

# CREATIVITY FOR SALE

HOW I MADE \$1,000,000 WEARING T-SHIRTS AND HOW  
YOU CAN TURN YOUR PASSION INTO PROFIT, TOO

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# INTRODUCTION: JASON \_\_\_\_\_ ?

For the past 32 years of my life, only one thing has been consistent: change. I wasn't a military brat, but growing up, I lived in Arizona, California, Virginia, New Jersey, and eventually Florida. My mom and I still argue about the correct number, but I attended somewhere between 12 and 16 schools. Not only did I attend double the amount of schools that normal kids do, but when I changed schools, it was often to a new city or a different state. I was the "new kid" over and over again.

Let it be known that I don't hold a grudge against my mom for this, and I wouldn't change my upbringing one bit because it made me who I am today. Okay, maybe I'd change asking Yolanda to middle school prom. When I found her phone number in the school phone book, I called her and asked her to go with me, and she said promptly said no and hung up. But that's a story for another book.

Being the new kid over and over felt like living in that MC Escher painting with all the staircases. Just when I thought I had navigated the right direction, made a few friends, and gotten into a rhythm, we moved. Three of those moves happened in high school, which were the hardest on me. Imagine yourself back in high school, but instead of the high school you went to and knew well, imagine a different high school. In this high school, you don't know where anything is (except maybe the principal's office), and you don't know a single person. Walking through the halls and going to class isn't too difficult, but you have the constant feeling that everyone is staring at you because you're the new kid, the new face, and you stick out like a sore thumb.

But lunch, oh man, lunch. Walking through the cafeteria doors and looking at all the other students who already have friends and tables to sit at is the worst. As you scan the lunchroom, it becomes painfully obvious that you don't know where to sit, but you also don't want to wait too long to find a seat or you'll look like the creepy kid holding his lunch and standing in the cafeteria doorway by himself. There's an open table or two, and once you find a seat at one of them, you can't get to it fast enough. It doesn't sound like a whole lot of fun, right? Like I said, it wasn't easy.

When you eat your lunch by yourself, you are truly alone with your teenage angst. At some high schools, I ate lunch by myself for only a day or two before a kind stranger came up to say hello or I found another misfit sitting alone to talk to. At other high schools, though, I went weeks eating alone or I avoided the cafeteria altogether.

But don't cry for me, Argentina! Looking back, these experiences helped mold me into the entrepreneur I would become. Those painful times I spent alone helped me become more extroverted throughout the rest of my life. I didn't want to experience the pain of sitting alone or feeling like I didn't have any friends. Thinking about those tough times helps me walk up to a complete stranger nowadays and say hello. Sure, I may have spent many an hour sitting alone in cafeterias, but that thickened my skin up for the brief few moments before that awkward hello when you meet a new person (which really only sucks for a few seconds). I learned how to adapt to change and how to make the best of any situation—two lessons that would come in handy as I started my businesses.

During all the time of movement, I also had multiple fathers come in and out of my life. Having multiple father figures brought

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me some good experiences and some not-so-good experiences, but overall it taught me that I was capable of taking care of myself. I developed a sense of independence because of it, and I think that independence translated itself into my out-of-the-box thinking later in life.

I also had a myriad of retail and customer service jobs when I was younger that taught me about identifying value, building human connections with different types of people, and prioritizing my money. I interned at a large insurance company in New York City as a graphic designer, commuting via train from New Jersey to the city daily with my buddy Alun Evans (page 24's sponsor, by the way). I learned how to deal with multiple bosses, how to manage important project deadlines, and that I really didn't like wearing a suit to work. I had another graphic design gig, but this time for an online coffee startup during the dotcom boom. I cared nothing about coffee when I worked for that company, but I made sure to suck it up and get the work done. I learned the important art of Photoshopping clear plastic on different color backgrounds (a skill everyone needs!). This was also the first, and only, job I was ever "downsized" from. I learned that I never wanted to feel that pain again, especially when I had worked hard for a company I didn't even have any interest in.

The first "real" job I had out of college was actually a dream job on paper. I worked for the ATP (Association of Tennis Professionals) as a graphic designer. The idea of working for a large sports agency was glamorous to me because I was (and am) a huge fan of the NFL and NBA. What started as an incredibly positive work experience quickly showed me that I wasn't cut out for the 9-5 world. Things like climbing the corporate ladder, attending meaningless meetings, working with unhappy people, and feeling like I never saw results

(monetarily or job growth-wise) taught me some valuable lessons about what I **didn't** want to do for a living. And all of this work experience was before I ever considered myself an entrepreneur. Yet, looking back, each one taught me things about myself, about business, and mostly about the fact that I didn't really enjoy working for other people.

Toward the end of my three and a half year career at the ATP, I had been chatting with a fellow design friend, Dennis Eusebio, about starting our own design company. I just knew that something inside me would never be happy unless I was my own boss. We decided to take the plunge, and we founded what became my first company, Thought & Theory. For the better part of six months, I worked at the ATP from 9–5 days, and I worked at Thought & Theory from 7:00 p.m. to midnight. Dennis and I agreed that I would transition away from doing design work and focus on the client management, marketing, and sales skills I had honed over the years.

During the first year and a half of operation, many of the Thought & Theory clients asked me about social media—if they should be doing something with Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. We hadn't used those sites, so I didn't know how to answer. But client after client mentioned these sites, and with each call or email, I got more interested in learning about them. I had *heard* of Facebook and Twitter, and had watched my weight in silly cat videos on YouTube, but I didn't see these mediums as valuable to me. (My, how things change.)

Eventually, I poked around on social networks enough to notice that businesses were on them, but that they weren't doing much. There were millions of people already on these networks, but no way for businesses to connect directly with them. I knew that

there were spokespeople for brands and companies on TV, radio, billboards, etc., but there seemed to be nothing like that on social media, and I made a mental note.

Then one morning I found myself standing in my closet trying to figure out what t-shirt I would wear from the dozens that I owned. That's when the light bulb went on. Almost every company in the world could make t-shirts to promote its business . . . so what if I wore a company's t-shirt and shared that through these free social media websites?

That day was September 24, 2008, and that's when the seed for IWearYourShirt was officially planted.

Throughout this book, I'll share with you how IWearYourShirt went from an idea I had in my closet to a business that generated over \$1,000,000 in revenue. IWearYourShirt taught me that creativity is the key component to developing a business and lifestyle that you love. It taught me that anything is truly possible if you have an imagination and if you're willing to put in the necessary work. (I mean, if you're going to trust somebody that says, "Anything is possible," I say trust the guy who made a sizable living by simply getting dressed in the morning.)

