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EPIISODE
176

Don Brown

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John Bowen and Don Brown
Episode #176

Dear Fellow Entrepreneur,

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Best of success,



John Bowen
Co-founder, AES Nation

John Bowen: As entrepreneurs, we are out there trying to make a huge difference. The one thing that we know is the more we can move from one to one, to one to many with whatever message, whatever passion, the purpose we have in life, and to inspire people to action so that they have a better life. We can do exceptionally well. I've got a fellow entrepreneur who is a remarkable individual. Everyone knows his products if you've been around for a little bit at all. He is in the fitness space ... He has gotten his start. I'm going to let him tell his backstory on this, but I just want you to know that he has generated, from his first big product, over a hundred million dollars in sales.

So, this is a remarkable individual who is a fellow entrepreneur. He's a fitness guru. He's extremely talented, and he's ... Approaching my age, not quite there yet, but he's an older guy in the sense of we think of all these young entrepreneurs out there, who is reinventing himself along the way, and I wanted him on this podcast to share with you, so that you can see how you can reinvent yourself and continue with your passion, your message, but make a huge difference in the world, and by doing well by your clients, you get to do well. I'm John Bowen. You're at AES Nation, all about accelerating your success. Stay tuned for this remarkable entrepreneur.

Don Brown, I am so excited to have you here. Thank you for joining us.

Don Brown: John. Hey, thank you. This is awesome, especially that I'm on a podcast for the person that's interviewing me is older than me. I'm so used to these young guys that I deal with all the time.

John: No, I do a lot of interviews on the other side too. I don't think I've ever had anybody older than me interview me, now that you say that. This is kind of a young guy's sport, and one of the things you and I are going to talk about is it doesn't need to be. This is ... If you have a message your passionate ... Before we turned on the camera, we talked about a mutual friend, Dan Sullivan, who is in his early 70's and has a 25-year plan. He sat his company down of over 100 employees and said, "At 70, I'm not retiring. I've got this plan. I've got this passion. I want to continue as long as my health let's me." He's planning on living to well over 100, so I don't know about the next 25-year plan, but we ... You've done some remarkable things.

There are so many life lessons, just really doing background, 'cause we didn't meet. We referred by some of my friends over at Joe Polish's genius network, and I'd love to get the backstory because the second ... Kind of started checking you out, I mean, I didn't buy your piece of equipment that you sold a hundred million dollars' worth, but I saw it many times. I'm pretty sure my wife did buy it though, so you got a sale in the household here. I'd love to get kind of the background of how ... You know, none of us start out, usually, saying we're going

to be an entrepreneur at three type things ... A little backstory and then walk through some of the lessons here, 'cause this is going to be ... You're just finishing a crowdsourcing campaign that every one of us entrepreneurs wants to know about, but let's start at the beginning.

Don: Sure. This is great. So, as we know, I'm 57 years old, and I did ... Grew up in a family where it was like get a job, please get through high school first, get a job, and stay with that job until you get a pension and retire. I did that for nine and a half years. I worked in a supermarket right out of high school. In fact, I barely finished my senior year. Three classes, go to work, and then eventually got the full-time job. So, I was there, I said you know what, I need to make more money.

The one thing I was passionate about was fitness. From the time I was 10 years old, I watched Jack LaLanne on TV. My mother would watch him doing his little kicking and jumping on his chair. Anyway, I was passionate about fitness, always wanted to stay in shape, pushup contests, pull-ups, I was the kid in high school that could do all that stuff. It was after getting that job, cutting meat, and realizing I'm going to do this for the rest of my life. Then we went on strike, nine and a half years in ... Six months, I had a pension. We had a big strike.

I'm walking around with a picket sign making 40 dollars a week. It was there I took a part-time job at a fitness center. It was from that point, and then eventually, that fitness center was going to go out of business. Here I am deciding, right, so I quit that job, walked away from a pension, had 40 grand in the bank, dumped it all into fitness machines, took over this failing fitness center. It was a Jack LaLanne fitness center, of all things, right. Anyway, so it was there that I started my entrepreneurial drive, 1986, worked a hundred hours a week ... You know, made all sorts of deals with members to keep the cash flowing, and keep that place afloat, and it finally worked.

