The Star Club:
Multi-Million Dollar Exit Stories

A couple of days after our electrifying Star Seminar 2.0 with Richard Koch in Portugal, I sat down and made a list of all the “big exit stories” that have emerged from our little universe here in New Renaissance Club.

We have quite a collection of members who've had impressive exits - ranging from several million to hundreds of millions of dollars.

Looking at them all together, some fascinating patterns emerged that could help you in your entrepreneurial journey.

So let’s get to the Star Principle Hall of Fame.

Finn Peacock:
Solar Power Simplified

Just recently, Finn sold SolarQuotes.com.au for a life-changing sum. He started the business during one of our “Bobsled Runs” (Google Ads funnel training program) way back in 2008 with a simple idea: generate leads for solar power installations.

Finn didn't just create another lead generation business. He built what I call a "Network Effect for Mere Mortals."

He created a marketing universe connecting buyers and sellers, then glued it together with software and, in the last 18 months, topped it with AI. Participants in both Definitive AI Seminars witnessed his progress in real time.

What impressed the acquiring company most? How Finn's small team accomplishes what normally requires a much larger staff. The secret sauce is a quality guarantee system that ensured installers do excellent work. In fact, **Finn bit the bullet and occasionally had to spend $40,000 or more to make good on his bold promises. *Skin in the game.***

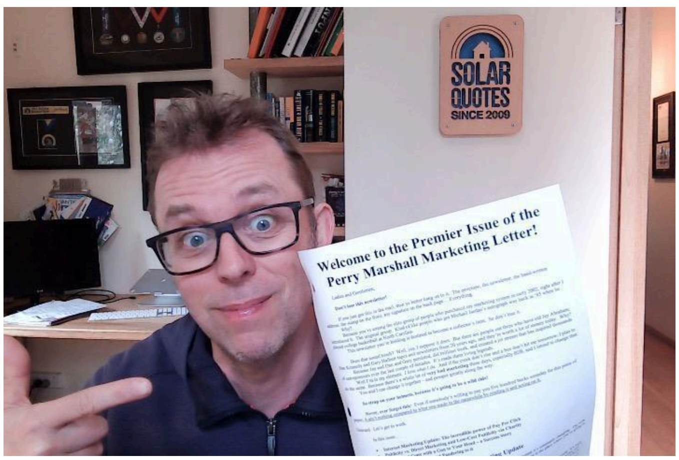
This wasn't just lead generation - it was building trust in an industry known for cowboys and carpetbaggers.

Australia's energy conditions didn’t hurt: abundant sunshine nearly year round and electricity costs 3X higher than the US. When you stay in Australian hotels, you'll notice stickers everywhere reminding you to turn off lights - they take power consumption seriously!

This was a fast growing Star market and Finn took full advantage.

One of Finn's brilliant moves was combining old-school quality control and conscientiousness with web technology. His team would personally vet installers, maintain quality standards, and handle customer service like a local business - then scale it with software and automation. This hybrid approach became increasingly valuable as the solar industry grew.

Finn said to me in an email last week:



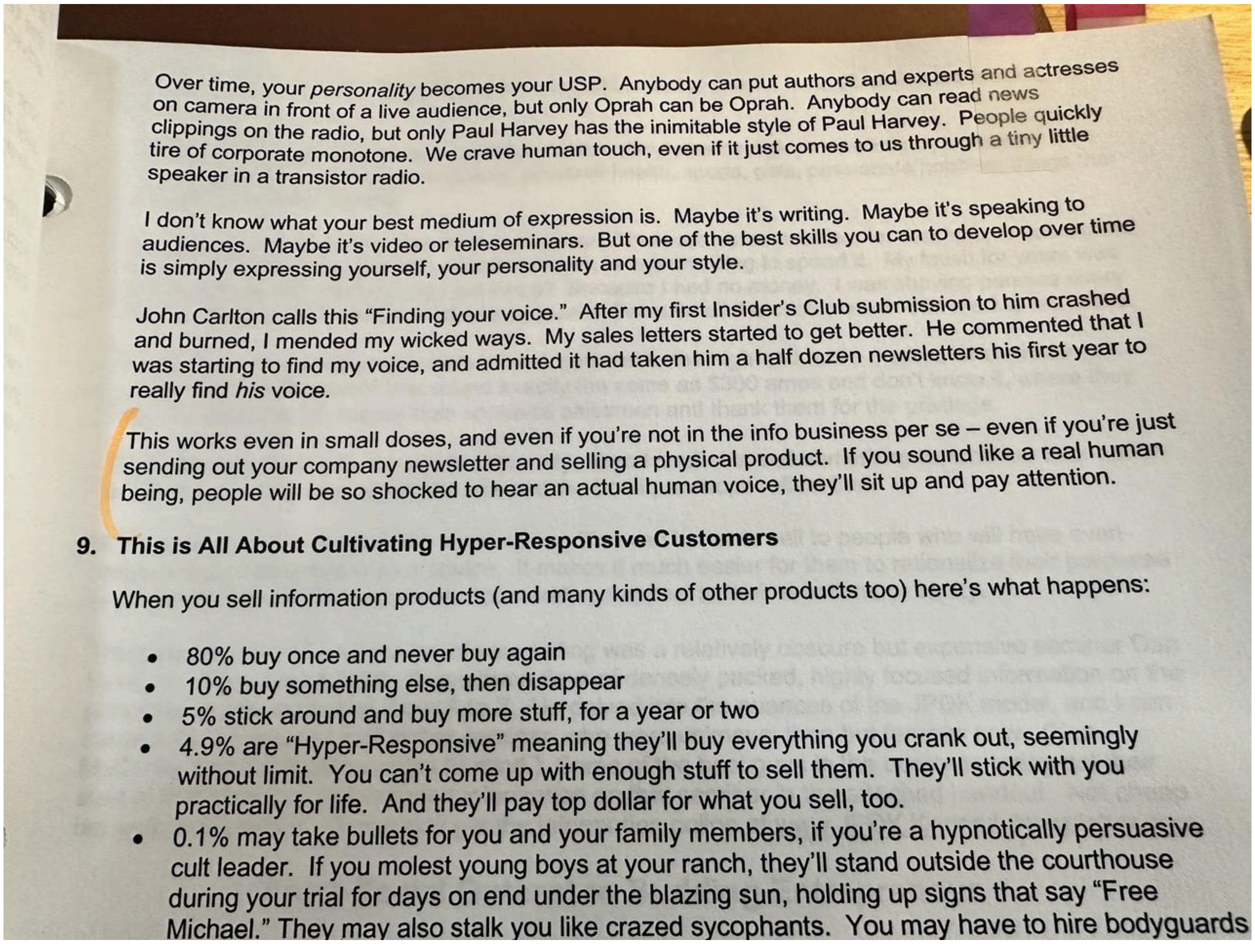
“Literally started this thing on a Bobsled Run in 2008.

“They *really* liked our AI chatbot. They couldn't believe how we serviced thousands of leads a month and hundreds of installers with our tiny team.

“Thanks for all the help - the way you made me think about feedback loops, leverage, marketing, Adwords, deep-thought over action made all this possible. It's like having a f***ing superpower.”

Then he added: “Pulled the newsletter archive you sent me with the White Paper course. I'd forgotten, but it looks like I read the whole thing and highlighted important stuff back in the day. This from Vol 3 Issue 3”:

Finn is right, and I can’t overstate this: The way we helped Finn think about feedback loops, leverage, marketing, Adwords, deep-thought over action made all this possible. It IS a superpower.



Over time, your *personality* becomes your USP. Anybody can put authors and experts and actresses on camera in front of a live audience, but only Oprah can be Oprah. Anybody can read news clippings on the radio, but only Paul Harvey has the inimitable style of Paul Harvey. People quickly tire of corporate monotone. We crave human touch, even if it just comes to us through a tiny little speaker in a transistor radio.