I'll also pull back the curtain on my business a bit and share all my successes and failures along the way. My previous work experiences in life may have helped me develop some client management, marketing, and sales skills, but most of what I learned was through trial and error (. . . and mostly error!). My hope is that you'll not only learn from my mistakes, but that you'll also see that creating a successful business isn't some unattainable thing. You don't have to have it all figured out from the beginning. You just need an idea or a talent that you're passionate about and the courage to learn as you go.

Later on in the book, I'll go into detail on how to think outside the box for your next idea or business. I'll also explain how my unconventional thinking has been one of my strongest assets over the years, and I'll lead you through the entire process of setting the foundation to make money doing what you love. Whether you're stuck or unmotivated or just plain lost, hopefully this book will be the spark you need to go after your dreams.

I set out to write an unconventional book because everything I do in business is pretty unconventional. If you take away just one thing from it all, I want you to remember that I'm no one special. I'm just a guy who likes to think outside the box. I refuse to let my life be dictated by others, and I hope you'll join me in that after reading this book. Do work that matters to you, and don't be afraid to do things wildly differently from other people. In fact, please share whatever awesome thing you are doing with me via email. I'd love to hear about it: [jason@sponsormybook.com](mailto:jason@sponsormybook.com). (*After you finish the book, obviously.*)

Now let's get those creative juices flowing!

# SECTION 1: JASON

When I told people I thought I could get companies to pay me to wear their t-shirts, more than a few people called me crazy. In this section, I take you through what it was like to take that “crazy” idea and grow it into a thriving, reputable business.





# LET ME WEAR YOUR SHIRT

On the morning of October 10, 2008, I sat on my couch with my dog, Plaxico, and stared at my laptop in utter confusion. Overnight, my design and development team had finished putting the final touches on the IWearYourShirt website. It wasn't an extravagant website, but it was the first big project I'd ever undertaken solo, and a large photo of me was plastered on the front page of it. I had seen previous iterations of the website, but pieces of it were all over the place before that morning. Now, it was a completed object. All the puzzle pieces finally fit together, and it was ready for the world to see it. There was just one problem. When launch time came, instead of seeing a fiery blaze of sales and hockey stick shaped web traffic, all I heard was my dog snoring and the morning weather report from my TV.

I had spent the previous evening clicking around every square inch of IWearYourShirt.com. I wasn't hoping to find hidden Internet gold—no no. I wanted to make sure everything was perfect. On a normal day, I followed a typical routine: wake up, make breakfast, let the dog out, use the restroom, and maybe even shower. Not

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today. Today I went from horizontal in my bed to hunched over my laptop on my couch in a hurry. My bowels and Plaxico could wait.

As the day progressed, my morning excitement turned to late evening sombertude. IWearYourShirt was the greatest idea I had ever had. It was going to be a new way for businesses to advertise. I was going to make a bunch of money and become famous, right? Yet, do you know how many people visited the website on that day? Twelve. Ten of those people were probably the designer and the developer doing updates, and then another was me refreshing the website incessantly. The other two were probably from my mom and grandmother. That was all it was. Nobody purchased a single day on the IWearYourShirt calendar (*hold your horses, explanation of this coming!*). Mike Tyson has never punched me in the gut, but that morning, I imagined I knew what it felt like.

When the clock ticked past 2:00 a.m. that same day, I finally threw in the towel with a heavy heart and a bruised ego and closed my laptop. I laid in bed for hours, wide awake, like a mummy-zombie. I didn't toss and turn. I didn't look at my phone. I just laid flat on my back and stared at the ceiling, wondering why this amazing project hadn't become wildly successful on launch day. Eventually, my mind and body shut down and I fell asleep. As I drifted off, a part of me still had a glimmer of hope that I'd wake up to a slew of emails, calendar purchases, and praise from all corners the world.

Remember when I told you to hold your horses? You can let them go! Let me back up for a second for those of you who may not be familiar with IWearYourShirt (IWYS). The basic idea for the business was that each day I would wear a business's t-shirt, take a photo, film a video, and promote that business and the content I created on different social media sites. The calendar that I mentioned was how I sold my t-shirt advertising space. As of that morning on

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October 10, 2008, every day in 2009 was for sale. The price would start at \$1 on January 1. On January 2, the price would increase to \$2. On January 3, the price would increase to \$3. The price increased by \$1 per day until December 31, which went for \$365.

The original pricing structure I had thought of was a flat fee of \$100 per day. However, the math showed me that the \$1-per-day pricing would net \$66,795 and the \$100 flat-fee pricing would only net \$36,500. (I'd like to point out  $365 \times 100$  is easy math. Figuring out the \$1-per-day total involved creating an Excel spreadsheet and filling out 365 individual cells with 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 . . . up to 365. Then I Googled how to add up a bunch of cells in Excel. I've since learned simple summation in Excel.) I wasn't a math whiz, but I knew 66 was more than 36. I also knew that I couldn't charge much in the beginning because no one had ever heard of IWYS or me. Over time, I would grow a larger following online, warranting a higher price to be spent later in the year. I'd also like to point out that my time spent on the pricing model was about one hour. The majority of that hour (98.5% of it) was the aforementioned Excel spreadsheet.

The morning after launch day began with the same disappointment in which the previous day ended. I didn't even bother getting out of bed; I grabbed my iPhone off my nightstand and checked my email and website traffic. Nothing. It was around 9:00 a.m., and there was no chance I'd be able to fall back asleep. I decided to avoid heading to work (my couch) right away and hopped in the shower. It was during those steam-and-soap-filled 10 minutes that I thought, "How could I have such a unique and different idea, with no one coming to buy?" I was feeling the mixture of confusion at why my brilliance hadn't been received, trying to brainstorm what had gone wrong, and being bummed out about the whole thing.

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Then it hit me like a bolt of shower-lightning. I had no existing network and hadn't shared the IWYS website with anyone. The personal Facebook account I had was actually set up by my college roommate, Travis, and I didn't have loads of friends. I had a personal Twitter account, but it didn't have more than 30 followers at the time. The IWYS Twitter account had even fewer.

Hell, I hadn't even emailed my existing contacts when the site launched.

Then shower-lightning struck again: How in the world will anyone know I started this company and launched this website if I don't tell them?

By the time I was done in the shower, my thoughts went from lost and sad to hopeful and encouraged. With a towel wrapped around my waist, I made a beeline for the couch and flipped open my laptop. It was time to put my nose to the grindstone. To start, I emailed all of the contacts I could scrounge up from my three different email addresses (one of which was an AOL email, #lol). I didn't want to ask all of these people to buy days on IWYS; I just wanted them to know the project existed.

I also wanted to hear back from as many of them as I could, so I sent individual emails to each person instead of one bulk message with a simple question at the end: *What do you think of IWear-YourShirt, and will you pass this along to any friends who might be interested in it?*

I had never done email marketing before in my life, but I knew the value of email, and I appreciated someone taking the time to send me a personalized note.

