

Lee Milteer's Millionaire Smarts® Coaching Program Secrets to a Super Successful Business Plan

Lee Milteer Interviews Robert Skrob

Transcript of Tele-Seminar

Welcome to this month's issue of the Millionaire Smarts® Coaching Program for Profit and Productivity with your coach Lee Milteer

Lee: Hi everybody! It's Lee Milteer, and I have a very exciting program for everybody today. It's The Secrets to a Super Successful Business Plan, and with me is a very great guy who I've known for a long time. I've personally hired him to speak at some of my seminars. His name is Robert Skrob.

You may know Robert. He's very well known in the GKIC world, and the association world. He has more than twenty years of experience in the marketing and building business including building a business, and he sold it two years later at the age of 41. He's currently helping businesses grow by maximizing their current customer value. This is very important, your customer value.

Although he hasn't practiced public accounting since 1995, he maintains his CPA license and fulfills his educational requirements primarily for his mother who wants to make sure that he keeps his license so he has something to fall back on if this whole entrepreneurial thing doesn't work out, and we all have to laugh at that. We probably all have mothers like that.

He's been married to his wife since 1994 and has two children. He enjoys running and smoking cigars, although not at the same time hopefully. Robert, welcome to our call.

Robert: It's such an honor to be part of your program. Thank you so much for having me. It's always a great pleasure to chat with you. I'm looking forward to this. I think we're going to have a great time.

Lee: I think we're going to have a great time because I have hired you to actually teach some of my own coaching people how to do a business plan, and the truth is as entrepreneurs, we really don't like to do business

plans. We like to fly by the seat of our pants, and sometimes that's great, but for the most part, it's much better if we actually have a plan that we can create and stick to and have our staff stick to so that we can definitely maximize the value of our customers and maximize our own energy.

Robert, my real first important question to you is why do most business plans fail?

Robert: I think it's really how folks think about their business, and if you google "business plans," you're going to find all kinds of templates and systems that are really about creating something that maybe an anchor would want. You spend a whole lot of time describing your business and talking about how you're going to get products and deliver it, and really not at all about the key things that drive your business forward.

That I think is really the key is that the business plan that most people think about is really just some document that you just to give to bankers in order to get money, and what we're really talking about here is a tool that helps you focus your time, focus your resources on the key drivers in your business that are going to give you the fastest results, the quickest way to the money and the longest value for yourself and for your business that are really going to help you grow you something that's going to be sustainable.

Lee: The reason I like this so much is a lot of entrepreneurs just go into tailspins when things go wrong, and we don't think as clearly as we would like to pretend that we're thinking, and one of the great things about having a real plan, and I'm a big believer in having a plan is when you start to feel unresourceful or lost or not clear where you're going, you at least have something solid to go back to, to focus towards.

So, one of the things that you did that I hired you to speak in front of a group which you talked about how to create a business plan and use the most amazing easy way to do it which still sticks with me today after several days. It was about using your car as an analogy of creating the business plan. I'm going to turn this over to you for a little while and let you kind of get started. I know there are people out there going, "I'm not sure I want to listen to this one."

This one sounds way too left-brained for me as an entrepreneur, but I promise you folks, this is going to be absolutely gold for you. We have

phenomenal reports for you. So, Robert, get us going with some fun here of thinking of our business plan as driving our car.

Robert: I think it's important because these are the real key drivers, the real pieces that are going to help you, the key things to focus on that if nothing else happens that you have accomplished what you need to do to move your business forward. I think that focus really helps. I do a lot of consulting with Harley Davidson dealers, and what we talk about with them is we talk about the swirl.

They get in their dealership, and the sales manager asks questions and then the parts guy, and then they've got customers coming. It's like, "Aw, man, there's this swirl going on," and pretty soon they're trying to put toilet paper in the bathrooms because there's all these emergencies they're trying to put out. If you think about it this way, these are the real key drivers that you really need to think about in your business that help give you clarity and instead of having this big swirl of activity, real focus on the key things.

Now, the first thing you've got to have in your car is if you don't have a gas pedal, the thing doesn't go anywhere. It just sits there. It may as well be a paperweight, a very big expensive paperweight, but the key to moving the car is pressing the gas, and the key to moving your business is generating new customers.

Nothing happens in your business, nothing starts moving until you have new customers. Just like that pedal on the floor, you can press it down further and go faster, and in your business, the more new customers you generate, the faster your business grows, period. That's all you've got to know about business growth. You want to grow your business? Get more new customers. It's just as simple as that, having systems and processes in place to generate new customers.