I don't know what your best medium of expression is. Maybe it's writing. Maybe it's speaking to audiences. Maybe it's video or teleseminars. But one of the best skills you can to develop over time is simply expressing yourself, your personality and your style.

John Carlton calls this "Finding your voice." After my first Insider's Club submission to him crashed and burned, I mended my wicked ways. My sales letters started to get better. He commented that I was starting to find my voice, and admitted it had taken him a half dozen newsletters his first year to really find *his* voice.

This works even in small doses, and even if you're not in the info business per se – even if you're just sending out your company newsletter and selling a physical product. If you sound like a real human being, people will be so shocked to hear an actual human voice, they'll sit up and pay attention.

9. This is All About Cultivating Hyper-Responsive Customers

When you sell information products (and many kinds of other products too) here's what happens:

- 80% buy once and never buy again
- 10% buy something else, then disappear
- 5% stick around and buy more stuff, for a year or two
- 4.9% are "Hyper-Responsive" meaning they'll buy everything you crank out, seemingly without limit. You can't come up with enough stuff to sell them. They'll stick with you practically for life. And they'll pay top dollar for what you sell, too.
- 0.1% may take bullets for you and your family members, if you're a hypnotically persuasive cult leader. If you molest young boys at your ranch, they'll stand outside the courthouse during your trial for days on end under the blazing sun, holding up signs that say "Free Michael." They may also stalk you like crazed sycophants. You may have to hire bodyguards

Nobody else teaches this like we do, and this was driven home for me in Portugal at Star 2.0 across several different conversations, and further reinforced by Finn's news which came as soon as I got home.

I had a belief in the back of my mind which I had never put into words, which if stated would be something like: *Shark tank is basically doing Star Principle, the big VC firms are basically doing Star Principle, we just have more elegant language and a better way of teaching it."*

NO.

They are achieving Star Principle ***by accident*** about 25% of the time. They are not doing what we do and this became even more clear to me as Richard Koch chronicled his history of investments. He repeatedly bet the farm - the majority of his money - on ONE Star investment which fit the criteria:

-Company and market growing 20% per year or more (Betfair was teeny tiny, but growing 60% per month)

-Company is at least 2X bigger than their nearest rival

-Investing in real numbers and history, not just a great story

And I realized that most of our own members have done exactly this, *and done it bootstrapped two thirds of the time,* and then when you add…

- Network Effect for Mere Mortals (Moat around your castle)
- Tactical Triangle Takeover (Controlling *most* of the business without owning all of it)
- Proposition Simplifying (Making your product a joy to use; banishing friction)
- 80/20 to the power of X (Tiny hinges swing big doors)
- Renaissance Time (Not just sanity and balance, but adventure and FUN)

You enjoy a formula that NOBODY else is using, that is consistently delivering eight figure exits and sometimes nine, mostly from businesses that started in a spare bedroom.

To put a finer point on it…

Finn Peacock spent a year in Advanced Mastery Network, has come to many of our seminars, has been a Renaissance Club member for over a decade, and has mastered the Big Ideas of New Renaissance.

Finn not only just sold his company for a handsome amount, he has enjoyed a terrific *lifestyle* for a long time. For years he has spent large amounts of the year visiting his mother in Finland (from which his name comes), camping, biking, collecting art and listening to music. He built one of my speaker designs. Finn's been exploring whatever interests him and living an enviable life.

A few months ago, a long-time client reached out and accused me of being deceptive in the Star 2.0 promotion. He complained that *only* an investor can grow wealth 30% a year working an hour a day; a business operator cannot.

He is certainly right about that. No, you can't grow a company 30% a year working an hour a day. But Finn Peacock, Mark Riffey and others have grown their companies 10-30% a year NOT working 60 hours a week. Every third call I have with Mark, he's in his camper heading to a concert somewhere by Trombone Shorty or Nirvana.

Yes, in many startups there are periods where you have no choice but to work 14 hours a day. But that should last a year or three. A business where everyone is huffing and puffing for years is not a healthy business and it's certainly not a Star.

What unaddressed segment of your market is growing fast AND is not claimed by any rival? If you are not a Star, that is THE question you need to answer, and your work is not done until you have answered THAT question.

