

ADVERTISING STAR



From a Book to a Business: Robert Smith

[By Robin Salisian]

"I've never had a job in advertising," admits Robert Smith, owner of Champion Media Worldwide (CMW). An ironic statement, considering Smith owns a full-service optimized media, PR, and marketing firm. How, then, did he land in the advertising industry? By reading a book, of course.

Smith remembers, "I was 24 at the time and...owned a collection agency." The book he read, by Dan Kennedy, instilled in him a desire to advertise — and advertise he did. He took what he had learned and quickly applied it to his own business. He began advertising his collection agency; however, the thrill of the advertising industry had a hold on him, and soon he left his original business to pursue a full-time business in advertising. Ever since, Smith has thrived.

Despite his background (he holds an associate's degree in paralegal studies), Smith pushed all obstacles aside to become an in-demand speaker on marketing and sales, the owner of a successful media company, and a master deal maker.

"I built my company by staying focused and becoming a master at deal making," he says.

And it worked. Today, "CMW has been acknowledged as a unique and distinctive authority in the field of public relations," says its website. Providing PR services, marketing services, and advertising services, CMW "has spent the last decade solving problems and significantly increasing the bottom line of hundreds of clients."

"My responsibilities include overseeing staff and creating winning campaigns that make my clients money," says Smith. "A typical day

for me begins at my desk and on the phone or solving issues that may have come up."

And CMW helps numerous clients solve issues. A page of client testimonies boasting of the company's accomplishments proves that Smith and his team have great acumen in what they do.

A testimony from Dan Janal reads, "I've done PR for some of the biggest names in computers and publishing over the past 25 years, but very few people hold a candle to Robert Smith's creativity and insight in finding the news angle that will help his clients get media exposure."

And Jay Conrad Levinson, author of the *Guerrilla Marketing* series of books, has said, "The best thing about Robert Smith is that everything he touches turns to gold— which is spectacular news for his clients and fans."

Current clients of CMW include business expert Harvey Zimmel, "who specializes in helping business owners sell their business for maximum dollars."

"We are using a combination of print, Internet, and magazine advertising and soon to use TV," says Smith.

Clearly, CMW solves various issues and provides numerous services. So why wouldn't their clientele list cover everyone from motivational speakers to rappers? Of the many clients CMW serves, a short list includes America's number-one motivational speaker, Les Brown; self-made billionaire Bill Bartmann; comedian Tony George; international business growth strategist Chet Holmes; Christian rapper Antonious; fashion designer Lisa Hunter; and peak performance coach Gabrielle Whitney.

Clients and their problems, therefore, are Smith's number-one priority. But it's about more than that. Not only does he want to *solve* clients' problems, but he also wants to solve them as creatively, strategically, and originally as possible. In other words, Smith

Q. What do you do for fun?

A. Take trips with my wife and kids.

Q. Throughout your lifetime, what movie have you watched the most?

A. *The Temptations.*

Q. What was the last book you read?

A. *The Ultimate Sales Machine* by Chet Holmes.

Q. What music is on your iPod or in your CD player right now?

A. R. Kelly.

Q. If you had an extra hour in the day, what would you spend it doing?

A. Sleeping.



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embraces the unknown, the blank page. When asked what he most enjoys about his job, he says, "I like thinking outside the box and coming up with ideas that no one in my clients' industries has thought of."

One example of this was when "[he] created an ad for a church that resulted in higher attendance."

"I liked this ad because it was my first TV spot," adds Smith.

And as someone who enjoys "thinking outside the box," it's no wonder Smith shows interest in TiVo.

"I think advertisers will think of unique ways to reach people," he says. "Maybe they'll place ads inside toilet stalls at public places."

Along with the ubiquitous DVR device, Smith admits that some of the best advertising tactics are what he describes as optimized media.

"It combines the power of publicity, search engine marketing, and optimization," he explains.

Smith's journey from receiving a degree in paralegal studies to owning a collections agency to eventually succeeding in advertising proves to anyone struggling to discover his or her career path that a book, a passion, and a ton of determination can lead you straight to the top.

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