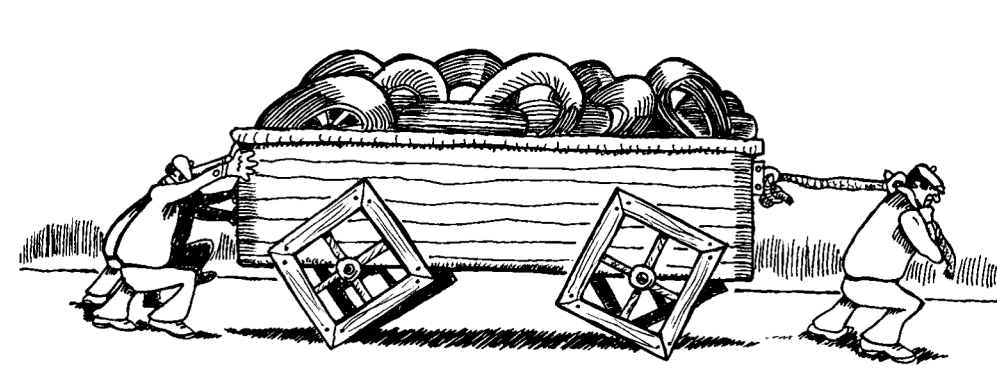


Working Home, *Selling Globally* Some Ideas for Business Development

by **Scott J. Simmerman, Ph.D.**

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This is how most organizations seem to operate. Discuss at your tabletops and consider how this might relate to the issues of collaboration, networking, business development and how most consulting businesses tend to work:



This session is geared to discussing some issues about developing a global business from a "**Working at Home**" model of selling business products to the world. Participants will:

- Exchange ideas about developing / distributing products / services globally and building a network of supporters.
- Learn the importance of focusing efforts on simple yet useful for-sale tools and products.
- Learn what I've learned about reducing overhead and establishing a global network of clients and collaborators.
- Learn straightforward strategies for business development built on a model of abundance and sharing.

Who is the discussion leader:

Dr. Simmerman, owner and Managing Partner of PMC, is a presenter, author and consultant in quality improvement, team building, leadership and organizational effectiveness. Recognized for his presentation skills and a broad base of business, research and academic experience, Scott has delivered workshops, retreats and presentations all over the world. He has authored more than 225 articles on topics including personal development, facilitation skills, service quality, leadership and continuous improvement.

Performance Management Company publishes the **Square Wheels®** books and **The Search for the Lost Dutchman's Gold Mine**, an internationally-recognized team development exercise. Over the course of 10 years, Scott has also invented other team building games and other products and collaborated with consultants in other countries to translate and modify his products. Clients include a mix of multinational organizations as well as smaller companies. Materials have been translated into 6 languages for local distribution. Collaborative business relationships have been established with organizations throughout the world while we maintain a home business.



A former professor of Psychology at Furman University and Teaching Fellow at the University of North Carolina, Scott received a Ph.D. in Psychology from UNC-Chapel Hill in 1976. A Master Practitioner of Neurolinguistic Programming, he is past Director of ASTD's Neurolinguistic Network. He is the former Chair of a chapter of the American Society for Quality Control and formerly on ASTD's Management Development and NeuroLinguistic Forums. He is currently completing certification as a Certified Professional Facilitator through the International Association of Facilitators.

Once upon a time, Scott was performance improvement manager with the Home Silk Shops, a chain of 26 retail stores and also Senior Vice President of Operations of The Warehouse, a chain of 126 retail stores selling music and computer software and renting video movies.

He has been Managing Partner of Performance Management Company continually since 1984. Scott is also on the board of NASAGA and an active contributor to a number of listserves, including his own.

The Ideal Business:

- *Sells the World* rather than a neighborhood or even a single city or state. It has an unlimited global market and cross-cultural adaptability. (A product focused on The American Disabilities Act has limited global possibilities; a program on improving safety is much more cross-cultural; a program on tracking cost of quality is quite international but needs local translation. Books on management sell worldwide. General is better than specific.)
- Offers a product with sustainable value, a product that people need or desire -- almost regardless of price.
- Sells a product which cannot be easily replaced; the product is original, copyrighted, trademarked or patented.
- Requires minimal labor (the fewer personnel, the better). Today's example of this is the much-talked about "virtual corporation." The virtual corporation may consist of an office with three executives and manufacturing / services supported by other companies.
- Manages with very low overhead; inexpensive location, minimal inventory, minimal advertising, limited legal and accounting expenses, limited liability (product, safety, etc.) problems and costs. Can use referral or virus marketing to establish a brand name.
- Does not require big cash outlays or major investments in equipment. In other words, it does not tie up capital -- one of the major reasons for new-business failure is under-capitalization.
- Enjoys cash billings. In other words, it does not tie up operating funds with lengthy or complex credit terms. Immediate payment or Net 10 days! VISA and other credit cards, international wire transfers.
- Is (relatively) free of all kinds of government and industry regulations and strictures. Low taxation rates. Few reporting requirements. Limited liability.
- Is portable or easily moveable. This means that you can take your business (and yourself) anywhere you want -- Nevada, Florida, Texas, Washington, S. Dakota (none have state income taxes) or hey, maybe Monte Carlo or Switzerland or the south of France.
- Satisfies your intellectual, spiritual, family and emotional needs. There's nothing like being fascinated with what you're doing. When that happens, you're not working, you're having fun.
- Leaves you with Free Time; it doesn't require your labor and attention 12, 16, 18 hours a day, although it may and you can choose to put in the time when desired.
- Is one where income is not limited by your personal output. There is leverage gained from collaboration.

