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MAVERICK

BUSINESS SUCCESS

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The KING
Will See You Now

The King Will



Known as the King of Connections and the King of Cheap, Tim Johnson is a master at scoring sweet deals—and helping clients close some pretty sweet deals of their own.

South Bend mogul Tim Johnson runs Bradley Management, through which he owns and manages over 200 real estate properties, and Global Renegade, a company that assists speakers with converting attendees into buyers. What do the two businesses have in common? Plenty, starting with Johnson's in-depth knowledge of both real estate and people.

Johnson knows properties from the ground up—literally. He started in the construction industry when he was still a teenager, learning skills like dry walling and metal stud framing. In his early twenties, he worked his way up from employee to owner of a construction company that specialized in retail and restaurant buildings.

By the time he was in his early thirties, Johnson was ready for a change. He became co-owner of an after-market drawer company called Shelyt, that grew to include two dealerships in Chicago and



With Forbes Riley

Milwaukee. Johnson's natural sales ability resulted in impressive numbers for the company. And while his accomplishments were peppered with phrases like "number one seller" and "largest sale ever," Johnson soon discovered a new outlet for his sales and business acumen.

He was invited to a real estate seminar and fell fast and hard for the industry. After all, his decade and a half career in the building trades gave him a thorough

See You Now



With Brett Micheals, Rock Star



With Jack Demarco, TV Producer, in Orlando TV studio



With Brian Tracy

It also helps that Johnson has an uncanny knack for getting materials at a much lower cost than anyone else, which is how he earned the nickname, “King of Cheap.” He once bought 17 properties for \$63,000, and while others were paying \$5,000 to get a furnace installed, he paid \$1,500. Clients have open access to his tips and tricks, and Johnson also shares his knowledge through his books, *How to Get Rich by Being Cheap* and *Living a Wholesale Life in a Retail World*.

One of the biggest keys, he says, is simple negotiation. Rather than blindly paying what big-box hardware stores charge for supplies, for example, Johnson suggests using apps like Red Laser, which allow you to comparison shop before setting foot in a store. And don’t discount the power of a good old fashioned bargaining session. “We’re the only country in the world where people don’t say, ‘Is that price the best you can do?’” he laments. “Negotiate! Get six or seven prices, and if you really like a vendor, show him the other bids. Make them compete against each other a little bit.”

In what he calls “due diligence,” Johnson spent—and continues to spend—time pricing supplies at both the big name, national retailers and wholesalers. He then borrowed a strategy from mega-retailers like Walmart and began negotiating larger quantities for larger audiences. “I got a bunch of investors together and asked them whether, if I can get stuff cheaper, they would buy under my name,” he says. “So they did.”

In the furnace example, his “furnace guy” buys under Johnson’s name and saves a big percentage. Which saves Johnson money on installations for his properties. This method of operation is something he uses in every aspect of his business, from lumber to booking blocks of hotel rooms for events.

His expertise in both real estate and deal-making prompted Johnson to launch his second business, *Global Renegade*, which assists clients in creating hugely successful real estate seminars and events. His services span everything from helping speakers hone their message to filling a vendor area to conducting back-of-room sales.

The demand for Johnson’s services, especially when it comes to those back-of-the-room sales, is off the charts. In fact, this element of the business got started because clients came to him. “I was going

understanding of what it took to construct and remodel properties. But because Johnson doesn’t do anything halfway, he decided to study with the best—like Robert Allen, Nuva Reese University, Ted Thomas, and Lou Brown—so he could master every aspect of the flipping and rental business. In 2005, he sold Shelyt and launched his real estate company, Bradley Management, from his home base in the Chicago suburb of Downer’s Grove.

Real estate is one passion that hasn’t waned, perhaps because it’s never boring. He does it all: flips and sells houses, holds onto some for the rental income, and manages properties for other people. The secret to his success is carefully choosing what makes sense for him, whether that means profiting from a tax lien flip or managing another owner’s property.



With Erika Arias from Fox 61 News Connecticut

to events and talking to people, and then I would walk an attendee back to the sales guy and say, "This person is ready to sign up." The salespeople were stunned."

