

MILLION-DOLLAR BUSINESS STRATEGIES  
FROM 32 SUCCESSFUL  
PHILADELPHIA-AREA ENTREPRENEURS

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# DREAM, INC.



FOREWARD BY  
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## Chapter

# 3

## A SURVIVOR'S STORY: OVERCOMING GREAT CHALLENGES AND LIVING LIFE ON YOUR TERMS

By Jim Palmer

*"God has given each of you some special abilities; be sure to use them to help each other, passing on to others God's many kinds of blessings."*

1 Peter 4:10

I saw the caller ID and thought that a phone call this soon after the biopsy could not be good news, but still I reluctantly answered the telephone. My doctor was all business and simply stated the fact, "Jim, you have cancer." Strangely, I thanked him for the call. I walked around my house trying to rationalize how this could be happening to me. Why did I spend so many years in the sun trying to get a "healthy" glow? I wondered how I was going to tell my wife and kids the news. How could I tell them the truth without frightening them?

After the initial shock and disbelief, I did what I have always done when confronted with a challenge: I moved swiftly into survival mode and developed a plan.

Two days later my wife, Stephanie, and I met with a surgeon. At this time, the tests were inconclusive and neither I nor the surgeon knew whether or not the melanoma I had was stage two or stage three. I've always been a confident "just fix it" type of person, believing that I can solve any problem and overcome any challenge. I asked the surgeon the difference between stages two and three. He told me that for stage three the average survival rate past five years drops from 80 percent to 50 percent. My once-confident attitude was gone in a nanosecond, and my first coherent thought was to add five years to the age of the youngest of my four children (13-year-old twin girls). The thought of not being around for my family was terrifying. Thankfully, Stephanie bravely took over the rest of the meeting by continuing to ask the doctor questions. We then scheduled surgery for three weeks later.

Two weeks after the surgery we met with the doctor again for my post-surgery consultation and he informed me that I was considered cancer-free! Several weeks of scary thoughts and concern seemed to melt away and, except for thanking the doctor, I couldn't say much. I was overwhelmed with relief, gratitude, and the small nagging fear that every cancer survivor faces: What if the cancer is still hiding somewhere? As Stephanie drove us home, I looked out the

window and saw the beauty of the greater Philadelphia area. I'd seen the same sights hundreds of times before, but this time it was different. I told her that I finally fully understood the old expression, "If you have your health, you have everything." Amen.

Being told that you have cancer is frightening to be sure, but what made it worse for me was that the news came on the heels of also being unemployed for a year. In July 2000, for the first time in 27 years, I found myself out of work. What followed was a yearlong roller coaster of emotions trying to land my next position. In early September 2001, I finally received a great job offer to develop a franchise program for a successful chain of stores. But following the tragic events of September 11, 2001, the company reconsidered its ambitious growth plans and the offer was rescinded. To make matters worse and to test my will greater than ever before, right in the middle of several weeks of meetings and negotiations with this company, I received the "you have cancer" call from the doctor. Can you say stress?

In October 2001, having just endured a grueling 14 months of distress, I did a lot of soul-searching and praying, trying to determine what I was supposed to do next with my life. Then one night I had this incredibly clear vision that now was the time to act on my long-time dream of starting my own business. Having come through the biggest challenge in my life, I was now a stronger, more determined person and I resolved not to waste another day dreaming and sitting

on the sidelines. A few months later I started Dynamic Communication, and I was absolutely elated that I finally had a job. Now I just needed to create a paycheck! My dream of owning a business can probably be more accurately described as a long-held belief. This belief was rooted in the fact that I have always been creative, had a strong work ethic, and was willing to work long hours and share the ideas and strategies that I developed to help my employers grow and prosper. I'd always worked for entrepreneurial companies and was excited by the fast-paced, do-whatever-it-takes approach to business growth. I observed my bosses over the years and I felt confident that I had what it took to start and run my own business.

A little bit about Dynamic Communication. I produce custom newsletters for companies and organizations, providing everything from content, copy editing, and proofreading to designing, printing, creating mailing lists, and distribution. This saves clients the headache and hassle of producing their own newsletter in-house. I was confident that Dynamic Communication would succeed for many reasons. First, I had been writing and designing newsletters for 25 years and just about every company and organization can use a newsletter, which meant that I would have a wide field of prospects. I also knew from experience that newsletters can be a challenge (actually a real pain) to produce in-house. A valuable lesson to remember in selling is that if you can cure someone's pain, you're 90 percent on your way to a happy client.