That is not a question you answer by pressing your nose to the grindstone. You address that question by making space for it and not being satisfied until it’s answered.

I do not feel that most of our members really ‘get it’ or take this seriously enough. Renaissance Club is not just another Internet Marketing membership. It ceased to be that five years ago. This is an incubator for visionaries and culture shifters. As you read on in this newsletter, notice how many of our Renaissance Club members literally created ecosystems and movements in their space.

Mark Riffey:
Engineering Sanity and Success

EnerCalc sells engineering calculations software to architects. Subscription is $1,700 annually. After a tough-love confrontation in Roundtable with Bob McDemus about getting his ownership stake formalized, Mark made it happen.

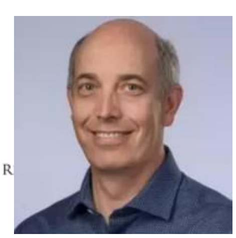
The result? A $32 million acquisition that left Mark in charge of growing the business 20% per year.

They're not just selling software - they're selling sanity. Their message is: engineers getting home for dinner on time, which resonates deeply in an industry known for brutal hours.

Mark migrated from Roundtable into Advanced Mastery Network, where we've continued to help him grow. Funny aside: They only began doing traditional online marketing, like digital ads, *after* selling for $32 million! That’s the power of a Star business with a killer Promise. It succeeds WITHOUT much marketing!

What made EnerCalc special was their deep understanding of their market's pain points. Engineers weren't just looking for calculation software - they were looking for a way to do their work more efficiently and reclaim their personal lives. Mark’s marketing messages speak directly to his customers' hearts, not just their minds.

Brady Roberts:
Surviving COVID to Thrive Again

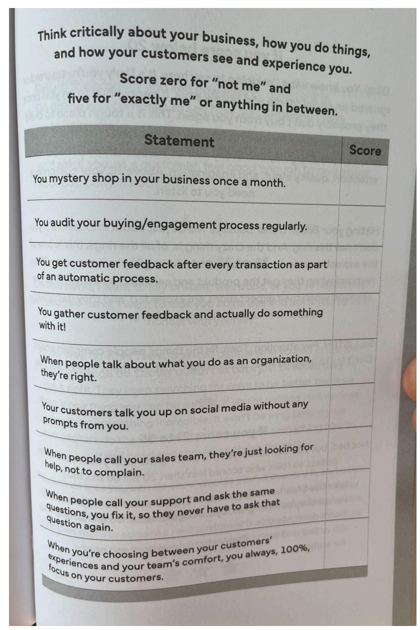


Brady built iCapture, an iPad app for collecting trade show leads. Then COVID hit. Trade shows might be the *worst* business to be in during a global pandemic. (Try to think of a worse one. Other live events like rock concerts could at least still operate outdoors eventually…. But nobody's hosting trade shows in a soccer field.)

In Advanced Mastery Network, we helped him slim 25 employees down to eight during lockdown. iCapture was able to survive on loyal annual subscribers who hung on through the hard times. When trade shows came back, they expanded again, and Brady eventually sold for life-changing money.

The COVID crisis helped Brady streamline his business. By being forced to operate with a smaller team, they discovered efficiencies they never knew existed. When trade shows returned, they were able to scale back up with a much more profitable operation.

Jonathan Kronstadt:
The Kajabi Story



Think critically about your business, how you do things, and how your customers see and experience you.

Score zero for "not me" and five for "exactly me" or anything in between.

Statement	Score
You mystery shop in your business once a month.	
You audit your buying/engagement process regularly.	
You get customer feedback after every transaction as part of an automatic process.	
You gather customer feedback and actually do something with it!	
When people talk about what you do as an organization, they're right.	
Your customers talk you up on social media without any prompts from you.	
When people call your sales team, they're just looking for help, not to complain.	
When people call your support and ask the same questions, you fix it, so they never have to ask that question again.	
When you're choosing between your customers' experiences and your team's comfort, you always, 100%, focus on your customers.	

