HOW TO PROSPER IN THE NEW ECONOMY

A practical guide for those who refuse to live small
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Change is upon us, my friends.

That statement is probably no surprise to anyone reading this. I believe that anyone who would pick up a publication such as this is a conscious person, capable of observing the obvious. The question that remains for us is: Is that good news or bad news? I can truly tell you that for anyone willing to think for themselves it is very, very good news.

This document does not purport to have an answer to every specific situation or a solution to every possible problem in business. What I offer is a concept and a formula that will serve universally.

And since I believe the height of mastery is simplicity, I will endeavor to keep this brief and pragmatic. You as the reader are ultimately the one who must put the ideas to use. As I indicated many times in my book *Integrity Is Everything*, ideas and principles are useless unless they are acted upon. There is an endless variety of ways one can use "right-thinking" to a practical end. You, as the person who is to demonstrate prosperity in these changing times, are the one who will make your decisions. Hopefully, you have determined for yourself that you will do just that.

To do that, you must first know who you are and where you're going. To the uninitiated, that may seem like a pointless statement. "Doesn't everyone know who they are and where they are going?" That would be a very poor assumption. In fact, much of our economic system today is based on the fact that most people have no idea - they're like bumper-cars in an amusement park attraction. There is no destination and ultimately no purpose. Fun for a little while, perhaps in our "wild and rebellious years", but ultimately fruitless. After a while in the bumper-car ring, one looses interest. After all, it's not their game, it's not their rules and nobody wins (except the people who built the game and sold the tickets).

Consider this: People will buy anything. I recently learned of an individual who is selling garbage from Yankee Stadium to people on the internet for $100 a pop. Yes, authentic garbage. And people are buying it. Now they can proudly display their Yankee Stadium garbage on their mantle next to pictures of Grandma and the trophy they won twenty years ago when they still had some drive and enthusiasm.

But the fact is, there is a market for everything. Here we see an example of someone who acted on an idea. How profitable is it? I don't know. But the point is they acted. Some ideas are exceedingly profitable. Who ever heard of an iPod ten years ago? Or how about the Starbucks phenomenon, or networking websites, or even paper towels? All of these started as an idea in the mind of an individual. The key word in that last statement is *individual*.
If you are going to prosper in the new economy you must immediately decide to take ownership of the experience. Back when I was an employee, working a typical job at a corporation, I had many ideas which I didn't act on. This is a common rut for most people, as most people work for someone else and are dependent on some outside source to do their thinking for them. While this may provide a sort of "comfort zone", it does not provide for getting paid what you're worth, only what the job is worth. If people want to play that game, that's fine, as long as they don't mind a really long bumper-car ride. I personally don't believe that's the extent of a human's potential. I think it's something that people have allowed themselves to be beaten down into. There are a few reasons for this, which I went into in my book, but by and large, people want to do something great with their life. This often means leaving the herd. Those who are living abundantly do not live by someone else's agenda.

Even during the Great Depression there were people earning tremendous money. I remember seeing the most recent version of the movie King Kong, where Jack Black portrayed the aspiring filmmaker on a quest for a blockbuster movie. Prior to seeing this, I wasn't aware that the story took place during that era. At one point in the movie, we see a group of wealthy businessmen in a room contemplating an investment in the filmmaker's vision. Even during the Great Depression, people still spent 25 cents or whatever it was to entertain themselves at the cinema. And today, despite the reports of economic turmoil that most people constantly talk about, people are in line at their local electronics superstore to buy video games and flat-screen TVs.

So the first thing we must do, if we're not doing it already, is determine what service or product we are going to offer people. It would be a good idea to find out what benefits people are looking for in their life now. The good news is (like we said before) there is a market for everything. But what's more, there is a specific talent, service, product or benefit you bring to the table that can uniquely fill a need or want. This is always directly related to something you enjoy or feel compelled to do. It is your purpose to do so, and from your position you can offer something which no one else can. Now, if that purpose is being fulfilled by what you're currently doing with your time, then you've got a head start.

Know who you are and what benefits you offer to those who do business with you. Move consistently in that direction. People don't fail because of the decisions they make. They fail because they turn their back on their decisions. If you are working in your chosen field, in control of your activities and fulfilling your purpose or your "calling", then hold your course. If you're not doing that - well, that's a whole different matter which we'll take up here in a moment.