I had that for over 20 years, but it was during that time when I had an idea that was basically to help one of my members, who had hurt their neck ... It was to create a way that they could do crunches or sit-ups. So, I sat there at my desk one day, playing with a paperclip ...

John: Let me stop you just for a second. This is an important story and I hate to interrupt, but one of the things ... I just want to point out, I mean, starting in 86, I'm a financial guy. I do remember 1986, Ronald Reagan, tax reform, and then the start ... So, you bought, and you were the guy that caused the stock market to go down, the economy to go down in 87. So, I mean a lot of us, as entrepreneurs, think to survive that initial start, all we've got to do is just have a good period. But you not only ... Life is timing. The timing was not ... I'm thinking that was even a more challenging time to start the business than usual.

Don: Oh, my God, yes. I mean, like I said, I had a little nest egg just from working so much. It was that little nest egg ... I just ignored what was around me, and just focused on what I

had to do. It was about keeping those doors open. I had members that were happy they were working out. So, yes, you're right, it was tough times, but again, it's just about focus ... Sold my trucks, I mean I got rid of everything I had to survive. It worked.

John: The thing that I love so much, Don, about what you've been doing ... And this is one we can all relate to 'cause ... I can remember at least one or two tough times in my long ... I'm 61, yes, many more than one or two tough times, and what you did ... I think this is something that's so important for all of us, is to observe how we can solve problems, and why don't you really ... 'Cause I mean, you turned around your career. Starting out in a grocery store, the meat cutter, and all that, and suddenly, now you're a big-time entrepreneur. What was that transition there? I'm sure it was a straight line.

Don: Well, as I had mentioned when we spoke earlier, I am a big believer in education. I've been an Earl Nightingale fan from way back. If your listeners have never, which I'm sure they have, listened to Earl Nightingale's *The Strangest Secret*, the whole concept of you become what you think about. Even before I had that health club, when I worked there part-time, I would always imagine myself at that desk, running the show, and here the place goes out of business, I end up taking it over, buying it. So, to me, it's that focus constantly on what I want, not what's going on around me.

Even during the whole Ab Roller ... When I invented the Ab Roller, as we talked earlier ...

John: Yeah, and tell us how you did that because ... Was there a one night you woke up with a brilliant idea and go out and sell a hundred million dollars of it?

Don: During that time, as you said, things were tough, but the one thing about when the economy's rough, people stay home. They watch television, TV infomercials were at the height. When people watch TV infomercials, they buy stuff, back in that time. So, that was 1994. I was trying to solve a problem with a client who had a neck injury, so I wanted to create a support system. I was just thinking, inventing a paperclip in a shape of a rocking chair, I held that thing up. My office manager walked in, and I said, "This is going to make me a millionaire." She said, "What's that?" "It's a paperclip," and no lie, I bent that. I went to Home Depot, bought a piece of pipe, bent it in the shape of that little rocking chair, put it on the floor, it worked perfectly.

Next thing I know, thousands of my members were like, "This is so cool. I want to get one. I want to get one." Then from there, the story, oh my God, you want to talk about the hard times and the rough times. I went to a trade show in the fitness industry to showcase my idea. Just to validate this is the ... What we talked about earlier, this is the modern-day crowd finding, but this is live at a big trade show. You spend 5,000 dollars to get a booth and everything.

My booth was the busiest booth at that trade show at Club Industry. But little did I know, it wasn't just the club owners and the fitness people that were loving it, it was the knock off artists. It was the people who steal ideas. They see something hot, and the next thing I know, I was knocked off. When you talk about the most stressful time in my life, 27 people were copying my product. I had 27 different lawsuits going on at one time. The money going out was just-

John: Don, had you done any of the protection of intellectual property type thing? Patents and that at that time, or ... Obviously, you've learned a lot 'cause you've written books about it, but how did you get up to speed on that process?