As I began to put the business together, I made a commitment to not start selling until I was 100 percent ready. No matter what stage your business is at, it is important to project and portray the look of a seasoned, experienced, successful businessperson. I've always liked the expression, "Don't look behind the wizard's curtain." It refers to the movie *The Wizard of Oz*, in which the great and powerful Oz was really just one man hiding behind a curtain. You'd be surprised how many companies appear much different when you look behind the curtain!

Over the next few years Dynamic Communication grew in large part as a result of referrals by my happy clients. One of my clients was so thrilled with his newsletter that he called me the "Newsletter Guru," which I use in my marketing to this day. As I got more and more clients, my available time became limited – and that meant that I would soon max-out my opportunity for continued growth. I knew that I had to find an answer to this challenge. I began to develop a proprietary process that would allow any business to go to my website 24/7, customize a newsletter template, attach a mailing list, and within a few days have newsletters printed and mailed to their customers. It took me nine months to perfect this system, and in 2006 I proudly launched my second business, No Hassle Newsletters. The amazing thing about [www.nohasslenewsletters.com](http://www.nohasslenewsletters.com) is that I can be sitting on a beach, visiting one of my kids at school, or kayaking with my wife, and there is still money flowing into my bank account!

Owning a successful business has many challenges, but it also has many rewards. Freedom is a huge reward of owning your own business. For example, while on occasion you have to put in 60 hours a week (or more), there are also many times where you can take off and spend time doing whatever it is you choose to do, without reporting to anyone. It is such a great feeling to be able to leave every day at 4 p.m. to work out, before the gym gets packed with the regular after-work crowd.

As a business owner you also have the freedom to make decisions as you see fit. One of the best decisions that I made was to join a mastermind group. A mastermind group is a group of like-minded business owners who come together to contribute to each others' successes. As business owners, we are sometimes too close to our own companies to spot opportunity. As a matter of fact, the idea for my third business, No Hassle Marketing, which I launched in 2007, was actually born at one of my mastermind meetings.

I'd like to share two "success factors" that every entrepreneur should consider. The first is the ability to listen to and follow the advice of experts. However, I suggest that if you are going to go to the trouble of hiring and paying someone with a proven track record for his or her expertise, put your entrepreneurial ego in the drawer and try it the expert's way, without needing to put "your imprint" on it. Chances are, the results will be better and you'll still get the glory.

The second success factor is to reap what you sow. Having a heart, giving, and serving others not only has benefited me personally, it has proved to be incredibly beneficial to the success of my businesses. I call this filling my heart instead of my checkbook. "What you do comes back to you" is an excellent paraphrase of the biblical truth, "You reap what you sow." You plant the seeds (sow), and then later you gather the resulting harvest (reap). The harvest that you reap depends on the kind of seeds you sow. On occasion I offer my newsletter services gratis to worthy causes, such as the Make-A-Wish Foundation. It always amazes me how, just when I think I am spending too much time on a project that doesn't pay instead of selling, my phone rings and I'm blessed with a new client!

I'll conclude with this thought. Dreaming of owning your own business is not a particularly unique idea, but it is only through taking action that your dream can be fulfilled and you can achieve the level of success that you desire. So go ahead and dream, but also realize, as I did, that life is short and you never know what is around the next corner. So take action, persevere, and enjoy all of the success that is waiting for you!

#### **Nugget of Wisdom**

Never stop learning, always deliver more than is expected, and in all things act with full integrity.



**Jim Palmer, Author**

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*Jim Palmer is known as the Newsletter Guru. He has been writing and designing newsletters for clients in just about every industry for nearly 30 years. Jim is the founder and president of Dynamic Communication ([www.dynamiccommunication.net](http://www.dynamiccommunication.net)), where he works with a very limited number of clients. Jim is also the founder and president of No Hassle Newsletters ([www.nohasslenewsletters.com](http://www.nohasslenewsletters.com)) where he produces newsletters for clients nationwide, and he is the managing partner in No Hassle Marketing ([www.nohasslemarketing.com](http://www.nohasslemarketing.com)). Learn more about the awesome power of newsletters by getting Jim's book, Newsletter Secrets Revealed- How to Use Newsletters to Make Your Profits Soar, at [www.newslettersecretsrevealed.com](http://www.newslettersecretsrevealed.com).*