For the person who knows where they are going, there are five points to consider as you move forward. This is especially so if you are experiencing dwindling revenues or diminished momentum. Again, I will keep this brief and simple, since no one knows your business like you do.
1. Advertising/Marketing
It is often the tendency of people to cut back in this area during a time of uncertainty. But a terrible thing happens when you don't advertise… nothing. Approximately 80% of advertising is for naught, and about 20% bears fruit. The challenge is in identifying the productive 20%. Naturally, that 20% will come out of 100% of the advertising you are doing. So do it. Marketing and advertising which has historically been effective can now be augmented. Additional promotional methods which have been used successfully by similar business entities can also be engaged, in addition to the previously existing, working methods. The point here is to ADVANCE, not retreat.

2. D.M.O.
In my company, there is a three-letter-word we kick around a lot: DMO, or Daily Method of Operation. Consistency here is key. But consistency in what? Like with our advertising and marketing, we must identify the activities which bear fruit. Where are our sales coming from? How much time spent do we spend with prospects, clients etc.? Don't be blind to this. Time is a precious resource. I know plenty of people who are very careful with their advertising dollars but piss away time like they're immortal.

3. Trim the Fat
Most businesses fail due to improper cash flow. Having augmented our productive investments of money and time, it's time to identify and eliminate wasteful flows. It's sometimes amazing to see how all the little liabilities add up when we're complacent. This doesn't mean that we have to be miserly, just smart and aware of our liabilities. Less is more, meaning that the more you disallow non-productive liabilities, the more you have to put into productive ones. This is just good economy.

4. Purpose
It is imperative at this point that all involved are in communication about the purpose or mission of the business. Let us always remember that, ultimately, the "boss" is the customer. I have witnessed the folly of sales managers trying to force increased numbers by focusing only on production and forgetting purpose. Force doesn't work, and life shouldn't be miserable because we have targets to reach. In fact, people are more prepared to hit their targets when they are on-purpose and happy, not obsessed with what they haven't accomplished yet.

5. Production
Finally, it is time to track our activities and our results. We acknowledge our improvements, we keep doing what works and we find more ways to do that. We also tighten-up any random, non-productive actions that are identified. We can set time-lines for our routine activities. This is a good idea since work expands to fill the time allowed for it. We communicate with all involved to eliminate any arbitrary interpretations about why we're doing what we're doing.
These five points of attention, when engaged, are done so by a leader. A leader is a decision maker, a mentor and an example to others. Most importantly, a leader is a person of vision. They are inner-directed people. Leadership means not buying into the belief systems of others - not believing that you have to make less money because the mass-media says the sky is falling. Leaders in business have a self-determined destination; and since they know where they're going, others have a reason to follow them and do business with them. If a person doesn't know where they're going, why would anyone want to follow them?

It's a leader's vision that actually enrolls other people. If we look at this from a business standpoint, we could ask ourselves several questions which will help us determine how we will respond to changing times:
What are people actually buying from me?
Who is my ideal prospect/client?
What is my unique selling proposition (USP)? This should always be expressed in terms of benefits, not features.
What is my time actually worth? Not based on my past, but on my vision.
And so on.

This type of critical thinking leads to better decision making in the face of change. And make no mistake about it - change is guaranteed. The individuals who prosper are proactive, not reactive.

I'm not saying that we become blind to what's going on in the lives of the masses who live in lack and mediocrity; quite the contrary. We are willing to actually confront change and put ourselves in a position to profit from it. The masses don't do this. This takes courage, which is quite the opposite of conformity. So add courage to the list of leadership qualities I mentioned earlier.

There was a man who studied the phenomenon of mass-movements and wrote about it some years ago. His name was Eric Hoffer (1902-1983). His most memorable statement (for me) which rings in my head when I'm considering my own willingness to be proactive is:
“In times of change, learners inherit the Earth, while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists.”

