily in some of the beauty salon magazines, one of the editors called and asked me to write an article for him about point-of-purchase marketing in wig shops.

Well, I wrote it and he published it. Right after that article was published and King of Wigs in New Orleans, he called me "the emperor". But anyway, he called me to ask who had written the article for me. Well, when I told him that I had written it, he asked if I could write some articles like it for him and let him put his name on it. He offered to pay me \$1,500 for each article. Well, I took him up on the offer and wrote eleven articles for him.

Until then, I didn't know that people would actually pay me to write. So, I wrote a bunch of how-to articles about things that I had done successfully in business and submitted them for publication to various business opportunity publications. All were rejected. There are and still are too many writers competing for the magazine space.

Then a friend suggested that I put all of those articles in a book and sell it. That worked all right. Made me a few bucks. But another friend suggested I start a newsletter and send out just one how-to article each month. Now that's when I started the business intelligence network offering. Just one how-to article about doing just one particular business each month and charged \$10.00 per year.

It was only one sheet of paper, front and back each month. My cost per month per subscriber was about .10 including postage. Later, I sold each of those articles separately for \$1.00 each. Sold hundreds of thousands of them each year.

Michael: What do you think has influenced you to write about a specific topic?

Jim: I never thought about it. I've always been a voracious note taker. I've always made notes to myself on any business deal or activity in which I was involved. You know, what worked, what didn't work, why, how,

etc., etc. When someone asks me how I did it, I would write a report, a little booklet, a book, article, whatever, telling exactly how I did it . Then, I would offer it up for sale. Well, enough people wanted to know how to do it I made money. If not, I filed the report for future reference or inclusion in a future report on a similar project.

Michael: What topic have you liked writing about the most out of all your writings up until today?

Jim: Well, my favorite is my last hurrah. I mean, you can be a millionaire in one year or less. I mean, you can belong with the bonuses encompasses everything I have ever done over the past fifty years to make the big money.

Michael: What suggestions can you give to awaken younger people who maybe want to get into writing? Or what suggestions can you make to younger people why they should maybe read more and be more like you?

Jim: Michael, I can't do that. That's the job of the parents.

Michael: How much do you like music and why?

Jim: I was a music and mathematics major in college. I played professional trumpet and was a vocalist. I loved real music.

Michael: What do you think the most interesting part of marketing is?

Jim: Definitely getting to hear from those who have succeeded in business, any kind of business.

Michael: Tell me something about MENSA.

Jim: MENSA is the high IQ society. It's made up of people who score in the top 2 percent on IQ tests. Being a member plus a dollar will usually get me a cup of coffee.

Michael: So, it's no big deal, huh? Does your family support you? Do they feel comfortable with your profession and all your mail-order icon status?

Jim: Well, I've never asked them but they do respect the money.

Michael: I bet they do.

Jim: But for many, many years my mother kept asking my wife, "When is Jim going to get a job?" when I bought a bank, my mother said, "Ah, don't be silly. People don't own banks."

Michael: What's your favorite dish?

Jim: Oh, rib eye steak, well-done.

Michael: What's your favorite music or song?

Jim: You know, I don't have a favorite. I love real music of all kinds. I startled a kid's once when I said one of the greatest composers of the 20th century was Isaac Hayes.

You're listening to an exclusive interview found on Michael Senoff's [HardToFindSeminars.com](http://www.HardToFindSeminars.com).

Michael: What's your favorite pastime, apart from writing books or novels?

Jim: Well, there is no contest. Reading.

Michael: I am in almost retirement age epidemic with a lifetime of doing the research and writing up lengthy reports that no one ever reads. But I started a blog five years ago, expanded it into Twitter and FaceBook and have slowly built up an opt-in list of 3,000 people. It now focuses on my rent-to-own real estate business.

But then everything stopped growing. My subscribers are real estate agents, investors, developers and lenders. Would you please be so kind as to suggest how I might restart my mail list growth into this area of real estate that I find fun and where I can build continuity in membership sites for monthly income?

Jim: If I were doing it, I would go to the various and very many real estate discussion boards and offer one, I mean just one of those articles and reports free. Of course to get the report they will have to give you their email address which you add to your list.

Also, advertise your free report everywhere you can. By the way, you might learn something of value in my report, *You Can Get Filthy Rich Selling Real Estate You Don't Own*, which is also on the web.

Michael: Let me give the listeners, Jim, that your URL. It's at www.buisnesslyceum.com/REOppions.html.

Jim: That's the real estate one, yeah.

Michael: Jim, what's a typical week look like for you? How do you leverage your time?

Jim: Well, with some 9:00 ams in them, Monday through Friday, to get things done in just three hours per day, I use the pine box formula. That's put your butt on a chair until the job is finished.

Michael: That's funny. Look, almost all direct marketers, marketing consultants say the same thing. Headlines, lists, testing, etc., etc. What makes Jim's stuff so special?

Jim: Well, nothing different. I just tell it like it is. No hype, no BS. Since I am really only telling the story of how I did it, people know it's the truth.

Michael; With the benefit of hindsight, can Mr. Straw tell us about two or three things he would do differently if he had the opportunity to travel back in time? I'm more interested in hearing about key actions, approaches or decisions he would change rather than about products which may not have sold as well as anticipated.

Jim: There's not much of anything I would change. I mean, each of my decisions was what I felt was correct at the time. I mean, some of those decisions turned out to be wrong but without knowing what I learned later I would have done the same.

I mean, hindsight is fine. But unless you have some way of knowing what you may learn later you would have no idea what to change. You only learn from your mistakes. I learned most of what I know from my mistakes and failures. My successes never taught me anything. They were only based upon what I had learned from my mistakes and failures.

That's why those who are afraid to make mistakes or fail never achieve success they desire. If I went back and changed those mistakes I wouldn't have succeeded.