Don: So, one of my members ... And the great thing about owning a health club is you have access to every trade in the world. I had lawyers, accountants, contractors, you name it. But one of my members was the technical director at the USGA, so he had a lot of background in understanding patent. So, he hooked me up with a patent attorney, said, "You have to file your patent. You've got to put your little TM on there for the trademark, and you have to do all this." So, I did everything that they told me to do before I showed it to the world, I had people sign non-disclosures ... Exactly what I teach today, I pretty much did back then. This is way pre-internet.

Even if you do everything right, the belief is, oh I have a patent, it's going to protect me. No. A patent is a piece of paper that gives you the right to spend millions of dollars suing people and hoping they're going to pay up someday. So that was probably the toughest part of my career, was knowing I hit a home run and that I can't collect anything. Then the patent lost my patent application. You can't sue people until your patent issues, until it's published. That was a nightmare. I mean talk about ... That was more stressful than stocking my health club, to be honest with you.

But yeah, that was a long bottle. Years. Millions of dollars spent on litigation. Now, fortunately we made a lot more, but let me tell you, that was the hardest thing to see other people making money off of my idea, and I couldn't do a thing about it 'cause patents take a year and a half, two years to issue.

John: Don, what would you tell your fellow entrepreneurs? As we're talking today, what would you tell them to do, knowing what you know now through that experience, as well as how the world's changed a bit to deal with the intellectual property side of this?

Don: You know what's neat, John, is I meet a lot of people my age, your age, who have ideas. A lot of in the garage tinkerers and a lot of people who run their own companies, and are too busy. They have ideas for products and they don't know what to do. So, my advice, to them, is now the laws have changed, obviously, to where you can fill out a provisional application,

but I spend very little money protecting that idea until I know that people really want to buy it, because you can spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on prototype, manufacturing, patent protection, all over the world for a dumb idea.

So, to me, the biggest message I think I can share with people is protect it, which you can now, very inexpensively, right, with a provisional patent application. Then, crowd finding. We'll get into that shortly, but validate the idea. If you have that provisional in place, you validate it, that gives you the window. But the focus, to me, isn't about trying to sue people or stop. Focus on being first out, best dressed. Do your best to build that beautiful product with a great story, quality marketing ... If you can win the market share out of the gate, that's how you play the game.

If I went back to do that Ab Roller over again, it's exactly what I would've done. I would've plowed my money instead of litigation into marketing. We would've owned that category. In fact, the Ab Roller wasn't my original name. It's the biggest one I sued that I won, and I won all the rights and the trademark, and everything else. So, it's about that first out best dressed. Focus on marketing, but do your IP protection if there's something worth protecting there. So, you have to have something.

John: I think there's so many pearls of wisdom in what you're saying. Marketing, I mean, particularly with all the outlets, what we, as entrepreneurs, want to do is if we have ideas, we can protect it through working with our intellectual property attorneys, and it's pretty straightforward how to do that. It's not overly expensive. I mean it is time consuming, the long delay, but it's ... You know, you can do that, you can file it, you can put the flag in the ground, if you will.

But then, one of the key things that ... There's a lot of ideas out there that aren't good. You can get really excited about it and everything else, and ... But going out and getting that market feedback is so invaluable. I can remember, I've always been in the professional service side, Don, but going ... When we were coming up with new financial service products, going to the trade shows, and I mean I used to hate them because ... It's hanging out. For everybody's been to 'em, either as a vendor or as attendee, but that was the way we did it.

Now, I love ... In fact, I want to put on the screen, the kick starter campaign that you're doing now ...

Don: Wow, great.