So the bottom line for me is: What am I willing to do (that others are not willing to do) to provide an abundant lifestyle for myself and my family? I have to decide how high above mediocrity I want to aim. Again, we're talking about leadership. And leaders earn a lot more money than followers. It doesn't make sense to expect leadership-pay if one chooses to remain a complacent follower. It's interesting, though, that many people make this error. There's no such thing as something-for-nothing. We must develop habits of action which are outside of our comfort-zone. As Albert E.N. Gray instructed insurance salespeople in the mid 1900s, the common denominator of success is that successful people are in the habit of doing things that failures don't like to do.
And it's not that successful people like to do these things, they just do them anyway. But we won't do these things if we're not motivated by a self-determined goal. If we're not passionate about what we're doing, it's doubtful that we'll excel at it. Interest renders aptitude, and if we're living a life of obligation, rather than a life of choice, it's not likely that we'll be providing a very high level of service. Going in a new direction takes courage, but if what we're doing isn't bringing us where we want to go, we must consider doing something other than that.

And this is so vital, because the Law of Compensation states that money is reward for service rendered. If a person wants to earn more money, they need only provide more service. The fact is - and this is very good news for any leader - that there is no competition for the diligent man or woman who chooses to play at the top of their game. These people are very difficult to replace. This makes them even more valuable. Let's go back to the question we asked ourselves earlier: What is my time worth?

Our time is worth exponentially more as we become more effective and efficient in our chosen path. We become the people who get the job done. I believe that anyone can earn a million dollars. The only question is: How long is that going to take? A lifetime? A year? A month? The person who takes a lifetime to earn a million dollars could be called a failure in today's economy. The person who does it in a month could be called rich. We must reduce the amount of time it takes to get the job done - making the sales, removing the obstacles, ignoring the distractions and solving the problems.

And there will be problems. Any game has them, otherwise there would be no game. We must choose our problems. A professional fighter has the problem of getting hit a lot. A movie-star has the problem of not being able to walk around in public without being accosted. A doctor has the problem of diagnosis - and not to be overlooked - malpractice insurance premiums. A person who chooses to do business in America has the problem of insane taxation. A person who doesn't has the problem of a reduced consumer market. And so on.

Choose your problems.

Once you've decided what you're going to do, it is of equal importance to decide who you are going to do it with. Perhaps even more important. I've seen plenty of examples of good business ideas which fail because of misaligned people. Partnerships are synergistic or disastrous. While leadership is a quality of the individual, no person is an island. Some of the best reading I've done on this has been from Steven Scott in his book *The Richest Man Who Ever Lived*. I suggest you read it as well.
What if you find yourself at a transitional period in your life? You have goals and dreams you want to fulfill, but are uncertain of the direction you will go in to fulfill them. Maybe you're no longer willing to succumb to a corporate life, or living as someone else's employee, but you're not sure about your ability to start a new venture from the ground up. This is the position I found myself in some years ago, and it led me to take a serious look at possibilities that most people don't consider.

And like I indicated earlier in this writing, leaders earn a lot more money than most people. I became someone who is willing to look for himself, think for himself and take actions that most people simply do not take. As a result, I became a millionaire in less than 2 years.

Before I elaborate, let me ask you: What would be your description of an ideal business?

Here are some of my answers:

- Low or no inventory to tie up capital;
- Product or service of above-average value;
- High return on investment;
- High profit margin;
- No accounts-receivable;
- Control over income;
- Incrementally capitalized;
- Speed to market;
- Systematized without being unnecessarily high-tech;
- Work with people I like;
- Low overhead;
- High predictability / acceptable risk;
- No franchise fees or royalties;
- Short learning curve / simple;
- Training provided;
- Ability to model another's success;
- Ability to be myself;
- Ability to go at my own pace;
- Ability to do business globally;
- Ability to operate from any location, including a home or mobile office;
- Minimal customer service issues;
- Etc.

Does such a business model exist? It does. It has been recommended by savvy entrepreneurs such as personal-development trainer Bob Proctor, real estate investor Robert Kiyosaki, and even multi-billionaire Donald Trump.
It is known as Network Marketing. It is a real business, and direct-selling has been a viable, growing industry for years. Lots of people have opinions about it. Very few understand it.

But I can't say it's perfect, because it's not. Remember earlier we talked about choosing your problems? Well this business has problems, no different than any other business. One problem in particular, namely: Human Ignorance.