Three hours later, I finished emailing my 200 contacts. Still in my towel, which was now completely dry, I felt motivated. I even started seeing some email replies come in while I was writing and

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sending others. I also received a text message from the website developer that there was a spike in web traffic. I think it was something like “5 visitors to 30 visitors,” but hey, that’s a traffic increase of 600%! As I started to read the email replies, I noticed a trend. One reply would be positive, with a message of encouragement and excitement for me. The next would say something like, “This idea is stupid . . . don’t quit your day job.” Reading those emails was an emotional rollercoaster, especially because the majority of these 200 email contacts were friends and family. But I noticed something. There were more positive responses than negative ones. And the negative responses actually added fuel to my encouragement fire. The more negative emails I read, the more I wanted to prove those people wrong. I knew what it was like to feel different from my days back in high school, searching for a table to sit at in the cafeteria. Through all those years we moved around, eventually I stopped caring what people thought about me. That lesson is what helped me push through those early days when people said I was crazy, and it’s a lesson that helps me continue to push the envelope with every business or project I start.

# LET THERE BE SALES!

At some point during the email melee, I took a break. I let my dog out, put on clothes, and smeared gobs of peanut butter on two slices of multigrain bread. Between and during each task, I refreshed my email inbox on my iPhone like a crazy person. I'm shocked I didn't spread peanut butter on my dog's head and end up wearing socks on my arms because I was so distracted.

Then a magical thing happened . . . the first calendar purchase came in. This was my moment. This was it.

Then I read who purchased it: Thought & Theory.

Dang it, Dennis! Dennis was the co-founder of my design company, Thought & Theory, where I was still working “full-time,” expecting IWearYourShirt to only amount to a side gig. I sent him a text message thanking him for the whopping \$4 that had just been sent to my bank account.

A few minutes later, another purchase came in. This time it was from one of our clients, Benjamin Edgar. January 3 was officially sold (mind you, it was for \$3). This was the first outside person to buy a day, and it was all because I sent him an email sharing IWYS.

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I actually still have the email he sent me after making the purchase. If you're reading this, Ben, thanks for being the first official day purchaser of IWYS (not sure I ever told him that).

By the end of the day, 50 people had responded to my emails. Thirty of those emails were positive and encouraging; the rest were people who were Negative Neds/Nancys.

With only two purchases, it surely wasn't the tsunami of sharing and buying I had hoped for, but it was a step in the right direction. I wouldn't say I was on cloud nine, but I was definitely feeling better than the night before. I spent the remainder of the day at my favorite taco place (see TacoLu on page 69), celebrating over a few margaritas and chips and salsa. The dinner probably cost me \$50, and I had only made \$7 that day. But hey, the margaritas were delicious!



# ONE HUNDRED FORTY (CHARACTERS)

The next morning, my email inbox could have been the dust bowl of Oklahoma during the Great Depression, minus the tumbleweeds. Shrugging it off, I figured I had done all I could with email, so I shifted my focus to Twitter. There, I searched for anyone talking about advertising, t-shirts, and marketing. I spent the better part of that third day tweeting at complete strangers from the IWYS Twitter account. I sent witty and funny tweets. I sent silly photos of me in t-shirts, and I argued with a few people about font treatments (I don't care about font treatments at all; I just wanted conversation).

In the back of my mind, I was hoping my Twitter handle alone would pique some interest and bring in sales. It did bring interest, but mostly in people following me, not in sales. It wasn't the perfect ROI I'd hoped for, but I knew having more followers would be good in general. I felt way less enthusiastic about my immediate results with Twitter, but I received much less negative feedback (which was a plus).

During the time I transitioned away from email and was scouring Twitter for keywords and talking to random people around the

world, another email hit my inbox from Chris Yeh. Chris mentioned he had an introduction for me. Chris was one of the first complete strangers to find my IWYS Twitter account and @ mention me, long before I ever launched. A few weeks earlier, he had sent an email saying he admired my creativity and thought IWYS was a great idea (I have no clue how he found my IWYS Twitter account, but Twitter was a much smaller place back then so maybe he was searching keywords as well?). After reading Chris' email, I did what any curious person does: I Googled him. Chris was an entrepreneur, advisor, and an investor. We chatted a few times on the phone before IWYS launched, and it was always incredibly enlightening to chat with him. We talked about thinking big picture for IWYS, and he helped spur the \$1-per-day pricing model idea.

Chris suggested I connect with a young public relations (PR) guy by the name of Evan White who was doing work for one of the companies in which Chris was an investor, Ustream.tv. I had heard of Ustream.tv when I was doing initial research on YouTube and other video platforms, and I knew that their goal was to be the online source for *live* video content . . . but that was as much as I knew. Naturally, Google pointed me to a simple website with a video featuring Evan. In it, Evan sat poolside, his blackberry in hand, flip-flops on his feet, wearing sunglasses and a slightly cocked hat. From the video, I could tell he was a fun guy, and his personality resonated with me. (This was actually my first introduction to a PR person. As it turns out they all don't wear flip-flops and sit poolside.)

After a few emails, Evan and I jumped on a phone call. He talked about some of his previous PR work and about living near the beach in California. I talked about some of my previous design work and about living near the beach in Florida. We ended up having a ton in common, and he was interested in helping IWYS get some media

## ONE HUNDRED FORTY CHARACTERS

attention. I also think he said the word “cool” or “awesome” more times than I did, which was rare in another human being.

A day or two later, Evan called and said he had convinced Ustream.tv to buy January 1 for \$1. In return for having Day 1, they wanted me to host my own Ustream show each day in my branded t-shirt, and they would promote my show on their homepage. At the time, the viewership of Ustream.tv wasn't high, but whatever it was would bring in more than my existing 30 website visits, *that was for sure*. I was nervous to accept the \$1 offer, but I knew if I had planned on learning how to film a YouTube video each day, I could figure out how to host a live video show each day, so I pulled the trigger and agreed. Shortly thereafter, \$1 showed up in the IWYS PayPal account (which ended up actually being \$0.98 after fees). And so began an era that would lead to 889 consecutive days of sharing my daily shirt-wearing antics and my life on a live video stream for the world to see, every single day from 3–4:00 p.m. ET, like clockwork.

# USTREAM . . . ?

On December 8, 2008, I hosted my first Ustream.tv live show that was promoted on the Ustream.tv homepage. This show was a pre-launch show of sorts—an attempt to build a little buzz and excitement, before I really knew what those things were. (Remember, official shirt-wearing wasn't set to begin until January 1, 2009.) I had done a few test shows before that to make sure my laptop camera worked and to find a backdrop that looked better than my brown couch and beige wall, but not a single viewer tuned in to witness that.