Lee: Robert, I'm going to hold on to that thought for a second because a very interesting thing for me is that I notice that a lot of not only entrepreneurial businesses but corporates. They're so into the daily activities of, "We want all our bills paid and things filed away," and they're so into procedure that the one thing that seems to be missing in the new customer, getting new customers, how are we getting new customers. Our time is money and our life is money, and if we don't have new customers, we don't really have a business. The business is dying.

A lot of entrepreneurs' businesses are actually dying and they're in denial about it.

Robert: I talk to folks and I ask, "How do you generate your new customers?" they'll say, "referrals."

Lee: Good luck with that.

Robert: Referrals are a terrific way of generating new customers, but it's not scalable. You're putting control of your business into someone else's hands and what you find is when they become distracted with their new issues, challenges and problems that they're no longer worried about giving you any referrals and now your business dries up and you've got to have a way of - it's kind of like in the car you can say that you're coasting down the hill, but when you reach the bottom of the hill, you're going to stop coasting. You've got to have that gas pedal to be able to press and really be able to control.

You control the amount of new customers you're getting by the amount you're investing in the marketing and it's all trackable. You know exactly where your customers are coming from, but this is a real key is having control and until you are monitoring and know how many new customers you're getting and what your investing, you really don't have a business. You're just coasting.

Lee: If I may say this, a lot of entrepreneurs actually create jobs for themselves, and they wanted to be a chef or they wanted to be an auto repair guy or something like that, and they feel allergic to marketing or, "I wish I didn't have to do that." So, what you're really saying is if you don't have the marketing, your business is really on death row.

Robert: I can tell you that I was the last one that wanted to hear this news. I'm a CPA. This is not anything that's really fun or interesting to me when I first thought about, "Oh, gosh, I'm going to go create marketing systems," and really what for me, I got into business because I hated my boss. My boss was making all kinds of mistakes, and I thought, "You know what? I can do better than that idiot."

I didn't have any marketing systems. I didn't have any process. I didn't know what really drove a business forward, and I think a lot of people get into business under similar like, "if he can do this, I can do better than that." Then, all of a sudden, we don't necessarily understand what drives

a business forward. I can tell you that growth comes from new customers, period. That's the accelerator pedal in the car.

Lee: This program is all about not only technical information, but really the way we think. So, what Robert and I are trying to do is to remind you that you need to clean up your thinking so that you can again have a great plan and jumpstart your business and have a fantastic year. So, on with the car!

Robert: Now, Lee, get in your car and you step on the gas. What happens?

Lee: Hopefully, we go forward.

Robert: Hopefully we go forward in the direction we want to go. We've got to steer this thing. The key to steering in your business is just like the steering in your car; you've got left and you've got right. The steering in your business are two functions. One is maximizing each sale, so each transaction size, and number two is maximizing the frequency that each customer buys from you. Those two numbers and those two pieces are essential in order to get your business to where you want it to go.

Of course, we're going to wrap all this stuff in a business plan and tell you how to use these concepts, but the key is the gas - new customers get your moving and then balancing, looking at, "Okay, how much is my average transaction size? What can I do to increase the size of each transaction?" So, now what you're doing is you're making the most of every opportunity. Then, secondly, getting your customers to buy from you more often, there you're maximizing the value of each customer.

So, if you're increasing your transaction size, making the most out of each of those opportunities and two, getting those customers to buy from you more often. Those pieces are going to completely transform your business from really anything anyone else is thinking about. I had a consulting business when I first got started, and owning my own company, and just by figuring this out, "Okay, how can I get my customers to buy more?" A lot of that is as simple as raising prices because that's certainly one place to start, and then two by packaging. That's of course the value meal at McDonald's is all about is they figured out customers were coming and buying a hamburger and a drink, but by a little bit of pricing voodoo, they could get them also to more consistently get fries. The value meal turned out to be a huge win in transaction size for the McDonald's company.

So, those types of little packaging, looking at each of your transactions and going, "All right, where can I increase prices, and two where I can create little packages, systems or change the pricing?" If you go to Disney World, you'll find that when you go up to the ticket booth, the seven day ticket option is the thing that's listed first at the top of the booth, and then it goes down to a six day, a five day, but they put the biggest, most expensive thing up at the top, and a seven day pass per person, I'm just guessing, but I think it's in the neighborhood of six or seven hundred dollars, something like that.

So, by the time they get down to the daily pass which is probably what you were thinking is, "I'm going to go buy a ticket and go in," well, that is all the way at the bottom and that is I think ninety dollars now, but compared to the six or seven hundred, that doesn't look like much, and who knows? What they found is a lot of people buy something in the middle.

