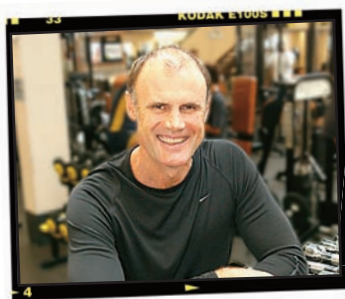




# SECRETS OF MALE ENTREPRENEURS EXPOSED!

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**DALE BEAUMONT**  
WITH BRENTON TONG & FOREWORD BY GLENN KIDDELL

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GET INTO ACTION

*BRAD SUGARS*



## BRAD SUGARS

“ I have had partners take my money, senior employees hold us to ransom, legal fights and people slinging mud at me in the media...if you can overcome the challenges that are thrown at you, then you are going to be a success. ”

# BRAD SUGARS

Brad Sugars was born in Brisbane in 1971 and has lived all over Australia and in the USA. He obtained a Bachelor of Business degree (majoring in accounting) from the Queensland University of Technology, but according to Brad, it is his life experience rather than his academic qualifications that has led him to become a successful entrepreneur.

Brad has been in business for himself almost all of his working life – he has either owned, or been involved in, more than 30 different businesses, including magazine publishing, pizza manufacturing and dog food. He is the founder of Action International Business Coaching – the 39th top global franchise, number one business services franchise and the world's sixteenth fastest growing franchise. Action operates in nineteen countries and has business coaches in more than 700 offices.

Brad is the author of fifteen business books, including four international best-sellers, he has taught more than 480,000 people how to create business, property and financial success, appeared in dozens of magazines and on radio shows all around the world and was voted the ninth most respected entrepreneur in the world by readers of *Espy Magazine – The Entrepreneur's Bible*. Brad was also featured on the ABC TV special *Selling Success* which followed the progress of some of his students over twelve months and proved his abilities as a business coach.

Brad is also a major philanthropist; he is chairman of the Queensland Tent of the Variety Club and donates hundreds of thousands of dollars to charities each year, including Father Chris Riley's Youth Off The Streets program.

Brad is a proud husband and father of two and is in his own words, 'a very average golfer'.

**When did you and your family first realise that you had an entrepreneurial flair?**

When I was seven, my dad caught me selling my Christmas presents to my brothers, so I guess he knew around about then that I was going to be different! By the time I was eight years old, I had worked out that you shouldn't sell anything that you can rent – that way you get to keep the present and also get paid over and over again. Apart from that I was a fairly normal kid. Money was never really the focus for me but having fun was. I played a lot of team sports including rugby league, Aussie rules and cricket.

**Is it true that after leaving school you had more than 30 different part-time and full-time jobs within a three-year period? Why did you choose to do this and what did you learn from the experience?**

Yes, that's basically true. I was at university studying accounting, which only took twenty hours or so a week, so I worked. I went through 30 different jobs in order to find out what I liked and what I didn't like. One of the most important things about work is to have a passion for what you do. Too many people have no passion for life simply because of their jobs, it's important to be able to look forward to going to work.

What I learnt over the years is that I am ultimately unemployable, which sparked my entrepreneurial interests and gave me the incentive to start my own business. Every job and every boss taught me something. The lessons weren't always about the right things to do in business, I also learnt a lot about what not to do, or what doesn't work well. If you're a learner and you look for the lessons in life, then every situation offers you something to grow from.

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“ Sometimes the biggest threats or challenges can turn into blessings. ”

The best thing that ever happened to me was that no accounting firm wanted to employ me straight out of university because my grades were average. If they had, I might still be an accountant today.

**In the beginning, what were some of the business skills you were lacking, and what did you do about it?**

Early on I had the attitude but lacked just about all of the skills needed to be successful in business; I made up for it with hard work and ‘street smarts’. To fill my knowledge gap, I decided to read everything that I could. I have read about 928 books and I definitely won’t stop there. I also went to every business seminar I could find and I bought tapes and listened to people who were successful in their fields. I found this easy to do because I was young, but what I have observed is that as people get older they assume they should know what to do and are too embarrassed to ask questions. In the long run it is more embarrassing to try and do something that you can’t do; people need to learn to ask questions. Books are probably my highest recommendation. I believe you should visit a bookstore every week, something will always jump out at you, so read it.

The number one investment you can make in life is education – both your own and your family’s. It will pay you back for the rest of time.

**What made you decide to start your current business?**

In 1993, after consulting with one of his local promoters, I was asked by Robert Kiyosaki to teach marketing at his business school for entrepreneurs in Hawaii. From this experience I discovered a love of teaching and went on to build my own seminar company teaching business courses. Soon enough, we wanted to continue our overseas expansion and we found that

we needed to overcome distance, language and cultural differences; the answer to achieving this was franchising.