When I went live on December 8, my laptop sat atop the TV in my bedroom, and Ustream put my show on their homepage. The viewers started to come in. Then they started to pour in. Thanks to Ustream's viewer count on my screen, I knew exactly how many people were watching at a given time. I was a nervous wreck at first, trying to fill dead air time, find things to talk about, and mask how sweaty I actually was. I talked about everything from my dog Plaxico, to living in Florida, to what I ate that day, to what IWYS was all about, and some other gobbledygook.

After two hours, over 8,000 people had tuned in to watch my first Ustream show. Many viewers stayed the entire time, including

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one Stacy Lunsford (aka Digimap) who still supports IWYS and me to this day. You rock, Digi!

When that show was over, I felt fantastic. My adrenaline was pumping. My shirt was soaked in sweat, and I had gained a couple hundred new Twitter followers. A handful of people emailed me to say IWYS was “brilliant.” And three days sold on the calendar. Not bad for my first show.

Looking back, tapping into the Ustream audience was one of the biggest accelerators for IWearYourShirt’s growth. Not only did it allow me to leverage an existing network (something that was still virtually non-existent for me at the time), but it also allowed me to connect with people on a daily basis. I viewed my show not just as a one-way vehicle for entertainment but as a two-way vehicle for engagement. People would stop by to watch and chat with me in Ustream’s text chat box. I made it a point to learn about those people and to really care about who they were. Many of those early viewers went on to become long-term fans of the brand; they were critical because I needed to show sponsors that people were interested in consuming their branded content.

# (C)LEVERAGE

A few days after my first Ustream show, Evan emailed to say that a *New York Times* reporter wanted to do a story on IWYS. I'm not sure how Evan had talked this reporter into writing a story about IWYS, but I'm assuming he used some secret PR-ninja tactics. I had never imagined the *NYTimes* would be my first big media hit.

I received an email from Jenna Wortham, and it was direct and to the point.

“Evan White referred me to you—I'd like to know more about your experiment. Have a sec to chat today, either on AIM or Gchat?”

That was it.

What happened to email foreplay right? I responded with my Gchat name, and we started chatting right then. With each question she asked, I'm fairly certain I gave an answer that was way too long and full of grammatical errors. During the long breaks between questions (read: impatient seconds due to my excitement), I (naturally) Googled Jenna. (Come on, we all do it.)

Her photo was one of the first results. She had a stylish poof of black hair, wore large, black-rimmed hipster glasses, and had on bright red lipstick. I skimmed a few of her articles while answering her questions, and my excitement built like a volcano. I remember

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wanting to type over and over again: “HOLY &\$^#! I’M GOING TO BE IN *THE NEW YORK TIMES!*” But of course, I played it cool.

What seemed like a conversation that lasted hours (mostly due to the wait time between my answers and her next question) was over in mere minutes. The entire IWYS story up to that point, which frankly wasn’t much, had been sent through a tiny rectangle on a window in Gmail. When the conversation was over and I closed the chat window, I thought this was “it.” *This* was the moment. IWYS was going to be everywhere!

Then the funniest thing happened. Jenna said the story wouldn’t run for another month. I was devastated. Surely the *NYTimes* wanted to run my story immediately, right? Wasn’t it unbelievably creative and unique? Wasn’t it breaking news for *NYTimes*? I called Evan to have him join me while I drowned in my sorrows.

**BEING FEATURED IN  
THE MEDIA OFFERS YOU  
OPPORTUNITY BEYOND  
THE STORY ITSELF.**

Immediately, Evan’s PR experience kicked into high gear. He told me we didn’t need the actual story itself to be up, we just needed the commitment so we could use it as leverage. The eventual *NYTimes* article became a piece of bait that we dangled in front of anyone and everyone we could. Evan told me he’d send emails to his contacts and that I should email all of my contacts again with the news that the *NYTimes* had “interviewed me for a story.”

Wait.

Why would anyone care if the interview wasn’t actually up? Here’s the first big lesson I learned about getting mentioned by the media: It creates a cloak of credibility. The *NYTimes* could have been writing an article that exposed stories about crazy people living in Florida. But I was going to be in that article. And I was interviewed by the *NYTimes*. The key was all in the messaging and

how we positioned it to our contacts. I knew the story wasn't about crazy people in Florida, but I had never used media for leverage before, so this felt completely foreign to me. (The next time you see an "As featured in XYZ TV show" on someone's website, you'll probably be surprised to find what that feature was actually about and whether it was 100% dedicated to how amazing that person was.)

Over the next few days, I emailed all my contacts, which consisted of my original 200 and another 100 or so that had come in from Ustream, Twitter, and other random emails. I shared with them that I had just done an exciting interview with the *NYTimes* featuring *IWearYourShirt* and that it was to be going live soon on *NYTimes.com*. All of these things were 100% true. The interview was extremely exciting *for me*. I had been interviewed by someone at the *NYTimes*. The story they were doing would feature *IWYS*. And the story would exist somewhere on the *NYTimes.com* domain soon (though I had no clue where or precisely when).

It worked. And well. Soon people were sending email replies with their own excitement for me. People I had emailed originally that didn't email me back were now asking loads of questions about *IWYS*. Sales were coming in, too, faster than I could count. Over those few days, nearly 100 days sold on the *IWYS* calendar, and I barely knew anyone who purchased a day. I couldn't stop grinning from ear to ear. And I had effectively learned about leveraging media.

That early gain in momentum *did* have something to do with the *NYTimes* but not in the way that most people expect. It was the idea of being mentioned that was used effectively to gain traction and sales.

If there's one thing I've learned over the years from being featured on countless media outlets around the world, it's that the



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media coverage itself may not do much for you. However, the credibility it can provide is always valuable. When the *NYTimes* interview finally ran in February of 2009, I noticed almost no spike in web traffic and maybe one or two sales. It's how I *used* the credibility of being featured in the *NYTimes* that actually made the huge impact—not the article itself.

# CHRISTMAS HARO EVE

During my crash course in PR early on, Evan also email-introduced me to a gentleman named Peter Shankman from Help A Reporter Out (HARO). This email introduction came with a price, though, and Peter wasn't cheap. You see, Peter had created a huge email list of journalists and sources (in late 2008, approximately 50,000 people were on the list). Journalists would post requests for information and other subscribers of the email would answer those requests. It was a brilliant PR tool, and Peter had placed small text advertisements at the top of the email. I had never considered myself a salesman in the beginning stages of IWYS, but Peter Shankman—*he* was a salesman, and a damn good one at that.

