

# STOP AND SELL THE ROSES

Lessons from Business and Life  
from the CEO of 1-800-FLOWERS

JIM McCANN

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**MAIN IDEA**

Business success today, despite all the talk of great technologies, is still built on personal relationships - warm, real human contact with the people you work with and the people you sell to.

The key to success in business, therefore, is not to develop ways to take people out of the equation and to reduce their role. On the contrary, the best use of today's technologies is to find new and original ways to increase the amount of human interaction that's possible between your company and your customers.

Focus on that point alone and success will most certainly follow.

**1. BACKGROUND - JIM McCANN AND 1-800-FLOWERS** . . . . . Pages 1 - 2

**2. TEN SEMI-COMMANDMENTS OF SUCCESS** . . . . . Page 3

Every business is totally different from any other, and success often has as much to do with the roll of the dice as it does with the smarts and the abilities of the entrepreneur in the driver's seat. The 10 semi-commandments of success are:

1. Spend your youth doing something original.
2. Don't be self conscious about not having an MBA.
3. Don't wait until you know everything to start.
4. Brand yourself.
5. Ruthless types always finish last.
6. Don't try and continually reinvent the wheel.
7. Smarter labor is always cheaper than cheap labor.
8. Trust your family ties.
9. High margins are not always everything.
10. Get personal.
11. Planless is not necessarily clueless.

**3. A WORLD BEATING IDEA** . . . . . Page 5

In the 1930s, a psychology concept was formulated by Claude Steiner which stated the thing human beings crave the most is social intimacy - contact with a fellow human being. The same is true in business. Products and services don't sell themselves - people buy them, people sell them and people make the difference. In business, it's the association between the buyer and the seller that's important. Products and services connect the buyer and seller, and form part of the relationship, but it is the economic relationship between the parties that is the key driver of commerce. In essence, the key to success in business today is finding ways to make contact with your customers on an emotional level. It's a contact economy first and foremost.

**4. TECHNOLOGY VS. REAL PEOPLE** . . . . . Page 6

Successful Internet based companies of the future will not just use new technology to do old jobs better; they will use use information technology to free up their human resources for more productive uses of their time like interacting directly with customers. To be successful in business, build customer relationships. In fact, the relationship is the transaction. The exchange of goods and services are just external signs. It is the relationship between your company and each individual customer which will drive you forward. Use technology to extend your reach and to multiply the number of times you make contact, but never take the human element away if you want to succeed.

**5. THE BRAND CALLED "YOU"** . . . . . Page 7

Back in the old days, people honestly planned on staying with one company their entire careers. Therefore, they didn't really worry too much about developing resumes because anyone in the company could look up their work history. Today, however, people change companies frequently, for a wide variety of reasons. Therefore, it doesn't make sense to develop a skill set that is specific to just one industry or just one company within that industry. You need to continually be doing projects in your spare time that will expand your skills and fill out your resume should you ever get in the position where a career change is forced upon you.

**6. THE ART OF MAKING MISTAKES** . . . . . Page 8

The art of making mistakes is under appreciated in the world of business. Most people have an "avoid mistakes at all costs" mentality, when in reality they should welcome intelligent mistakes openly as the price of progress. The person or business who is not making mistakes isn't taking any risks, and therefore isn't looking for new business opportunities. Instead of avoiding mistakes, raise making mistakes to an art form. Vigorously explore business areas in which new initiatives can be tried. Expect most of them not to work out, and don't put your company in a position where making a mistake will be threatening, but push the edge of the envelope a little. If it doesn't generate any new business opportunities, at least it will let your employees and associates know you're not afraid to try something new.

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