(Material content is from Richard Russell's original thoughts (1996, Dow Theory Letters, P.O. Box 1759, La Jolla, CA 82038)
Others adapted from a CompuServe "Working From Home" Forum posting of Rollyn Trueblood's comments and ideas.)

There are few Ideal Businesses. Consider that **Square Wheels**® may represent:

- traditions and culture of your business and the way you have operated
- the way things have always been done in your experience or industry
- any common base of experience that does not move smoothly forward
- anything that causes your business to *"thump and bump"* along

Discussion Exercise:

What may be some of the **Square Wheels**® that might be operating in the way you do business?

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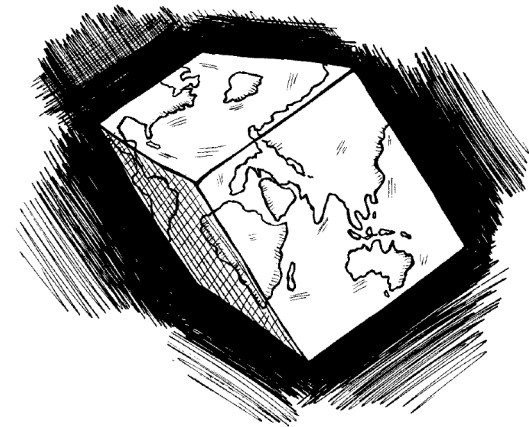
We must step back from the wagons to identify opportunities for improvement. So it is hoped that the above lists on pages 3 and 4, combined with your discussions, will help you identify potential **ROUND WHEELS** in your wagons and help you get *"more of the mud you throw to stick on your wire fences."* The **ROUND WHEELS** are already in this wagon and already at this conference!

"The more I think about it, the more convinced I am that the terror comes from the same thing that leads us to start companies in the first place -- some basic, semiconscious need to make our mark in the world, to leave our footprints in the sands of time. What we really fear, I suspect, is that we might become another member of the herd and pass into oblivion."

From "Entrepreneurial Terror," by Wilson Harrell,
Inc. Magazine, February 1987, Pp. 74 - 76.

" The price of greatness is responsibility "
Winston Churchill.

"The world is changing how things work."
Scott Simmerman



Would you like to realize your goals, run your own business, and expand your material possessions? Well, it's possible. But you've got to have excellent products, good distribution and a sense of support from others who understand how things work. There is also no sense in *"re-inventing the wheel."* There are many ways in which you can take the materials you own or develop and create a distribution system for them. Here are a few qualities of achievement that are common to many people who make it. The following list is not complete but may assist your thinking and reframing about developing a different business and better attaining your goals.

1. Do you prefer to work for yourself rather than for others?
2. Can you collaborate with others easily? Can you extend your trust readily?
3. Do you take advantage of opportunities when they appear?
4. Can you finish a job even when it is difficult or unpleasant?
5. Are you challenged by problems that need solutions?
6. Do you have a specific goal or goals you want to achieve?
7. Can you bounce back after defeat or self-perceived failure?
8. Can you respond to the needs of others? Can you listen to understand?
9. Do you believe in yourself and your abilities?
10. Can you make your own decisions?
11. Can you stand by your actions in spite of criticism? *More people believe you cannot than believe you can.*
12. Are you flexible in your approach and willing to try things differently?
13. Do you keep well informed on current business practices?

Some of Scott's **ROUND WHEEL** Ideas:

From the *simple* idea of using cartoons to illustrate key themes in management and working, we