Upon asking for the rates for the text advertisements at HARO, Peter waved success stories from other advertisers in my e-face, saying things like “So-and-so-company gained over 1,000 new customers!” and “John Doe’s business was found by *USA Today*.” He had quotes from happy customers. Lots of fancy media outlet mentions. To Peter’s credit, these things were all 100% true, and the advertising spots worked very well. And then I got to the

## CHRISTMAS HARO EVE

bottom of his email and saw the price: \$1,500.

At that time, even by selling nearly 100 days on the IWYS calendar, I had barely made \$1,500 (selling out January, February, and March netted just over \$2,000). Then came the real kicker. Peter mentioned that the ads were selling so well that the next available spot was in February (two months away!). I can remember forwarding Peter's email to Evan and saying simply ". . .".

I was just that: speechless. How could I afford to spend \$1,500 with no clue that anyone would actually buy IWYS days? And, what if Peter was exaggerating or just sharing success stories that were few and far between? But Evan wasn't going to let my doubt get in the way. He believed HARO would work and told me if it didn't at least make the \$1,500 back, he would pay the difference. That was an offer I couldn't refuse. Resolute, I emailed Peter back and booked the ad spot.

Over the next few days, I was like a kid on Christmas (Two Months Long) Eve. With each passing day came more and more impatience. Eventually, Peter sent me an unexpected email.

"Tomorrow's [Dec 22] afternoon spot just opened up. Do you want it?" Faster than you can say *Peter* I had responded "YESSS!" Then the Christmas Eve excitement went into *intense* overdrive. Not only was it *three days from actual Christmas Eve*, now it was Christmas HARO Eve as well. The 12-year-old me would have bounced off the walls like a lunatic. Instead, I handled the excitement like the adult that I am, drinking copious amounts of alcohol and eating my weight in pepperoni pizza. I know it may seem odd that I was this stoked for an ad spot, but in the back of my mind, I knew I needed something to help IWYS take off and hoped this was it.

By the time the ad was supposed to run, I had begun sweating bullets. This was a huge gamble, but instead of trying to hit 21 at a

blackjack table in Vegas, I was trying to sell days on a virtual calendar of me wearing t-shirts.

The ad ran and the immediate spike in traffic was incredible. Over 3,000 unique visitors came through IWearYourShirt.com in a matter of an hour. And the sales. Oh, the sales! Over 50 people purchased days, bringing in over \$8,000 in revenue in less than two hours. I had also landed a handful of new media contacts and interviews. If the Cookie Monster woke up to find his pillow, his sheets, the walls of his house, even his grass, to be made of warm, gooey chocolate chip cookies . . . this would most accurately portray the excitement that ripped through me that evening.

After the HARO smoke cleared and Christmas was over, I felt the mounting momentum as January 1, 2009—the official IWYS launch day—approached. By that time, the IWYS calendar was about 50% sold out, and I hadn't even started wearing the t-shirts yet. I attended a New Year's Eve party wearing my first t-shirt under my sport coat and button-up shirt. I enjoyed my time out with my friends, drank a little extra champagne, and made sure my friends took a couple photos of me enjoying the evening. Then, at 12:01 a.m., I ripped open my button-up shirt like Clark Kent to reveal the first sponsored shirt I would ever wear: Ustream.tv.

Several glasses of champagne later, I stumbled into my house, opened my laptop, and uploaded my first official shirt-wearing photos to IWearYourShirt.com. I published a pre-written hello message on the website, closed my laptop, sent Evan a text message that read something like "And it begins . . ." and went to sleep happy.

# MY FIRST DAY OF (T-SHIRT WEARING) SCHOOL

The next morning, on January 1, 2009, Google Analytics for IWear-YourShirt.com revealed over 1,500 people had already been to the website. I was grinning ear to ear. It felt like my birthday and winning first place in a pancake-eating contest (with a trophy, obviously) all wrapped in to one. For months, I had spent countless hours sending emails and planning for this day. It had finally arrived, and seeing a spike in traffic was just the beginning. There were a few calendar purchases waiting for me in my inbox, as well as a few people waiting to buy who had questions. After answering those few important emails, it was time to document my new t-shirt wearing life. I drove to Chick-fil-A with my Flip video camera suction-cupped to the dashboard. I hit the record button and filmed myself driving and talking about Ustream while heading to breakfast. If this was how every day of my life would feel as a “professional t-shirt wearer,” I was pretty damn pumped!

## CREATIVITY FOR SALE

Throughout the rest of the day, I answered questions through email and Twitter, posted photos on Facebook, and got ready for my first official live video show on Ustream. When the show went live at 3:00 p.m. EST, Ustream put it on the homepage of their site, as promised, and over 20,000 people watched. Most of that live show was a blur, but I went 90 minutes over my planned one-hour timeslot, and I felt like I had found my niche.

All the emotional ups and downs, all the “what ifs” that occurred the few months prior, were long gone. This was what I had hoped for on October 10 when I launched and nothing happened; it just took two and half months longer to achieve the feeling of success I had dreamed of. I imagine this is what NASA feels like when they shoot a rocket ship into space . . . Very similar to IWYS, I know.

After that first day, I could feel the momentum and it was incredible. Not only did it feel like months of hard work were finally paying off, but it also felt like my idea was a hit. It felt like I was providing value by doing something that was uniquely suited to me. The real work had just begun, of course, but I’ll never forget that feeling. It’s a feeling I hope everyone gets the chance to experience at least once: the feeling of creating something completely different and completely your own.

# LIFE-(HANGING EMAILS

In August 2009, I received an email from a small business columnist at Reuters who asked if I'd be interested in a five-day, "day in the life" interview article for them. Because he was booked with other stories for several months, we targeted the second week in November 2009, when I happened to be going on a 5-day t-shirt sponsored cruise by MSC Cruises (the MSC standing for Mediterranean Shipping Company). He was already excited to have me journal my life, but with a Caribbean cruise thrown in the mix, he was even happier.

In hindsight, that definitely seems glamorous. Getting paid to wear t-shirts for a living while going on an all-expenses-paid five-day cruise to the Caribbean. Not a bad gig. As the months went by, I had almost forgotten about my Reuters piece, until the same Reuters reporter reached out to me in early October. One of his producers had caught wind of my story and wanted to do an additional feature on me. He wanted to know if they could send a crew to my home in Jacksonville, Florida, to do the story in early November, but when I declined due to a previously booked a trip to New York City to attend a conference, his ears perked up. The Reuters headquarters

was in Times Square, and filming a segment *there* would be even better. Win-win.

In early morning on November 4, 2009, I landed at the LaGuardia Airport, hopped in a cab, and headed to my hotel. Like a little kid, I sat with luggage on my lap the entire hour-long cab ride from the airport to my hotel. I'd been grinning from ear to ear since waking up, and it hadn't faded yet.