John: And this is one it will be finished unfortunately when we post it, but I do want to point out that you're a little ahead of your 20-thousand-dollar goal, and ... Matter of fact, when I looked at it, I was doing research, your background on it. I looked at it, watched this video,

and said, "You know what? This is cool. I got to have one of these too." So, I was one of your earlier pledgers along the way, but what I love, and I wondered ... When we were going to talk, I thought you were using this as ... To me, this is the cheapest research platform there is putting it out, but there's a lot of new in crowd funding.

It's not that oh I got a great idea, I'm going to put it out, and the world's going to come to me ... At least most of my friends who have tried that have failed. What did you learn about getting the market feedback in today's world?

Don: Well, as I said, John, I spend about a year and a half, two years studying crowdfunding, because to me it's the modern-day infomercial. The old TV infomercials, that audience is dying because they don't have to watch commercials anymore, so it's a way for you to create a video show, and to show the world an idea, and see if they respond. There's a huge audience, roughly about three million people right now, that love to back new ideas and new projects. These are called superbackers on Kickstarter.

So, there's about three million of them that are all around the world, that are looking for the next cool gizmo gadget ... Sort of like the early adopters, right, in the product lifecycle. So, these people are out there, and they're ready to jump on ideas, and they're cool enough, and they really believe in it, and you tell your story good.

But what I learned from the research I did prior to is you can't just show up on a platform with a product prototype and shoot a little video, and expect people to suddenly back it. Because there's four to five thousand projects running on Kickstarter everyday. So, yours is at the bottom, unless you have an early surge. So, the magic is to gather a good list of people, friends, family members, or just you're running some Facebook ads doing some testing, running to some images of your product, getting people to at least be familiar with it, so you can start to build that audience. Because if you can come into the crowdfunding platform on day one, with a huge surge, you go from that low four or five thousand people on the bottom of the pile all the way up top.

This is popular, look, people like this. Now you're in front of those superbackers. You're in front of those people that are scanning crowded Kickstarter and Indiegogo all the time, looking for the next exciting thing. Those people understand how it works, different, right.

John: I wouldn't consider my ... As a superbacker, but I account myself as somebody who spends a fair amount of money on a Kickstarter, so I think I probably do qualify. I hadn't thought of that. I didn't know that term, Don, but there's so many people that like the next shiny thing. I don't go on to Kickstarter that often because I have a bad habit, but when I do, what I do is I look at the backers or anybody I know, and if ... Or the project's in the winning ... One of the things I found interesting, Don, on yours is that not only it's clear that you were

winning right in the beginning, and I didn't know you then and didn't know how you did it, but I found a video that you did, telling people how to buy.

Don: That is so funny.

John: I just did a quick search on YouTube and it showed up. What was kind of interesting, you were showing the second day after the launch. This is when I knew you knew what you were doing, is you had already surpassed your 20-thousand-dollar goal, and how could anybody not want to jump on this? If you had any interest in doing another exercise, or plank, or having the great abs that every one of your models had, of course you wanted to do this. I think if you're going to use crowdsourcing, it's a great tool, but you can't count on Kickstarter or Indiegogo, or any of the other platforms to bring people to you.

You first have to deliver to them, win, pass your goal, or to be real close to it, that you now start showing up. That's what I'm hearing you say, is ... What you really did?

Don: Yeah, that's correct. Some of the key mistakes that people make is they put a minimum goal too high. I've seen ... 'cause they do the math, and they say, "Okay, wow, to do the tooling and everything I'm going to need to manufacture this product," if they even do that. Most people don't even figure out the math and they just guess, but if you do the math and say, "Okay, what am I going to need to do this?" It's a big number. Let's say it's 100 thousand dollars, right, that's going to scare some people away if it's your first time project that you've ever done, because they don't know who you are, this isn't your second or third.

By the way, the second and third is you see like Pebble Watch, you know they get a lot of momentum because they have a following and a trust factor that they're going to deliver. But to me, I've been doing this my whole life ... My partner on this, Howie, as well. He's been involved in several projects and entrepreneurial adventures, and we both have been successful. So, our backgrounds elongate the credibility that we're going to deliver, but-

John: I want to stop there just for a second 'cause you did a risk reversal, using the marketing term. When I looked at your frequently asked questions, one of the things you did ... Everybody worries. I had bought a few things on Kickstarter that have never come, nor have I gotten a refund along the way. You always wonder when you do that, whether it's going to happen. Well with your success and your partner's success, you kind of have just a single line, or relatively short line on that. It's like, oh of course this is going to work type. I think that's so important.