Jonathan, a longtime student of 80/20 and Star Principle, was CEO of Kajabi, the famous membership site software used by countless entrepreneurs. Three and a half years ago, Kajabi went public at a $2 billion valuation. Jonathan, deciding he didn't want to be a public company CEO, parachuted out with his stock options.

His new book "Billion Dollar Bull's Eye" offers a masterful explanation of how he built the company. They made it insanely customer-centric - his checklist on page 125 alone is worth its weight in gold. If your company wasn't customer-centric before reading his book, it certainly will be after.

Jonathan's approach to customer service was revolutionary. Instead of treating it as a cost center, they viewed it as a product development lab. Every customer interaction was an opportunity to improve the product and identify new features customers would pay for.

Proposition Simplification at its finest. Read his book for the full story - it's an adventure and it's packed with actionable moves.

Jonathan Pototschnik:

The Art of the Exit

Service Autopilot became the 'Salesforce equivalent' for landscapers and lawn care businesses. When he wanted to sell, he took a brilliant approach: a leisurely tour of the private equity universe. He spent 18 months strategically talking to potential buyers, learning their models, and finding the perfect match without revealing too much.

The result? A high-8 figures exit.

He realized there might be max 20 potential buyers, not 100, and certainly more than one. Each firm had its own business model and way of doing deals. Some prefer keeping existing management, others bring in their own team. Parsing these differences found the perfect match.

Ed Harycki's Swift Capital:
Shattering Norms to Axis Shift Lending

Swift Capital's story is remarkable. At the 2014 Star Seminar with Richard Koch, Ed was one of many players in the small business loan space. During a consultation, I challenged him to try something radical: remove the credit check. Approve loans in 60 minutes instead of days. Bite the bullet and eat the risk for a day or two - *just long enough to gauge demand* - and see what happens.

The response to "Loan approvals within the hour" was astronomical. Ed's team then painstakingly engineered a way to assess credit risk without traditional credit scores. They tied repayment to the borrower's merchant account transactions - taking a percentage off the top of incoming payments rather than chasing business owners for monthly checks.

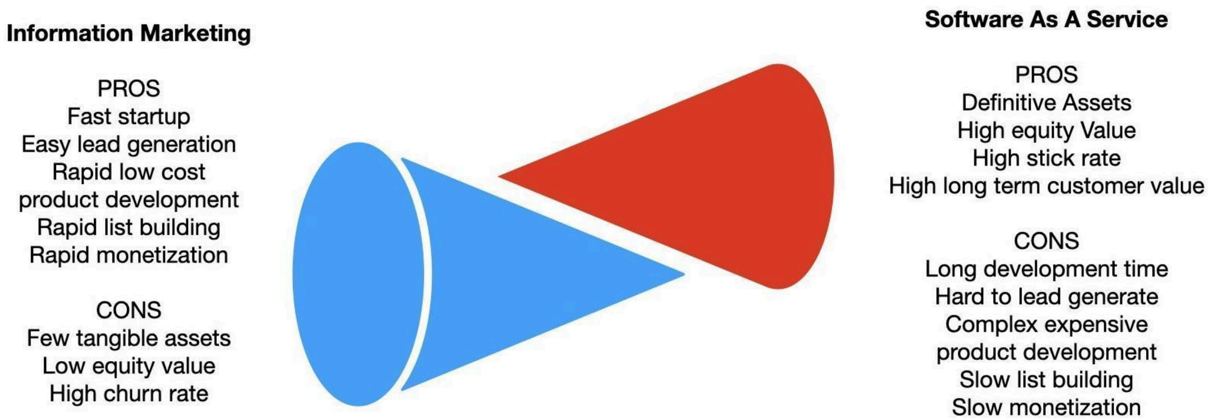
PayPal bought them for $183 million. The platform became one of the largest small business lenders globally. During COVID, they became the number one channel for PPP loan distribution. Swift Capital threw out old lending rules and cut loan friction by 90%. Masterful Simplification.