Michael: Jim, what is your one favorite marketing technique that is working for you? Or someone else that you know of? The best right now and the objective of your answer I wanted to be is to find out how to replicate the same results.

Jim: I don't have a favorite but I have always loved telling stories that my readers can relate to.

Michael: Here's a question from one of my students, Jim. He says, "Most of the mail-order marketing information I have found is very US-centric. For example, the SRDS list, that's the Standard Rate and Data Service. Is it different to be doing mail order in local markets from other countries?"

What do I need to be aware of in doing mail order locally? I'm based in Malaysia."

Jim: First, read your own mail. See who's offering what in your local economy by mail. See how they're doing it. Talk to them. Ask them what they are doing and how they are doing it. You will be surprised. Business people love to talk about their business.

Also, contact the direct mail association in your country. There is one. Hang on a minute. I don't find one in Malaysia unfortunately but you might try those in your by countries.

Michael: What was your biggest blunders? And what was one of your biggest successes?

Jim: My biggest mistake was the time I did a 10,000 piece mailing because everyone who read my sales letter said it was the best thing I had ever written. It pulled one order.

My biggest success was the mailing was crooked on the paper, by accident. The printer offered to do the job over but I had already prepared the mailing so I mailed it crooked. Got a 23 percent response. Printed that mailing crooked on the paper from then on.

Michael: How old a market will be different one year from now? How different do you think it'll be five years from now?

Jim: Mmm, don't know. I mean, I'll just keep testing. Testing and testing and testing some more just to keep up with it.

Michael: Out of all the businesses you created what is the one that gave you the most free money and free time and what method or business-model system was used to achieve that? Now note: Money and free time is together. Not a separate question. I don't care what gives you the most money because if you had to work eighteen hours to achieve it, that doesn't count. So combining the two, most money, most free time business venture.

Jim: Well, the activity that gave me the most money and free time was my dealings as a finder. Just a few hours work sometimes produced a year's salary or more. But I used my free time to get involved in other businesses.

Michael: Why don't you just retire? You sold everything under the sun and why not vacation and relax in Malibu?

Jim: Yeah, I have retired three times over the past thirty years. It never lasted more than two or three months. I just can't stand being idle.

Michael: I'd like to know if Jim has any tactics or techniques to help him write his book as quickly and efficiently as possible?

Jim: Most of my books took years and years to write because they were only written after I had done whatever I was writing about. Don't really know anything about research writing.

Michael: All right. What are some effective ways to begin drawing people into my new website? My target markets are folks who want to begin a home-based business and those who are just looking for some additional income?

Jim: Well, how do you sell anything? Advertise. That means putting your website out everywhere and anywhere so people will know it's available.

Michael: Jim, how do you identify who from a mailing list will be a potential customer? It seems a waste to send out thousands of letters to people who would consider your offer junk mail.

Jim: T.P. Brown once said, "Only 50 percent of my advertising is effective." Well, the problem is I don't know which 50 percent. The only way you can find out if they are a buyer is when they buy. That's why you should have two lists: A list of inquirers and a list of buyers. Then again, in mail order you can rent lists of people who have actually bought products or services similar to your product or service.

But, even then, your rate of response will be just a small percentage of the list. On the Internet even that is impossible. In mail order you can rent lists of buyers for specific products or services but, on the Internet there are no real demographic profiles on the lists.

Michael; Jim, I'm thinking about getting into the MLM business. What advice would you have for me getting into this, especially if I'm on a tight budget?

Jim: Well, to begin with, it is highly unlikely you would find me selling a network marketing biz-op, but if I were doing it on a limited budget I would simply seek out the places where network marketers gather. Then I would build a personal rapport with that group of people and trade opportunities with them.

It seems network marketing is somewhat addictive. Those involved seemed to be forever looking for a biz-op that will work for them.

For more exclusive on business marketing, advertising and copywriting, go to Michael Senoff's [HardToFindSeminars.com](http://www.HardToFindSeminars.com).

Michael: Jim, I want to give out your URL. You've got a report there on MLM. And it's www.businesslyceum.com/mlm.html.

Here's another question from one of my students. He asks, "Jim, what skills, resources or attribute did you have that enabled you to succeed while others would and will fail? How can others acquire this skill, resource or attribute? What are the steps to doing what you did? What major obstacles did you overcome? And think through your process and identify small things that you haven't told us because they are obvious to you; but in retrospect, aren't obvious to someone without your experience?"

Jim: And okay. Let me list them for you and I did it I would say through – I had it figured out at one time. Probably through eleven different lessons, okay? Now. Number one, I learned very early in life that the only way to make money was to sell something, either a product or a service. You know, something people wanted or needed. Or, do something for them they couldn't, or wouldn't, do for themselves.

And number two, I learned to make do with what I had until I could get what I needed to do a better job. Number three, I learned I had to do anything necessary – but legal – to get where I wanted to be even if I didn't like doing it – especially if I didn't like doing it. And you can do anything you need to do until you can do what you want to do.

Now, number four: I learned never to ask anyone to do anything for me that I wasn't willing to do myself. And, everyone who has ever worked with me has taught me about what they had done for me and how they did it. After a while, I could do it, too, but not as well as they did.

Number five: I learned to pay for what I wanted. If I couldn't afford it, I saved up to be able to afford it. Sometimes it seemed like that took forever.

Number six: I learned that no matter how long it took to achieve my goal, whatever it was, it would have been just as long as if I hadn't persisted, that I would have accomplished nothing.

And number seven: I learned that nothing is as easy or as fast as it should be. It only gets easier and faster when you know how to really do it. And, learning how to really do it is just a matter of doing it over and over and over until you finally find out how it works. Of course, if you give up after the first, second or third or fourth or whatever you try, I mean, you'll never do it.

