



Genius Network Interview

Joe Polish, President of Piranha Marketing, Interviews:

MaryEllen Tribby

Expert Marketer, Business Consultant and “Money Honey”

Having It All

***Understanding the Tools that Bring
Success in Business and Balance in Life***



Joe Polish

Joe Polish's Tempe, Arizona office – headquarters for Piranha Marketing – is often referred to by marketing insiders as “action central” for much of the entrepreneurial world. Though he made his fortune in an almost invisible niche by telling carpet cleaners how to crush the competition and turn their small local businesses into money-churning machines, he is now among the most well-known, respected, “complete marketing geniuses” in the world.

Consulting clients from many different countries each happily pay up to \$20,000 a day just to hear his advise. His “boot camps” attract convention-sized audiences full of famous entrepreneurs and many of the “superstars” of marketing and advertising.

In a business environment bristling with false prophets and bad advice, Joe's unique mix of real-world experience and stunning financial success has earned him a spot among the most trusted experts alive. His one-of-a-kind recorded interview series, “The Genius Network” is a “Who's Who” of super-savvy marketing and advertising brilliance.

No one refuses an interview with Joe. He has the gift of gab and the insight of a business veteran who's earned his success. The “best in the biz” seek him out. He knows the good, the bad, and the ugly of what's working – and what's not working – on the Web, in infomercials, in direct response ads and direct mail, in niche marketing, in personal coaching and in every critical area of the entrepreneurial landscape.

The business world is moving faster than ever before. Staying close to the action means paying attention to Joe Polish and Piranha Marketing.



Joe: Hello, this is Joe Polish, president of Piranha Marketing and founder of the Genius Network Interview Series. You're about to hear one of my Genius Network interviews. I just want to thank you for taking the time to listen to this and I hope you find it very useful.

If you want to find out more information about some of the interviews and resources that can help you in your business, you can go to www.JoePolish.com and we have a Joe Polish Recommends section, with all kinds of resources and vendors and services and products that we recommend that could help you in your business. Also, for more useful interviews and a whole list of other people that I've interviewed, you can go to www.GeniusNetwork.com.

Thanks, and enjoy the interview.

Joe: Hello, this is Joe Polish, founder of Piranha Marketing and the Genius Network.

Today, I'm going to be having a fantastic conversation with a good friend of mine and an absolutely brilliant entrepreneur by the name of MaryEllen Tribby. MaryEllen, can you hear me okay?

MaryEllen: I can hear you great. Hi, Joe!

Joe: How are you?

MaryEllen: I'm fantastic. How are you?

Joe: I'm fantastic. So, you've got a cool website that's going to be launching here soon. You are a phenomenal business builder. Let me just give everyone some background of who you are. So, who is MaryEllen Tribby? Then, I'm going to ask her some questions.

She is the proud founder and CEO of WorkingMomsOnly.com, the leading newsletter and website for the empowerment of the working mom.



Prior to founding *WorkingMomsOnly*, MaryEllen was widely recognized as publisher and CEO of *Early To Rise*, where she was responsible for growing the business from \$8-million in sales to \$26 million in sales in just 15 short months.

Before that, she served as president of Weiss Research, where she led the company to \$67-million in sales, from \$11-million, in just 12 months.

Today, because of her impressive track record of generating revenues and profits, she's known in the info publishing world as "The Money Honey," but credits a good part of her success to her traditional New York City publishing career. There, she not only ran divisions at Forbes, Times Mirror Magazines, and Crain's New York Business, but had some of the best direct response marketing mentors in the world.

Due to her superlative direct response skills and her ability to channelize marketing campaigns, MaryEllen is a highly-sought-after business consultant, speaker and author.

Her first book, which she co-authored with Michael Masterson, *Changing The Channel: 12 Easy Ways To Make Millions For Your Business*, hit #1 on Amazon within just 10 hours of its release.

MaryEllen currently resides in Boca Raton, Florida, with her husband of 13 years and their 3 beautiful children, Mikaela, Connor and Delanie.

MaryEllen: And, as of Saturday, our brand new puppy, Cocoa.

Joe: Cocoa. This interview would not even be complete without mentioning Cocoa.

Anyway, you hang out in Florida, you do a lot of cool stuff. You've made millions of dollars for companies you've worked with, for, and that you've built. There are literally God knows how many thousands and thousands of entrepreneurs have made money as a result of your advice.

You are awesome. I've seen you speak several times. We've hung



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out with Richard Branson in a private setting recently, and did a brainstorm group where you and him totally hit it off. You're phenomenal. You just have done so many cool things. On top of that, you teach women how to be great entrepreneurs and lead a balanced life with all of the stuff on their plate.

So, what else? I know you raise money for foundations and you have a lot of important causes. So, to you, business is more than just making money. It's about funding and building a life and creating great contributions in the world. Those are some of the things I want to talk to you about today.

So, what else didn't I mention that people need to know about you, before we teach people how to make some money?

MaryEllen: For me, it's all about having that balance in life. When you have real balance in life, there is no difference between work and fun.

Like you said, when we were hanging out with Richard Branson, was that work or was that fun? Well, that was both, right?

That's when you know that you've got the life you want to have; when you're doing things that are making your business money, and at the same time it's also what you want to be doing. That's the key, especially with WorkingMomsOnly.com.

Working moms have this incredible influence and responsibility, and they've got to get to a point where they've got the life they want to live.

Joe: I think out of all of the different things and individuals and people in the United States, and probably worldwide, the hardest-working people have got to be working mothers and single mothers raising children.

MaryEllen: Absolutely. Absolutely.

Joe: So, I think what you're doing is phenomenal. Out of all of the different things that you could focus and spend your time on, and you being a



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mother, why did you resonate with working moms? Why has that become your core group, your core audience that you want to help? You're so darned passionate about it.

MaryEllen: I am. Because I've been so blessed. I have 3 great kids, and they're healthy and they're smart and they're compassionate. They're good kids. I'm very fortunate I have a wonderful spouse. I have a wonderful partner.

So, when I would run companies, I'd be CEO of a \$70-million company or a \$30-million company, I'd also be speaking around the world and writing books. A lot of times, working moms would come up to me and they would say, "How can you do this? How do you do it?"

You know what? You can do it. It's just that you really have to understand the tools. That's why I want to give working moms the tools; they deserve the tools because of the responsibility that they have in this world.

You know what? We can. We can have it all. You don't have to pick one or the other. You don't have to pick between your husband, your kids, and your career. I know my kids are better off because I have a career that I'm great at and that I believe in, that I have causes – and in my case, I can do anything because of that.

So, it's just something I've always wanted to do. I've always wanted to go out there and start this company, and finally it's come to fruition. Within a year, I'm going to have a community of a million working moms.

Joe: You're able to do that. I want to say this right at the very beginning here, that it does not matter if you're not a working mom. You can be a guy running a business, starting up a business. MaryEllen is amazing, and so knowledgeable, and has such a track record of I shouldn't just say successes. You've had giant successes, but anyone that will tell you the truth, and you're one of those people that will tell the truth, will tell you here's many, many failures that you have to figure out, mistakes that are made, you have to go through in order to get to the successes.



It does not matter who you are. You are a full-blown direct response marketer, and you know how to make people money. Clearly, your track record has proven that.

So, assuming you're not driving, make sure you have something to write on, because you're going to want to take notes. I can assure you I'm going to ask MaryEllen some questions, and she's going to give you some really, really awesome tips.

She also has her site, which has a lot more, which I'll recommend everyone check out, at WorkingMomsOnly.com.