Don: Yeah, very important that you remove ... You're saying the risk for the person who's going to back you, that you have enough knowledge and credibility that you understand a process, right? But, what you had said, that video you found, which is exciting to me because

the one thing I learned from these young guys was that you can't go market fitness people on Facebook. They don't know what crowdfunding is. They go, "What do you mean? I know what crowdfunding is." They don't know. They'll get there and they'll freak out, 'cause they don't know what a pledge is. They just want to go to Amazon and buy the thing. They don't have a clue that they must wait for it.

So, I did that quick video and it's amazing to me that a lot of people were watching it. Hopefully, those people that were not familiar with crowdfunding got enough education to realize this is a great way to get a fantastic deal on a product that 80 percent of the time is going to get delivered. I think Kickstarters still says about 20 percent of their projects, people don't fulfill. It's not that they're thieves. They don't understand how to manufacture. They run out of money. They get burned by a factory and weird things happen. That's not good.

John: That's part of it, I think. When you've never manufactured something ... I think of the guys who did the water cooler or something. The disaster ... It was a great marketing campaign, but nobody knew how to do anything and hadn't lined it up. On the other side ... I mean it's just, you can make some mistakes here that can be a little fatal and you don't want to do that, but one of the other things when I was doing the search, Don, that you had lined up, it looked like are some PR along the way too, in spots where people who are going to be likely to want to use ... There was kind of the tech guys and the fitness guys, I saw that kind of combination, maybe describe how you did that as well.

Don: Yeah, again, studying Kickstarter early on, I've realized that there are several components. Getting that first list, friends, family members, and people engaged through Facebook that you could pre-educate that you're going to be launching it. That's the one group. The second group is PR. If you can get a reputable organization talking great things about your new idea, the people who follow that podcast, or Huffington post, or one of these big tech. People who follow that and they have that ... Like I said, it's that risk reversal. There's a trust in that this product's going to come through. This group is highlighting it.

The down side, if you don't have samples, you miss out on a lot of press, and that is one of our biggest hurdles because this product has a very expensive tooling cost. We handmade, had these machined out of aluminum for the prototypes. So, these are four thousand dollar prototypes, which you're not going to be sending around to a bunch of journalists. So, you don't get the press that you would want without having samples.

So, we did ... We hired a PR firm that had a reach that could help us at least get the initial word out, and it worked fine. The other thing, John, is the engine of the project, where you can look at the stats. I don't know if you follow Kicktraq. Have you followed Kicktraq at all?

John Bowen: Quite honestly, I wasn't aware of it. This is one of the reasons we do podcasts is ... All of us are learning on this-

Don: Your listeners are going to love Kicktraq, because Kicktraq is a great tool for following the daily revenue and product charts of how a product's doing, and predicting the trend, and where it's going to end up. So, if you go to Kicktraq, and it's T-R-A-Q, I believe, and just type in "Stealth." you'll notice the last 10, 12 days of my campaign have spiked through the roof. What happens is, as I said, these superbackers, they want this project, but they've been following it. They're not ready to jump in yet. There's a couple marketing companies out there that understand that.

If you collaborate up with these marketing companies, they know exactly ... not only do they have Facebook accounts and lists of all these superbackers, they create ads running on Facebook and they can turn a 10 to one, a 15 to one, an eight to one, for every dollar you spend, they'll draw that much revenue in right at the end of your campaign. Because they know these superbackers must have your product. They don't want to miss out.

So, they just feed it in their Facebook pages like crazy. We've locked in so we want to return with at least five to one ...