Now, number eight: I learned most of what I know from my mistakes and failures. And like I said, I mean, my successes never taught me anything. They're only based upon what I learned from my mistakes and failures. That's why I have to repeat that. That's why there are those who are afraid to make mistakes or fail they never achieve the success they desire.

Now, number nine: I learned that my most prized possessions were my customers. People who directly, or indirectly, paid for my lunch every day. That's why unlike my contemporaries, I reply to my customers' emails, personally.

Number ten: I learned that money is not an end unto itself. It is only a way of keeping score. You know, the saddest people in the world are those who are forever chasing the almighty dollar. And, the vast majority of them have no real respect for money.

Number eleven: I learned to ask for what I wanted or needed and to graciously accept a "no" as readily as a "yes". Yes, you can get rich, but, you have to do it yourself. No one will do it for you. I get tickled by people who want to start at the top of the ladder.

For some unknown reason, they honestly believe that they are better than I am. Since I had to start on the bottom rung and climb up one rung at a time. And when I mention the above I often hear, "Yeah, I could do that. But, it will take too much time. I need money now." And, "I don't want to make just a little money. I want to get rich."

I say, "I'm sorry. You have to start where I started. Do what you need to do to make the little money. Then, do more, and more of it to make more and more money. As you make more and more money, the greater the opportunities you will have to make even more money. Nothing succeeds like success; even small success.

"I mean, the more things you don't want to do that the fewer and fewer things you will do. Until you are doing as most people do at nothing but dreaming. I can teach you how to do that, but you won't get it until you actually start doing it yourself."

Michael: That's powerful. Here's another question from one of my students. He asks, "Jim, what mentors did you have over the years that have helped you and how can others get access to similar mentors?"

Jim: Back in the early '80s, I went to New York City to discuss some business ideas with some other entrepreneurs. I was early and found myself in a pretty magnificent office building before anyone had arrived at their offices. Well, I was attempting to light a cigarette – you know, it was legal back then – and I discovered as my lighter was out of fluid and I had no matches. The only person in the building was the janitor. So I asked him for a light and he obliged.

And after lighting my cigarette, the janitor decides to join me in a smoke and we struck up a conversation. After I told him about some of my business dealings, he made the comment, "What we really need is..." You know, that simple comment made over \$16 million for me over the next five years.

One of my success secrets is that I listen, no matter who is talking, from Fortune 100 CEO or all the way down to the janitor. By the way, do you know what a mentor is? I mean, most people use the word really don't know. My definition: A mentor is only a trusted teacher or guide. So, everyone, and anyone can be your mentor, if you just learn to listen.

Michael: What's a list of resources that my listeners can get now to help them accomplish what you've accomplished?

Jim: Any book on the fundamental basics of business. I mean, once I had an email that said, "Please take me off your list. I don't want to know about doing business. I just want to make money." Well, that is the biggest mistake made by opportunity seekers. They keep falling for the hype and BS because they don't know or even try to know the fundamental basics of business.

I spent hours and hours in the public library back in my youth reading and studying every element of business. The best of the fundamentals is *The Business Executive's Handbook* by Brown and Dorse. Now, if you can find a copy you probably think it is outdated due to the publication date. It was back, I don't know, 1960 or something. But everything in it is necessary knowledge for an aspiring businessperson.

Michael: Do you think there's other people selling opportunities that are holding back the real secret of success?

Jim: Well, neither I nor any other real knowledgeable business how-to writers – oh, many think that. But we all know that less than 10 percent of those who read or will have written will ever do anything with it because it doesn't contain any knowledge.

Michael: Okay, this listener asks, "Jim, I'm launching a theatre company in February of 2009. I would love to know the following: What steps did you take to increase your customer base and what type of follow-up system did you put in place? Maybe I can apply some of your expertise to my new venture."

Jim: Firstly, identify your audience. Find out where they gather. Go get to know them and more importantly, let them get to know you. I always personally correspond with my customers. I don't even automate my emails. It's often been said, "Let him who would be great among you be servant to all."

Michael: Jim, how did you adapt your direct marketing business to the Internet age and have you taken full advantage of the online marketing it?

Jim: Well, today, Internet marketing, it's nothing more than good mail order, only faster. But it wasn't always that way. I mean, read what I had to say about it back in October 1999. Now that's on my www.businesslyceum.com/Oct99.html.

Michael: Jim, I'm selling a product e-fuel. And what this product does it helps enhance one's gas mileage. My questions are below: How can I successfully market my product and get people to see it and buy from me? There are many people out there selling the same product and how can I sell it for the most money without sacrificing profits? And, how can I continue to have return buyers? How can I successfully follow up with the customers?

Jim: As I said before, advertise. And don't worry about your competition. As a matter of fact, copy your most successful competitors. Treat your customers as your most valued assets, and you will always have return buyers. And keep in touch with your customers. I mean by mail, email, telephone; whatever works best for you.

Michael: What was your biggest mistake ever in the field of copywriting and what did you learn from it?

Jim: Well, as I told you a while ago, it was when I made a 10,000 piece mailing. Because everyone said it was the greatest thing that I had

ever written. I learned as you should to test, test, test, and then test some more. You'll never know if it works or not until you test it.

Michael: What was your most elevating campaign spiritually and what was your benefit from it from a non-financial perspective?

Jim: Well, all of my campaigns have been spiritually uplifting. I mean, when I hear from people who have done what I have taught –

Michael: Here's a comment from one of my listeners. He says, "One thing Jim talks about is selling close-outs and using the web to find them and sell them as well. The problem is that so many people are doing it already. And people can just go and look for their own deals. Or there's some details he would like to share about this."

Jim: Well, there's no need in repeating myself. I mean, go watch my video. That's on www.businesslyceum.com/Video 02.html.

Michael: Jim, how would you advise a person starting from scratch – meaning they have no list, no employees, no business, no product, no testimonials to get up and running if the person only has a computer and Internet cable hook-up, time and desire to implement the test and \$200.00 of start-up capital?