Franchising also helped me to overcome one of the biggest challenges I was facing in my business. When I first started in business coaching I employed all of the coaches myself, and of course several left and went into competition with me. With the laws being the way they are, I was unable to stop them. Sometimes the biggest threats or challenges can turn into blessings. This experience led me to go into franchising rather than become bitter about the fact that I was losing my employees.

### **Why did you call your company Action International and what does it do?**

‘Action’ is what it’s all about. Many people *know* what to do but the successful people are the ones who are actually doing it. ‘International’ because I had faith from day one that we would eventually be global. Today Action International is essentially a business coaching company. My coaches work one-on-one with business owners teaching them how to improve their sales, marketing, team building, systems and management. We do this through a simple six-step formula, using a tool box of 282 profit building strategies and much more.

I started in 1993 and today Action International is still number one, with more than 620 coaches in eighteen countries and climbing rapidly. For the past two years we have been listed in the world’s top 100 franchises and we are ranked number one among business consulting franchises. We have about 200 offices in Australasia and more than 700 offices in the 20 countries we operate in.

For the first four years, Action was a seminar company but there was no leverage in that because I had to be on stage all of the time and I was on the road for more than 200 days a year. For intellectual property protection and international growth we chose franchising and it’s been the best decision I ever made. I think the other very important factor in franchising

is profit margin, and that's where a service business stands head and shoulders above the rest.

### **Why would someone consider using a business coach?**

The top three reasons why someone would use a business coach are:

1. *Team problems* – If you have staffing problems a business coach can assist you in finding solutions to recruit, train and keep good people.
2. *Time problems* – If you work too many hours or if the business would collapse without you in it, a business coach can help you to find ways to leverage yourself out of your business and to implement systems so that it can run like clockwork without you.
3. *Financial problems* – If you need to find ways to boost your revenues, raise capital for projects and/or increase your bottom line, then a business coach can help to find cost-saving or profit-increasing solutions to integrate into your business's financial plan.

Most business owners realise pretty quickly that because they don't have anyone pushing them they tend to slack off a bit, so with an Action International coach, two things happen – they finally have someone to hold them accountable and they have someone with the knowledge base to help them grow in the areas they need to grow.

### **You say that there are only five ways to grow a business. What are they?**

That's right. Most people who come to one of our Action coaches generally want three things – more customers, increased turnover and higher profits. However, you can't change those things on their own because they are simply the result of other factors in the formula.

So here are the five ways to grow a business:

$$\begin{aligned}
 & \mathbf{1. LEADS} \\
 & \text{(prospects or potential customers)} \\
 & \times \\
 & \mathbf{2. CONVERSION RATES} \\
 & \text{(the difference between those that could have bought and those that did)} \\
 & = \\
 & \mathbf{CUSTOMERS} \\
 & \text{(the number of different customers you deal with)} \\
 & \times \\
 & \mathbf{3. NUMBER OF TRANSACTIONS} \\
 & \text{(the average number of times each customer bought from you that year)} \\
 & \times \\
 & \mathbf{4. AVERAGE DOLLAR SALE PRICE} \\
 & \text{(the average price of the item you sell)} \\
 & = \\
 & \mathbf{TOTAL REVENUE} \\
 & \text{(the total sales of the business)} \\
 & \times \\
 & \mathbf{5. MARGINS} \\
 & \text{(the percentage of each sale that is profit)} \\
 & = \\
 & \mathbf{PROFIT} \\
 & \text{(something every business owner wants more of)}
 \end{aligned}$$

It's important that you work at improving each of these five areas simultaneously. If you don't, it's a bit like going to the gym and only working the muscles in your right arm for one month, then the muscles in your left leg for the next month. It doesn't make any sense.

In my book *Instant Cashflow*, I share a whole bunch of ways to dramatically increase each of the five areas mentioned. The exciting thing to realise is, because of

“Go on, apply the above formula with a few basic numbers and see for yourself!”

the multiplier factor, by simply achieving a ten per cent increase in each of the five variables, we get a 46 per cent increase in the total revenues and a whopping 61 per cent increase in profit. Go on, apply the above formula with a few basic numbers and see for yourself!

**At one point in time you had one of the fastest growing franchises in the world. What were the key ingredients to making that business grow so rapidly?**

This year we were ranked as the sixteenth fastest growing franchise on the planet by *Entrepreneur Magazine*. I believe this is due to four factors:

1. In handling growth, we were decisive and had strong leadership.
2. There are good people on the team, especially the sales and marketing teams.
3. We have a great product or service to sell.
4. We have created 'raving fans', so our customers and our franchisees do our selling for us.

On top of that, it's about realising that there are more people in other parts of the world, so don't restrict yourself by geography. Too many companies, particularly in Australia, restrict themselves geographically. We have a firm policy of global expansion and aim to add four countries a year to our trading region. This alone allows for massive growth and with franchising, the working capital comes with the new franchisees.