John: It's just fresh on the screen what we're talking about here because I just pulled it up. Kicktraq you can see here. If you're in a car or working out, even better, just go to AESNation, get the show notes, you can get the transcript of everything that Don and I have talked about, as well as you can download any of the connections here, but you can see it's ending ... The time we're doing the recording, it's ending on Saturday, and you're currently 1579 percent of your pledge. It's amazing that they have this and I can see that people ... Now I got another one I can look to see what's kind of hot and the whole thing.

Don: Right, because that does several things. If you can drive fresh traffic in, you move up in the rankings under Kickstarter, popular, right, you move high in the category, and missing gadgets or technology. You move up top and guess what? You're right in front of the superbackers. When they see this thing's hot, they want in. It's an addictive thing. It's almost like, I think, the grandmas watching QVC. They're there looking for cool stuff, and when it's put up right in front of them, they got to have it.

That's how the games are played, at least on these crowdfunding platforms. So, we're excited. I'm very happy. I think we'll hit over that 300-thousand-dollar mark and I don't know, what is that in the last hour or so?

John: 315 right now, so ...

Don: Perfect.

John: 316 as we look it just went to.

Don: That's fantastic.

John: This is amazing. Don, I want to go to resources in a second, where they can reach out and talk with you, or get any of the tools, or how they can follow what you're doing. But, anything else on crowdsourcing? 'Cause this is one of those things, I mean I'm sure you've talked with many fellow entrepreneurs and it's kind of sexy. We think that we should be doing it, but it's still a very small percentage of the people that are using this. What would you do, and then what I want to do is ask you the follow-up question: Now that you've had the success, what are you going to do with this product? But let's ... Any advice for any fellow entrepreneurs that are trying to think, "I want to do this, but I don't know what I'm doing" type thing.

Don: Yeah. Well, again, the reason I did this was one, to completely understand it and learn it so that I can teach it. So, I will be doing that this year on a website called inventWOW.com. Right now, it's just a placeholder for email, I believe, if it's even up yet. But, it'll be a website called inventWOW.com, where I'll be educating helping people do it. Basically, anyone, especially guys our age who are a little not so tech, up on every new little app that comes out-

John: Don, let me just put the page up for a second to ... And it is right now, if you want to sign up to really keep track of what Don is doing, you can go to inventWOW.com, and again we'll have that link. If you're on the video podcast, you can see the page, but I'm sorry to interrupt. I just wanted to make sure everybody got that, Don, continue to go to the journey you're doing here.

Don: Okay, so there are plenty of resources. I spent the last year and a half understanding and learning it. The most important thing is there's probably 10 or 15 companies that are specializing in crowdfunding videos. Turnkey, I've seen them low as two thousand dollars. They'll take your prototype and they'll create a crowdfunding video for you. I've seen them as high as 30 thousand dollars. So again, just like anything you're involved, the financial markets, you've got to be a little savvy and sit and say, "Okay, what route should I go? Who should I pick?" But the bottom line is the researchers are out there. There's plenty of people that will set up your page for you. But Kickstarter's pretty easy. The one thing about these platforms is the average person can go in and get it set up, but there's a lot of people, especially these young people, who because they can use these to throw up a quick website, they can get your page set up.

The one bit of advice I'd give people that I did, I went in and I searched for products that are in fitness gadget wellness gaming technology. I went through and watched every video. I wrote down the scripts word for word. I looked at the timing of every script. I looked at the pictures underneath the video, and I basically built a model for myself. It's no different to me

than what I used to do in the TV infomercial world. The TV infomercial world as we know, it's agitate, right, problem solution and here's the big aha moment, and here's the call to action.

So, a crowdfunding video isn't quite like direct response in the sense that you want them to buy into you, your concept, your idea. That's what happens. So again, there's producers that do these now. There's a couple of great ones out there. There's maximum video we used out in California, great resource. There's another one called WeMakeVideos, she's I think in Tennessee. She's very, very affordable, and there's several other ones. Even if you take a videographer ... I've seen people shoot a whole video with their iPhone, and the product's wow enough. That's the whole concept with inventWOW, right, you got to have a wow idea. Something that separates you from what's out there.