Jim: Well, first, decide what you want to sell. Find the affiliate programs that offer those products or services. Then, sell those products or services to the people you have identified as needing or wanting them. But use your \$200.00 to buy the products or services you will be selling. That way, you won't have to try to sell crap to your potential customers. I mean, a satisfied customer is your most valuable asset.

Michael: Jim, how do I test effectively with a small list? Say a list of 500 or 1,000 people?

Jim: Back in the mail order days everyone said a minimum of 5,000 piece mailing was the best test. But over the years I found out that a 500 piece mailing was just as good as a test as a 5,000. I mean, yes, you count the dollars, not the percentages.

Michael: Jim, here's a question from another one of my students. They say, "Jim, we have a tax preparation business with more than 3,000 clients. Now the average income is \$27,000.00. Our market is highly price sensitive whereas we are trying to differentiate. We simply cannot compete against non-profit organizations that charge zero for the same service.

“Every year, we prepare 150 to 200 fewer returns. Our marketing is focused on information security and confidentiality but our market doesn’t seem to react to it. We are leaders in our market but feel the industry is going down. What would you suggest we do?”

Jim: Well, go ahead and add customers to your base as you have been. But increase the value of your current customer base by adding compatible products or services you can offer them throughout the year. One tax preparer I know offered his customers a monthly tax update printed newsletter. He was soon offering investment services, insurance, travel services, yeah, etc., etc.

Eventually he was making more money from those products and services than he was doing only tax preparation. Instead of a printed newsletter you might do it with Ezine.

Michael: Jim, what do you see as the hot buttons to reach small, independent owners and managers to interest them in buying a unique book on small business marketing and advertising? And, what would you see as hot buttons to get newspapers to publish my weekly column on small business marketing into possibly buy a book on how to find, teach and coach a newspaper ad staff to sell something?

Jim: I have always let my customers tell me what they wanted. Then, I gave it to them using their own words. Beyond that, read and learn from your biggest competitor’s marketing methods. They probably already asked their customers.

Michael: What has been the easiest and/or most popular thing to sell?

Jim: If there were one popular, easy thing to sell, I mean, everybody would be selling it. I have sold what my potential customers have wanted or needed, not some arbitrary best thing to sell as advised by someone who may or most likely may not have any idea. I let my customers tell me what they want or need.

Michael: Here’s some more questions from a student. They want to know, Jim, “What are your profit margins or what’s your overhead like? Do you advertise through catalogues, the Internet, TV and where else do you advertise? And what percentages are done in each one of these categories?”

Jim: Well, my profit margins have run from 3 percent to as high as 98 percent. Overhead’s the same way. And I have used all of the avenues of advertising mentioned. To be quite frank with you I put

very, very little trust in percentage-based statistics. I believe in the pragmatic results of testing.

Michael: Questions: My company has submitted a new soccer training tool for children. It can be used in the backyard or the training ground. My company owns the IP for this training tool. I want to know how to best approach customers with this kind of new and innovative product?

Number two: what are the best methods to promote via mail order? I get the feeling a mixture of marketing from online to offline is probably good but does Jim have any specifics for me in my product? By the way you can view it at the Targetizer: www.thetargetizer.com.

And he has one other question, Jim. I'm looking to get my product in catalogues and in the high street, too. What is the best way to approach buyers from these organizations? How do I get a hold of them and when I have, what do I need to say?

I firmly believe we have a global product that can take the place in many sectors including soccer, backyard family entertainment and so forth.

Jim: I took a look at the website. It looks like the product should sell well to grammar school to middle school sports departments and of course, the soccer players that are in that age group.

I mean, if I were doing it I would go to the local newspaper and hire one of their writers to write a news article about the product. Tell them that they don't have to publish the article, just write it for you.

As a matter of fact, I would have three or four writers write news articles about the product. That way, I would have three or four stories to use. I have been for \$25.00 to \$50.00 per article. Oh, about £15 to £25. Newspaper reporters are always on the low-end of the pay scale. I mean, written by newspaper writers, those articles would be great for publication. I mean, unlike your own writing, which may lean more toward ad copy than journalistic news copy.

These articles would be used as press releases to any publication that may include information about new products, unique ideas, sports, etc.; anywhere it may fit. Beyond that, I would enlist the assistance of a soccer coach who could attest to the value of your product. Doesn't matter where the coach comes from, but a pro coach would of course get you more exposure. Have the news writers feature the coach in some of the articles.

Now, once the articles about your product begin being published, use copies of those articles to interest the catalogues and others to handle your product.

Michael: So, Jim, what are your plans for integrating this Web 2.0 into your online business?

Jim: Well, as my grandson would say, "No way, José." When Web 2.0 first started I went out and signed up for a number of them. Recently I even started a discussion board on one of them.

In my opinion Web 2.0 really doesn't have any real business value. It's social and thereby would only be useful to anyone wanting pen pals. Of course, if you're running a pen pal type of business you may find some real value to it.

Michael: Are you planning developing separate profiles for the various aspects of your life from a marketing and security standpoint?

Jim: No. I am me. I only have one profile.

Michael: What do you see as the biggest change in direct marketing will be in the year 2009 and between now and let's say as far out as 2013? Any ideas?

Jim: Don't know. I mean, I'll just keep testing so I'll be using when it comes along.

Michael: As more products become commodities, how do you envision creating profit when the barriers to entry are so low?

Jim: As the barriers have lowered and the promoters proliferate there comes a point of saturation, market jaundice and promoter corruption. Then the pendulum swings in the opposite direction. I've seen it over and over in the past fifty years.

Michael: Here's a question, Jim, from one of my students. "Hello Mr. Straw, First question: Were you always in sales and marketing or was there something that led you to decide on that life's course of work? In other words, what was the first thing you did as an entrepreneur and business man instead of an employee? And what led you to jump out of your own in business?"