We also have very strong viral or organic growth within the regions that we already trade. We had strong growth in the first three years, with twenty to 40 per cent growth each year after that in our existing regions. When you couple this with international expansion, you quickly see how the two multiply to give years of solid growth both now and into the future.

## **What do you think are some of the major benefits of having your own business?**

I am so passionate about business that I could easily write a whole book on this question alone. These are some of what I consider to be the most important benefits of business ownership.

- It's the only vehicle to create *serious* cash flow. How much money would you need invested in the share market (at say ten per cent growth) to cover all of your family's lifestyle expenses? At least one or two million, right! How long would it take you to save that amount of money? Even with real estate, you would need to own a dozen or so properties outright, which will probably take ten to twenty years to build up. However, with business, provided that you have a strong desire and some street smarts, it is possible to create an asset which produces ten to fifteen thousand per month in cash flow, in a year or two. Then you can leverage yourself out of that operation and repeat it again with another business. To me that's accelerated wealth.
- With your own business you are in the driver's seat. You are the one that is in control of decision making and the leadership of your team, which gives you the satisfaction and peace of mind of knowing that whatever you put into the business, is whatever you are going to get out of it. Plus, you are working every day to make yourself rich, rather than to make the boss rich.
- Business gives you the ability to buy back your most valuable asset: time. A wise friend once said, 'Once you've spent your money you can just keep making more, but once you've spent your time it's gone forever'. Business allows you to put together systems and then employ and train a team to do the work for you. That way you don't have to physically show up in order to keep the business running, instead you can spend time travelling or with your family. Of course if you love showing up you can, but it's good to have the choice.

- A little bit of knowledge in business goes a long way. I've found that it doesn't take much to out-perform your competition in business. Like it or not, most business owners do a poor job of running their businesses, so you only need to do some basic common sense things to totally win in the minds of your customers.
- Where else can you get all of the tax benefits that business ownership brings? Of course tax systems vary around the world, but in general they're selfishly structured in such a way as to favour the people that have their own businesses. From the government's perspective, why would you want to deter the goose that lays the golden eggs?
- Most importantly to me, it's fun. I love playing the game. I love the challenge of marketing, team building, sales, accounting and cash flow management. I love the fact that I get to deal with so many different things. If you haven't already, you'll fall in love with it too when you see the results it can get for you.

**You made a lot of money in your early twenties but lost it all shortly thereafter. What went wrong and what did you do to make it back again?**

The biggest mistake that I ever made was taking on partners who enjoyed my money more than I did. I lost money through poor judgement and by allowing others to manage and control my finances. That's life, and we move on. I still had the knowledge of how I made it the first time, so I went back into business with a strong conviction to avoid making the same mistakes again. What I learnt is that partnerships don't work long term, but also that tight monetary controls are paramount to success.

To make a distinction here, shareholders are different to partners. It's okay to have people who fund the business and retain equity, they provide capital because they want a return on their investment but they don't work in the business like partners generally do. Shareholders understand their place and are less likely to do damage to the success of your business.

## Why do you say that the key to business success is laziness?

Understand that business isn't about working hard, it's about employing people who work hard for you. Yes, you have to work hard to initially set it up, but the aim of business is to have the work done profitably by someone else and as the owner of the business your aim should be to do yourself out of a job. This is known as 'leverage'. Your job is to *think* – to search out new opportunities and add value to the company. Your team's job is to run the business and grow it.

My definition of a real business is a 'commercial, profitable enterprise that works *without me*.' It's funny how when I teach people this definition they are usually taken aback for a few seconds and then it's like, well yes, I guess you're right.

There are several elements within this definition. A 'commercial enterprise' comes first, that's one in which you can reliably and productively deliver what you sell. Most companies we coach have to go back and start at this level to remove customer complaints, bottlenecks and so on, so that the basics of the company are running right. It still amazes me how many companies don't even know what their break-even is on a day-to-day basis. We also put a very big focus on making sure that profit margins are solid right up front in coaching.

The next element to add is the 'profitable' part. That's where you learn to market and sell what you deliver. Here we find that most business owners use only two or three ways of getting new customers and even fewer ways of getting them back or having existing customers spend more money. Getting business owners to focus on their conversion rate from prospect to sale is a massive area for growth.

“ It still amazes me how many companies don't even know what their break-even is on a day-to-day basis. ”

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Then, it's about systems to make it all work, a system is simply a documented way of doing something. Systemising everything from employment to customer service is all about having it recorded and documented. You can write it down, film it, photograph it, or record it any way that you like, what's important is that you have a documented way of doing things.

The last stage is the team building to make it work without the owner. Team building and leadership go hand-in-hand, but teaching it to business owners is often a challenge. On the surface it's pretty simple, but as you get into it, you begin to realise the complexities.