So, simply by changing the way they present price, they've been able to increase the transaction size. Think through those types of things within your own business.

Next, now that you've got somebody, now that you went out and got a new customer, what can we do to get them to come back? It could be as easy as the dry cleaner who has a promotion to get folks in to get their clothes clean. When they come back to pick up their clothes, give them a coupon with their clothes so they will come back another time. You create that habit, get the customer to come back.

Lee: One of the things I heard and you may know if this is true. I have heard with dry cleaners particularly, if you can get someone to come back three times, you own them.

Robert: No question, and even like with a restaurant. How many times have you gone to a restaurant, where the restaurant owner asks somehow either through a rewards program or birthday promotion or something, collected your name and contact information? Maybe less than one percent.

Lee: I'm always shocked about how little anybody does about anything. As a matter of fact, I did fill out one of those forms. My birthday is not too far away, and I filled out one of those forms last year, and I got a postcard from one of those restaurants for if you buy a meal, you get a meal free for your birthday. So, will we do it? We like the restaurant. Absolutely.

Robert: So, by doing that, by simply collection your name and address, something very different in the restaurant field, but really not all that hard to do. You have all these customers coming in. You give the servers and incentive to get names and addresses completed. You give the customer some reason to give you their name and address. Whether it's a club or special information, and then instead of just having somebody who came and went, you're able to follow up with them.

So, when you have a special promotion, when you have new products, when you start serving breakfast when you didn't serve breakfast before, or what have you, you now have an avenue, a direct contact to your customers where you don't have to go through radio, TV or other people's media. You've got your own.

So, understanding that a huge part of getting to where you want to go is once you get a new customer, capture that customer. Get their information and focus on, "All right, how can I increase the value of this customer so that it's not just a one time transaction, but it happens over and over again?"

Lee: What do you think of those referral services - I see it with dentists a lot - where they tell their existing patients, "if you refer someone, you get something?"

Robert: I think that's very smart, and I think what that does as another referral - it's a great new customer generation strategy, and it helps for the guy who is saying, "I get my customers through referrals," well, this is a process that helps you take control of that and helps you generate new customers kind of on an ongoing basis through referrals. So, it doesn't happen by mistake. Instead, you take what is happening by mistake and you increase it by making it happen on purpose.

Lee: Excellent.

Robert: So, the theory is you're maximizing customer value and maximizing transaction size. Now, if you're running down the road and you're pressing the gas and you're steering back and forth, are you going to get where you're going? Not unless you can see. If you don't have any visual gauges to tell you how fast you're going, how many miles or really even see anything, then you're not going to end up where you want to be.

So, like in your car, you've got a dashboard that tells you your speed. It tells you how many miles. Well, in your business, you've got to have numbers and you've got to be tracking the number of new customers from month to month, the number of the transaction size from month to month. You want to be measuring the lifetime value of your customer. Also, depending on how sophisticated you get, and I understand at this point if you are just thinking about this, we're about to blow your mind, but this is really not that hard.

When you get advanced, you want to measure how many customers have bought from me within the last thirty days, how many have bought thirty to six, and then sixty to ninety and then plus ninety so that you can track and say, "How many customers do I have on my list that haven't come in and haven't bought from me in the last ninety days?"

Depending on your business, if it makes sense to make those windows by quarter or something because your customers don't normally come in on a monthly basis or weekly basis, you need to recalibrate that to quarterly or something else. It's essential that if nothing else, you're going to want to track the number of new customers and your transaction size, and the lifetime customer value, and you want to have some sort of guidepost of what you want those numbers to be.

When you're going down the road, if you know you're going too slow, the speed limit is 55, you look at your dashboard and it says 25, well, I know I have to press the gas in order to get to my destination in a timely manner. I need to go ahead and get going. Well, that's the sort of thing that you need in your business. If you can figure out what your goals are for your business growth and where you want your business to be twelve months from now, then you can tell very quickly if you aren't generating the number of new customers you need in order to get to those goals. You've got to increase that rate.

If the number of new customers is good but the customer value isn't what it needs to be, you can focus on that. If the transaction size isn't what it needs to be, you can play around with that. Flying blind in your business is just like driving blind in the car. Chances are something bad is going to happen, but if nothing else, you aren't going to reach your destination.

Lee: How long were you a CPA?

Robert: I've been a CPA since 1994.

Lee: When you were a CPA, we have some CPAs that are listening today, did you have any particular ways that you increased your business as a CPA?