The last thing I'm going to say before we get into moneymaking stuff, I heard you say, in a presentation at Del Rey Beach, at one of the EarlyToRise events that I recently attended and I was speaking at, which you invited me to, you said, "150-million homeless children are out there," and you believe working mothers have more influence on the world than anything. That's one of the things that motivated you to purchase the domain *WorkingMomsOnly* before you even launched it.

MaryEllen: Yes. Yes. When you think about that, like I said, I have 3 kids, and my 9-year-old son couldn't survive a night in the backyard. I'm not kidding about this.

Yet, there are 6-year-olds and 7-year-olds and 8-year-olds on the street. They do not have a home. Many do not have any parents looking after them. This is just fundamentally wrong.

In conjunction with *WorkingMomsOnly*, we have a foundation called "The Good News Kids," and that's going to build sanctuaries for children. Not orphanages, but sanctuaries where they can feel safe and secure and actually be tucked in at night by somebody who loves them.

It was just something that it's at a point in my life, I've been really fortunate. I've gone through the corporate career, the entrepreneur career. The consciousness has been raised and I have to give back.

Joe: Gotcha. Gotcha. That's great. There's so many different things I could talk to you about. But I'm going to really focus it on making business



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work and doing it with the least amount of stress and work and hardship and mistakes as one can avoid. That's why I want to borrow your expertise and your brain on our conversation here.

I've heard you say the biggest entrepreneurial curse is having 4 projects or name the multiple amounts, but let's just say 4 projects halfway done yield zero revenue, one project 100% finished brings cash in the door.

We live in a day and age where there are so many things vying for our attention. There's even a book that was written called *The Attention Economy*, and people's attention is everywhere.

I think that statement, the biggest entrepreneur curse, which you said, "4 projects halfway done yield nothing, one project 100% finished brings cash in the door." Can you speak to that? Before we go into techniques and methods and list-building and offers and copy, and all of these things I'm going to ask you about, what do you mean by that?

MaryEllen:

This is something I've seen for years and years and years, and a lot of people almost kind of joke about it and say, "I'm a serial entrepreneur." But that's not what a serial entrepreneur is.

Basically, I see this all the time, that people get a great idea to launch a new product, whether it's an Internet marketing product or a health product or a financial product or write a book, or write an ebook, and they start on this project and halfway through something else hits them, another great idea hits them. So, they put that first project to the side and they start on the second one. And halfway through that, the next great idea hits them.

In the meantime, they've got 3, 4, 5 projects that are almost complete, but it's doing nothing for their bottom line. It's doing nothing for their business.

What it is actually doing, it's frustrating everyone around them. If they've got a team, their entire team is frustrated and miserable, at this point, because they know that these 4 other great ideas are yielding zero revenue to the bottom line of that organization.



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Meanwhile, they're trying to manage the entrepreneur on their next project.

So, you know what? I'm not a big planner, but I believe in a timeline. Just putting that visual representation out there, a timeline for your projects, that you can get it done, market it, move on.

It doesn't mean that you can't work on multiple projects in the same time period, but you've got to have a timeline for that project, so that you know on X date, it's done, it's yielding money for your company.

Joe: How do you actually come to that mindset-wise first, because there certainly are the mechanics, and there's lots of support materials, including many that you've created, that assist people in their thinking.

Mindset-wise, when someone is excited about different things, and let me just be very transparent here, I'm a guy that's always loved bright, shiny objects. When I hear about a new opportunity, oh my God, I get excited about it. I think it's super-cool. I see opportunities in everything. I see so many different options.

The challenge is when you have 1,000 options, you don't have any options. That's what a good friend of mine, Richard Rossi, says.

That's why it so resonates with me when I hear you talk about this. When I've seen you say this in audiences filled with hundreds of people, everyone shakes their head. This is something that everyone relates to, especially now, when there's so many different things to read and look at. How do you get to that point where you just narrow your focus and can stick with something?

MaryEllen: This is what I do. We were talking before. I'm a big believer in working out. That's the first thing I do every single day. I work out. Whether at the gym, on the elliptical, the tread, or if I'm riding my bike, whatever I'm doing, I'm thinking about ideas.

When I come back from working out in the morning, the first thing I do is I have a list and I go to my list on my computer, about the ideas and the projects I want to work on, and I make sure I outline what I just



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thought about, and I get it down there.

So, it's there for the day. I haven't lost it. I know what it is. Then I continue on what I'm working on. At the end of every single week, I look at that list and I prioritize.

So, what may happen while I'm creating the product that I'm working on, and that's coming to fruition, the order in which I work on the next one may change, and that's okay because I haven't started working on them yet.

Joe: Okay, I gotcha.

MaryEllen: So, don't lose it. That's what everybody thinks: if they don't do it right now, they lose it. But it's not. It's not gone forever. Gosh, like I said, I bought the URL WorkingMomsOnly.com 2.5 years ago. It was always on the back burner. It was there. I thought about it. I wrote things about it every day. But I was concentrating on and had a commitment to EarlyToRise, and I knew I wanted to fulfill that commitment to EarlyToRise, to my team, to Michael Masterson.

But I didn't lose this project.

Joe: So, it's not guiltting yourself into thinking you've got to do it right now, it's just prioritizing.

MaryEllen: Absolutely. That's what a balanced life comes down to. We all have the same 24 hours in a day. Right? Nobody gets more hours. We all have that. It's what we do with those hours that hits our success meter.

Joe: Out of all of the things that you've learned in hanging around some of the most successful people on the planet, having created a tremendous amount of success for yourself, what are some of the biggest attributes of successful entrepreneurs that make it and failures that may work really hard but just never get any traction, never get it off the ground?



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MaryEllen: By far, the first thing is this is why most entrepreneurs fail. Right? It's not because they don't do the work, it's because they do the wrong work.

Joe: The wrong work.

MaryEllen: It was so funny. I was writing, last night, a story about how I created my business from scratch – from scratch, from my house, this brand new business. I was saying that a friend of mine quit her corporate job to become a marketing consultant. The first thing she did was she went out and she rented office space. I said, “Why are you renting office space?” She goes, “The housing market's in the crapper. I can get office space for \$1,500 a month that would normally cost me \$5,000 a month.”

So she spent a month and a half looking for space, then she spent another couple of weeks decorating the space. Meanwhile, she didn't work on her website, she didn't work on a sales page, she didn't work on cultivating clients, any of that stuff. Those 6 weeks that she started that business, basically, she had an office with no revenue coming in the door.

My first same 6 weeks, I have a great laptop, I can take it anywhere. I work by my pool, I work in my dining room, I work wherever I want. What do I have? I have a website, I have customers, I have a sales letter, I have product.

So, you've got to prioritize. In business, it's the same thing. What's going to yield you money?

So, that's why Michael Masterson taught this ready/fire/aim approach. You don't just aim, aim, aim, aim, aim. You just go. You fire. You ready, fire, aim. You do it, you see what works, you see what sticks.

In *Changing The Channel*, in the book, we have a whole section on failed product launches. Why do they fail? Because people spend hundreds of thousands of dollars developing a product before they even know if it's going to resonate with the market.

As a marketer, you have to assume that you know nothing. The market will tell you what they want. Of course, most people market what people think they need. You don't market what people need, you market



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what people want.

Joe: That is such a difficult thing for non-marketers to get and so obvious to marketers. I wanted to ask you your definition of marketing, because I think that is one word that is so critical in business. I think it is the most important skill set to develop and spend your time mastering. That's where all of the money comes from.

It is also one of these skills that is misinterpreted. There's a lot of dumb marketing in the world. There's a lot of ineffective marketing in the world. There's a lot of people that teach a lot of that ineffective marketing and call themselves experts.

A lot of people think that, "Oh, I don't want to have to learn how to market this stuff or have to sell something," as if it's a bad word, which I think is hysterical.