Jim: It all started by answering the ads in the back of comic books. You know, offering to let me sell Christmas cards, cloverleaf salve and other items. I had an early morning paper route and even sold the first

issues of TV Guide since I always made more money than my employed friends by selling stuff in my 1,000 population hometown. I never really thought about being an employee. I also provided services to the farmers and ranchers in our area. I ran hauling crews. I employed men and boys some years my senior, paid them and kept my profits.

And, I found buyers for the farmer's redundant equipment and machinery for a commission, of course. But in actuality every entrepreneur starts in sales and marketing because no matter what business you think you're in your only business is selling. If you ain't selling, you ain't making any money. But if you are a manufacturer, wholesaler or retailer or a service provider –

Michael: Yeah, that makes sense. It's curious to me that you got started that way. Many of the most successful people I know started out in sales at a very young age. When it comes to sales, if you had to recommend that people learn a few core sales skills, what would they be and how can a person get good at sales without investing decades in gaining experience?

Jim: Of the hundreds of real self-made millionaires I have known, almost all of them have been involved in some kind of money-making endeavor in their youth, from selling stuff door to door, to mowing the lawns and raking leaves. In the beginning, our goals were to make some money so we could have some things we wanted or to get away from where we were. And those of us who succeeded the most learned early on that selling was the name of the game.

First we just took stuff around and offered it to people. Then we developed little speeches to entice people to buy what we had. We didn't focus on selling until we learned that selling was what we were doing. Learning to sell should always be a key element for anyone wanting to make money.

A fellow did this interview some years ago, boxing champ George Foreman. He was asked if he was teaching his sons to be boxing champs. He answered, "No. He was teaching them to be salesmen. That way they could always make a living." Although the concepts of selling are important to your success, it really won't help you recognize opportunities when they come along.

Selling is something you do after you have something to sell. The keys to recognizing viable opportunities is to keep in touch with your potential customers. And, learn how real business is done. Now if you

only study selling, you won't have the necessary management skills to take your money-making endeavors to higher levels.

I know a fellow who has been a successful salesman all of his life. He knows how to sell but is always feast or famine, depending upon whether or not he sells anything. He has no management skills whatsoever, depending solely upon his skill as a salesman to provide for today.

To succeed, you must learn to do business. Selling is an important part but it's not the end-all be-all. You learn to do business and how to sell by studying what the masters before you have done. Why do mathematicians write math books? Why do medical doctors publish their methods? Why do plumbers, electricians, composers, architects, even hobbyists write handbooks and instruction manuals?

Many successful business people write down their methods for the younger generations. So the next generations won't have to learn for themselves how it's done as we did by trial and error.

Read and study everything and anything on doing business, especially how to sell materials by those who are doing it or have done it. but, don't forget to also learn the elements of doing business in the real business community.

Michael: Well stated, Jim. Jim, another question from one of my students. He wants to know, "Jim, have you ever worked with one person being the opportunity locator and the other person being the one doing the deals? Or do you prefer to work alone and just outsource what you need to and hire the people you need to for a particular project and opportunity?"

Jim: I'm going to have to repeat something that we talked about earlier with an email I got from someone. Let me tell you that one again, okay? This person wrote and said, "Please remove from your list. I don't want to know about how to do business. I just want to make money."

Well, unfortunately that is the sentiment displayed but the vast majority of opportunity seekers. They want to make money but they don't want to bother learning about doing business. And that puzzles me. The only way I know how to make money, without doing business is by getting a job.

So, if you don't want to know about how to do business, you just want to make money, get a job. Although I'm just a high school graduate

with one year of college, you wouldn't believe the scores of MBAs and PhDs I've employed over the years. If the person doesn't want to learn how to do business, they have no hope in making any serious money.

Michael: Jim, if you would have waited to learn all of the ends and outs of the businesses you've been involved in prior to jumping onto an opportunity, do you think you would have ever have become wealthy?

Jim: Well, it is always good advice to find and hire good people with necessary skills but you go one step further and learn what they do and how they do it and why they do it that way. You don't have to become proficient but you should at least know how they do it so you can use that knowledge in other of your money-making efforts.

Believe it or not, I have always tried to do my learning before I entered into an opportunity. I spent over \$2,000.00 on books about gold mining before I became involved. Over \$800.00 on books before I got involved in banking. And over \$1,500.00 on books before I went into gold mining

Ain't no way of telling the amounts I spent on retail and wholesale marketing books. I think in some cases I had spent more time on my learning curve. I wouldn't have had so many adjustments to make.

Michael: Jim, what's your overall attitude about the multi-level marketing industry, or MLM industry?

Jim: Well, who is the most beautiful woman in the world? That depends on who's looking, doesn't it? The same holds true in choosing a business. The choice depends on what advantages you seek and what disadvantages you will accept. It's all in the eye of the beholder. There are very, very few opportunities that couldn't be the best for someone. It is all a matter of persistence.

I mean, look around you. There are millionaires in every field of business endeavor. There are millionaire garbage collectors, millionaire bankers, millionaire shop keepers, millionaire daycare operators, etc., etc., etc. and Albert Einstein said, "Anyone can be genius if they picked just one specific study and study it diligently just fifteen minutes a day."

The same holds true in business. Just pick one specific business. Do it every day until you do it successfully. Most people don't fail. They just fail to stick with any one thing until they've mastered it.

Benjamin just really said, “The secret to success is the constancy of purpose.” Now, what would be best for me since I have very high risk thresholds wouldn’t be the best for anyone seeking any kind of security or privacy.

To succeed in business you must leave your comfort zone and tread into untried waters, willing to take the risks. All of the online opportunities have their value. But, none of the online opportunities have any value.

Michael: What’s two important things can someone do to ensure that their business doesn’t become a part of the failure statistics?