Robert: I was a junior little peon in a CPA firm. So, I wasn't one of the rainmakers or anybody at the firm. It was a local firm, but for any business you really want to be able to focus on some sort of paid media, something that you can control and ramp up if you need to be able to generate more customers.

So, whether it be ads for special niches within your customer base where you are helping them solve some particular problem. If you're a CPA, then just off the top of my head some of the niches are small business owners, little bit larger businesses. You've got non-profits. You've got government. You've got individuals, and even within individuals, you've got people with IRS tax problems. You've got wealthy people. You've got people whose incomes are growing and they need a little bit more planning.

So, by focusing on each of these niches, when you look at marketing, it's, "Oh my gosh, how am I going to get new customers," it feels overwhelming. Then, when you break it down and you go, "All right, who are my very best customers, and let me look at all the different niches and all the different little types of customers and why they use my service or why they buy my product," and now, okay these people seem to get the best value from what I do. They're most valuable for me, so now let me figure out where they are and how to talk to them in order to get more customers like that.

When you focus it down on a little bitty niche, one it's a lot less expensive because you're not trying to market to the whole world, and two, it's a lot more effective because where everybody else is out there just marketing, "Hi, I'm a CPA," or "Hi, I'm this. Come see me." You are able to be laser focused on exactly who you need with a great message that promises to solve their problem, and you generate the high value customers and let everybody else go after the great unwashed masses.

Lee: That's fantastic advice. I was in Atlanta recently and happened to turn on the TV and there was a guy standing on a big truck. He was a lawyer and I had never seen this in my life. He had niched his business to, "If you've been in a big truck accident." It was actually hilarious, but it was also brilliant because apparently there are a lot of big truck accidents. I had never heard any lawyer anywhere go for that particular niche. I was actually impressed with the guy that he found this niche and he was

advertising on television for it. So, that's brilliant advice. Thank you very much, Robert.

Robert: Do you know what the greatest fear though? This is a little bit of a segue that we're going on, but the greatest fear when I give this advice is, "Well, but if I limit my practice, I won't have all these other customers coming to me." That guy who is doing the ad about the truck, he still gets leads for other types of personal injury cases, and I can tell you he's also getting leads for bankruptcy, wills, estates, all the other kind of bread and butter law that people go to attorneys for.

The thing is, and yeah, he's probably referring most of that other stuff that's not within the personal injury area out, but when you limit your marketing, you are not eliminating all the other leads that you're already generating. Instead, you are increasing the number of high value leads that you're targeting, and that's the critical thing is people think they're giving up something by niching, but what you're doing is you're just focusing that one message like a laser beam on that high value customer and in addition to everything else that's happening, you're going to attract that high value customer at a greater rate.

Lee: I so agree, and to add on to that, the same lawyer I saw later in the week while I was in Atlanta advertising other things. So, he wasn't just going for one niche. He was going for several. He was making himself very well known.

Robert: Each of those messages is infinitely more effective. You have not been, to my knowledge, involved in a big truck accident.

Lee: Nope, thank gosh.

Robert: If any of the people you know or anywhere in your sphere of influence, somebody mentions to you that they were involved or a family member of theirs was involved in a big truck accident, boom that guy in Atlanta is going to come to mind. That is the power of having each of those messages niched and having it be so specific like that. It doesn't eliminate messages. In fact, it makes you top of mind for each of those categories so that when somebody thinks of a particular issue or whether it's in themselves or they come across it, "Oh, I know exactly the person you should speak to."

Lee: There's another psychological thing to that as human beings when we see someone that we perceive as doing something very well, in our brains, we actually connect that we think we do everything well in that field.

Robert: That's very, very powerful. You get credibility through your whole sphere of expertise by clearly demonstrating your expertise in a particular area, very powerful. You're absolutely right, Lee.

Lee: We're still driving.

Robert: We're driving the car. You've got the gas pedal which is new customers. You're steering because you've got to get where you want to go. You have a dashboard with the key figure and numbers so you know where you're going. You know the rate at which you're moving, and you're getting yourself there.

One last point I want to make on that is a lot of folks, certainly accountants, they give you financial reports or accounting reports as key numbers. Financial reports are critical. They're certainly important. I went a long time to school to figure out how to recreate those, but those aren't really the numbers that you really need.

Financial reports are about the past, and so if you're trying to steer your business based on financial reports, that's just like driving the car using only your review mirror. It's going to be very difficult moving forward only looking at the rearview. You've got to have forward looking numbers such as the rate of new customer growth, the customer value and the transaction size.