**At the age of 26 you were in a position where you could retire financially, why did you choose to go back into the world of business?**

In short, I failed at retirement. I was bored, I became irritable and I realised that the reason I had worked so hard before wasn't the money, it was because I enjoyed it. I love the game of business. Business is about people and systems working together, and keeping the balance between the two is always a challenge. Too much systems orientation and you lose customers because they feel you don't care about them. Too much people orientation and you lose customers because you can't deliver on what they order. Business is one of the most creative and challenging games you can play. However, you must remember that it is just a game, so learn the rules, play hard and have fun.

What I love now is the fact that I have choices. For example, I have the choice of going to work or not, the choice of working with my IT team one day, in marketing the next or with my CEO making the big deals. That's why I went back into the world of business initially. Nowadays, with my wife and two young kids, I have more important things to do so I work very little.

## **Why do you think so many small businesses fail in this country?**

Put plainly and simply, it's a lack of knowledge. Just because you're a good hairdresser, accountant or florist doesn't mean that you have any idea about how to run a business that does or sells those things. The 'official' reasons for business failures are often red tape or a lack of capital, but in my experience, after working with hundreds of thousands of business owners, it's simply a lack of knowledge. The problem is that most people find an excuse or someone else to blame for their lack of success. It's easier to blame economic conditions or the government than it is to truly take responsibility for the fact that you failed. It's my belief that you never fail – unless you fail to learn the lesson.

The other most common mistake that new business owners make is starting a business from scratch doing the work they know how to do. For example, a plumber starts a plumbing business and fixes pipes all day but never actually tries to build the business. Most people buy themselves a job rather than viewing a business as an investment where it's not only the income but also the capital value that you want to build. The salary you can pay yourself is important, but ultimately you've got to remember that you're building a business with one purpose only – that is, to eventually sell it or leverage yourself out of it while the profit still comes in.

## **What do you think are some of the essential characteristics of a successful entrepreneur?**

In short, I believe the most essential quality of a successful entrepreneur is to have 'balls'. In other words, they have to have the confidence to take a leap into the world of risk in order to achieve their dreams. While I'm thinking about it, here are a few other points I think will be useful:

“ Business is one of the most creative and challenging games you can play. ”

*The great idea* – The great idea doesn't have to be a great product or service, just a great way to deliver it. You could be selling black socks, you just need to do it better and in a different way to everyone else. Differentiation is the key to a successful business because people take notice when things are done in a unique way to what the rest of the market is currently doing.

*The great people* – This is by far the most important ingredient. A great jockey can get an average horse to win, but an average jockey can stop even a great horse from having any chance of success. The people you surround yourself with are a reflection of the amount of success you will have. And the last thing you need is...

*A little bit of money* – If you can't run at a profit from day one, then things are going to be tough later on. The only reason you should need extra capital is for fast expansion. So make informed decisions and borrow from people whom you trust, if need be.

I have had plenty of challenges in dealing with all of these things. I have suffered a lack of cash, a lack of good people and a lack of knowledge. I have had partners take my money, senior employees hold us to ransom, legal fights and people slinging mud at me in the media. But when it all comes down to it, I can go home and my family is there waiting for me. At that point, I realise that it's all worth it. At the end of the day, if you can overcome the challenges that are thrown at you, then you are going to be a success.

**If anyone can succeed in business no matter what their background or circumstances, what do you think holds people back from becoming successful entrepreneurs?**

I think that what holds people back is fear, lack of desire and lack of knowledge. Most often, people have no big reason to be a success, only a big reason to stay safe. What sets successful entrepreneurs apart is that they feel the fear, and do it anyway. Business can be a scary world to be playing in and there were lots of times when I wanted to give up. The fact that you just

have to keep going gets you through. For me, there's no allowing myself to throw in the towel, it's just not who I am.

Also tenacity with flexibility is key to success. Some people use the saying, 'If at first you don't succeed try and try again'. But remember that you need to try it a different way, not just the same way over and over again.

The best time to begin is today. The longer you wait the harder it will get – not because it's too late but because you're too safe in your old ways and you feel comfortable. Only your lack of knowledge holds you back, so start learning.

### **What are the most important things you have learnt about succeeding in business?**

An important thing about business is that those who say it can't be done will never try, but those who at least try will learn something new. People overestimate what they can achieve in a year but underestimate what they can achieve in ten. They need to stop wishing that their lives were easier and start wishing that they were better. Those who keep learning and growing have businesses that keep growing with them.

Essentially in today's business world everything is about handling change – it will either happen to you, or preferably, you will make it happen. Too many people live reactive lives and they often live in fear because they don't know what's going to happen to them next. Be proactive and know what's going to happen because you're the one making it happen.

### **You say that everyone is ultimately in the business of 'marketing and selling', how can aspiring entrepreneurs learn to become better at sales?**

To me marketing is maths. If it boosts the bottom line, it's great marketing. I became a great marketer through understanding, testing and measuring.