So, what's your definition of marketing?

MaryEllen: Okay. The whole broad term of marketing, essentially, the process is associated with promoting the sales of goods or services in exchange for money. Right? That's the broad, broad marketing definition.

But what we are, what we do is direct response marketing, which is very different from branding. Direct response marketing is designed to solicit an immediate response that's specific and quantifiable.

That basically means dollar out, dollar in. You send something out the door. When it comes back, you know how it came back, and it comes back immediately.

It's very different from branding, which is kind of creating an image, something the customer remembers. The next time they need sneakers, they're going to remember you. They're going to remember Nike.

But what we do is we want to send something out the door of direct response marketing and get a response back immediately.

Joe: Gotcha. Direct response, I've never seen a situation and, of course, I've



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not been to college for years and I don't know if you know this, but I failed owning and operating a small business when I went to a community college, so I've never gotten any real college education, per se.

I remember the little bits that I was taught. It was always brand building and big, huge, large corporations that had large sums of money to dump down a black hole, and that would be what they're trying to teach people that aren't even in business yet, about what marketing and advertising is.

There's so many things that already leave people with a handicap and a misperception of what they should do.

You have a chapter in your book that you did with Michael Masterson, *Changing the Channel*, which is direct response television, why Super Bowl ads don't work. I wanted you to just comment on that statement, "Why Super Bowl ads don't work." What do you mean by that?

MaryEllen: I mean they're ads to the masses. They're ads to the masses, and they have no particular intent. Again, they're going out there, hopefully they're thinking, "Somebody will remember me someday." Every Super Bowl ad loses money.

These kinds of ads are created by advertising agencies. Most advertising agencies aren't direct response marketers. They're out to win the big awards. They're out to win, "Oh, that was the funniest commercial I've ever seen!" or "That was the most beautiful direct mail package."

When they win awards, it has nothing to do with the response and the success of their ad or their direct mail packages, or their email campaigns. It only has to do with the look and feel of their ad.

So, Super Bowl ads don't work because no one is out there tracking results for this.

There was one ad that ran on Super Bowl, and it was for a website. It was like the only direct response marketing ad through Super Bowl.

You know you get all of those emails all the time, Joe, that they're



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so big, so phony, and you hate getting them, email marketers that say, “I’m extending this because the response is overwhelming and it crashed my server,” and that’s always really insulting to me because our subscribers are much, much smarter than that.

But this was the one time, the one time that they just did not anticipate how successful their ad would be. They were brand new. They were direct response marketers. They had never done TV before. They had always done mail or email, so they’d never done TV. It worked, because it’s direct response. So, it really did crash their servers. They actually were successful with their ad, because it was a direct response marketing ad, not this big branding, image-building ad.

Joe: That’s great. What I love about this is whenever someone with a track record and with experience can challenge the mass assumption of what advertising and marketing is all about, and prove that a lot of people are wrong, a lot of big companies, the way they’re successful has very little to do with their “marketing and advertising.” It has to do with deep pockets and years and years of stuff.

There are a lot of large companies that were started with direct response, and that’s what gave them a foothold. Then once they got their roots in the ground, for some bizarre reason, they changed to image advertising and brand building. People think, “Oh, that’s why they’re successful. That’s why McDonald’s is really big,” blah, blah, blah.

Anyway, that’s great.

The reason I wanted to bring that up right from the very beginning is wherever you’re at in your business, if you’re an experienced business owner, if you’re a working mom that wants to start a business, learn direct response. That’s what’s going to be the fuel.

You’ve worked with some incredible copywriters and direct response marketers. You talk about mastering the key elements guaranteed to boost response in any marketing campaign, and you talk about lists, you talk about offers, you talk about copy.

I want to ask you about all 3 of those things, if you could kind of



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go through that, those key elements, because those are so crucial.

MaryEllen: These are the most crucial elements in all of your marketing campaigns. These are the only 3 factors that you need in every single campaign, regardless whether that campaign is on TV, on the Internet, in the mail, on the phone. It doesn't matter. You have to understand your list, your offer and your copy.

This is the funny part. If you ask 10 people, "What's the most important part of those 3 things," 9 people will say to you, "The copy is the most important part."

Here again, guess what? It's not. The most important part of any single marketing campaign is your list. When I say "lists," basically your audience. Who are you reaching? Who are you going after?

I love to do this fun little thing, because it kind of drives the point home. People say, "Oh no, that's not true. It's the copy." I'm going to prove to you, right now, it is the list.

So Joe, let's pretend that I am selling these wonderful, beautiful brassieres. For the sake of this exercise, I have the best copy in the world. I have the best copy in the world for these brassieres. I'm going to sell you a brassiere, right?

The offer is fantastic. First, let's talk about the benefits of this brassiere.

This brassiere is going to make you look 10 pounds slimmer. It's going to guarantee that it attracts a man in your life in the next 30 days, or double your money back. I'm only going to charge you \$9.95. Are you going to buy this brassiere from me?

Joe: Well, no, because I'm a dude.

MaryEllen: Exactly. Is that my point? You're the wrong list. You were the wrong audience.

I have the best copy. Not only that, I'm going to actually give you 3 brassieres for \$9.95. Not just white, but red, black, and leopard. But



If you don't go to the right audience your campaign will not work.

you're still not biting because you are not the audience.

Joe: With the leopard, you're now getting me excited.

MaryEllen: I should have stopped. But you're not my audience. Okay?

So, you can have fantastic copy and a great offer, but if you don't go to the right audience your campaign will not work.

So, the next most important element in any campaign is actually your offer. You can have great copy and you could be going to the right people, but if you botch up that offer you're not going to get the results.

This is where a lot of entrepreneurs make mistakes, because they don't spend enough time on crafting their offer.

In *Changing The Channel*, and if we have time here, I've got 10 tests that your offer should pass to make sure it's effective.

Joe: I want to come back to those, because I think a 10-test thing would leave everyone listening to us bedazzled with valuable, actionable stuff.

MaryEllen: Good. Good. Okay. Copy is the third most important element.

Now, here's the funny part, because everybody always hears this line that copy is king, and it is king. It's king because copy is actually the most creative and the most difficult to accomplish.

Offer and list are a scientific part of your marketing. Copy is the creative part, and that's why they say copy is king.

So, you've got to understand these 3 elements. This is what I call the holy grail of marketing: list, offer and copy.

Joe: Great. Can I comment on that, too? When I first started in my business years ago, I tried a bunch of different things in the very beginning. What I ended up stumbling on and sticking with – and you know my story, but some people don't that would be listening to us – I started out as a dead-broke carpet cleaner, funding my business off credit cards. I did a good job. I got certified, I got training. There actually is training on how to be



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a professional cleaner. There's a lot to it, like any industry.

I was good at what I was doing and I treated people well. The problem was I was broke. A positive mental attitude and all of the things that I was reading and doing, and being good at delivering a great service, that was irrelevant if I didn't have people paying me money.

So, I literally survived on credit cards and I was going deeper and deeper into debt.

In the process of trying to switch into another business or looking at other opportunities, some person said to me, "Well, if other people are making money in your industry and you're not, there's nothing wrong with the business you're in, there's something wrong with you."

That really stuck with me. I thought, "Huh. I've got to figure out what the heck am I not doing." What I discovered I wasn't doing was I just simply didn't know how to sell. I didn't know how to market.

What you just went through (list/offer/copy) that was my first introduction into figuring out how to make a business work. There's this saying that Dan Kennedy says. Many people say it, but I first heard Dan Kennedy say it back in the early 90's, where "The best message in the world is useless if you shout it at deaf ears."

