

Principle 16

Leveraging & Licensing Your Greatest Asset

*Use your experience
to identify commercial opportunities*

Right now, I have no doubt that just about anyone reading this has an 'Aladdin's Cave' of potential money and profits locked up inside their own heads, just waiting to be let out. Whether you sell computers, fix cars, or work as a chef for a restaurant, you almost certainly have accrued a certain amount of knowledge and expertise over the years that others will pay to get.

Here's an example: After putting her four children through university, Jean, a housewife with no job outside the home, was elated when her last child graduated, not only because she was happy for her children, but because it meant an end to wading through the almost endless bureaucracy of all those mind-numbing forms and applications for student grants, loans and various other red tape. Then a friend from her neighbourhood asked Jean for help with her son's university entrance applications. She said: "Jean, I know you've put four kids through college so you must be an expert at this."

Indeed she was, so an idea and a new business was born. Jean took out a local ad and pitched herself as a university financial aid consultant. Her ad said something like: "Need money for university? I'll help you find it!" For £70, Jean would sit down with



parents and future college student and find them every form, application and legal documents they needed, help them fill them out, and get them sent to the right locations - all in one session. A typical consultation of this kind took about 90 minutes, and often less. The result was that Jean was earning perhaps £40 to £60 an hour as a paid consultant. Many people were more than glad to pay because they knew that Jean saved them countless

hours of frustrating form filling and paper pushing - and they also knew Jean might uncover sources of student financial aid they may not have known about otherwise.

Ironically, Jean herself never went to university - but now she was making £60 an hour - which a lot of college grads would be thrilled with these days! And now that she was getting paid for filling out university forms, it wasn't such a drag anymore. Best of all, Jean loved helping other people and she felt appreciated because people loved her service.

The point is, no matter what you've been working at, or even doing as a hobby, it's likely you can leverage that expertise and make it a valuable cash generating business. There are many ways to package and use your knowledge; one-on-one consulting, conducting seminars, write a book about what you know and market it, or how about publishing a newsletter? You've worked hard gaining a lifetime of experiences - why not put them to good use?

Here is an idea that's similar, but takes a different angle. It involves packaging your best ideas and licensing them to others for a fee or percentage of future profits, or both.



For example, a lady, 'Jill', who was a former newspaper reporter with a major metro daily newspaper, grew tired of big city life. So she moved back to her rural small town where she grew up. She started up a new, one-issue per week newspaper that covered the happenings of her

small town. Now, this town already had a newspaper, but she put together such a new, exciting and fun publication, she was able to drive her venerable competitor out of business in just five years - and that newspaper had been in existence in that small town for nearly 100 years!

Jill enjoyed the good income of being the only publisher in her small town, and had all the advertising market to herself. Yet, the limited population in her coverage area meant she could only grow so large. Always the restless entrepreneur, Jill hit upon an idea that would soon make her rich.

Jill, in effect, "bottled" her method for establishing an all-new local, community newspaper by writing down all her methods of getting started, marketing, gaining the support of advertisers and readers, and put it all in one easy-to-read manual. She also made up a super-easy-to-use template for laying out a newspaper and put it on computer disk. With this template

and her manual, Jill started making contacts in other small town around her state, and in other states as well. For £350, and 15% of all profits on the first two years of business, her customers got the manual and the ready-to-go template - everything they needed to start their own successful newspaper.

Within less than half a year, Jill had racked up £200,000 in licensing agreements. Some of the new newspapers failed, but she still kept the £350 start-up fee. And those that survived and prospered continued to pay Jill their 15% over two years - and the cash really rolled in.

What is your area of expertise - and can you “bottle” it like Jill did? This idea often works even with something much more simple - maybe you have a method of selling used cars, or perhaps an exclusive recipe for making a certain ethnic food and a plan to market it - it can be just about anything. Take what you or your company knows how to do well, have proven to be a success at, then package and license that knowledge. A lot of other people will pay dearly for it. You'll be helping them get started in a new business and a new life - while making yourself a lot of money!