---

“You run an ad, count the responses, see if it made a profit and if it did, run it again.”

You run an ad, count the responses, see if it made a profit and if it did, run it again. There is no mystery to it just a basic science behind it. Marketing is about buying clients for the cheapest possible price (decreasing their acquisition cost) and then working with them to get them buying more from you over a long period of time (increasing their lifetime value). Too many companies look to make a profit on the products or services they provide whereas I look to make a profit

on every customer I deal with. People talk about being customer-centric, but most companies are not, they're product or service centric.

You can become better at sales and marketing in the same way that you learn anything – find someone who's better at it than you and copy them. That could be from a book, a seminar, a colleague, or wherever. Always remember that sales is a numbers game, the more numbers you do, the more customers that buy. Remember, business is about making money, not making products or services, and the only way we make money is by selling something.

### **What advice would you give to an aspiring entrepreneur who wants to get started in a business of his or her own?**

Tap into any knowledge that you can. Read my books, read other people's books, listen to tapes and CDs, go to seminars and invest as much as you can in yourself before you invest in your own business. This shouldn't go on for too long though, your apprenticeship for your own business (which is having a job) shouldn't last for more than five years or so. If you treat your first few jobs as an apprenticeship for running your own business in the future, you'll realise that it's important to have several different jobs and to choose jobs based not on what you will *earn* but on what you will *learn*.

When it comes time to start your own business, you shouldn't think of your first business as needing to be something that you want to do for the rest of your life – start looking for a business in which you can learn. Your first one, two or even five companies will be training for when you ultimately find a great opportunity, one that you can take to a global level. Don't try to make the first one perfect, just start somewhere.

As a suggestion, look in the 'Business for Sale' section and find someone who is desperate to get out. Don't decide on your first deal let your first deal decide on you. Negotiate hard, buy yourself a great deal, then fix the business. You need to learn the lessons while you are doing it, so your first business can be the scene of many mistakes. But when you know that you can survive the first, you'll have the knowledge and experience to survive many more.

### **What are your top tips for becoming a great entrepreneur?**

1. Your jobs should be an apprenticeship for having your own business. You should endeavour to learn as much as you can from each job that you undertake in order to fuel the knowledge that you can use in your own business. By viewing your jobs in this way, you won't get stuck in the rat-race rut like everyone else.
2. Knowledge growth equals profit growth. The more you invest in yourself and in seminars, books, tapes and CDs, the more you will know about producing positive cash flow in your business.
3. You must have a good business coach. When you have the advice of people who have already made the mistakes and proven successful, then you have a blueprint to help you avoid those mistakes.
4. Do the work once and get paid for it forever; that's leverage.
5. Work harder, faster and longer than anyone else you know, do more, be more and make bigger opportunities for yourself. In other words, bite off more than you can chew and chew like crazy.
6. Test and measure everything. You cannot manage what you do not measure. When you measure things, make sure you have certain quality control levers in order to accurately see if you are staying on track.

7. There is a lot of advice in my books for aspiring entrepreneurs and I would recommend them to anyone who is serious.

### **If you had to start again with nothing, what would you do?**

When I started I was young and naïve. In some ways that punished me, but in others it was a blessing. I would try things that others thought couldn't be done and I would make things happen. Unfortunately, I also made a lot of mistakes and several times I did have to start over again with nothing. However, this gave me the benefit of learning and if there's ever a good time in your business life to lose a lot of money, it's at the beginning.

If I had to start again with nothing, I would first learn everything I could from my mistakes so that I didn't repeat them, and then I'd move on, it's important to not dwell on the past. Even if you lose your money and do have to start again, you still have your knowledge and that's the important part. Perhaps even more importantly, you'd also have more contacts. Understand this, everyone starts with nothing – no money, no knowledge, no contacts. If you only lose the money, you still have the other two to rely on. Most people believe that money is the be-all and end-all of business. It's not. If you started a business with money but no skills or people to support you, you would have a very slim chance of success.

### **What do you see as the major business opportunities over the next ten to twenty years?**

Major opportunities will be there, the same as always; find the gold rush and sell pans. With that said, intellectual property is my specialty, so I guess I would have to look there. Leisure is getting bigger and bigger, there is always going to be a big need for distribution. Health is, and will continue to be huge, and of course there will always be a high demand for the fundamentals, that is all the day-to-day necessities. The fact is that there are opportunities in everything we do. This is because successful businesses are about more than just the product or service, in fact you could almost

say that it doesn't matter what you're selling, it's the business model that's important.

**Apart from business, are there any other asset classes that you invest in and why?**

I also invest in property because of the capital growth and the fact that the banks and tenants pay for most of it. People have this funny belief where they think about property in terms of rental income and want to create cash flow from it. To me, business is for cash flow, and property is purely for capital growth. Yes, you need to have some property that is positive cash flow to balance up your portfolio, but not all of it. I also invest in covered calls, because I like owning shares but I also like getting a 'rental' on my shares. This takes very little time once you know what you are doing, about three hours a month and you can trade internationally.