He's able to do what most speakers and even other salespeople aren't able to: speak the audience's language. No matter the industry, people on the inside of it learn a lingo that doesn't usually click with the general public. There's a disconnect. But the King of Connections breaks that lingo down into a language that makes sense—and makes participants ready to buy.

It's an ability Johnson has always had. "From very early on, I was connecting this person and that person, and so both of my businesses kind of evolved together," he explains. "The King of Cheap and the King of Connections are both about who you know and how you work those connections."

At the heart of everything he does is one basic understanding: people need to know what's in it for them. Johnson says too often speakers focus on what a great company they have, rather than how that company benefits people in the audience. His gift is in translating the concept into concrete benefit for the potential customer. "It was something I did over and over, and people began to take notice," he says.

What most people want—and are willing to pay for—is convenience, a concept that was driven home when he ran the drawer dealerships. "I wasn't selling a drawer box, which was simply a piece of wood on 100-pound rollers," he says. "I was selling convenience. Now, someone who was 80 years old and couldn't bend down anymore to reach the back of their cabinets is adding function back into their life."

With both Bradley Management and Global Renegade, convenience is the name of the game. Johnson has a seemingly limitless Rolodex that make clients' enterprises and events extremely successful. People who are looking for great services, products that deliver, and events that sell



With the most interesting man in the world, Jonathan Goldsmith

don't have to reinvent the wheel. They can just call Johnson. "Whether I'm connecting construction guys so they can get better prices or connecting seminar participants with people who have products to sell them, it's about knowing how to make someone's life easier," he says.

Though he's now based in South Bend, Johnson's skills are in demand all over the country. One good example is a Connecticut real estate investment club for whom he ran back-of-room sales for two years. He's also able to reach people throughout the U.S. and around the world through Renegade Real Estate Riches, a coaching program that walks people through due diligence and teaches them how buy for less.

His clients won't let him get out of the joint venture business, though, with repeat customers demanding more of the same great back-of-room sales and vendor results. He attributes that track record to being what he calls the "Henry Ford" of every room. "I don't need to be the smartest guy there," he admits. "Henry Ford wasn't the smartest guy in the room, but he knew the guys who delivered the best value."

When it comes to connections, there's no one better than Johnson for delivering the best value. He advises clients to stick to what they're good at—what their business is all about—and let him take care of making the connections that can take that business to the next level. "If I can come in and use my resources to skyrocket their success, I will," he vows.

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The *Secrets* to Lucrative Events

It's no secret that a powerful speaker and a great location are crucial to pulling off a successful seminar or event. But did you know that vendors can be just as important? Tim Johnson, the King of Connections, explains that this often-overlooked element brings a sense of status and legitimacy to events. And that's where he comes in.

He's developed an extensive—and impressive—roster of contacts, and clients depend on him to steer top-quality vendors and sponsors to their events. And he delivers. He works hard to ensure that his joint ventures include vendors with products and services that are complementary to the seminar's product or service. "It's a win-win," Johnson says. "The event coordinator has spent time and money to bring the ideal clients to the event that the vendor can then capitalize on."

The right vendors can make events more successful in multiple ways. In addition to elevating the seminar's profile simply by being there, vendors can help promote the event through social media and word of mouth. After all, they benefit from a high turnout, too. But managing individual vendors, as well as the mix of purveyors, is vital. If you want to enhance the experience for attendees, create greater value to sponsors, and facilitate the exchange of ideas and networking at your next event, the vendor area can be an asset or a deal breaker, he explains.

Johnson's involvement doesn't end with vendor procurement, though. He uses his understanding of both people and business principles to convert seminar attendees into buyers. "If you can connect a problem they're having in their business to the product or service onstage, they buy," he promises.

When Johnson is on your team, event success is practically guaranteed. From vendor participation to back-of-room sales, no aspect of the joint venture is overlooked. He put in the blood, sweat, and tears to test and vet his connections, so his clients can sit back and enjoy the rewards. Finding experts in every field? That's tough. Counting on Johnson to mine his network for your benefit? That's easy. "I surround myself with people who deliver every time," he says.

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