Jim: It isn’t really a matter of perception; rather, it is whether or not a person will do what needs to be done. I mean, every time I recommend a product or service that I have found to have real value, I mean, I get emails telling me it won’t work or it’s a rip-off.

In the final analysis those people are simply saying, “I don’t want to do what needs to be done.” Yes, I believe in the perfect business because every business is the perfect business for someone. I mean, what you or I would consider to be a perfect business may not be perfect for anyone else. And a business others consider to be perfect may not appeal to us at all.

The most important thing you must do to succeed is fail. I learned most of what I know from my mistakes and failures. My successes never taught me anything. And they were only based upon what I had learned from my mistakes and failures. That’s why those who are afraid to make mistakes or fail never achieve success they desire.

You’re listening to an exclusive interview found on Michael Senoff’s [HardToFindSeminars.com](http://www.HardToFindSeminars.com).

Michael: What can the average entrepreneur do to minimize the negative effects of failure so their failures become positives as you just talked about? And, aren’t disadvantages to them emotionally or financially? How can one get around that?

Jim: I never recommend it, planning to fail. No. Instead I recommend contingency planning. Not every opportunity I’ve ever been involved in I’ve always asked myself, “what if?” I’ve written those what-ifs down and tried to figure out what I would do in each instance.

It’s like the amateur who runs one ad and doesn’t get the response they hoped for. Most of them just quit at that point. Contingency

planners re-write the ad and try again. By contingency planning the negative effects of failure are minimized.

Now as Thomas Edison once said, "I have not failed. I just found 10,000 ways that won't work."

Michael: Jim, do you have any tips or strategies you've used that you can share with the listeners?

Jim: Once again, I've got to repeat myself. The only strategy I used is to test. Test, test, then you test some more. That is the only thing that separates the pros from the amateurs. It really doesn't cost much when you consider the ultimate returns. But, the time involved can be maddening.

Michael: If I were interviewing you, based on your life's experiences, what questions or question would you have asked that I haven't yet that might be beneficial to my listeners?

Jim: Well, if I were to ask myself one question, I would ask, "What separates people like you from everyone else?" Now my answer would be, "I simply care more about my customers than I do about myself. As long as my customers are foremost I reap their rewards as well. I get ten times the rewards with ten customers. One hundred times the rewards with one hundred customers. One thousand times the rewards from one thousand customers.

"Unfortunately, most small business people put themselves first. But for over fifty years I have lived by the credo, 'Let him who would be great among you be servant to all.'"

Michael: Jim, when you got started in all this, did you ever have that little doubt in your mind that maybe you ever considered just quitting?

Jim: Yeah, I can count my successes on my fingers and toes, but, it would take all the hairs on my chest to count my failures. Each of my failures was a learning experience. You know failures taught me what I should have done to succeed. Didn't learn much from my successes. So those successes were based upon what I had learned from my failures.

Michael: Do you have any regrets now about your businesses?

Jim: Well, that made me think. No, I've really had no regrets. There are things I would have done differently had I known then what I know now. But I do not regret anything I have done.

Michael: Was there a turning point when success started to happen in your career which was pretty dramatic?

Jim: Well, when I finally learned why I wanted to succeed, yeah, after attending a lyceum at school where a Catholic priest told us about their vow of poverty, I must have had a puzzled look on my face that evening. I seemed to be troubled.

My dad asked what was bothering me. And I told them about the lyceum and how the priest had told us about their vow of poverty. His answer gave me reason why to become rich. For some reason they believe they can help people by being poor. But, if you really want to help people, get rich. A rich man can help more people in one day than a poor man can in a lifetime.

Michael: What is a typical day for you, Jim?

Jim: Well, I usually get out of bed about 4:30 each morning. Have my coffee, relax and think about what I did yesterday to see if there's anything I should re-do. I contemplate the day ahead and you know, make a list of things I should do. I nap. Drink more coffee. Go to my office at home about 7:30.

Yes, I do spend about three hours preparing for each day. I usually get all my work done by noon and have lunch with my wife, Deloris and (inaudible) the rest of the day. I have no employees although I do outsource some tasks.

Michael: Can I ask how much money you've made selling products in the mail? Direct mail? Two hundred and fifty million?

Jim: Well, actually that number is a little old. The total now is over 400 million. I did it the way that all of us did it. Once again, I tested and tested and tested and then tested some more. When I found something that worked, I just kept doing it until I found something that worked better.

Michael: What's the most creative marketing idea you've implemented and seen the most dramatic results from?

Jim: Sorry, no big single success stories. I never hit any homeruns. Just a whole bunch of singles, some of which are still producing income for me over thirty years.

Michael: Is there still a place for mail order in today's online Internet age?

Jim: Yeah, yes, yes. I mean, with all the wannabes and amateurs and ne'er do wells jumping on the Internet marketing bandwagon there is less and less junk mail to compete with. Less competition and the opportunities for direct mail are stupendous.

Michael: Jim, what's an inexpensive way for a small business owner to promote their product or service using the US mail, not the Internet?

Jim: Well, in my opinion the two best are classified ads and postcard mailings. They're inexpensive and highly effective. But, I mean, if you cut corners to make anything inexpensive it is just about worth what you are willing to pay for it. Never look for inexpensive methods. Look for effective methods. I mean, if a method is effective its cost will be easily recoverable.

Michael: Are there any materials you would suggest I read through learning more about direct mail?

Jim: Well, first of all, I would recommend anyone to check out what you've been doing, Michael. I mean on your [HardToFindSeminars.com](http://www.HardToFindSeminars.com) and anything written by Joe Costman or Dan Kennedy and of course anything I have written on the subject.

Just remember the rule and I'm going to repeat it again: Test, test, test, and test some more.

Michael: What has the Internet meant for your business?

Jim: The Internet is only another advertising medium. It is not the end-all be-all that promoters claim it is. You used it as you would any other advertising medium in conjunction with any and all or the other media.