I checked in, dropped off my bags, and left my hotel to walk to the Thompson Reuters office in Times Square. I all but skipped from the hotel door to the Reuters office, brimming with excitement. I knew that Reuters handled big news. Global news. This story was going to be *huge* for IWYS. When I got to the Reuters building, I stood outside and stared up at their logo on the building. If a pickpocket was nearby, he could have taken my pants and shoes, and I wouldn't have even noticed or cared (just don't take my t-shirts!).

Inside at the reception area, a nice man in a button-up shirt and starched jeans greeted me with his cameraman counterpart.

"T-Shirt Guy!" he hollered in my direction.

We shook hands, made quick small talk, and walked outside to film the story. He told me he wanted to see me in my "t-shirt wearing element," so I pulled out my Flip video camera and started to film my daily video. I finished my video filming in less than five minutes, and we moved locations.

We stopped in Central Park and Columbus Circle. In each place, I'd work on my laptop. Tweet something silly from my phone. We even talked to a few strangers walking by to see what they thought about a guy who "gets paid to wear t-shirts for a living," but alas, no one had a spaz attack about it. After about an hour of filming all over the city, my Reuters Times Square interview was done.



## LIFE-CHANGING EMAILS

That December, when the IWYS Reuters story went live, it did actually go global as I had dreamt when I walked into their headquarters. Media outlets from Croatia, Australia, Japan, London, France, Brazil, Italy, and many other countries reached out to do follow-up stories. So far, that Reuters story has been syndicated to over 80 countries, many of them running on their featured morning or evening news hours. By December 15, 2009, over 90% of the 2010 IWYS calendar had already been sold, and I had officially earned my world-class-nickname: The T-Shirt Guy.

### ONLINE DATING (SORT OF . . . )

Another life-changing email came from a friend named Jessica Thomas (who owns page 107). Jessica worked for a local Jacksonville business magazine and, in 2009, asked me to talk on a panel for a business/marketing event (which I did, and I melted faces). Another email from Jessica later in the year was different, though.

In it, she referred me to the President of the Advertising Society at University of Florida to speak at one of their events, which I thought was pretty rad. I had given a few talks to high school and college students, and I always loved their spirit and enthusiasm. At the time, IWYS averaged somewhere between 300 and 500 emails a day, and it was rare that I could remember to respond to all of them (even for speaking engagements—terrible, I know). Needless to say (but I'm saying it anyway), I didn't respond to the invitation and neither did the other person on the email: Caroline Winegeart.

A few months later, I received an @ reply on Twitter from one such @ckelso. She asked me if I could follow her so that she could direct message (DM) me about a speaking opportunity. After

looking at her profile, I realized the name looked familiar, but after stalking Google (yes, you may be noticing a pattern), I still couldn't place her.

I clicked the follow button, and she sent me a message asking me if I'd be interested in speaking for the Ad Society at the University of Florida (where she was the President). *Ah-ha!* I remembered the email from Jessica that I never responded to! We exchanged a few direct messages, and I told her that because of how limited my time was, I was charging for speaking gigs—even Skype chats.

Charging for speaking gigs is a tricky topic, and you might be thinking, *“But Jason! It’s a speaking gig to a bunch of college kids! Why would you charge money?”* The answer is this: my time. I was running a (more than) full-time business, and every hour in my day is valuable. Even if your time isn't maxed out right away, if you don't start charging for speaking gigs early on, it's like climbing an epic uphill (both ways in the snow) battle when you *do* realize you need to charge. Besides, I didn't know this Caroline person, and the date she asked me to speak was only a week away. Even though it was a relatively local event, I had to make it a valuable exchange for my time.

We sent a couple more messages back and forth and eventually settled that I would do the gig. When the date and time rolled around a week later, I hopped on Skype.

“Hi! Can you hear and see me?” Her face was slightly too close to the camera, but she was easy on the eyes, so I didn't mind the close-up. She was brunette, with a generous smile and a friendly voice. I sat on my modern brown couch in the IWYS office, and because of all the media and videos I'd done, I had my camera and lighting setup in front of me. In staring at Caroline's face as she adjusted the camera, I was surprised to see the video on the other

end of the call, since most of these “appearances” are one-sided and don’t link up their video.

“Yep, can you hear and see me?” I adjusted myself on the couch and checked again to make sure the video was framed up well.

“Yes, I can see and hear you! Hi Jason, it’s Caroline and the UF Ad Society!” She waved and slowly backed away from the camera, revealing a few hundred college kids sitting in an auditorium.

“Helloooooooooo people.” I leaned forward into my external microphone.

“Thanks so much for taking the time to talk to us! We’ve got you up on a big screen here, and we’re ready to hear all about IWearYourShirt.com.” She was the master of talking while walking backwards, making her way to a seat amongst the other students.

From there, I relayed to these college students how I had crafted this unique business idea, spending almost no money to start it, and telling a bunch of random stories about t-shirts I’d worn and things I’d done in the first two years of business. While I was talking, I couldn’t help but notice myself looking at two people in the audience. One was the attractive brunette (Caroline), who must have flipped her hair about 20 times (and I noticed each one). The other was a young guy who was kind of scrappy looking (he reminded me of myself in college) and wearing a bright orange shirt.

**Fun side note:** *The guy wearing that orange shirt was Burton Hohman (Burtle aka Burt aka the IWYS intern in 2011). Burt was the first person to ask a question after I was done speaking, and when he raised his hand, I called him “Orange Shirt Guy” (because I didn’t know his name). That moniker stuck with Burt for nearly two years on the*

## CREATIVITY FOR SALE

*Internet. Everyone from the IWYS community knew Burt as the “Orange Shirt Guy.” (Spoiler alert: Burt is not the reason this chapter is called online dating.)*

When I finished my talk, Caroline came back close to the video camera and said thank you and goodbye. When I waved goodbye, all I could think was, “Man, if I had known this Caroline person was so attractive, I would have answered her email right away!”

After the call ended, I jumped into my inbox and crafted a witty reply to thank her for having me talk to the Ad Society. I giddily typed out the message in 30 seconds but left it open for about an hour before hitting send so I wouldn’t seem desperate (you gotta play it cool!). It couldn’t have been 10 minutes after I sent the email that Caroline wrote back telling me how great I was and that the students couldn’t stop talking about IWYS. She also replied with some wit of her own, which I definitely took note of.

From those emails, Caroline and I kept talking on Twitter and a few times on the phone when she wanted to pick my brain about career options after college (a clever ploy I now realize was just to lure me in). That summer after she graduated, I found out she was coming back to Jacksonville, where she was conveniently from. We had our first lunch together at a burger place in Jacksonville Beach. Almost immediately after that lunch, we started dating. Six months later, she moved in with me. She’s my partner in life and my best friend, but she’s also one of the few people who truly understands how my crazy brain works. (Thank you, Caroline! I couldn’t be where I am today without your love, your support, and your creativity!)