My belief is that you must start off with business to be able to invest in other asset classes. Business provides the best cash flow, and the best chance to use other people's time for your own leverage. Before you have money as an asset, you have time and while you only have time you can invest it in a business, which will result in profits. Then, those profits can be invested in property and the share market.

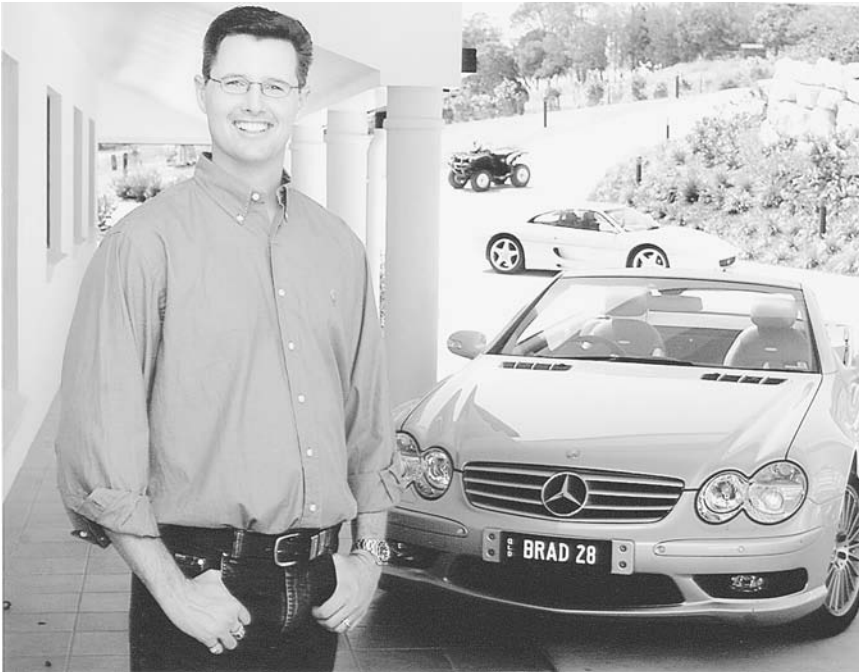
**You are a well known supporter of numerous charities including Father Chris Reilly's 'Youth Off The Streets'. Why do you think that giving back is such an important wealth principle?**

As well as Father Chris Reilly's 'Youth Off The Streets', I am now also the chairman of the Variety Club in Queensland. The reason that I do these things is because it's vital that you support the community that supported you. You need to give in order to receive, and unless you give you miss the whole point of life, which is to be in 'the flow', those who don't give, also don't receive. We have all heard of the important life principle that 'As ye sow, so shall ye reap'. Further to this, I also get as much, if not more, personal

satisfaction out of helping others as I do from just helping myself. The satisfaction of contribution is immense, it's nice to feel as if you are making a difference for others as well as for yourself.

**Having built a multi-million dollar business, and what some people would say is the ultimate lifestyle, what changed in your life when you became a father?**

It is true that many people say I have the 'ultimate lifestyle'. I have a different car for every day of the week, right now I'm driving my Lamborghini, probably because it's the newest and the most rare. I have always loved cars and it makes me feel good when I can give myself a reward like this. I also feel like I deserve it because of the patience, hard work, diligence and knowledge that I have poured into my business. Remember, you only get out what you put in.



"Hmmm, which car will I drive today?"

However, the moment I became a father I experienced something magical. I have developed a lot more patience and some would even say I have become a softie, I don't think that part is true though! I have had to become a lot less selfish and I suppose the biggest change is the fact that I have now handed over control of my company to my CEO and learnt to totally trust in his and his team's abilities.

### **Who are the mentors that have inspired you and what important lessons have you learnt from them?**

One of my mentors, perhaps the main one, is my dad. He taught me the elements of common sense such as:

- Trust your own judgment rather than everyone else's opinion.
- As a leader or business owner you only get the people you deserve.
- It's more important to make *a* decision than it is to make a right decision.
- There is no such thing as a right decision or opinion, just different ones, so try them all.

Through experience I've learnt that a great decision brings either fear or excitement, so scare yourself and excite yourself a lot more often!



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THE FRANCHISE KING

*Jim Penman*



## JIM PENMAN

“ Most franchise systems rigorously guard against franchisees ‘stealing’ their goodwill by going independent. I decided to make it a key selling point by allowing my franchisees to do just that – whenever they felt like it. ”

# JIM PENMAN

Jim Penman was born in England in 1952, his family returned to Australia in 1955 and he grew up in Adelaide and later, Melbourne. Although he was the second of four children, Jim was a solitary child and a voracious reader of history and science fiction. By time he finished high school Jim had decided on university and an academic career.