Then, fourth, Lee, you're from the south. I'm from the south. If you're driving around especially in the summers, it is darn hot and uncomfortable in that car. So, you have to have some creature comforts, some air conditioning, some things that make life in that vehicle a lot more bearable especially if you're going a long distance, and your business, you're going to plan on going a long distance. You want to keep this thing going for a long time.

In your business, the creature comforts are business systems and processes, being intentional about the systems and process that you create in your business that make you more effective and help you systemize. This is the thing that I had read all the books and looked at all different kinds of business system, coaching programs and really what it all came down to is I was just totally exhausted.

I had grown my company, and I thought that I couldn't – it was like, "Man, I've got to do this." It would take me just as long to delegate this as if I just do it myself, or when a team member or vendor or somebody did something wrong, "Oh shoot, I'll just do this myself."

What I figured out is I can't grow if I'm going to try to do everything myself. The switch was I had to become better about doing things through other people. I had learned how to do things myself, and by golly, I was pretty awesome.

Lee: If you say so yourself.

Robert: I can tell you, there's really nobody who could get work done as I can. I am a machine, but I get topped out. I only have so many hours a day, and I'm less and less interested in working all the time, and by golly for a long time, I was working eighty, ninety hours a week. What I figured out was all that was doing was making me tired. That wasn't growing my business.

The rate at which I was growing was topped out, and what I had to do was become awesome at delegating and getting work done through others, and that is just like you learned how to get things done in your own business, just how you learn some skills, getting things done through others, creating business systems and processes is a skill that you can learn.

I get it that people just don't care as much as I do. I understand, and I certainly understand the sentiment and I understand what you're dealing with. The challenge is it doesn't really matter. If you have systems and processes in place, checklists, documented ways of things happening in your business, then folks don't have to be as dedicated and as determined as you in order to be effective at getting the work done.

Just like the work that we do with the Harley dealers, having these checklists and processes and systems are really going to help you combat the swirl so that you're not the one where people are asking every little thing, every emergency comes to you. You've given them the criteria to be able to make decisions so that you don't have to make each and every decision.

I didn't come to this decision easily. It was thrust upon me, "I am never going to be getting out of this business unless I figure this out." As soon as

I decided that I was going to become good and I was going to invest time in creating systems, that's when it happened for me.

Lee: I could not agree more as a professional speaker for over twenty years and I was gone all the time. For my office just to survive, I had to create systems and processes and checklists and checklists and checklists because I hired people who had to basically run the business for me while I was on the road. I only got to talk to them on the phone occasionally.

So, I'm a thousand percent in agreement with this, Robert, and the fact that when we do everything ourselves, not only can we not grow, but we actually end up very exhausted and bitter and tired and just unhappy campers which unfortunately affects the balance of our life and our family life and everything. So, I know a lot of people listening today don't have assistants. I highly recommend that if you don't have great assistants, your business just cannot thrive.

Robert: I get it too. What will I have the assistant do? They don't know anything. One of the first places I started was I simply started creating systems and checklists for myself, "Okay," and it's as simple as packing. I actually now have a checklist. When I'm going on a trip, I have a little packing checklist of what I need to put in my suitcase.

For years, I didn't have this. I just did it off memory. For years, on any given trip, not every time, but one out of five, I'd forget something like a belt or shoes. Eight trips later, I'd forget socks. It just didn't cross my mind to go ahead and grab socks out of the drawer and put them in the suitcase.

Even now that I've got the checklist, I kind of go, "Yeah, yeah, I know what to do." No, go look at the checklist because when you've got the checklist and you use the checklist, you don't miss something. When you don't use the checklist, it's easy to. In fact, what happens Lee is I am now a lot faster packer. It's a lot more efficient of getting the job done now that I've got the list. It's, "Okay, how many days am I going?" Three days, one, two three of this, one two three of that, boom, boom, boom. You don't even have to think. You just look at the checklist and it happens.

Now that you've got the checklist on whether it's something as simple as packing or something as simple like that in your business, now you've got the power to delegate because you've gotten your judgment out of this. You've put your judgment into the checklist and now you're able to delegate this to others, and instead of trying to manage and go behind and look in people's desks and try to figure out if they've done something

right, now it's, "All right, where's your checklist. I need your checklist at the end of every day for the daily tasks and then the weekly tasks checklists. Turn that in."

Even then, you can delegate to someone else to receive all the checklists, make sure all of them are received and do a little testing to make sure things have gotten done. These checklists and procedures can really systemize just your own life much less make it a lot easier to delegate to others.