That's exactly your example with the brassiere that you just talked about. You could have the best offer, the best message to me, the best copy, but I'm deaf ears to that because I'm not interested in that.

So, list is critical. Mediocre copy will perform fantastic, if you have a starving audience. But for the most part, when you combine a great list, a great offer and great copy, you have an advantage that 99% of business owners never have, because they simply won't learn this. That's what's so great about you, MaryEllen, is that you not only have mastered this, you're taking it to working moms, and out of all of your experience of taking it to entrepreneurs in general.

What I'll say on copy is copy is the oxygen that makes your advertising and your marketing, be it online or offline, work.

Before we go deeper into it and I do want you to talk about the 10 test thing you mentioned, I want you to talk about a couple of people that



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you've worked with, so that people understand the depth and the importance of these items: 1) Michael Masterson, and then 2) copywriters. You know many copywriters. You know Paris, Clayton Makepeace. I'd like to talk about them, because I'm going to make sure that Clayton and Paris both listen to this interview.

MaryEllen:

Let's actually start with Clayton, because Clayton I've known for 10 years, and he's one of my dearest, dearest friends. I met Clayton when I went to work for Weiss Research. When I started at Weiss, I started as a marketing director. I didn't start as the president.

But this is the funny part, because it's exactly what we talked about. Clayton was there, and he was writing copy. This is direct mail days. This is before big Internet days. When Clayton was writing copy, they couldn't mail more than 10,000 pieces a month because the person doing the list selection at the time just couldn't get it out there. They didn't understand the process and the science behind list selection.

So, I go to Weiss and I take over doing the list, now Clayton's writing the copy. We literally go from 10,000 pieces a month to a million pieces a month, to 2-million pieces a month, to 3-million pieces a month. Same copy as before I got there, when they were mailing 10,000 pieces. But here we go to 3-million pieces a month.

This is the key. When we did this, and we'll get back to copy here in a little bit, because this is when you know you have great copy, when you're willing to put it in the mail. Right? That's when you know you have great copy.

A lot of people online now, they confuse themselves by thinking, "Well, it's pretty much free for me to send this copy out, so it doesn't have to be great. But one of your tests for knowing that you have good copy and to send it to your email list is saying to yourself, "Would I put this in the mail?" Because if you put it in the mail, then it's going to cost you 50¢ to every single person that you mail it to. So, if you're going out to 100,000 people or 200,000 or 500,000 people, you're dropping \$250,000.

But entrepreneurs confuse themselves saying, "Well, it's not



When you understand the architecture of your copy, then the copy will really come together.

costing me anything. So, even though the copy kind of sucks,” and they know it does, “I’m going to send it anyway.”

But what you’re doing is there’s a huge opportunity cost for your list, and it’s kind of insulting for your subscribers. So, before you send your copy out say, “Would I put it in the mail?” That raises the bar a little bit.

Joe: What you just said, where it could be insulting to your audience, it just reminds me of almost like how a romance could go bad because you don’t think you need to say hello anymore or “I love you,” or send a little card or bring flowers every once in a while. It’s like, “Eh, it doesn’t much matter.”

Because you basically were raised in the direct mail world and you saw people – and your own money – putting literally thousands of dollars, in some cases millions of dollars spent on marketing, that’s one of the biggest mistakes that I see Internet marketers that didn’t grow up in that world. They’re just promiscuous with how they put stuff out there. They don’t think about it, because they’ve never had to put their money on the line.

But what you’ve just stated is you’re losing money because you’re destroying the reputation and the bond you have with your list if you just are throwing stuff together.

MaryEllen: Yes. One of the things about copy, what you have to understand about copy more than anything else, is the architecture of copy. How copy is supposed to flow. What’s the job of a subject line? What’s the job of a headline? What’s the job of the first line in your lead?

When you understand the architecture of your copy, then the copy will really come together. If we want to give everybody a resource, probably the best book on that is *Breakthrough Advertising*, by Gene Schwartz. Right?

Joe: Yeah, unbelievable. I sell it at my office, the guys at Boardroom. It’s



unbelievable.

MaryEllen: So, one of the best books. If you are in the business, if you're an entrepreneur and you're selling direct response online or on TV or radio or in the mail, you have to read this book. It's one of the books that when I was CEO of EarlyToRise, every single person who came into my company to work there, I had them read the book before they started.

Joe: That's great. *Breakthrough Advertising*, by Gene Schwartz.

Okay, so you were going to say Clayton Makepeace, before I rudely interrupted you.

MaryEllen: Okay. So, the best thing about Clayton was he's just not a copywriter. He's a marketing strategist. So, I learned a lot from Clayton. We were partners. We essentially spoke every single day, at 7:30 in the morning. That's how our day started, to make sure that – because with copywriters you need to keep them on track – we had Clayton on track, and just to brainstorm first thing in the morning.

So, it's just a great way to work with your copywriters. But I learned a lot from Clayton.

Another great entrepreneur that I learned a lot from, and most people probably won't know him, is Dick Benson, who is a real old-time direct marketer king. This is the guy who was teaching the Gary Benzivengas and the John Carltons and the Claytons.

Anything by Dick Benson. Of course, he passed away years ago, and he was in his late 90's, I believe. Probably one of the most brilliant direct marketers ever to live.

I had the opportunity, when I was in New York, working at Forbes and Crains and Time Mirror magazines, to actually work with him. He's an amazing person.

Joe: That's phenomenal, because a lot of people may not know these names, but these are the giants of the marketing world. When you get an oppor-



Some companies that are gigantic were built on good copy in a sales letter.

tunity to learn and work directly from those people, and you pay attention and you take to heart, how could you not become incredibly skilled? That's why individuals like yourself, you now are out there teaching and sharing what it is you've learned.

A lot of those people never really spent a lot of their career teaching other people. They were out just working. Gene Schwartz was a secret weapon for Boardroom Inc., which you're friends with everyone at Boardroom, as am I. Marty Edelston and Brian Kurtz, and Margie, and all of those people.

There are incredible techniques and methods, and now, that's what you're actually teaching *WorkingMomsOnly*, which has never brought this sort of insight and knowledge to the world before.

Clayton is an example of one thing I'd like to ask you about. Most people, when they think of the business heroes of the world, they see famous CEO's and people that have written books, and that sort of stuff. But rarely do copywriters get the recognition – or even copy in general – that it deserves.

Some companies that are gigantic were built on good copy in a sales letter.

Let's take one of my clients, Bill Phillips, who created a company, EAS. He bought the company EAS and built it to a giant multimillion-dollar sports supplement company. He wrote a book called *Body For Life*.

That entire company, he sold it for \$300-million after he built it up over a couple year period. But it was all built with direct response marketing, all with sales letters, all with promotions. Most people would never have any idea that many of these companies even exist.

What could you say about copywriters and copy in general? Why do you think it's just not one of the main things that would be taught say in a marketing course in college? When someone starts a business, the difference between Richard being broke could be a really awesome sale letter or great copy and direct mail on a website, on an email, why doesn't it get the respect and acknowledgement that it so not only deserves, but is so critical to someone's success.



A
great
copywriter
is like a
brain
surgeon...

MaryEllen: It's so critical. It's amazing that people have this fear. I'll tell another story.

When I was at Weiss and I was working with Clayton, people were pissed that we were paying him so much money. I would say to them, "Do you get it? Do you get that this money wouldn't be coming in the door if we didn't have a great copywriter?"

A great copywriter is like a brain surgeon or a heart surgeon. Right?

Joe: Right.

MaryEllen: There's a lot of copywriters out there that are almost kind of that general doctor, that general MD. Then a great copywriter, which there are a handful, are like that brain surgeon, and they can do things other copywriters cannot do.