You deliver the story in a compelling way. It's amazing what can happen. One project I'll talk about briefly is the Better Back. I don't know if you've seen that product out there, Better Back, but she crushed it with a back-support device that was around 30 years. She just rebranded it with a different name, told a better story. No patents, nothing. That product crushed it because again, people who are in front of a computer all day long, back issues are a problem sometimes if you're sitting or standing.

So again, like I said, crowdfunding is not for every product out there, but for most them, you can definitely learn a lot.

John: Tell me what ... Okay, this is not the end of the journey Kickstarter, I mean this campaign. What are you going to do with this product going forward?

Don Brown: Here's the neat thing, which has sort of become the new model is, if you start on Kickstarter, there's an automatic transition over to Indiegogo. So we're going to be transferring over to Indiegogo, which means you'll still be able to get a discounted price for the next 60 days while we manufacture this product and bring it to life. So, it's called Indiegogo InDemand. You can also start an Indiegogo and launch your product to that audience. We chose Kickstarter just because of the tech community and Kickstarter was first, and it was one of the sites that I just spent a lot of time learning on, but I think that's neat.

You know, Indiegogo has opened themselves up and say, "Hey, you know what, your products not made yet. You might as well keep collecting pre-orders from our audience to." I look at Indiegogo and Kickstarter like Mac and PC. You like one or the other. They're two different groups, but it's been a lot of success, so I'm expecting we'll probably get close to four or five hundred thousand just in pretty much organic exposure on Indiegogo.

John Bowen: Tell me where you ... Quite honestly, I didn't know the on-demand thing, I love that idea. Where are you going to go from here? You have 500,000 in sales. I used to be in the investment relying on the edge of VC money, I'm going there's a proof of concept here, obviously. So, you don't stop, right? You're going to continue to do something with this?

Don: You know, let's say in the last 20 some years, I created the Ab Roller. I also created the Ab Coaster. I don't know if you studied that, that the current company I'm a partner in is called The Abs Company. So, we sell commercial ab machines to health clubs all over the world through The Abs Company. To me, the plank, which this idea for the Stealth came from a good of mine who was in the fitness business, and he got into a couple other really good entrepreneurial ventures and did very, very well.

But anyway, the two of us teamed up to make the plank exercise non-boring. The plank is considered one of the best core exercises because it not only supports your back, your core ... Every abdominal muscle, your legs, your shoulders, and it takes less than three minutes. If you were to do one exercise everyday, to keep your posture, your balance, to eliminate the whole back issues, and have that firmer flat stomach ... At least create the awareness that your belly is the single most important thing regarding your overall health.

If you have a big bulging belly, chances are you're not healthy. If you focus on your core, and that's what the plank does, so we wanted to make it fun because traditionally, sitting in a static plank and just sitting there for two minutes to three minutes is painful. You don't even want to look at your phone, so we noticed that and said-

John: I know what I do. I just think about how much I hate this exercise.

Don: Exactly.

John: And how long the time is going to be here.

Don: So, the cool thing is that we are going after a small new niche market. So before, I would sell TV infomercials, mass consumer market to retail stores everywhere. Then there's the health club market commercially, sell to health clubs all over, which this product will work in health clubs as well. But our goal is to focus on the little minimal things you can do, hence the name Stealth. Stealth is about sneaking fitness into your daily routine. We have a full line of products that are going to combine the concept of the simple device, combined with your smartphone, the thing you have ... That brain you carry around in your hand all day long.

We want to put that to good use so that it's going to help you get in shape by doing these short little, brief little exercises. We have a bunch of things. So, what are we doing from here? Once we get the tooling done, and our goal is to make it in the US, we're still working on that to get the numbers right. Then we're going to go direct to consumers, it will probably be on Amazon, possibly Jet as well.