Michael: Jim, can you give me one powerful idea about how one can become successful online?

Jim: First they may not build you the biggest email lists but your customers will be yours forever.

Michael: All right. What if ideas for someone who is having a hard time making things work?

Jim: Well, don't give up. Keep testing every idea you come across. When you find something that works, just keep on doing it while you test every new idea. You only lose when you refuse to fail.

Michael: I'm starting a small business. How do I go about finding a management team in locating qualified employees?

Jim: Oh, whoa. If you were to come into my office and asked that question, I would have a whole bunch of questions for you before I could even begin to answer. I mean, what kind of business? Tell me all about the product or service. Where would the business be located? What is your background? What are your financial strengths and weaknesses? Etc., etc.

If you are looking for a management team, your business is either very sophisticated or you just want someone else to do the work for you. While you pull over strings and make the profit that your business is sophisticated enough to need a management team you can find good management teams advertising in the trade publications for your industry. Once you employ one of those management teams they will locate and employ their qualified employees to operate the business.

If, on the other hand, you are just looking for someone to do the work for you, I hardly suggest you get a job and stay out of the business community. There are already too many ne'er do wells pretending to be business people.

Michael: Jim, who are some of your business heroes and why?

Jim: Well, my heroes are like my mistakes and failures. I mean, I couldn't count them with all fingers and toes and hairs on my chest. I am forever in awe of people who succeed in business, any kind of business, from the local mom and pop grocery store to the mega-corporate types. Anyone who succeeds in business is my hero.

Michael: What does one need to learn to become a business-minded person?

Jim: Well, the main thing a wannabe must do is attempt to lose their consumer mentality. That means they must give up their attitudes about privacy, security and the evils of making money.

To succeed in any business, you must be willing to give up your privacy and rely solely upon yourself for your security. You must let your customers know who you are. Not just a fictitious email address and where they can find you. Otherwise, you are only playing at being in business.

Learn to respect money in all its forms and embrace the fact that making money is not evil. But there are some evil people who make a

lot of money. By and large, most people who make a lot of money are far more honest than the customers they serve.

Michael: Businesses would you recommend that one stays away from? And how can one spot an illegitimate offer?

Jim: Well, all right. Where's the ugliest woman in the world? It depends on who's looking, doesn't it? You know? As I said before, there are millionaires in every imaginable business so if a business interests you, pursue it.

How do you spot an illegitimate offer, to which the learned gurus or gurus would respond? If it sounds too good to be true, well, it is. There are many legitimate businesses that sound too good to be true as there are illegitimate ones.

Know why? Because most beginning business people are still thinking like consumers. They don't get to know the real facts about business. So they dismiss legitimate business opportunities because they simply don't understand that business of business.

For example, would you believe it if I told you that passive earnings of 3 percent to 7 percent per day were possible? Too good to be true? But it happens every day. But then again, it doesn't happen every day to the same person. And you can only do maybe oh, five or six deals like that in a year's time. Now it takes thirty to sixty days just to set up the deals, even with the best sources and resources.

Now I've done it more than once. That kind of offer would be known and acceptable in the international arena. And those knowledgeable in that field would know it couldn't be done every day. But, every day con men around the world are separating people from their hard-earned money by promising those returns every day on every dollar invested.

You can't tell a legitimate from the illegitimate in the business community until you fully understand the business of business as it really exists. A knowledgeable money man would know that the con man's offer was illegitimate because the money man would also know that you can't do a deal every day. Even under the best circumstances. The only way you can protect yourself from illegitimate offers is by knowing the business of business.

Now that means losing your consumer mentality and studying the business or industry in which the opportunity may or may not exist.

For more interviews like this, go to [HardToFindSeminars.com](http://www.HardToFindSeminars.com).

Listen to hours of free interviews, case studies and how to consultant training at 27

<http://www.HardToFindSeminars.com/AudioclipsH.htm>

Michael: How do I find a joint venture partner or a silent business partner if I want them to kind of come into business with me?

Jim: Well, how do you find anything you want in business? You advertise for it. There's no big mystery about finding venture partners or silent partners. You just advertise for them in the publications they read. Now every trade industry (inaudible) the business endeavor and hobby has publications directed specifically to the people who participate in those industries.

The best are newsletters that although very small in circulation go to a very tight-niched readership. Get them. Read them. Then advertise for the partners you need.

Michael: What are the most important parts of a business plan and how would I develop them?

Jim: This question is a bit out of my field of knowledge. Over the past fifty years I had never found it necessary to write a business plan in order to interest investors. I have bootstrapped all my businesses without financing.

So, I recommend you do a search on business plans. I've read a number of good articles on the subject and remember receiving a free template for writing business plans from one of the Internet companies that provide business plan assistance.

By the way, although I have never written a formal business plan for any of my businesses, I always have a written plan for doing any business in which I decide to get involved.

Michael: Well, what would you say of five to ten keys to your success in your businesses and life?

Jim: Well, there only are two. Studying and testing. No matter what business you attempt you must study everything you can find on the subject of your business endeavor. Then, you must test every method, concept and technique in that business until you find what works for you.

Once again, for example, when I decided to go into the banking business, I bought over \$3,000.00 worth of books on banking and the financial industry. Read them from cover to cover, all of them. Then I tested and re-tested methods to make my bank do what I envisioned it doing.

Another example: When I got involved in gold mining, I bought copies of over \$1,500.00 worth of gold processing patents from the US Patent office. I studied all of them until I had some ideas on how to get the gold from the placer to profits. Then, I tested, and re-tested those methods until I found one that worked.

Now, whatever you want to do in business, you must pay the price for your education. You either pay for books on the subject or you pay the price by cold, hard experience. Then, no matter what you learn you can only make it succeed if you test and re-test what you've learned.

Michael: Jim, what online and offline companies or businesses do you use currently and really, really liked?