Casey Graham:
Pivoting to Power

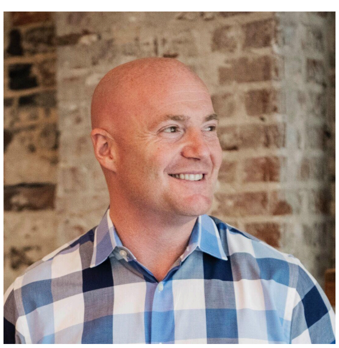
Casey came to a four-man intensive ten years ago. He had an information marketing business that taught pastors about money management. This in turn increased the giving from congregations, forming a virtuous circle.

Almost as an aside, he mentioned they had a smartphone app for collecting offerings. That's when I stopped him: ***"Casey, THAT'S your real business. The education part is just lead generation."***

He did exactly what I said. Then did something brilliant: every 30 days, he would text his key metrics to one interested buyer - *new customers acquired, revenue, subscriptions, growth rate.* That buyer eventually acquired his company, leading to Casey building his dream home in Georgia and his new life as a serial entrepreneur.



Casey's blend of Info Marketing+Software As A Service is a perfect combination because each of these has opposite and complementary strengths and weaknesses. Many times the service aspect of an info business (coaching, implementation) can fill in the chinks of premature software.



Roundtable members Ted Thomas and Chris Martin are doing this right now. They are building a SaaS on the back of a tax lien marketing and training business. Their software is functional but buggy. Their coaches and trainers get to either 1) use the software in the background and 'put up with' its shortcomings [very common with rapidly prototyped software apps] or, when the software gets a little further, the company releases it to users but reserves certain functions for adult supervision.

This blend of info business + SAAS has been a reliable formula for many of our success stories including Finn Peacock, Jonathan Pototschnik, and Tim Francis.

David Jellins:
Adventure Tourism Meets Tech

David built Adrenaline.com.au, an adventure travel booking site, connecting thrill-seekers with experiences like skydiving, race car driving, and zip-lining. He became a Private Client. Once a year he would come to my office in Chicago and spend a day.

During one of our consultations, I drew a “Network Effect feedback loop” on the whiteboard - showing how to get buyers to attract sellers, to attract more buyers, creating a virtuous cycle. At 11am I showed him how Network Effect for Mere Mortals quadruples the magnetism of his company each time he doubles his number of vendors.

David's reaction was immediate: "I just got my money's worth for the whole trip." After lunch his attention was wandering. At 1:30 he announced, “I already got my value. Take the rest of the day off.” He left to implement what he'd learned. He later sold Adrenaline to Big Red Group for a substantial sum. Then moved into cryptocurrency mining in Canada, taking advantage of cheap electricity rates for another successful venture. He took that company public.

Donny Wyatt:
The Power of Knowing Your Position

Donny started Co-Construct, software for managing home builder projects. He found his way into Planet Perry to optimize his Google Ads. At the 2014 Star seminar, he got a hot seat with Richard Koch. They identified that he was a **Question Mar**k in a fast-growing market. A competitor was growing faster and was the clear Number One. Donny was growing but lagged the top player by a good margin.

Richard warned him: “If you’re still #2 when market growth slows down, you’ll be in trouble.” Richard was crystal clear: either pass up the competitor, or engineer to get bought by them.

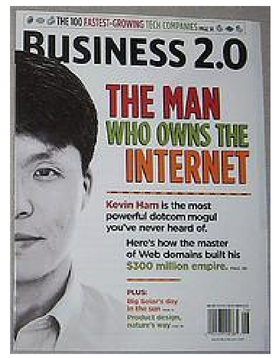
Donny chose the latter path, recognizing it would take deep pockets to outgrow the market leader. He kept growing his business, and about three years ago, the market leader acquired them for a tidy sum.

Getting the weight of running that company off of his shoulders was a huge relief. He slept much better and suddenly had generous time for his kids. Knowing exactly where you stand in your market and what your options are is invaluable. Donny didn't burn resources trying to become the market leader; he focused on being an attractive acquisition target.