Lee: Absolutely, I'm in agreement and I could tell a very similar story, but your story is better about packing. My big wake-up call is I packed for a trip, but I didn't take a blouse for my suit. It wasn't a suit that closed totally in the front, and I suddenly realized I had no blouse whatsoever to wear with this suit in front of a very large audience. So, I had to run down to the gift shop and buy some kind of beachy t-shirt to wear with this professional suit.

Robert: I guess it wasn't the kind of audience where you could show up without a blouse.

Lee: No, no, no, no. We won't go there. Well, I'm so happy to hear you talk about the checklist because even going to the grocery store, if we go to the grocery store on memory, we're always going to leave the most important thing out.

Robert: Even more is we're going to buy things we didn't need to buy, and that's what you figure out when you start running your life with these checklists is you get these tasks down to what they need to be and you click them off, and they aren't about a whole bunch of other things. So, you save yourself time just like having a list when you go to the grocery store. You don't buy things you don't need; you don't do things you don't need to do when you've got a checklist, a system, a process that helps you run this stuff. The same with your people.

Lee: Exactly, we call it our resource list in our office and we're very big on checklists. Thank you so much. You're singing my tune. So, what's next?

Robert: So, those are the four things about driving the car. You've got to have the gas pedal, new customers. You have the steering wheel, which is the increasing transaction size, and then increasing customer value. You need your numbers which is your dashboard, and then the creature comforts which are the systems.

So, these are the critical pieces of the business. Everything else is superfluous, and again, this kind of gives you a little checklist of what you need to be worried about and what you don't need to be worried about.

Next is putting all this together in a plan, and Lee, you might not be surprised, but I actually have a system for creating and focusing these things into a plan, and that's probably the next place to move.

Lee: I'm not surprised at all. I would be shocked if you didn't have a fabulous plan.

Robert: Creating a plan, it seems like, "This seems like a lot of work," but it's a little bit of focused time, and what I do ask is for four hours. If you invest four hours into creating a plan, I'm going to tell you, you're going to save forty hours of time within the first month. It's going to be so much easier in your life if you have a simple plan that we're going to outline here. Does that seem easy enough, Lee, four hours? Does that seem reasonable?

Lee: I think almost any entrepreneur can find four hours to change their direction of their business into a more profitable, not only profitable but easy direction.

Robert: Take an afternoon, take a morning. It's actually pleasant, and we'll outline exactly what to do here, but it's actually a very pleasant thing. So, all right, your first and also Lee we have articles and things that accompany this so if they're listening to this in the car, and you're not able to write down, don't worry you've got it all written as part of your program in an article, but we'll go through it here.

So, four hours, your first thirty minutes is a candid review of last year. Take thirty minutes. Look at your calendar. Look at each month. What went right? What went wrong? What are some of the things that you want to do differently next year? Really give a nice review thoughtful, look back at the last twelve months and figure out what you want to build upon, what you want to maybe duplicate and then if there are things that haven't worked for you, what you want to let go and not do in the next twelve months. Does it sound easy enough?

Lee: It does.

Robert: The next thirty minutes is what are your goals and targets for the next twelve months? Where do you want to be in terms of revenue for your

business? Now, that we figured out what that revenue goal is, how many new customers do you need between now and then in order to reach that goal? What is your transaction size now and what do we need to do to that transaction size in order to help you reach your goal? If we increase that by five percent, how does that change the number of new customers you have to get?

Then, let's also look at your current customers. How often are they buying from you? If we can get them to buy from you maybe one more time a year or two more times a year or one more time a month, how does that change your numbers.

Now, you create these three goals, the number of new customers, your transaction size and the frequency that your customers buy from you, and so that's what this thirty minutes is about is creating those three goals so that you can have targets for the next year. Does it make sense? A little bit of work there. You maybe need to crunch some numbers and maybe work with your bookkeeper, but easy enough.

Lee: Not only is it easy, but the truth is we get what we focus on psychologically. If you say, "I will be able to hit my target if I had ten more customers paying X number of dollars." Then, every day everybody in your office was focused on, "Okay, well we only need ten more. We got two, now we only need eight." It actually builds a lot of camaraderie and everybody loves that competitive spirit. I love this.

Robert: This one little piece completely transforms the business because generally most businesses focus on all the problems, "We've got this to fix. We've got that to fix. We've got this person complaining." All that stuff still happens, but your focus, your conversation, everything is on the growth and on the numbers, and the other is kind of noise that has to be taken care of, but it really completely transforms the conversation that you have with your people when you've got these kind of numbers and you're focusing their attention on the positive versus all the problems that come up.