Before starting university Jim took a year off and worked in a variety of jobs, including a stint on a farm in Western Australia, selling encyclopaedias door-to-door (unsuccessfully) and six months in the public service. He also tried (and failed) to get a gardening business going, but he did have a few customers which he kept as he began studying history at La Trobe University in Melbourne in 1971. Jim later extended his studies into a PhD in cross-cultural anthropology and zoology, but it soon became clear that because of his unorthodox views, the academic career he had planned was out of the question. As his PhD work wound down in 1982, Jim's thriving part-time gardening work became a full-time mowing business.

Twenty-two years later, this one-man mowing service has evolved into the Jim's Group, with more than 2,500 franchisees and branches all around Australia, New Zealand and Canada. Despite his success, Jim still goes into the office every day and has no plans to retire. Instead, he is committed to continuing to improve the service to both his franchisees and customers.

Jim is also still committed to his scientific interests and is currently funding a research program at La Trobe University on the neuro-endocrine basis of social behaviour.

Apart from his business and academic interests, Jim's main focus in life is his family.

## **Tell us a little of your background before going into business...**

As a young boy, I wanted to be a train driver and later on a doctor and then a vet, for a number of years I wanted to be a science fiction writer – but never at any time did I consider becoming a business owner and least of all a gardener! It was while I was doing my history degree at La Trobe University in Melbourne that I decided to have a go at gardening – earning \$1.50 per hour for gardening seemed pretty reasonable to me (this was 1970) and as it turned out it was a valuable training ground.

Eventually, I came up with plans to expand my gardening activities. I went into the university union and used the photocopier to run off notices advertising my services at \$3 per hour, which I delivered to all the houses around my family's home. The response was astounding! Many people said they had never heard of anyone working so cheaply! I changed from charging an hourly rate to offering fixed prices for different services – I decided on \$5 for mowing a lawn, and with each lawn taking thirty minutes, I could earn the dizzying sum of \$10 per hour! But no one was going to pay me \$5 while I was also using their mower, so I had to buy my own, which meant taking the leap into the entrepreneurial world of spending money to earn more. This was probably the scariest decision of my whole business career and the beginning of my journey into the business of mowing and gardening.

## **Why did you choose the lawn-mowing business, was it something that you enjoyed doing?**

I did enjoy it. After sitting at my student desk all week, it was good to get exercise in the open air. Even today, I feel that life falls short without some daily contact with grass and trees. I made sure that my mowing business never interfered with my studies though, mowing lawns just seemed to fit in really well back in those days.

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“...he had given me the most powerful sales pitch of my life.”

**In the beginning, what were some of the business skills you were lacking and what did you do about it?**

I had no people skills in the beginning and I couldn't take rejection – I also absolutely hated selling – but for my business to succeed, I had to sell my mowing services and rounds consistently. Aware of this

problem, I went to see a man named Peter Rancie, a member of my church who was a partner in an advertising firm. He spent half an hour with me answering my questions, advising me on media, how to write ads and anything else he thought might help me out. I remember walking back to my car feeling very impressed by Peter and his agency and wondering how he had sold his business to me without doing any of the normal 'selling' things. He hadn't told me about his clients, nor shown me any materials. In fact, he had advised me not to use him, yet I had been completely and totally sold. He had done nothing to sell me on his business, yet he had given me the most powerful sales pitch of my life. His sole concern had been my welfare and the success of my business.

The next time someone called me about a mowing run, I tried out this new approach. I told them how to buy a mowing business and how to run one effectively. I gave advice on advertising, collecting payments and technical tips such as how to cut wet grass and fill the catcher. Over time, I developed a twelve-page manual on buying and running a mowing business. In other words, I told potential clients how to build a business from scratch (as I had done) and how to avoid the need to buy from anyone! I passed on all my hard-earned knowledge, no strings attached, for the benefit of my clients. It wasn't 'Buy from me and I will help you', but 'Here's how you can succeed, regardless of whom you buy from, or even if you choose to build your own business'. This 'selling by not selling' technique became the foundation of my business and ensured its success in the beginning, before we even began franchising.

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# About the authors

## Dale Beaumont



Dale Beaumont was born in Sydney in June 1981. Growing up, he participated in a number of sports and at the age of nine was selected for the elite NSW Gymnastics Squad. Training 34 hours per week, he soon learnt the value of discipline, hard work, having a coach and most importantly, delayed gratification.

After six years of intensive training, Dale changed his sporting focus to competitive aerobics so that he could spend more time on his studies and pursue other interests. In 1998 he became the National Aerobics Champion and the youngest Australian to compete at the World Aerobics Championships, where he placed eighth.

After finishing high school, Dale began attending various personal development and success seminars, where he learnt from people such as Jim Rohn, Michael Rowland, Bob Proctor, Robert Kiyosaki, John Maxwell, Brandon Bays, Brad Sugars, Mark Victor Hanson and many others.