But that's pretty much it. We're not going to really go the traditional retail route. It's one route I have to say, I don't like. It was great in the infomercial days when they were calling begging for the hot product on TV, but they run the ship. They control everything. I like going direct to consumers, you know, build that community. With the app download, now we can feed people all the other things they need to know ... Health, nutrition, everything that we can gain by getting people to focus on their core.

So that's what Stealth is all about. It's about sneaking fitness in, so we're going to launch a separate company just based on that concept, of the simple things you can do right where you are now ... At work, right? You can have a Stealth trainer at work. You don't have to get undressed. You don't have to run to the gym. But there's great things that can come out of doing these short little bouts of exercise. So, to answer your question, that's what Stealth is doing. We're going to revolutionize the health of people by saying, "Look, just put three minutes into this workout." When they do that, they'll feel great, but also, they're going to get more great information, tips, and short little things they can do to change the course of their health for the better. 'Cause hey, 57, getting up there, and you know it, your chances of disease and bad things after the age of 50 skyrocket, so ...

John: Well, and one thing I look at, Don, too is if you can keep yourself healthy in the next 15 years, with all the medical research, the ability to live to 100 with a high quality is just increasing dramatically. So, I mean tools like this are just so invaluable. Let me go over ... I want to cover kind of the key takeaways that I got out of this, and they are numerous. So, thank you, Don, this has been valuable.

One of the things ... None of us, all our fellow entrepreneurs, none of us go in a straight line and we need to be opportunistic, and the opportunities show up so often in the perfect storm when something isn't right. We just need to be able to do it and today, it's never been a better time to be an entrepreneur because doing the commercials ... Spending all the money that you had to do to market these infomercials, a huge difference. Now we can really keep things very lean and test ... Want to be very clear on intellectual property. You want to do it in a way to protect it, but you're never going to make money.

I have had that same experience ... You can do a lot of cease and desist letters. You can send lawsuits and all that. You spend a lot of money if you put it in marketing, you can dominate, so be that rising star that everybody wants to be around success. One of the best ways is to use these crowdsourcing if you're going to do a product, get it out there and test it. But make sure you've got a list that's active, that is going to be aligned with whatever your solution ... So, you can get it a success.

Price ... Work with somebody. I mean Don's got great experience. Go to his website, inventWOW.com. Whoever you use as a coach, don't try to do this alone. There's too much

value in it. Get proven employers who can do it, don't need to spend a lot of money, and then test the market. What I love about ... What Don's done is he proved out the concept. You can hear his passion on the fitness side. Then, he extended it with the PR, he's now going and extending it one more time as a campaign Indiegogo, then going to make it available on the online platforms, maybe Amazon and Jet.

But think of the product ... The long-term client value for each one. What I really love is you're building a tribe, a community, whatever term we use, that you can communicate with now, and work with them to have a much healthier lifestyle so they can live a long and great quality of life. Don, I really appreciate this time. I want to wish you the best of success, remind everybody I've got our website AESNation.com. You can get the transcript, all the links that Don and I talked about, and use these. Go out and take action, and you will make a big difference.

Don, anything before we wrap it up here?

Don: The one thing I just wanted to say when you're talking about the whole testing, right before you do your crowdfunding campaign, you can do a little Facebook test for about 200 dollars, and you can validate that people will even want it on crowdfunding. So there is even a pre-test before that test. But again, Facebook is so powerful to do these little things.

John: This is two older white guys telling you to use Facebook. I spend probably about 500 dollars a day now, and I'm working up to about 1,000 dollars a day now on Facebook on marketing advertising. I just find it to be extremely effective, and my two businesses are financial advisors, and very high end, and individuals, and you wouldn't think that's going to be the group ... It works. It's a great way of proving our concept.

So, your current client/customers, your future customers and clients are all counting on you. Don't let them down. Go out and download Don's information. Go sign up for his mailing list, and go take action on all this. You'll be glad you did. Go out and make a difference.

A Second Opinion on Your Finances

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Founder and CEO
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