Joe: You're so right. Marty Edelston, when I interviewed him, he's the founder of Boardroom, he's like, "I pay my copywriters more than I pay myself."

MaryEllen: Yes! Yes!

Joe: Running a \$100-million-a-year company, and he has that attitude. He's like, "And I'm glad to do it, because they deserve it."

How many business owners not only don't have that attitude, but it wouldn't even cross their mind? For some people, this is the first time they've even heard a statement like what you just said.

MaryEllen: Right. Right. It does, it blows my mind that people object to this. But if you want to make money, you've got to get a great copywriter. To get a great copywriter, you've got to understand good copy.

Joe: How does one know what good copy is? Clearly, they could read your



80% of
people
buy from
just
reading
the
headline
and lead.

MaryEllen:

book and they could go through your website, and they could start learning it, which I hope everyone does.

But what are some ideas? How do you know?

The best thing that you could do, there's things out there that are called "swipe files." A lot of people have them. Clayton has them, AWAI has them, John Carlton has them.

Basically, they're files of great copy that they're going to quantify it, they're going to say, "This sales letter generated \$1-billion. This sales letter generated \$100-million," and they're going to tell you what worked.

When you start looking at sales letters, really successful sales letters, you're going to see what they have in common. You're going to see that they follow the same architecture. They all start with a great headline.

A headline and a lead is 80%. Right? 80% of people buy from just reading the headline and lead. They don't even get into the body.

So, a great headline and lead is the most important thing you can do in copy. You're going to notice how many sentences a great headline is, how many paragraphs is a great lead, what's incorporated there, do they have benefits and credibility and track record and proof? Are all of those things incorporated into that lead?

But you've got to do your research. Just get some swipe files, look at great sales letters, see what they have in common. You'll be able to recognize that.

The other thing is I wrote a great article that's on WorkingMomsOnly.com, that's called something like "The Marketing Director's Guide To Working With Outside Copywriters," because you're not going to always get a Clayton. You probably won't get a Clayton or you won't get a John Carlton or somebody like that. But you will get good copywriters.

If you go out and hire them, you want a copywriter who understands direct response marketing. You want a copywriter who asks for royalties. It doesn't mean you're always going to pay them royalties,



You
don't want

a one
night
stand
here.

You
want

a
long-term
relationship.

but if they don't think their copy is worth royalties, you don't want to work with them.

Joe: That is a great statement, because a lot of people I talk to that are business owners are like, "How can I get a copywriter, a cheap one, without having to pay royalties?" I'm just like, "Why the hell would you not want your copywriter incentivized by results?"

MaryEllen: Right. The other thing you want to look for is you want a copywriter who knows the results of copy for their other clients. People have said, "I've written for American Express and I've written for Disney and I've written for this." I said, "How did that copy do?" They said, "Oh, I don't know."

Somebody you want to work with, you want somebody who's interested in your success, not a one-time.

Again, it's relationships. It's building any relationship. You don't want a one night stand here. You want a long-term relationship.

Joe: That's great. Such good advice. Everyone should go to your website and read that article, because I do not write a lot of my copy. I hire other copywriters to do it. I learned how to write copy. It's painful for me, meaning it takes time. It's a skill.

I think one of the reasons people don't learn it is they're not willing to take the time to actually do it. But you can find and hire copywriters and, in many cases, they will be the difference between being successful and not successful.

However you need to crank out and create killer copy, get it done, if that means you learn how to do it yourself. I know, MaryEllen, that you guide people through it.

If they read *Changing The Channel*, they would learn a tremendous amount about this; if they would read any of the books that you already mentioned. I've certain interviewed John Carlton and Paris, and I'm going to interview Clayton, and I've interviewed Gary Halbert and Kennedy, you name it. I love copy. Copy, again, is the oxygen. I



Will the prospect understand exactly what they get and how to get it?

think it's so, so critical.

Okay, you talked about the 10 tests that your offer must have in order, I guess, to be effective. So, what are they?

MaryEllen: Alright, let's go through them.

1) *Is your offer specific?* Will the prospect understand exactly what they get and how to get it?

2) *Is your offer exclusive?* Are you making your offer only to a select few or are you making the same offer to everybody?

3) *Is your offer valuable?* Will your prospects perceive your offer to be value to them? Your offer might be inexpensive for you to make, but it must have high perceived value to your customers.

4) *Is your offer unique?* Is the deal you're offering only available through your business?

5) *Is your offer useful?* Your offer can be exclusive, but unless it's unique, it's not useful.

6) *Is your offer relevant?* Do the prospects actually want what you're offering them?

7) *Is your offer plausible?* Some offers sound too good to be true, so that's sometimes going to make you look a little silly.

8) *Is your offer easy to acquire?* I've seen this time after time. People have this great copy, and they don't give their prospects a way to buy it. They make them go through 24 pages before they actually let them buy.

Make sure your offering to let them buy throughout the copy. Make sure your 800 numbers are clear. Make sure your links are working, all those kinds of things.

Joe: Don't have the sales prevention department running your show.

MaryEllen: Exactly.

9) *Is your offer urgent?* Do you have a deadline? Do you have an early bird special? Are you only going to let 100 people in, 250 people in?



If you
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tests,
you're
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dynamite
offer.

And then last, 10) *does your offer have a guarantee?* This, without a doubt, strengthens your offer.

I just said before, if I'm selling brassieres and they don't make you look 10 pounds slimmer, I'm not just going to give their money back, I'm going to double their money back.

Make sure you have a guarantee that no one could resist.

So, if you can pass all 10 of those little tests, you're going to have a dynamite offer.

Joe: I just want to point this out. If people use this as a checklist every time they're sitting down and they're going to make an offer to someone to buy their stuff or visit their website or whatever the call to action is, this could be for profit or it could be raising money for a charity, if they really went through this, what do you think this would actually do in terms of increasing the possibility and chances that they're going to have success with people taking them up on their offer?

MaryEllen: Oh, my gosh! I just wrote a sales letter the other night, and I actually took out the same presentation that I have right in front of me, right now, because I can't remember everything that's in my book or everything I've ever written, so I actually took this out. I have it bound in a binder. I took it out and I went through everything, and I'm like, "Ooh, guess what? You know what? I don't know if this is urgent enough." I had to go back into my offer and rewrite it.

These are things you have to do. If you're only doing one or 2 of these in an offer, that's not enough. It's not enough.

Joe: Gotcha. So, if someone has never really sat down and written a sales letter before, and they've got a business idea, say they're already in business but it's not where they know their business purpose or life purpose really is, and they want to start something new, I think a great exercise, if someone wants to get into a new business or sell a new item, or sell something, is to sit down and write the sales letter first. Don't



She has an idea, and it's never gone beyond.

worry about it being perfect. Sometimes you have to have the silly thoughts in order to get to the great thoughts. You just sit down and write.

That's one of the recommendations I make to people. Just write the darned letter. "I have an idea. I want to sell this, I want to sell that." "Do you have a sales letter?" "No, but I have this great idea."

I have one friend, and she is, I swear, the nicest, sweetest person. She has this idea, I don't want to publicly mention her because she listens to all of my interviews and I don't want to irritate her too much. You might know who I'm talking about.

MaryEllen: I think I do.

Joe: She has this idea to really help a lot of people become more aware of who it is they are, and she's got this message she's been talking about, and it's got a symbol attached to it and everything, and I've said, "Sit down and just record an audio about what does it do for a person. Have that transcribed, turn it into a sales letter. Sit down and write a letter about what this is, what it will do for people."