Consider this stream of logic: We live in a society where most people are inundated with negativity from every direction. Their family, their broke friends and co-workers, the media. I believe that TV and mass-media is destroying people from within. Negativity on demand. And as every great teacher in history has taught us, we become what we think about. When I was younger I didn't believe this was so serious. Now that I've had years of experience in business and in teaching others, I can see that most people are living completely at the effect of what they're told to believe - what is supposedly true because lots of other people (some in a self-proclaimed position of authority) say it's so.

Now consider this: Sales is the highest paid profession on the planet. But what is sales? Here's a definition that I love: The transfer of enthusiasm.

Now we come to find this industry called Direct-Sales or Network Marketing. It offers a variety of business models, with various modes of compensation, spectacular products, superb leadership and training and accessible to virtually anyone, even the "Average Joe". What's more, by its very nature, Network Marketing overcomes the information overload that any modern inhabitant of the "civilized" planet experiences on a daily basis. I heard recently that the average American is exposed to more advertisements in one day than a colonial American would have been exposed to in a lifetime. Granted, that was 200 years ago, but the brain hasn't changed that much in that time. We have not evolved a new species in 200 years, although some highly critical people may want to argue that.

So what happens? Average Joe is enrolled in a Network Marketing opportunity and dreams of making it big. After all, look at all those other success stories. Maybe he's enrolled by an actual leader, or at least has access to a leader somewhere in his network, but he himself is not yet a leader. He's an aspiring leader. He's a hopeful person. But a hope is a far cry from a knowing. His best thinking up to this point has been at cause for Average Joe results - in plain terms, mediocrity.

Now, let's give Joe some credit. He's taken a step in a new direction. He's got his toe in the water and he's taken one step out of the herd. This is despite the fact that the purpose of the herd is to keep Joe in the herd. The corporate agenda certainly isn't about empowering people or helping them realize their potential. It's about keeping people under control. The media, which Joe's friends take as Gospel, breeds victimhood and confusion. This confusion has grown to the extent that the majority of people in a free society now believe that the corporate pyramid they're at the bottom of is a good and honest system; while an
opportunity to exercise their right to free-enterprise and profit from the offering of benefits to another (as in Network Marketing) must be immoral, unethical and maybe even illegal. Most of the conversations Joe’s been involved in until now have been nothing more than people agreeing with each other as they complain about how bad everything is and how hard it is to make money.

But Joe has hope. As frail as that is, it's a start. Hopefully, for his sake, he latches on to a leader and stays close. He develops good communication lines with people who are completely out of the herd and who are getting results. This is Joe's life-line if he is to have any shot at making it to the next level in his life. In fact, nothing will accelerate his evolution out of victim-society faster than this association. This is so necessary, because here's what's coming next: The public.

Joe starts to offer his product/service/opportunity to others. As it turns out, the same type of people that Joe has been communicating with for most of his life are now the people he is attempting to serve. And he is met with refusal. Massive refusal. Now, make note of this: There is a vast difference between refusal and rejection. Nobody likes rejection. Rejection is personal. Refusal is not. If Joe has not maintained good, consistent communication with his leader(s), it will be rejection and Joe will soon be a statistic. This is the end of the line for most people. But it doesn't have to be that way.

Because Joe has decided that he's a self-determined person, and because he has a vision for himself that is worthy of the effort it takes to get through his learning curve, he perseveres. He realizes that he is now in the business of interpersonal communication. And the more he develops himself through communication with other on-purpose people, the more he becomes independent of "the good opinion of others". Sales is the transfer of enthusiasm, and his enthusiasm is growing.

He develops an understanding that a person consumed with negative thinking must behave negatively, that no intelligent action can come from a negative mind regardless of how good his offer or service is or how badly a person needs it. He realizes the true meaning of prospecting, which is not cultivating value, but finding a value which already exists. He transitions from emotionally-attached convincing efforts to unattached sorting. He learns how to be personally marketable again; a quality he wasn't demonstrating when he was living at the hands of some corporate agenda. He learns advertising and the other leadership actions we spoke of earlier. His value as a human being has gone up, and now, not only is he a part of the solution in his own life, he can be a part of the solution in the lives of others. It is he that people are buying when they get started on his team. He is no longer Average Joe. He is the leader.