Kevin Ham:
Domain Name King

In medical school in the late 90s, Kevin attended a presentation about Mosaic, the first web browser, and had an epiphany about the future of the internet. The presenter said, “This is the future of everything - news, TV shows” and Kevin seized the vision. He started buying domain names, believing they would become valuable real estate.

Kevin was already quite successful when he landed on Planet Perry. I met him at the 80/20 Summit with Tim Francis in Banff Alberta. He had come because the dedication in the front of my 80/20 book quoted Sirach 1:4: “Wisdom is before all things, and the understanding of prudence is before all time.” We had a meet and greet and he shook my hand, held out my book and said, “Nobody quotes Sirach. How did you end up quoting this?”



Sirach is one of the books of the Apocrypha, the parts of the Catholic Bible that the Protestants tossed out. Kevin collects old Bibles, including a 1611 King James worth $150,000. (I have only been asked about my Sirach quote by three people. All three of them were wealthy. Is this a clue?)

When Kevin read *80/20 Sales and Marketing*, he restructured his entire domain portfolio based on the principle. He realized 80% of domains weren't worth much, packaged them and sold them to other domainers, focusing on premium domains like BlackFriday.com, which he sold for a fortune.

Kevin became so convinced about the power of 80/20 that he gives the book to all his employees. He flew me to a Hawaii retreat to speak to his staff, and implements it across his entire operation. While he made a fortune before discovering 80/20, his post-80/20 domain sales have exceeded many company exits.

Jim Siwek:
Fax to Email Pioneer

In the early 2000s, Jim created a fax-to-email service when businesses were starting to go online but still needed fax capabilities.

Similar to Donny Wyatt's story, there were several players in the space with one dominant leader, J2. Jim was in Roundtable, where we focused on optimizing every aspect of the customer experience and onboarding process for their few-dollars-per-month subscription.

The market leader consolidated the industry, buying out the smaller players including Jim's company. The windfall gave Jim the freedom to pursue his next ventures with a very long runway.

Jeff Garnett:
Tattoo Removal

Jeff's story begins at Rosetta Stone (the "Network Effect for Mere Mortals seminar") with a seemingly simple question: "I'm in the tattoo removal business. What's the Network Effect move for me?"

I was stumped by his question. Then Dave Jabbas came to the microphone. Dave probed further, revealing that successful tattoo removal requires incredible precision - you need to understand exact skin pigmentation, the specifics of the tattoo ink, and countless other variables. (The client is a guy who has "Stephanie" tattooed across his chest, but now Julie doesn't appreciate seeing Stephanie's name on her man.)

The breakthrough was recognizing this expertise could be progressively migrated into a software platform. Every successful removal added to their knowledge base, so by baking that expertise into their system, Jeff owns that intellectual property. The knowledge resides on his servers, not anyone else's. This made it possible to scale - opening store after store while maintaining consistent quality.

Jeff joined Roundtable and began building his tattoo removal empire. As his presence grew and he became a stronger personality in the industry, Private Equity groups started paying attention.

When they bought him, it transformed Jeff from founder-entrepreneur to industry kingpin. He shared his story at a Perry Marshall Live in Connecticut. Participants were treated an impromptu masterclass in how to turn a service business into a scalable, sellable enterprise. (No two Perry Marshall Lives are alike, and a handful of our top members come to most of them.)

What made Jeff's exit interesting was how he transformed what looked like a pure manual labor service business into a technology-enabled platform. The software didn't just manage appointments - it captured and systematized expertise in a way that made the business much more valuable and scalable.

Rising Stars:
Building Tomorrow's Success Stories

While we're celebrating big exits, it's worth highlighting some members building remarkable businesses that might be future exit stories… and are great businesses to own and run *now*:

Tim Francis: Revolutionizing Assistant Hiring

Tim's journey began with a provocative question at the 2014 seminar: "Under what conditions would working one hour a day be more productive than your current eight hours?"