It just goes to show how important it is to answer your emails. So many unexpected opportunities came through my inbox throughout the course of IWearYourShirt.

## LIFE-CHANGING EMAILS

Some of my closest friends to this day have come from introductions and random emails I've received over the years. People I can relate to. People who go through the same struggles. People who aspire to "make a dent in the universe" (as my buddy AJ Leon says). When you're building a business, it's not only about making stuff happen, but it's also about taking advantage of opportunities as they come to you. I always try to imagine that something exciting and life-changing is just around the corner. (And sometimes, it is.)

T-SHIRTS  
+ LAST NAME  
+ THIS BOOK  
= \$1,000,000

While I enjoyed success early on, IWearYourShirt certainly wasn't all puppies and rainbows when it was an active business from late 2008 to May 2013. I made some mistakes when it came to managing people and managing money, and not making tough decisions fast enough. That being said, I've learned countless life lessons from those experiences, and as painful as some of them were, I wouldn't go back and change them. Those experiences have helped me progress as a person and as a business owner, and they continue to provide value in my life.

Despite some of these hiccups, it's 100% true when I tell you that IWearYourShirt generated over \$1,000,000 in revenue during its time, and I'm extremely proud of that. Most people (or media outlets) share business numbers like that and don't like to share the

expenses that go along with that number. Let me be clear: I certainly don't have a cool \$1M sitting in my bank account. Each year, I had expenses to pay. Both 2009 and 2010 were very profitable years for IWearYourShirt. The company made more money than it spent. In 2011 and 2012, the company unfortunately did not make more money than it spent. Yes, IWYS generated \$350,000+ in 2011, but the expenses (salaries, website costs, promotions, etc.) were over \$370,000. Some big changes were made in 2012 and 2013, and I realized that the business wasn't a scalable or profitable model the way I had been doing it, so I officially retired from "shirt wearing." Whether my financial situation was great or not so fantastic, I always tried to remind myself that at least *I* was in control of my life and running my own business the way I wanted to run it. That was the goal all along, even from the early days when I left the 9–5 world to start Thought & Theory.

However, if there's one simple business lesson I can impart to you from my ups and downs with IWYS over the years, it's to be diligent with your revenue projections and expenses. These things are constantly changing and evolving. You need to be on top of them or hire someone to be on top of them at all times. *And hey, if I can get brands around the world to pay me over \$1,000,000 to wear t-shirts for a living, you can do anything!*

## BUYYMYLASTNAME

I've found myself on countless "Unconventional Ways to Make Money" lists. There was even a Cracked.com article in 2012 that named IWearYourShirt the "6th Least Impressive Way Anyone Ever Got Rich." While that title was a bit over the top, I've come to realize over the years that I take pride in doing things unconventionally.

I embrace it. Doing things unconventionally has been the recurring theme for every single business venture I've started. Where people see rules and a standard way of doing things, I want to run in the opposite direction at a full sprint. Give me boundaries, and all I want to do is push beyond their limits, which is why in the fall of 2012, I found myself yet again sending out emails about a “crazy” idea I had. But before we get to that, let's back up a second.

In April 2012, my mom called me via Skype, which was not a normal occurrence, so I knew something was up. She told me that she and my stepfather were going to be getting a divorce—my stepfather whose last name I had taken. While he had been in my life for 13 years, my Mom was always the person I was closest to. On that call, I made a joke that I wanted to get a divorce, too, and I was going to “*sell my last name!*” That joke must have embedded itself in my subconscious because it eventually resurfaced in November of 2012 (and later in 2013) as BuyMyLastName.com. My idea was that I would legally take the last name of the high bidder. So if PlatypusDepot.com won the auction, I would legally become Jason PlatypusDepotdotcom for one year.

At the time, my sense of identity wasn't tied to my last name at all. Having multiple last names throughout your life will do that to you. Where I had found my greatest sense of self was through the Internet. As weird as that sounds, I built some of the strongest relationships I had by meeting people on Twitter and Facebook, through email and IWYS. So when I launched the auction to sell my last name in November 2012, I made sure one thing was absolutely clear: **It would be profitable!** I kept the expenses extremely low and only paid for website design and development and some PR help. The website design and development was less than \$1,500, and the PR help was a percentage cut of the total last name sale



## T-SHIRTS + LAST NAME + THIS BOOK = \$1,000,000

(no up front money). There was also 10% of the final sale going to a charitable organization. So from the start, I knew that I would pocket at least 75% of the total revenue BuyMyLastName brought in. Look at me, learning from my mistakes!

In 2012, the first auction on BuyMyLastName kicked off with an amazing bang. Within the first 24 hours, the bidding was up over \$30,000. I was stoked! After 40 days, Headsets.com won the last name auction for \$45,500. I had zero expectations going into that crazy business idea, but I knew if nothing else, it would be profitable.

You may be wondering why a company would purchase someone's last name. Well, I banked on the fact that I had spent four long years building a reputation, accumulating a following, and gaining media attention online. I knew that companies wanted to pay me to wear their t-shirts, so I figured selling my last name was something a brand might be interested in as well for the exposure it could get them. After the auction ended, news of my last name sale spread like wildfire. The story of Headsets.com paying \$45,500 for my last name was on the homepage of *USA Today*, CNN, CNBC, *Huffington Post*, and many more. Not only was the media attention good for Headsets.com, but they also reported an increase in sales of \$250,000 in first few months of 2013. Bam! Not too shabby.

With the successful case study of BuyMyLastName in 2012, I decided for 2013 I would auction my name off one more time. The second auction would be exactly the same, except the big selling point would be the byline on the cover of the book you're currently reading. The second auction for my last name ended at \$50,000 and was won by two budding entrepreneurs who built a free surfing app (download "Surfr" on your iPhone!). (At some point this year, I guess I should probably learn to surf, huh?)

As awesome as it was to put a profitable and successful feather

## CREATIVITY FOR SALE

in my business cap, I think the possibilities that BuyMyLastName represents are even more awesome. It's an example of how many business opportunities exist but that people pass up because of the restraints of conventional thinking. At the time I thought of BuyMyLastName, the IWearYourShirt model wasn't operating profitably. But I knew I had value to provide businesses in my audience and my reputation in spite of that fact. By opening myself up to any and all ideas (no matter how crazy), I was able to identify a \$50,000 revenue opportunity for myself.

### HOW I MADE \$75,000 WITH (CREATIVITY FOR SALE

When I finally decided I was going to write a book, you can imagine I didn't want to do it like everyone else. I have friends who are authors, and most of them talk about books as opportunities to create influence for yourself or to market your other products. Not very many of them talk about actually making money by selling copies of their books. Of course, being who I am, I saw this as a challenge. I knew I had a story to tell; now how could I make money doing it?