Jim: Well, Michael, this is the kind of question that gets most beginners in trouble. Why? Because all too often beginners believe that if they use the same resources as the successful person they, too, will succeed. Each person must make their decisions about what businesses, services, suppliers and/or vendors they will use for their business. Now based solely upon the value provided by the sources they choose.

For example, back in 1983 we went looking for a new typesetting system for our paper and ink publications. Now we had been using the (inaudible) graphics system and typesetting is one line of type at a time. And then retyping any errors, cutting and pasting them over the error.

Now, best quotes from a typesetting system where they patch (inaudible) work from \$80,000.00 to \$120,000.00. Then, I received information from one of my subscribers. Steve Jobs telling me about the (inaudible) PageMaker that worked on his Macintosh computer. The whole system cost me just over \$20,000.00. Now you can buy it today for less than \$3,000 with a lot more bells and whistles.

So, you could say I use and admire the Apple computers with the new Adobe PageMaker system and the fantastic PageMill website maker but that's because they were the system I started with. Now would they be right for you? I don't know. It is as always a matter of perception.

Michael: What advice do you have for one who wants the magic formula to success?

Jim: Well, you quit trying and start doing. I mean, you can try to do something all your life and never get it done. I mean, when you quit trying and dedicate yourself heart and soul to doing it, you will succeed. Pick just one thing. Do it every day. Test it every day. Do it some more. Test it some more. Work will teach you how to do it.

Michael: Are the opportunities for the small start-up still out there? Is there room for the little guy?

Jim: You know, back in the late 1800s, before automobiles and airplanes, it was decided to close the US Patent office because everything that can be invented has already been invented. Well, niche marketing is great but instead of trying to niche yourself into a marketing corner, try expanding your efforts to include others into your niche by either adapting your product to a larger niche, or finding another audience for your products outside your niche.

As an example, when I wrote the report, *Get \$1,000 to \$5,000 Free and Clear Within 30 Days*, it was directed towards people who needed some help with their financing. Then, I started receiving notes like this one that I used in an ad campaign for it. Here's the actual email message I used.

In the information publishing business this is what we live for. It's from a Cynthia T, Pismo Beach, California, recently bought my report, *How To Get \$1,000 to \$5,000 Free and Clear Within 30 Days*. Now she sent me this and I got her permission to share it with you.

"I just wanted to let you know I ordered your report about making \$1,000.00 in thirty days. I have made \$400.00 in just under two weeks and can't believe how easy it seems to be. Now, aside from the elbow grease, I teamed up with my teenaged son and I expect to really go at it over the next month or so. And he's wanting money to buy his first car. I'm happy to have found something we can do together and that he will now also have as a fallback in the future."

You know, Michael, that opened up a new whole new market for the same product. Then other readers found another market for the report. I included it in the new campaign.

Now here's an actual email message I used for it:

"Over the past three months, eight of my readers have told me about the great gobs of money they are making on eBay using the method I teach in my report, *Get \$1,000 to \$5,000 Free and Clear Within 30*

Days. But, but, but the report has absolutely nothing to do with selling on eBay. As a matter of fact, eBay isn't even mentioned once in the report.

"My readers tell me that quality merchandise that they get for free using the method in my report sells like hotcakes on eBay, and, because the merchandise is free 100 percent of everything they sell it for is pure profit."

And when it comes to the Internet, it won't be over until you say it's over which will mean that you have given up on the Internet. Not that the Internet has quit being a viable market place.

Michael: Do you use software to automate your online business?

Jim: Well, actually I use very, very few automation programs for my business and neither should you unless you know for an absolute fact that those programs will benefit your customers, not just your desire to get out of doing work. Until just a couple of years ago, I did all of my Internet marketing on a 14.4 paid dial-up modem connection. Not because I wanted to but because that was the only connection available out there in the woods. Now I considered that one of the most fortunate problems I have ever encountered.

My only having a very slow dial-up connection I was forced by circumstances to devise ways to accomplish the things I needed to do in order to serve my only assets: my customers. That made me develop the best methods to serve my customers.

Now when I did get a faster dial-up connection I found that the systems I had developed were far better than any of the automation programs I could find. Although the automation programs did speed up the process and they in too many cases abandoned my customers, making my customers no more than a series of email addresses, rather than the real people my methods served.

So, before you automate determine whether it will serve your customers or will it only serve your desire to get out of doing the work. Have you ever heard it said, "A poor workman always blames his tools"?

Michael: No, I have not.

Jim: Yeah, well, it's true. When I started on the Internet I was just about as computer literate as an old yellow cat. Today, I know more than the cat and I am constantly reading, studying and learning anything and

Listen to hours of free interviews, case studies and how to consultant training at 31

<http://www.HardToFindSeminars.com/AudioclipsH.htm>

everything I can about my tools, my computer and the applications I need to make it do the job I want it to do.

Anyone with basic computer skills can run a successful Internet business. But, those of us who are making the big bucks are unceasingly studying and learning about the tools we use in our profession. You'll never know enough.

Michael: Jim, I really, really appreciate your time, and I can tell your voice is getting tired out but some of the things you said are just incredible and I can't wait to re-listen to all of this wisdom you shared with all of our listeners at [HardToFindSeminars.com](http://www.HardToFindSeminars.com). I really, really appreciate it.

Jim: Well, Michael I am really happy to help you out and I sure hope that it works out for you and if I can be any help to you in the future you let me know, you understand?

Michael: I will, Jim. Thank you very much.

Jim: All right, sir. Take care.

Michael: Okay.

I hope you've enjoyed this interview with Jim Straw. If you have any questions for Jim please email me at michael@michaelSenoff.com.

For more exclusive interviews on business, marketing, advertising and copywriting, go to Michael Senoff's [HardToFindSeminars.com](http://www.HardToFindSeminars.com).