So, that's been an hour. We're an hour into this. The next thirty minutes are, let's look at your customer acquisition techniques. I learned from Bill Glazer to create a marketing calendar. So, a marketing calendar is simply taking the next twelve months and planning out what you're going to do in each month in order to generate new customers.

It may be this month it's all about researching what I'm going to do in month two, three and four, or it could be, "Oh, I've got to create a new campaign." So, in month one, you've got to spend a few hours actually creating a campaign that you can launch in month two.

So, if you don't have all the answers, that's fine, but more than anything, identify the fact that you need to find those answers and dedicate yourself to creating a twelve month plan because very often with these marketing strategies and marketing things, if you're going to run an advertising campaign four months from now, you've probably got to buy the ad space within the next few weeks or else the space is going to be gone or the issue is going to be closed and you'll lose that opportunity.

Also, the other thing about having a calendar is it makes it so easy when other people come to you with ideas, "Oh, hey, I've got this great rodeo coming up that you need to sponsor," or "We've got this thing going on that you need to buy." You can see where it makes sense within your calendar, and where it makes sense incorporate it, and where it doesn't don't.

It gives you control of what you do in order to generate new customers, rather it be your marketing being based on the last salesperson that's come to your office.

Lee: I really like that because you're teaching people to think and act versus react. I think that's a very important point that a lot of people don't distinguish is that they react to salespeople and they react to situations, but if you have a plan, then you'll know immediately if this offer is good for you in the big picture or not.

Robert: Kind of as a tool for this, the office supply place whether it's Office Depot or Staples or Office Max, whatever your favorite place. They've got those big twelve month calendars, and they're just a few dollars. You can put them on a wall and you can use a grease pen to write things and the dates. That could be an easy enough tool to use for this sort of thing. You've just got to figure out with the next twelve months what you want to accomplish and how you're going to generate new customers. That's ninety minutes.

The next thirty minutes is, what are the promotions that you're going to do to existing customers? If you don't have a list of existing customers, then you use this time to figure out what you're going to do in order to create that list of customers, what kind of promotion are you going to run

so that you can capture the names and addresses of every customer that comes in? What do I need to study in order to be able to make sure that I'm generating a customer list?

As you have a customer list, what are the campaigns, what are the high profits that you could be selling more of and making some more money? Let's do a campaign. I don't mean let's discount the price. Let's create some sort of package, some sort of special, some sort of promotion to let our existing customers know that we have this and to get them to come in versus going somewhere else. This is letting folks know. If they don't remember you or think of you, then they're going to keep on going and go somewhere else.

I have a friend who owns a restaurant and I got him to capture all of his names and addresses, and he makes these fabulous muffins. Well, it's all about doing a promotion now instead of people driving by your restaurant, let's let them know the flavors of muffins that you have today and they can get a muffin and coffee on their way to work versus going to Starbucks or someone else.

So, by using that list, what are the types of promotions that we can do over the next twelve months that are going to be able to make that happen? So, does that sound easy enough?

Lee: It actually does, and I'm taking notes as you speak because even though we both done this a long time, you can see these little pockets of, "Oh, I need to be doing more of that." So, thank you. This is fantastic information. I'm sure everyone listening today is really appreciating it, and also feeling slightly guilty that they haven't done it.

Robert: It's no problem because very few people do this, and if you go down low to business planning template from Google, it's not going to talk about any of this stuff. It's not going to talk about the key drivers that are really going to get you anywhere. It's not your fault that this isn't done, but now you've got the opportunity to make the next twelve months your best ever.

So, we're two hours into this. Your third hour is actually broken up into three twenty minute segments. For twenty minutes, what are you going to do the next twelve months on the fulfillment side getting things done? What are some of the ways that you can systemize, delegate, improve and be more efficient about the way that you get things done? It could be that

you want to hire somebody to replace yourself. Well, then, you're not going to do that tomorrow.

So, you're going to have to figure out a job description. You're going to have to advertise. You're going to have to interview. You're going to have to select. You're going to have to hire. You're going to have to train. Well, then, you and I both know that's not going to happen overnight. Just plan it that maybe this month you create a job description. Next month, you create the advertising. The following month, you do the interviews. You hire somebody. You provide a month or two of training. You plan to get it done rather than go, "I wish I could hire an assistant." Let's just incorporate that into the plan and do it piecemeal so it can happen versus putting all this pressure and feeling guilty that you don't make it happen.

