



Launch Plan

By Evan Carmichael

My first business was a software company. When I got started I was full of excitement, energy, and couldn't wait to get going.

The world was mine for the taking!

The excitement wore off pretty quickly when I realized how hard it was for me to make money. I'm not talking about big money... I'm talking about ANY money. Every day I hustled, grinded, and gave everything I had to my business.

What did I have to show for it? \$300 a month.

That's all I could take out.

I was embarrassed and humbled. I've never felt so badly about myself.

I felt like a failure and I was letting everyone down.

Here I was supposed to be living the entrepreneur's dream but I couldn't even afford \$20 to go out and have dinner or drinks with my friends.

The books, TV shows, and movies make it look so easy but all I could think was "Why is this so hard???" Almost every day I wondered if I should keep going or do the "smart thing" and go get a job.

Then I hit bottom.

I couldn't stand the face I saw in the mirror any more.

I hated how I felt about myself and I knew I was better than this... something had to change.

I made a commitment to find a way to make this business work or go do something else because I couldn't keep going as is.

Then the light bulb went off inside my head.

I realized that I wasn't the first guy to try and sell software before.

I didn't have to figure everything out myself.

So I started researching large software companies like Microsoft and how they got started.

I didn't know it at the time but I began to model success.

I didn't care about how Bill Gates makes an extra million dollars today.

I wanted to know how he went from his idea to making his first million. That's what I wanted to do.

When Microsoft was a small company they grew rapidly through partnerships.

They found other companies who were selling to their target market and found a way to work together.

Microsoft sold software so they partnered up with companies that sold computers.

They structured deals so that every computer that was sold had Microsoft software on it.

Now instead of having to go out and get individual clients one by one they worked on closing a few big partnership deals and allowed their partners to go out and sell their software.

Microsoft's big break came when IBM approached them to discuss creating a new operating system for their line of personal computers that they were creating.

Bill Gates agreed and MS-DOS was born.

The deal with IBM paid Microsoft \$430,000.

IBM was apparently expecting Microsoft to ask for more money up front or a pay per copy royalty. Instead, Microsoft asked for the ability to resell its MS-DOS software to other companies. Microsoft wanted to be able to continue to partner up to grow their business and IBM agreed. IBM didn't want to be in the software business.

This set the stage for Microsoft to form partnerships with virtually every personal computer company.

Almost every computer on the market was soon being shipped with Microsoft software. They dominated the operating system market for years to come and built a multi-billion-dollar empire off of it.

So I decided to model Microsoft's partnership strategy and set off to research people who are already selling to my target market and find a way to work together. Within a month of following this strategy, I landed my first deal. Then I landed another one, and another.

It was working and I finally had some momentum with my business!

The hard work was paying off now that I was focused on the right tasks.

The partnerships that I formed saved my business.

Their track record and experience helped expose me to so many people who I could have never reached on my own.

If I didn't discover the power of modelling success and didn't research Microsoft's story and put their strategy to work for me, I probably would have had to shut down my business.

I'd be working at some job that I hate, wishing that I could have found a way to make my company work.

My instinct to solving any challenge in front of me now is "Who can I model?"

For the past 10 years it has been my mission to teach this instinct to others.

I help them find who they can model and what lessons they can extract.

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About the Author

Evan Carmichael helps entrepreneurs. At 19, he built then sold a biotech software company. At 22 he was a venture capitalist helping raise between \$500,000 and \$15 million. He now runs EvanCarmichael.com, one of the world's most popular websites for entrepreneurs. His goal is to help 1 billion entrepreneurs. He has helped set 2 world records, works 20 hours per week, uses a stand-up desk, rides a Vespa, raises funds for Kiva, and created a line of Entrepreneur trading cards. He graduated from the University of Toronto and enjoys salsa dancing, being a DJ, and the Toronto Blue Jays.

Co-ordinates

Mail: 4665 Yonge Street,
Suite 303, Toronto,
Ontario, M2N 0B4
Canada

Email: evan@evancarmichael.com

Web:

<http://www.evancarmichael.com/>

LinkedIn:

<http://ca.linkedin.com/in/evancarmichael>



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