I've known her for years. She has gone to seminar after seminar after seminar. Knowing me, I've taken her to \$10,000-a-person events and stuff, and she has not produced anything. She has an idea, and it's never gone beyond. She has nothing to sell. She has a lot of stuff she talks about. She's so sweet and she's so caring, but she just doesn't put anything together, including anything that will sell.

I think it's a fundamental psychological fear of success. But beyond that, and I know I may sound like I'm rambling. The point is I think a lot of people are in that space, in varying degrees. What do you do with that? I think they should just sit down and write a letter or talk the letter into a recorder, if they can't do it any other way, and get it transcribed.

But what are your thoughts on that sort of stuff?

MaryEllen: Absolutely. The funny part is that before I actually put a point on a



Today,
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than any
other
time...

product or even develop a product fully, I get the sales letter written first, because that's where all of the ideas come from.

As you're writing the letter, you're going to think about, "Oh, you know what else would be a great benefit in here? This." So, you add that into the letter.

So people do it wrong. They think they actually have to make their product first and get a price point on it, then they write the copy to fit the product.

But that's wrong. Write the sales letter, then develop the product to exceed the expectations of the sales letter.

Joe: That is awesome. You said it more eloquently than I certainly attempted to do.

The point I want to make, and that you just said, is when you write the copy, the copy creates a better copy. The copy creates a better service.

Part of selling something or creating a new business or starting something has to do with canning and cloning what's in your head, what's about it, why you think it's so valuable, what the offer is. If you do that, you'll end up with a better product.

Like you said, you can actually create the product to exceed what the copy is. Then you're in the situation of under-promising and over-delivering, which is usually not the experience that most people have.

MaryEllen: Right. Today, it's so much easier to start a business than any other time, ever, because of the Internet. Because you have access to every single one of your competitors, you can see what's working.

People, again, the entrepreneurs, they make this mistake. They call up their buddy and they say, "Will you comp me on your product? I'm going to start something like that. Comp me on your product." That's the wrong thing to do.

You subscribe to your competitors. Then, you watch what they do. You watch their sales funnel. Then you know what you do? You do the same thing. You do it better, cheaper and faster. That's how you beat your



You've got
to be a bull
in a bear
market.

competition.

Don't go and ask people to comp you on things. You pay for them, you look at them, you study them, and then you do it better, faster and cheaper.

Joe: That's great. That's great. You said it's easier to start a business right now than any other time. A lot of people, at the time we're actually doing this interview, there's this recession going on. There's this economy situation.

I was interviewing Steven Pierce a couple weeks ago, and he said, "A lot of people are like, 'When's the recession going to be over? When's the recession going to be over?'" And he's like, "The better question is, when are you going to be over the recession? It's here. What's going on is what's going on. How much you internalize it has to do with you."

So, with all of the things that people could use as excuses as to why not start a business or why not to do this, why not to do that, you're a woman that I've absolutely known to just abolish any of that sort of nonsense in your thinking and having a mindset that, "Hey, I'm going to go out and make things happen, no matter what."

So, what advice and suggestions would you have with anyone that is dealing with maybe let's say like our friend Steven Pressfield, in *The War Of Art*, talks about resistance? When people have resistance, how do you suggest they overcome it?

MaryEllen: Again, it goes back to this mindset: you've got to be a bull in a bear market. A recession is the greatest opportunity. When you look at the biggest companies in the world that were started during recessionary times, it's amazing.

I don't know. I went to look this up last night, but I didn't get there, Joe. What do you think the average salary is in the United States, right now?

Joe: Oh man, I don't even know. That's a good question. \$20,000, \$30,000, maybe?



*I know
I will
make this
successful
and I
know my
audience.*

MaryEllen: Maybe \$40,000 on the high side, right? So, I walked away from a salary-paying job 10 times that, during the worst recession, during the worst housing market, during the highest unemployment because 1) I needed to do this, but 2) I knew I could make it successful.

So, what I would tell people is you've got to go out there and test your idea first. You don't go out and you don't spend all this money. The beautiful thing about being online is you can test your idea; you can test your copy. You don't have to invest thousands and thousands of dollars into something that's not going to form.

Go out there and put up a few PPC campaigns and see if your idea resonates.

Another big mistake people do is they don't research their market. Is it a viable business? I love the idea of doing something you're passionate about, but I will tell you this, and I'm going to tell you really honestly, as passionate as I am about this new business, if I didn't think it was going to be a marketable business, I wouldn't be in it.

Joe: Then it just becomes a hobby and something you do. It doesn't become a business.

MaryEllen: Right. Right. Like I said, I left a job that I was making a lot of money for this. So, I know I will make this successful and I know my audience.

The best thing that you can do, and you did this too, Joe, is be a part of your target audience. Right? I've been a working mother for 11 years. Do you think I know what goes through the minds of working mothers? Do you think that I know about guilt and being overwhelmed and how to get over that? Do you think that I know all of the other sites and the businesses out there that are targeting working moms right now? Of course, I do.

You need to know your audience intimately. Make sure there's a business. Go after it. Test it before you put in money.

Years ago, if you wanted to start a publishing company, think about



What's
going to
build your
confidence?
What's
going to
allow you
to do it?

what you'd have to invest in. You'd have to invest in a plant, in machines, in skilled workers who understand how to run those printing presses.

Now, you've got this great opportunity.

Joe: You're absolutely right. What I got out of everything you just said is that you have this really important skill, this really important I guess you would call the attribute *confidence*. You left your position that was paying you a tremendous amount of money, doing something that you really enjoyed, that you were really great with, with working around amazing people. You said, "I knew I could do it," because you had confidence.

This interview (as hopefully all of my Genius Network interviews are) is literally a dose of confidence in an area of business, talking to very smart people. That's why it's so important to build and develop that confidence.

You develop that through learning it and focusing on it. You're simply laying out a roadmap here of, "Here's what to do and how to do it." That's what your website exists for.

So, if anyone's out there and they're like, "Oh, I'm worried about it," what's going to build your confidence? What's going to allow you to do it?

Going back to your friend who spent time setting up an office and then spending the first 6 weeks decorating it, and not going out for the things that are making money, in 6 weeks, guess what? There's no sales, there's no revenue, you've got a really pretty place but you're completely lacking confidence because you've not instilled the behaviors that are going to produce the result.

So, I think that's such an important point.

I know one of the things that you want to do for working moms is fill them with belief, with skill, with capabilities, with confidence. If a woman is out there right now who has never started a business, she knows that she wants to do something but she doesn't even know where to start? I'm kind of asking you in a different way. You've already kind of laid it



Just do
something
really
simple...

MaryEllen:

out. I just want to really reiterate this point. What is the first thing that she should do?

Just do something really simple. Go to Google, plug in your business idea, look at the number of hits per month. If you're starting out, because there's kind of different metrics for different places you are in business, if you're just starting out, you kind of want to be in that 1,000 to 5,000 a month, at least that amount of people have been on Google looking for it.

If you're a little further apart, then your sweet spot is probably 10,000 to 50,000.

So, go out there and see if there's a market. If no one else is doing it, there's a reason why. So, you don't want to be the first in any market.

Joe:

Can I say something to that? Because so many people, and you've heard this probably thousands of times in your career, "I want to do this because no one else is doing it." You just want to be like, "Do you think that maybe one of the reasons no one else is doing it is because the market has no interest in it?"

MaryEllen:

Right. Right. Again, remember we talked about it earlier, it's not what you think, it's what resonates with the market. You don't create product because you think the market needs them. Again, we don't want a market that needs. That's things like termite exterminators are for. That's a need market. Somebody needs that, great.

What you're creating, most info products are wants. You're touching someone's emotions.

Joe:

Exactly. Exactly. So, go to Google, do some research, see all that.