- were open to sharing the cartoons, initially published as a set of 13 transparencies. (The idea for a book or books was not in our original thinking, nor was PowerPoint even a program!)
- looked toward reducing overhead and simplifying (cutting \$6,000 in office expenses, at least \$500 in laundry bills (!), and at least 6 hours of commuting time per week from our lives).
- looked to working as a team, with me as the initially stronger partner but the benefit of both people being active in the business (I can leave for a month and the business is basically maintained with a "business" phone call every two or three days).
- were open to novel or unusual (in our minds) uses of the products and open to audience reactions.
- took every opportunity to speak and present as we could arrange and manage. Proposed to present through the RFP process to numerous conferences and associations, globally.
- joint-ventured with organizations whose goal was to support membership with new ideas and management development opportunities (not-for-profit institutes, associations, etc.) on a local, national and international basis. Collaborations worldwide with a variety of other organizations.
- actively collaborated with other consultants, initially in the Mideast and then elsewhere such as Finland, Sweden, South Africa, Hong Kong, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Canada, Spain, Germany, The Netherlands, Denmark, Australia, Mauritius and elsewhere. Now we have an expanding and truly global network of associates and I have presented in 29 different countries.
- traveled to support the products through public seminars; to support the local consultant and to generate interest in the products. Used other people's money to travel.
- took advantage of technologies and networking opportunities such as:
 - desktop publishing for customization of materials
 - toll-free 800 number for domestic (US / Canada) calls (that is transferable if we move locations)
 - brand name website access name (SquareWheels) (and easy global access to e-mail, Internet, etc.)
 - "Learning Organization" TRDEV, NASAGA, and other List Serves on the Internet
 - Use our own listserves to push email to others
- shared FREE transparencies of the illustrations at various conferences and programs. Now I give away cds of materials and soon to start marketing PowerPoint versions of materials along with bundles of products.

- cross-marketed the books with the game, cross-fertilized both products.
- shared resources, ideas and innovations, *and people* (Roy Sabean, our artist - 864-244-3415).
- shared clients and suggested alternative delivery people *at no commission*.
- work with internal trainers and external trainers in a non-licensing, sharing way and generate referrals worldwide.
- maintain a global focus and a macro / synergistic view of how things really work.
- continually simplified the business by maintaining focus and making all materials non-dependent on us for delivery, actively supporting a learning network of support.
- continually recognize that our model of how things should work sometimes has others take advantage of us and that it will not *always* work. But the view is congruent with how we want things to operate and we maintain a wholesome, long-term, global view of collaboration as the key to success.
- didn't take the traditional approach and *license* our products (because I don't want to be a lawyer or accountant or deal with them on a regular basis.)
- didn't hire workers because I want to do things, not manage them.
- didn't take advantage of all the possibilities of Home Pages, electronic mail and electronic communications (pagers, cellular phones, etc.). Moved slowly on internet marketing, just adding a few pages on our game at <http://www.clicknow.com/stagedright/dutchman/> on an associates' home page and then slowly building our own websites. Now, we manage four sites, with a new one coming on line to sell downloadable product bundles.
- Redefined products for different marketplaces (**Dutchman** became LD3, 4, 6. HBDI , High-Risk and Pro).

Lastly, we're **always** open to new ideas and potential new ventures with different people or organizations. We've established a global distribution network. We allow non-English speaking consultants to translate materials for local use. We've partnered with others to co-market new products. So, we focus on collaboration for business development and program improvement purposes.

After all, if we keep our overhead costs low, innovation continuous and maintain a niche focus, how does one have competition? We do not feel we compete with any organization, directly. The benefits are in collaboration.

On the next page, spend some time on the list and see if you can generate some new ideas about making your business more profitable or getting a new business off the ground.

ROUND WHEELS are new ideas for innovation and continuous improvement, already in the wagon. And anyone can suggest these small changes or potential improvements. Some people see them clearly and understand the benefits of getting them onto the axles. Others need some help in discovering the different ways of getting things done. But once they are seen, perspective changes and implementation becomes more likely.

***Discovery is about stepping back from our wagons and taking a dissociated view.
Seeing your wagon from a distance gives clearer perspective.***

Best Business Characteristic
Score (10 High, 1 Low)

Your **ROUND WHEEL** Adaptation / Alteration (*mindmap?*)

_____ Sells the world.

_____ Product with inelastic demand.

_____ Cannot be copied.

_____ Minimal labor.

_____ Low overhead.

_____ Little cash outlay.

_____ Cash billing.

_____ Regulation simple.

_____ Portable.

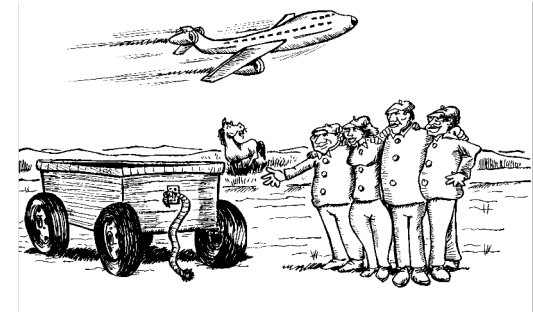
_____ Satisfying / Fun.

_____ Gives Free Time.

_____ Leveraged.

_____ *Other*

Envisioning The Future



Based on the concepts of “*Continuous Improvement*,”

What are some “aircraft” that could redefine your business?

What are the beliefs held to be true today that may not be true in 5 years? What radical changes might we expect?

How could I better prepare for these changes?

A last simple thought: What holds true today will not be true in the near future. Radical and rapid changes are upon us and each of us must take responsibility to re-think policies, practices and procedures.

Celebrate today's successes and share ideas and best practices to make your business stronger in the future.