As I'm reading what I just wrote I'm getting a little emotional. I've witnessed this story many times, and it's one of the reasons I love Network Marketing. It is truly a vehicle for giving people back their self-worth, and I can think of no more noble a mission. I say this not from a theoretical standpoint, but from the position of experiential knowledge, as a person who
has actually earned millions of dollars in the Network Marketing industry. But as many successes as I have witnessed, I have seen many more failures. The skeptics and victim-thinking masses are quick to envenom an aspiring new direct-salesperson with any negativity they can get their hands on. Remember, the purpose of the herd is to keep you in the herd. Like crabs in a bucket, they claw and scrape to pull a would-be escapee back in. Negativity ammunition does not even need to be manufactured; it is readily available on the internet by the ton, free for the viewing and disempowerment of all. Liars, cynics, people peddling fear - some of which are even in the industry themselves, but are totally misdirected and are only focused on making money by derailing people out of another opportunity and enrolling them in theirs. Their efforts are strictly mercenary. To those people I say: YOU ARE PART OF THE PROBLEM, not part of the solution.

So, what can I say to a person who wants to go in this direction but is concerned about failure statistics? Not that it's any different than any other business. How many people "make it" in real estate, or in retail, or in film or music, or in any other worthy endeavor? How many expensively "educated" college graduates "make it" for that matter? (They all paid tuition though, didn't they?)

Here's what I can say: First and foremost, if you're going to do it, then DO IT. Commit yourself fully. Half-measures avail us nothing. Direct sales is real business, it's big business, and if you treat it like a business it will make you money. If you treat it like a hobby, it will cost you money as any hobby does. And some people have expensive hobbies. This shouldn't be one of them. Be the person who gets the job done. If you're in business for yourself, excuses are not allowed. Be prepared to figure stuff out by using the five step formula we spoke of earlier. Expect to win. Play to win. You are not average, and nor will your income be average. Remember this: Some people make money; some people make excuses. Nobody does both.

Next, stick with the people who are in action and getting results. These are also not-average people, and they're the people you want to be in close communication with. "By their fruits you will know them." Like we said before, as important as what business you do is who you do it with. Seek qualified leadership, and soon enough, people will be seeking you. Remember the words of the great James Allen (1864-1912): “Men do not attract that which they want, but that which they are.” You will become like the people you associate with.

One opportunity only. A business as simple to operate as a Network Marketing business sometimes attracts some dim-witted people. They jump around from "deal to deal", dragging their equally dim-witted followers with them. They sometimes work multiple opportunities simultaneously. There is an old proverb that states: “The fox that chases two rabbits catches neither.” These people are always on the hunt. You can sometimes see a trail of wreckage behind them. Remember Warren Buffett's wisdom: “I prefer to keep all my eggs in one basket and watch that basket closely.”
As corny as this sounds, your attitude will determine your altitude. And what is attitude? Attitude is the sum of your thoughts, feelings and actions. There are no free rides in business or in life. You are going to have to cultivate a winning attitude if you are going to make it in this, or any business. Remember that sales is the transfer of enthusiasm. Most people have low enthusiasm. Most people play a game that isn't worth much to them. They lack the courage we spoke of earlier. Don't be one of them. Know what you're worth. Expect to get paid what your worth.

Be prepared to demonstrate persistence. This is an indispensable quality for anyone who intends to prosper in the new economy. Although Network Marketing is exceedingly simple, there is a learning curve. Success isn't easy, but neither is failure! You will experience plenty of refusal. Don't let it become rejection. Say less to more people. Learn and use inexpensive marketing systems that put you in front of the cold market (people you don't already know) and quickly sort for people who want what you offer. Many people think that successful people are lucky, and they hope that someday they'll get lucky. They entertain only lottery-mentality offers, and yours isn't one of them. Instant gratification is overrated anyway. Stay present, and remember your purpose in the face of any and all circumstances.