MaryEllen:

Then, start. Then, start writing your sales letter. Start looking at your competitors. Look at your competitors. Maybe instead of starting a brand new company, you might go to a competitor and say, "Hey, can I give you an essay for your newsletter?" or "I've got this product. Let me test it in



Info
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world.

your newsletter first.”

We didn’t even get to joint ventures, which is a whole other call. But there’s so many ways to test your idea before you start it. But putting up a website, gosh, it’s going to cost you a couple hundred bucks and a week. You can test your idea first. Get it out there and just start.

Info businesses are the best businesses in the world. I really go through that pretty much very methodically in *Changing The Channel*. You know exactly the steps you’re going to take, as far as researching your niche and testing, and writing your sales letter, and developing a product.

Joe: You have. You’ve laid out a map in your book, *Changing The Channel*. I know that’s so much of the focus on *WorkingMomsOnly*, specifically for that market, for working moms.

You said a great word, which I think everyone should write down and they should post it. You should get a little label and put it on your mobile phone, you should put it on your computer, you should put it on your mirror. You should write the word “Start.”

The bottom line is this: there is no perfect way. You’re never going to have everything completely laid out.

People are waiting for that magical day. They’ve heard the cliché a million times, “Life is not a dress rehearsal.” Look at how many people never realize their dreams, never create value for the world, because they’re always preparing before they step out on stage. There’s always going to be things that are incomplete, but you’ve got to start.

Like Gary Halbert said, the late Gary Halbert, “You always accomplish more through movement than you will through meditation.”

There comes a point where you want to think, you want to lay it out, you want to plan, but you can plan yourself and analyze yourself to nowhere and get nothing accomplished.

MaryEllen: Yes. That’s the whole resistance thing. It’s actually easier to look for office space or to get business cards printed than it is to sit down and write a sales letter.



If you want a successful business, you've got to step out of your comfort zone.

Most people will work on what's easiest for them. If you want a successful business, you've got to step out of your comfort zone. You have to.

I listened to a call a couple of weeks ago, with Tony Robbins. This is something I've always believed in. You've got to work on your business every day.

The beauty about having a business that is working and profitable is that then you have the flexibility, you don't have to work all of the hours. But when you're starting a business, it's serious, and you need to take it that way.

One of my things that I vow to my customers is I'm never going to work in my pajamas. I get up, I work out, I dress, I shower, I start, because I take my business seriously.

Joe: That is really, really good advice. It's a different perspective on it, too. It's just not sitting around, looking like a bum. You're not a big fan of the "make money at home in your underwear" sort of thing?

MaryEllen: I'm really not. I'm a big fan in living a life that's balanced and successful. But, again, people are spending money, they're paying money, they're spending their time. I take that commitment very seriously.

I've seen it. I've seen it over and over again. I look at people I know in this world, and I see the people who are always complaining about, "Why am I not as successful as Rich Chevron, or why am I not as successful as Joe Polish?"

Well, you know why? Because you get up when you feel like getting up, you don't have a plan for the day, you don't really get anything done. That's why.

When you're an entrepreneur, and maybe because I've had so many years of corporate experience, when I went to Forbes and I ran Times Mirror magazines, and created this business, I went in there feeling very obligated to these people. I wanted to do a great job. So, I run my business the same way. Most entrepreneurs do not run their business as



The first rule is, know the person behind the business...

seriously as if they were working for someone else. It had the fear of being fired and not making their mortgage payments.

Joe: That is such great, great advice. I love the way you describe it. It is a real business. You want it to be fun, you want it to be enjoyable. But at the same time, if you don't take it seriously, it's never going to get off the ground.

MaryEllen: Yeah.

Joe: I would recommend if someone really is challenged with starting, read *The War Of Art* by Steven Pressfield. It's a fantastic book.

MaryEllen: Love it.

Joe: Steven's a friend of mine, and it's just awesome. That's great.

Let me ask you about this, with the limited time we have, MaryEllen.

You wrote a great article on your website, *WorkingMomsOnly*, which is "[3 Simple Rules For Making Million-Dollar Deals](#)." For someone starting out or for an entrepreneur, I think I'm going to email this article over to Richard Branson, because I think he'll really like it. I think this is the way he operates, in many ways.

You have 3 rules. The first rule is *know the person behind the business*. The second rule is *only make deals that will benefit your customer*. The third rule is *only make deals that will benefit your organization*.

I'd like you to briefly talk about these 3 rules, because I think they are fantastic and I think if someone, from this day forward, really took this sort of approach as you build and grow your business, it will just make it a lot easier for you.

So, the first one is know the person behind the business. What do you mean by that?



*I always
make
sure that
I believe
in the
person
behind the
company.*

MaryEllen:

Well, you don't do business with businesses. Right? You don't do business with another business, you do business with a person. Right?

When I do business with Piranha Marketing, Joe, I'm doing business with you. So for me, it was so important to know you, to know your values, your mission.

It's very important that you deal with people who share the same values in business. It's going to be a real deal-breaker and you're not going to get anything done.

So, before I do business with anybody, I meet them in person. There's been a couple of times where that hasn't happened. Know what? It's always come back to bite me.

Even people that I get great references from, I think Jeff Walker's a great example, Rich Chevron told me, "You've got to meet Jeff, he's got a great product. He'd be great for your conferences." I said, "Well, I don't know Jeff. I've never seen Jeff. I've never met him, even though I've heard he's great. I'm not going to just have him come speak at my conference."

So, Rich called Jeff and Jeff called me and said, "Please come out to my conference. I'll fly you out. Let's just meet and we'll talk." I did that. I flew out. I live in Boca. I flew out to Colorado, I met with Jeff, I saw him speak, I saw the people behind his organization, and 3 weeks later he was speaking at my conference.

It's the same thing with Tim Ferriss. I was introduced to him via email, through David Croft, and Tim and I had a nice phone conversation. We realized we were both going to be in New York 2 weeks later, and boom, we're having breakfast. He ended up writing an ETR.

But I always make sure that I believe in the person behind the company.

Joe:

That's such good advice. So many people, they just don't take the time to really get to know someone. It could take a lifetime to build a great reputation and, like my friend Dave Kekich said, a moment of stupidity to



Then, by the end of the summer, the refunds were 60%...

destroy it. So, get to know the people behind the organization and make sure they're the real deal, make sure they're awesome people.

Secondly, even if they are, your second rule is only make deals that will benefit your customers. You can have a really great person that has a great product, but it may not be a real fit for what it is that you're doing.

So, your second rule, only make deals that will benefit your customer, could you elaborate on that?

MaryEllen: Yeah. It's funny because, again, a lot of entrepreneurs have a problem with this. They have a lot of friends and they just want to help them out and they want to do things, but it's got to benefit your customers.

I remember a couple of summers ago, somebody came to me with a product that the copy was great. The copy was great and I knew we could sell it out the wazoo. But I looked at the product and I said, "This product is not neat. The promises in this copy, this product is not good for my customers," so I passed on the deal.

Gosh, through the summer I kept hearing from other affiliates and JV partners that this person had, and they were like bragging about how much money they were making from this. But then, by the end of the summer, the refunds were like 60%, 65%, 70%.

So, when you have refunds like that, you are destroying your credibility. You are ruining your relationship with your customers.

So, yeah, I could have made money, but it would have been really bad for my customers. So, I passed on the deal.

Joe: That's so sound. That is so sound. A lot of people, if you've not experienced that sort of situation, if you are flippant about this, I can assure you, you will come across a period of time where you're over-trusting or you don't do enough due diligence, or you don't really think that your clients are real human beings, they're not just a big herd of mindless idiots that are buying stuff from you.