At the age of 19, together with good friend Brent Williams, Dale wrote his first book titled *The World at Your Feet*, and co-founded Tomorrow's Youth International, which now runs educational and self-development programs for 13 to 21-year-olds in four countries. Dale has been featured on the *Today* show, *Sunrise*, *Mornings with Kerri-Anne*, as well as in countless newspapers and magazines.

Most recently, Dale has been hard at work developing the 'Secrets Exposed' series, to bring together the very best material from hundreds of Australasia's most successful people. With more than twenty books planned for the next three years and an up-coming seminar series, Dale is now a sought-after speaker on topics such as: start-up business, networking skills, book publishing, internet marketing and generating publicity.

Dale lives in Sydney with his beautiful and very supportive wife, Katherine. With a baby next on the 'to-do' list and lots of international travel plans, Dale is looking forward to the challenges ahead, and to spending more time enjoying life.

For more information about Dale's workshops and educational materials, or to book him as a guest speaker at your next conference or event, please visit: [www.DaleBeaumont.com](http://www.DaleBeaumont.com)

## Brenton Tong



Brenton Tong was born in 1977. His business career began early – selling contraband lollies at the age of ten in the school grounds, which sparked his passion for creating and growing businesses and providing for others.

When he finished university, Brenton entered the world of financial services but before long began to see the cracks in the way most companies were run. At just 23 years of age, he started his own financial planning firm, Phillips Dean

Brickwood, based on providing an ethical approach to financial services and greater education to his clients.

In the early years, running a business that was focused on more than just the bottom line was a real struggle, but Brenton's persistence paid off as he developed an affordable, cutting-edge business model, which had clients beating a path to his door.

Describing himself as a financial planner by trade but an entrepreneur at heart, Brenton now employs a team of nine talented and equally dynamic financial professionals. They provide clients with assistance in the areas of financial management, asset protection, tax planning, property investing, lending, insurance, superannuation and much more. Brenton also prides himself on being the owner of one of the few non-commission earning financial planning firms in the country.

With offices now in two states and plans for a third, Brenton is ready to expand nationally and take on the big end of town. Brenton is a featured writer for a number of publications, and an in-demand financial speaker.

Outside of his many business interests, Brenton is a collector of cars – his favourites being his Porsche 911 and his latest acquisition, a Honda NSX. In his spare time, he enjoys travelling, sailing and studying ancient history.

For more information about Brenton's financial planning practice, please visit:  
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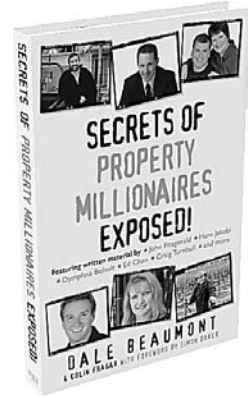
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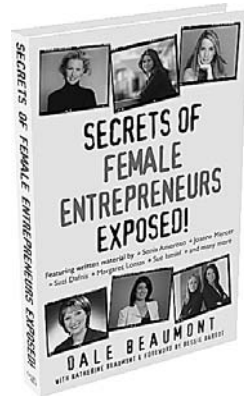
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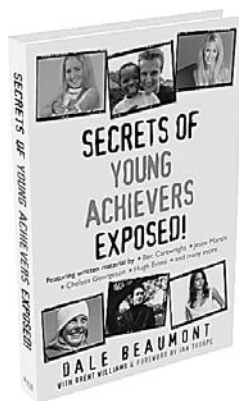
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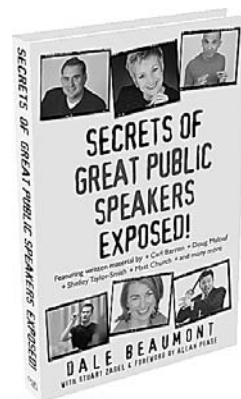
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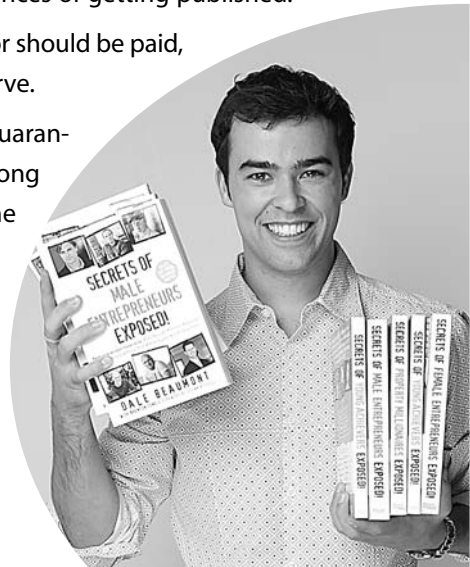
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