Understand that timing is an important component in any business. Network Marketing is a "people business", and therefore personal timing comes into play. The timing of your offer will not be right for everyone, because again, confronting change takes courage. Most times, people must have their back right up against the wall for them to begin considering new, creative ideas and actions, and how their best thinking may not be serving them. Sometimes, they never consider it. Be okay with other people dying broke if this is their choice. Again, this is nothing to be taken personally.

I have a personal-experience case-study that I'd like to share with you. Over the past five years I've been contacted by over 30,000 people who were interested in an opportunity to increase their income. They responded to a variety of simple, inexpensive advertisements that I ran. These people were all admittedly not getting the results in their life that they wanted, and were asking to be shown a better way.

The deal was as follows:
Their response would include their name and phone number.
I committed to personally responding to them by phone.
I would discuss with them their specific wants and goals.
After discovering what they want to achieve, and determining that they are serious about achieving it, I would educate them on the opportunity they have to do so.
All of their questions would be answered.
They would be in direct communication with other people who are currently experiencing what they want. This includes people earning upwards of $50,000 per month.
All of this would be done for free, at no obligation to them whatsoever.
Then, and only then, they would be asked to make a decision to get started or not.
The results which came next are somewhat startling:
53% could not answer the phone, return a phone call, respond to a voicemail or effectively communicate in any fashion.
24% were just curious, looking for a job or killing time.
23% were offered information about the opportunity
10% completed their review of the information and took the opportunity to get any questions answered by direct communication with people who were currently earning at least the income that they said they wanted to earn.
5% said they were getting started.
3% actually got started.

Of those who got started:
22% did anything whatsoever with the opportunity once they got started.
3% went on to become successful.

What conclusions can we draw from this example? What does it say about most people's level of integrity or decision-making? Or about their ability to even tell the difference between truth and falsehood? Keep in mind, all of this took place after the opportunity had proven to be outrageously lucrative for those who actually engaged in it! It certainly proves one thing: That there is no competition for a person who lives on-purpose and follows through on their intentions.

I could go on and on and on with things that I've learned as a result of my experience in the direct-selling industry. And with the people who I personally mentor, I do. In my book *Integrity Is Everything* I expand on much of the psychology behind the ideas that I've shared here. And I said that I would keep this brief, so before this turns into another book I'll end off by saying this:

You, as a conscious and capable person reading this, are living in a time of great change. This means that it is a time of tremendous opportunity for those who refuse to live small and are willing to think for themselves and act accordingly. The decisions you make now will shape your circumstances and determine your financial future. Know that you are in the driver's seat. You have been endowed with the greatest creative faculties of any creature on this planet. What you do with them is up to you. Use them to demonstrate prosperity, or use them to demonstrate lack. My intention is that your reading of this document has assisted you in becoming a more powerful leader in your own life and in the lives of others. The rewards for being deliberate in the use of your faculties are immeasurable. Leadership is a most needed commodity in all areas of endeavor today. With it, you can name your price. Enjoy the game.

With great respect,
John Lavenia
About the Author

John Lavenia is an author, speaker and trainer whose teachings come from real-world experience and wisdom gathered over twenty years of studying human potential.

Born in New Jersey in 1970, his early life was that of a struggling youth. After years of witnessing hardship and purposeless survival in his own life and the lives of others, he was introduced to personal development principles at the still young age of 16. His adoption and application of principle-based living techniques was immediate and unremitting, displaying an unusually high determination to discover answers to the challenges of life we all face. His path has included the study of many great thinkers and high producers in recent history, as well as a variety of spiritually oriented teachings of Eastern and Western lineage.

The result is that of a true rags-to-riches story, and the ability to show others how they can duplicate success and create tremendous effectiveness in their life. As a likely result of his "hard knocks" beginnings, and the necessity of taking personal responsibility for his own evolution, John has been known for his direct and "in-your-face" delivery. This has earned him the title of "The Godzilla of Personal Growth". He is often quoted as he sets the ground-rules for his trainings by stating, "If I say anything that offends you... you'll get over it."

Thousands of entrepreneurs, salespeople and success-seekers throughout the world have attributed breakthroughs in their effectiveness to ideas they gained in his teachings. John and his wife Shannon currently reside in Tucson, Arizona and Los Angeles, California.

For more information about John Lavenia's writings, courses, seminars and workshops, please visit www.JohnLavenia.com