Next, twenty minutes of administrative improvement, what changes do you need in operations or your team or software or tax structure? There's all this kind of administrative stuff that's out there. It could just be you need a new corporation or you need to replace the software you have. Let's just think about those things and plan what month you want to get some of that stuff done.

Then, finally, take twenty minutes and look for the types of events that you want to go to. You probably participate in coaching programs. If you don't, you certainly should give some thought to that. What kind of seminars do you want to go to that you want to learn and improve yourself, get new ideas? What types of meetings do your coaching programs have that you need to incorporate? There may be weddings or things like that that you need to incorporate into your plan and make sure that you block off time for. Lee, it may not be a bad idea to go ahead and block off time for vacation.

I can tell you, if I don't block it off many months in advance, it doesn't happen. It's absolutely crucial that you go ahead and block that kind of time off, and both learning for yourself and also maybe even give some thought to your people's vacation. I went to a key employee just last week and said, "You haven't take a two week vacation in the last couple of years. Let's make this happen."

Now, I can tell you from a business owner's perspective, you want your people to be gone for a couple of weeks because very often, the most egregious problems aren't able to be covered up for the two weeks that they're gone, so you're able to discover things that you wouldn't be able to if they weren't gone for two weeks, but that's not why I send them

away. I think it's an important recharge that I really want them to be gone for a while.

There's another reason you want it to happen as well. So, that's the third hour. The final hour, you break this up into two thirty minute segments. First is big picture, look at your calendar for the next twelve months. You've put all kinds of things. You've put new customer acquisition. You're maximized customer value time. You've put administrative time. You've put all these different things. Now, look at it and go, "Can I really get this done in a month? Should I move some things around? What are some of my priorities? How can I massage all these different tasks that I've loaded into my calendar? How can I make sure that I'm not overloading myself in any particular month?" It's very easy to say, "I'm going to get it all done this month."

Now, let's just focus on getting one thing done a month in each of these areas and then what can I do to make it efficient. Just take thirty minutes, look over the calendar, make sure that it's going to be effective. The final thirty minutes, incorporate these dates and timelines into your own personal calendar.

Lee, I know you do this. I do this as well. One of the reasons why I am so darn effective at getting things done is that I've got a plan. It's essentially a calendar, and I know exactly what projects I'm going to do. Really, at this point, I know four weeks from now, every week for the next four weeks, what client projects I'm going to do and when, and I've blocked off time for my stuff, my marketing. I've blocked off time for my clients' work, and blocked off time for my people. I know if a client asks for something, I can go, "Well, I'm happy to do it for you, but it's going to have to be five weeks from now because I've got everything blocked off."

It didn't start that way. I can tell you. It started one day at a time where I just said, "Okay, today from this time to this time, I'm going to do this. From this time to this time, I'm going to do that." When I also did this originally, I also had more slack time in. I had a couple of hours of just trying to catch up, and as I've been able to be more effective, I've been able to lessen that. Now, it's only about an hour in my calendar a day is that kind of catch up time.

By planning your day, so take that big calendar that you've created and take at least this week and figure out what you're going to do this week in order to plan it. As you move forward, do it a month at a time. Go, "Okay, what am I going to do this month in order to make sure that I hit my

goals?" I can tell you still Lee to this day, I have a monthly checklist. Every month, I go through that checklist and there are dates I need to schedule appointments with members of my team. There are times like, "Okay, I need to write my newsletter for this month," and I'll schedule time in my calendar for the month for that.

Then, there's also I need to plan time for new customer acquisition. Make sure that I set aside a number of hours in my goal of how much time I went to set aside to do new client acquisition and I block that off in my calendar so that if a client asks for me to do something, I look at my calendar and go, "Well, it's going to be three or four weeks. It may be here before I can get that done." Generally, that's perfectly fine. The client is happy.

The thing is when you have this, you're going to be so more effective at actually getting things done and make them happen when you promise them. There's nobody can get things done when they promise. If you're actually somebody who can make it happen when you promise, then they're not going to run off and hire someone else just because it's going to be a week or two more than they thought.

Lee: Robert, we have like thirty seconds before our hour is up. So, everybody can reach you at www.AssociationMarketing.com, and just so everybody knows, Robert is one hundred percent correct. He has supplied us with lots of reports that I'm going to share with us.

Folks, I don't know about you, but this is one of those interviews that you really should go and get the transcript for and listen to and take notes and really take Robert to heart. Robert, thank you so much. This was fantastic. We deeply, deeply appreciate your wisdom. So, we're going to call it a wrap, and thank you very much.