I'll leave all the "book publishing is broken" stories to people and authors who have more insight about it. Instead, I'll tell you exactly how I put \$75,000 in my bank account before writing a single word of this book or selling a single copy.

#### STEP #1: (ROWDFUNDING

I've been very curious about crowdfunding over the years. Sites like Kickstarter and Indiegogo are brilliant to me. I thought about using Kickstarter for my book initially, but when I started thinking about selling 200-page sponsorships (those super cool 140-character

## T-SHIRTS + LAST NAME + THIS BOOK = \$1,000,000

messages at the bottom of every page of this book), I realized Kickstarter probably wouldn't allow over 200 reward levels. That also seemed like a nightmare to set up and manage. So I set out to build my own crowdfunding website based on the idea that I would put small text advertisements on the bottom of the pages of my book, along with four larger sponsorship opportunities on the covers and inside cover flaps.

### STEP #2: KEEPING EXPENSES LOW

Building a crowdfunding platform of your own can seem like a daunting (and expensive) task. Instead of spending oodles of money and trying to recreate Kickstarter, I sketched out a stripped-down version of a crowdfunding website. I didn't want to worry about fancy things like reward levels; instead, I'd look at selling my page sponsorships like you'd sell a product (t-shirt, mug, bag of coffee) on a website. With this mindset, I was essentially creating a fancy e-commerce website, and I could use my experience selling IWYS days as proof the concept worked. I reached out to my buddy Conrad Decker (who owns page 9 and 85) for his help with this project, and he agreed to help me build SponsorMyBook.com. While it may have looked like a complex website (if you saw it), it was actually just a custom designed Shopify theme. Huzzah! Internet magic!

### STEP #3: SELLING 200+ SPONSORSHIPS

On the day SponsorMyBook.com launched (learn more about my launch process in Chapter 19: Let's Do ~~Lunch~~ Launch), 50+ page sponsorships and both inside cover flaps were sold. In just 24 hours, I made \$18,000 and my book didn't even exist yet. The launch went fairly smooth, but the page sponsorships didn't fly off the shelves

like I'd hoped. What I realized quickly was that I was selling something intangible—something that had never been sold before. (If you're creating a business, I recommend you avoid selling this way; it's a difficult sell!)

Over the course of five months, I sent out over 1,200 emails to potential sponsors, not including multiple email blasts to my existing email lists. With a huge sigh of relief, all of the book sponsorships finally sold, and SponsorMyBook.com ended up netting me \$75,000. It wasn't easy, though. Many times, I didn't think I'd find any other companies who believed in my story or this next crazy project of mine. And who would pay for a book they wouldn't see (or read) for months? But to me, it was worth all the hours and all the "No, thank you" emails I received. With exception to people who get huge book deals, I'm in a very small group of authors who actually make a profit from writing a book. I take great pride in that.

### STEP #4: GOING FORWARD AND SELF-PUBLISHING

One of the biggest reasons I chose not to use a big book publisher with this book was because when I emailed Chris Brogan with the idea for SponsorMyBook, he so poignantly replied saying, "*Self publish your book, there's no reason to split your money with them (book publishers) for pathetic distribution.*" That hit me like a slap in the face. Why on earth would I give any percentage of the profits of selling my book when I knew, as a first time author, a book publisher was barely going to help me sell copies of my book?

To put it in simple terms, would you rather sell 10,000 copies of a book and make 60% of the revenue or 20% of the revenue? I chose 60% and haven't looked back since. (The only reason I don't make 100% of the revenue is because I don't own a printing press and shipping company . . . yet.) Yeah, this book may never hit the

## **T-SHIRTS + LAST NAME + THIS BOOK = \$1,000,000**

shelves of Barnes and Noble, but I don't care because I can't force people to drive there, meander to the Business section, and look for my book amongst hundreds of others. But my book is on the front display of CreativityForSale.com, and I can drive thousands of people to that website for very little money and actually see sales (and profits!).

As we continue throughout this book, I challenge you to think about what value you provide and how you can think beyond how things may have been done before. Instead of seeing boundaries, learn to see opportunities to improve, to create, and to do unconventional things. There is always money to be made somehow, as long as you know the value you provide and you can identify the people who benefit from that value. Selling ad space on t-shirts and last names and the very pages of this book is proof of that fact.

## SECTION 2: BUSINESS STUFF

Hopefully, you've learned a bit about how I turned virtually nothing into something of value, something people were willing to pay for. Now, I want you to discover what that is for you. The following section was written to help you formulate a business doing something that you love. For some of you reading this book, it may be rudimentary information. However, it's also possible that you may read something that sparks an entirely new, awesome business idea that brings you billions of dollars. You don't want to miss out on that, do you? I didn't think so. Read on my friend . . .

## SECTION 3: WE'VE LAID THE FOUNDATION; NOW LET'S ACT

Marketing, social media, product launches, oh my! While the last section was more about getting the fundamentals of your business idea in place, the next few chapters are focused on helping you price and sell your products and/or services. Remember, no one has the "Midas Touch" when it comes to business or marketing. Iteration, trial and error, and just putting your stuff out in the world is the most important part.

## SECTION 4: REFLECTION, CONCLUSION, AND INSPIRATION

We're nearing the finish line, folks. This is the last section of the book, and I want to share some of the "deeper" stuff with you. The wild ride I've been on with IWearY-ourShirt and my other ventures has led me to some conclusions about what I think is important in life, and I've made some big life changes as a result.

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jason SurfrApp (formerly Jason Headsetsdotcom & Jason Sadler) is an unconventional marketer and entrepreneur living in Ponte Vedra Beach, FL. He created IWearYourShirt, a company that used sponsored t-shirts to promote businesses on social media, and in 2012 and 2013, he auctioned off his last name to the highest bidders. Jason has been featured by *The Today Show*, *CBS Evening News*, *USA Today*, and *The New York Times*.

As a creative entrepreneur, it's Jason's goal to always find a way to make a living doing what he loves, and he's developed a passion for helping others achieve that same thing. Jason can often be found traveling to conferences and events where he speaks to audiences about his unique story and helps them learn to think outside the box. If you're interested in having Jason speak at your next event, contact him via email.

Here are some ways to get in touch with Jason and continue to follow his entrepreneurial journey:

Jason's email list: [therebelwithinus.com](http://therebelwithinus.com)

Personal blog: [jasonsadler.com](http://jasonsadler.com)

Twitter: [@iwearyourshirt](https://twitter.com/iwearyourshirt)

Facebook: [facebook.com/jasondoesstuff](https://facebook.com/jasondoesstuff)

Contact email: [jason@sponsormybook.com](mailto:jason@sponsormybook.com)