Tim was offended by the question. But he realized: *I'm making $50 per hour as a web consultant, and inside my head I'm arguing with a guy who's worth $200 million. I paid a lot to be here. Maybe I should listen.*

He chose to take the question seriously. Initially he created a course on how to hire a great assistant. But the people in his mastermind group didn't want to buy the course, they wanted him to hire them an assistant. He reached a moment of truth where he had to decide whether to build the infrastructure to run the Great Assistant business.

Today, Great Assistant is the leading company in their space, charging $6,000 to find and train perfect-match assistants for entrepreneurs, with ongoing training and support ensuring long-term success. I have *many* clients who rave about the service.

Jon Benson: AI for Copywriters

Jon transformed his video sales letter training into Benson AI, now the leading artificial intelligence tool for pro copywriters. While ChatGPT and Claude serve general audiences, Benson AI incorporates proven sales structures that have generated hundreds of millions in revenue.

The platform bakes in decades of copywriting expertise with cutting-edge AI, creating a tool that understands not just how to write, but how to sell.

Sarah Mueller: Building a Decluttering Empire

Sarah's journey with me began with a one-hour consultation where she showed me her accidental success helping people declutter their homes and lives. I told her how she could become the "Oprah of decluttering," and she ran with it.

Through Roundtable and the recent Portugal seminar, we've helped her grow the business substantially.

She wrote me a few months ago:

I am a completely different person than I was 3-4 years ago.

We have a membership of almost 3,000 people and will double that next year. We will touch millions of people!

I also hired several key people who are already making a difference. One of them now makes more than her husband (working less) and is taking her family on their first ski trip!

With her approach to helping people simplify their lives, including working with hoarders and others struggling with organization, she's building a tight community. Don't be surprised if you see her on her own TV show soon.

Shanyn Stewart: The Exit Whisperer

Shanyn has become the go-to tax strategist for business owners planning exits. Her specialty is helping entrepreneurs structure their companies years before a sale to minimize taxes when the big check arrives. Instead of paying 45% to the government, clients keep much more of their hard-earned money.

She also owns a conceal and carry lingerie company. It appeals to uppity women and their men.

Megan Macedo: Category of One

While not building for an exit, Megan has created something *very* unique - helping entrepreneurs nail their artistic voice; navigate the yawning gulf between the business paradigm and the art paradigm; and understand the relationship between their family story and the work they do now. Anyone who attended the Definitive AI Seminar back in April witnessed her brilliant exposition of how the Art Paradigm relates to business.

Five years ago I was describing her as “The Brene Brown of Marketing.” Today she’s the Megan Macedo of marketing. What she does no longer fits into any “box” or preconceived notion.

Patterns of Success: What We've Learned

Taking these stories together, several clear patterns emerge:

Technology Patterns

1. Many successful exits were SaaS (Software as a Service) businesses, even if they didn't look like it initially
2. Many found ways to turn old school service businesses into tech-enabled platforms.
3. They built tight feedback loops between customers and service providers
4. Technology scales human-centric services, but does not replace the humans

Business Model Patterns

1. All Simplified something complex (Proposition Simplifiers)
2. Most built some form of Network Effect for Mere Mortals, marketplace and ecosystem
3. Many recognized they were "Question Marks" in growing markets and positioned themselves deliberately to get acquired.
4. They focused on making their services easier and more pleasant to use than competitors
5. A common model is information marketing to SaaS.

Promise Patterns

1. All maintained strong quality control and customer experience
2. Most made implicit or very explicit promises that their competition did not have the guts to make
3. Many if not most built their offers around IF IF THEN ELSE guarantees.

Exit Patterns

1. Successful exits often came from understanding the buyer landscape
2. Many built relationships with potential buyers long before selling
3. Most groomed themselves specifically for acquisition by market leaders
4. Most focused on building great businesses first, letting exits follow naturally

Now It's Your Turn to Join the Star Success Roll Call

Join us April 22-24 in Chicago for the Equity 2.0 Seminar where many of these people and more will share their stories and experience in detail. Details at https://www.perrymarshall.com/equity-2025/.

Richard Koch says: "Money is either really hard or really easy." When you nail the right formula - like these members did - things that seemed impossible begin flowing naturally.

Seize the day,

Perry Marshall