

# Preface

## **Biking and Business**

Statistics show that of the 1.3 million motorcycles sold annually; over 300,000 are purchased by executive level business men and women. They are serving to make up one of the largest segments of biking today – the Business Biker.

So if you're one of the millions of Business Bikers, you've picked up this book because you get it. You understand the rush and sense of freedom biking gives you. It's a total escape or as Leo Keily, CEO of Molson Coors told me one day, "I'm now landlocked in Colorado so to me it's an instant sailing trip where I go to clear my head."

And where the motorcycle is a great place to go in order to clear the mind after a long day or week in the office, this book is not just about that. This is not only about how I use my motorcycle to escape business, but how I've also taken the lessons learned from a lifetime of riding and applied them to build not only a successful business, but a successful life as well.

To that point, this book is written for the biker and non biker alike who are struggling to find the right balance in business and life. For too long it's been an accepted 'either/or' proposition for entrepreneurs when it comes to business performance and their personal lives. Like far too many entrepreneurs, I struggled to find the key to having my company work for me instead of me always working for it. Although it took a while, I created a process that allows me to go for it and performing at the highest level in business without it coming at the expense of my personal life. I just happened to do it with the help of my bike.

The first time I straddled a motorcycle with the intent to ride I was sixteen and in a lot of ways I've not gotten off that bike. In fact, aside from family and friends, the only thing I love more than the great game of business is riding my motorcycle. Over the years motorcycling has been an integral part of my life story and continues to be a source of enlightenment and happiness. I've also come to understand that the skills and abilities it takes to be successful on a bike also come in handy when building a successful business.

To start with, both biking and business are equally thrilling and serve as vehicles to take me where I want to go; one physically, the other economically. And achieving excellence in each requires many things, not the least of which is awareness, timing and a keen ability to sift through the background noise and bullshit around you.

To be sure a car can take me there, but where's the fun in that? When in my car I'm on the phone, listening to the radio or a book on tape and thinking about a million things, not the least of which is 'Am I there yet?' But when on my motorcycle I'm a major part of getting there. Senses totally in the moment, I'm shifting, constantly looking out for those crazy cagers and other road hazards. I'm literally *riding* the ride!

Certainly, non-riders immediately focus on the dangers but there's so much more to it that offsets the risk. By hopping in the saddle and exposing my relatively unprotected body to the outside world I literally inject myself into the environment around me as I roll along. I fully experience the sounds, the 180 degree view, feel the air, smell the rain right before it hits and know that it and bugs begin to sting at 50 mph. Riding releases my senses and is the essence of truly being alive.

And the same holds true for me as an entrepreneur because there's no greater ride than that of business. Getting out there and exposing my relatively unprotected product or

service to the marketplace allows me to still feel like that 19 year old kid just starting out ready to ride the twists and turns of the marketplace and chasing the possibilities of the day.

I'll admit there's inherent risk attached to both biking and business as we've all seen where, if not ridden properly, each can and will cause severe damage. And if that level of risk wasn't enough when starting out, my well meaning family and friends who feared for me literally said to my face or behind my back that I was destined to either wipe out or fail totally. To which I simply shrugged and like any good biker or entrepreneur, went on down the road.

As a biker and entrepreneur, I know the risk and it is always with me. But riding a motorcycle scared is a fast ticket to the hospital, and for a lot of the same reasons you damn sure can't run a company scared. Those who do know this-the champions-get that it's not about *overcoming* fear, but instead *understanding and embracing* it.

In order to truly succeed at both I must accept many things, the first of which is reasonable and controllable risk. For me it goes beyond what some would view as simple thrill seeking because reasonable and controllable risk is a way of life. It's my drug, my mistress and salvation all rolled up into one. It fits me like a \$10,000 suit and I cannot fathom life without it.

Where others see risk, I see potential and innately understand that the reward at the end of the day corresponds to the amount I am willing to risk in order to achieve success. I don't simply do business...I grab it by the handlebars and ride it for all its worth!

And I'm not alone. Entrepreneurs like bikers are today's cowboys and a similar and bold lot. We're independent, adventurous, strong willed and downright intolerant of

fences...it's in our DNA. When we walk into the room we're the alpha dog exuding confidence and just that right touch of swagger that lets everyone know we mean business. It comes from a burning desire to carve our own path and a belief deep down in our soul that we have a better idea and go for it.

And we know each other when we meet. There's no secret handshake, just a revealing look in our eyes that tells the other we understand. That we've both felt the highs and lows of getting where we are today and paid our dues without reservation. In the beginning we have, at some point in time, awakened at 2:30 a.m. on a Friday in a cold sweat trying to figure out how to meet that week's payroll. And, at some point, we have viewed our bank balance not as a safety net, but as a down payment on something really cool to push forward.

A great example of this is my former client and biker who I'll call C.J. We came together at a difficult time for him as his extremely competitive industry was radically shifting due to the rapid change rate of technology.

He joined a group of CEOs I worked with on a monthly basis and over the course of six months set about strategizing and writing a bold new business plan for his company. It was extremely innovative and showed tremendous forethought and promise. After completing the plan, he made about 30 copies and began handing them out to anyone who would read it for feedback.

One day during our meeting a fellow CEO asked, 'Aren't you afraid that someone is going to take your idea and implement it? Not missing a beat, C.J. looked that person dead in the eye and said, "Maybe so, but at the end of the day they still have to beat me at it."

That's biker attitude...it's that subtle swagger that comes when you possess the supreme confidence that where your competition is good, you're better. It comes from being comfortable on the edge and knowing how to execute in such a way that no one can stop you.

And that's why I believe biking makes me a better business person. Aside from the thrill of not having a safety net, it's my way of maintaining an edge as well as a proper perspective on business and life. More than just a metaphor for how I live, understanding the edge in both business and biking allows me to approach it full out because that's where the real jazz is.

As John Paul DeJoria, Biker, CEO and Founder of John Paul Mitchell Systems and Patron Tequila told me one day - ***“The difference between successful people and unsuccessful people is that successful people do all the things unsuccessful people don't want to do.”***

So saddle up along side and I'll show you, step by step how I grab business and life by the handlebars!