They're real human beings. If you don't take care of them, they will abandon you and they will say very bad things about you in the



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abandonment process.

People, for years, have always, “How can you keep selling things to the cleaning industry? Haven’t you gone to another niche? You’re going to cream the best people in the very beginning, and then they’re going to go to the bottom feeders.” There’s all this weird terminology that people use to describe markets. Part of it is just continually creating value and not introducing things to people that aren’t going to help them.

So, even if there’s money to be made, some money is not good money. Because in the long run, it will destroy or undermine the value of the relationship. So, only do things that will continue to add value and create value. That’s what this article describes, which is why everyone really needs to go and read it and just print it out. I think this is not only a great read, but it’s something that people can always use as a reference to go back to whenever they’re doing deals.

So, the third rule says, “Only make deals that will benefit your organization.” What do you mean by that?

MaryEllen: One of my very favorite business books is *Good To Great*, by Jim Collins. Probably one of the best business books ever written. In that book, he talks about what it takes to be a level 5 leader.

When you’re a level 5 leader, you will do anything for the good of your company. I say that, of course, with caveats.

But let’s just take, for example, that your best friend says, “I know you need a vendor that sells hats really cheap, that you can put a logo on. That’s what my husband does. Can you interview him for that position or could you buy the hats from him?”

Basically, of course, you go through the process and you look at this person’s company. But at the end of the day, if your best friend’s husband is not the best person for that job, you’ve got to pass on it. You’ve got to go with the vendor who’s going to give your company the best quality, the best value. You just can’t do favors that are going to be bad for your company.

If you could use that person because he is the best person for the



*It's the
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project, then great. But if they are not the absolute best person that you would have chosen, then you should not choose them. You do what's best for your organization.

Joe: Awesome.

MaryEllen: It's hard. It's hard. I came to ETR and, at that time, we only had a staff of 12. These were nice people, but I had to go in there and, out of 12 people, I fired 5 of them.

Michael Masterson said to me, "I knew they needed to go, but I just can't fire people."

So, it's just one of those things that I don't like firing people. It's the worst thing you ever have to do. But you do it with respect and you do it so that person has their dignity, but you have to do it. You have to do what is best for your company, because you have an obligation to everyone else in your organization and to your customers.

Joe: Do you think that had one of the reasons why you grew ETR from \$8-million to \$26-million in literally 15 months, is because you...?

MaryEllen: Absolutely! Absolutely! You bring in the right people. Bill Gates or Jack Welsh, it's all about the people. It's all about the people. I talk about this all the time: ideas are useless until you put them into action.

Well, you can have great ideas and great marketing, but if you don't have the right people implementing that in your company, your company's not going to flourish.

Joe: Let me ask you about that, too, in the limited time we have left here. There are a lot of people, and I've used this as an excuse myself and I'm just curious as to how you would respond to this, where you have really nice, caring people in your organization, but you find yourself second-guessing yourself or questioning if they're doing a good job or not.

Let's just use me as an example. Is it me, as an entrepreneur, or is



I'm not a big stickler on work hours, I'm a big stickler on getting the job done.

it the person? Obviously, it could be a combination of both. But what is your criteria for knowing when you have someone that's not the right person on the team? What are the indicators that a lot of people rationalize and justify ways, so that they don't have to fire someone or get rid of them? Any tips or suggestions on that?

MaryEllen:

To me, relationships all come down to respect, first of all. I see this all the time. The people who usually aren't doing the great job are usually the people that, sure, they can be a nice, good person, but they're coming in maybe 5 minutes late, they're taking longer lunches, they're talking on the phone. They're not taking your business seriously.

Like everyone is always like, "How can you fire that person? They need this job!" But look at them. Look at what they're doing. If they need the job, they'd come in early, they'd do everything they can to make sure that they are becoming a superstar in your business.

I joke about this because I got that nickname, the Money Honey, in this world because I could make money. At first, I was a little insulted. But then I said, "You know what? It's good to be the Money Honey." Right? It's a good person who can bring in money to a company. Because when you can do that, you have – and I hate this word, but I don't know a better word right now – you have a certain amount of power when you're bringing in that money. That power lends to things like more time off, higher paychecks, flexibility, because you know what you're doing.

I'm not a big stickler on work hours, I'm a big stickler on getting the job done. I don't care when they're doing it. If they're getting it done, they're getting it done, and that's fine.

But when people aren't getting it done and they're not taking it seriously, then they're not respecting you. So, you can't have any relationship without that respect.

Joe:

Such sound advice. I love the line "are they becoming a superstar in your business. If not, then you simply need to have a real godfather talk with them or you need to get rid of them, because you're not helping yourself



So, you
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and you're certainly not helping them." That's awesome.

MaryEllen: Most entrepreneurs don't like to fire people. They don't like coaching it. So, what they'll do is they'll let it go, let it go, let it go, then they'll just blow up. This person's like, "What? It's been going on for like 6 months. I don't see what the problem is."

So, you nip it in the bud. You nip it right away. Somebody should be on their best behavior when they first start. If they're starting with you and they're coming in late and they've got an emergency here, emergency there, it's only going to go downhill from there.

Joe: You're right. The whole saying "Rotting food in the refrigerator does not get better with age, it gets worse."

MaryEllen: Right. Exactly.

Joe: So the whole rotten roots create rotten fruit. So, that's good. Even if you're listening and you don't even have a team right now, in the process of building a team, this will totally make the difference.

MaryEllen, I want to do a follow-up interview with you, obviously. I'd like the listeners of Genius Network to give me their feedback on what they thought of this. You are so filled with so much knowledge. You're just one of the sharpest entrepreneurs that I know. You're a full-blown, focused direct response marketer, and I know that you are going to help literally tens of thousands, and millions, most likely, of women with *WorkingMomsOnly*.

So, famous last words? Anything else you'd like to leave people with for now? I know this is just the start. I hope people go and visit your website, I hope they read your book. I'm certainly going to get this interview out to all of my subscribers. I will give my subscribers permission to share this interview with anyone that they think would benefit from it, male or female, and to think about different women that exist in your life, working moms that would so benefit in so many ways,



When you
invest in
yourself,
you
have it
forever.

by sharing this interview. Because you're not only helping them, you're helping their children, you're helping their children's children.

The message and the information you shared here, I think, is critical and so beneficial. Famous last words?

MaryEllen: Invest in yourself every single day. Do something that's going to benefit your life, whether it's reading a great book or listening to a great CD, or watching a DVD. But when you invest in yourself, you have it forever. That's something I live by.

Joe: Awesome. Awesome. So, WorkingMomsOnly.com. Any other things that they should do to find out more information about you, or is it pretty much all there?

MaryEllen: It's all there. Go to WorkingMomsOnly.com. Sign up. I have a free newsletter that goes out twice a week.

On my board, I'll just mention this, on my panel of experts, I've got spectacular women like Mariel Hemingway, Ellie Drake, Joyce Bone. We just have a panel of experts that you're going to hear from, as well.

So, with the 2 issues a week, it's me on Monday, and then on Thursday it will be one of my guest panelists.

Joe: That is awesome. You're doing great stuff. I really love always talking with you and doing the interview. So, MaryEllen Tribby, thank you so much, and have yourself a wonderful day.

To all of our listeners, start. Put it into action. Make it happen. Go read the *Simple Rules for Making Millions-of-dollars Deals* on MaryEllen's website right now, and please keep us informed of your success. Thank you.

Hello, this is Joe Polish. I want to thank you for taking the time to listen to this interview. I hope you found it very useful. Please give me your feedback on all of the interviews that you listen to. I love to hear your



*Eat
Your
Competition
Alive!*

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