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**Wednesday, November 2**

**Wes Moss**

**21 Real-World Stories to Rev Up Your Inner Entrepreneur**

A new book from former Apprentice standout Wes Moss offers a host of been-there-done-that lessons from people who left the corporate world to forge their own path.

There's a special class of entrepreneurs that Fate seems to have smiled upon: the overnight gazillionaires. Perhaps they got in on the cusp of the dot-com bubble, or stumbled onto some mundane product the world nonetheless seemed to be waiting for, or caught the eye of an angel investor who graced them with a healthy infusion of cash. Frankly, you can't relate to such stories. You'd love to start your own business—you even have an idea you're excited about—but you're relatively certain you weren't born under a lucky star. Is there a point to even trying . . . or should you just keep plugging away at your day job?

Don't despair, says Wes Moss, author of *Starting from Scratch: Secrets from 21 Ordinary People Who Made the Entrepreneurial Leap* (Dearborn Trade Publishing, November 2005, ISBN: 1-4195-2106-3, \$22). You don't have to hit the "business lottery" to make a nice living on entrepreneurial avenue. Passion and good old-fashioned elbow grease go a long, long way.

"I wrote this book because I wanted to prove that ordinary people can take charge of their financial destiny," says Moss, an investment firm V. P. who is best known as the cool, calm, and collected candidate on season two of NBC's *The Apprentice* with Donald Trump. "I wanted to restore people's faith in the American Dream. It's not about having the planets line up just right. There's nothing magical about entrepreneurship, but it is a hugely rewarding way to live your life."

To start your own business and make it work, you'll need both practical advice and inspiration. Moss provides hefty doses of both. In *Starting from Scratch*, successful entrepreneurs from 21 different industries and business concepts—a lawyer turned gourmet baker, a paralegal turned yoga studio owner, a saleswoman turned designer shoe retailer—reveal real-life secrets that can set you on the road to financial independence. (The book's subjects have an average net worth between \$2 million and \$20 million.)

The bite-size, business-secret-packed stories in this book make entrepreneurship sound downright doable. In fact, Moss has identified a four-step mode of operation that led all of his book subjects to success. He calls these steps "the HUNT." Here's how the acronym breaks down:

**Harness what you have.** Identify your inherent skills and figure out something tangible you love: a product or trade you are proud to be associated with.

**Underestimate your obstacles.** Define a vision and mentally bypass the multitude of things that can go wrong or stand in your way.

**Notice your network.** Find those around you who can assist you in realizing your vision and utilize the leverage that others provide in reaching your goal.


**Take the first step.** Develop a bias toward action.

Clearly, these steps represent advice almost anyone—yes, even you—can follow. All you need is a dream, a healthy dose of courage, and the willingness to work hard. Yet there are plenty of lessons-within-the-lessons that entrepreneurs must learn. Moss addresses them in a

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 speak for themselves. Here  its you'll glean:



**Desperately seek challenge.** Don't settle for a job iust because it's in



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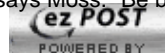
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frustrated. She quit her magazine job and plowed the money she'd been saving for the business school into her new company and created what sends a lighthearted daily fashion or lifestyle tip (actually a cleverly disguised ad) to its subscribers. Today, *Daily Candy* has seven editions and nearly a million subscribers around the world. "Even though Dany had a job many people would have killed for, she was still willing to take a chance," says Moss. **Be bold. Push yourself. Come up with something new."**



**Keep it weird.** Different is better. Look for ways to breathe life into the same-old, same-old. Steve Bercu was a 50-something lawyer smothering in a sea of sameness when he decided to change his life. He invested in BookPeople, a struggling independent bookstore in Austin, Texas. Right away he got rid of any employees who were prone to sneer at customers ordering "low brow" books and replaced them with friendly, outgoing people. But just as the store was taking off, Steve discovered that Austin was about to give a tax incentive to a big box chain bookstore, which was moving in across the street. He joined forces with a local CD store and started a campaign to urge customers to express opposition to the incentive package. He latched onto the countercultural slogan "Keep Austin Weird" and printed it on thousands of bumper stickers. BookPeople flourished, Steve became a local celebrity, and the next year the big box competitor withdrew from its lease. "Weirdness works," says Moss. "Embrace it and promote it. Stand out from the competition in a fundamental way and you'll thrive."

**Tirelessly pursue what you want. Don't take no for an answer.** Giovanni The Margarita King (his legal name!), founder of The Margarita King, might well be the poster child for tireless energy and persistence. An Italian who grew up in Colombia, Gio cast aside his architect training to head to the U.S. and work in its restaurant business. After building and selling nine different Mexican restaurants in San Francisco over 15 years, Gio became famous for his margaritas. He decided to bottle and sell them ready-made in stores. When distributors told him his margaritas were too expensive, he went door-to-door with his fiancée, working from seven o'clock in the morning until eleven o'clock at night. After trying for months to get an appointment with California's largest liquor store chain, he showed up at the head honcho's office, bulldozed his way in, and forced him to taste the drink. "Successful entrepreneurs push and push and push to get the answer they want," Moss says. "They just don't give up. It takes heart and energy and the ability to thrive on very little sleep, but when you absolutely love what you do, these things come as naturally as breathing."

"I found it interesting that all of these people gave me the same advice," reflects Moss. "Their secrets are universal: figure out what you love to do, envision what you want to accomplish, and put in a lot of old-fashioned hard work. It's a simple formula. Sure, there's risk involved, but working in corporate America can be risky too. Entrepreneurship lets you forge your own path instead of running on someone else's treadmill. It's fun. And even if you don't make millions, there's a lot to be said for that."

**About the Author:** **Wes Moss** "bootstrapped" his first ventures when he was in his teens, turning his businesses into award-winning, prosperous enterprises. Moss appeared as a candidate on NBC's popular show *The Apprentice* with Donald Trump. A graduate in economics from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Moss built a substantial investment practice and went on to become a vice president at one of the world's largest investment firms after just five years. He is also a Certified Financial Planner™ and along with his partners manages more than \$100 million in investments for high-net-worth individuals, entrepreneurs, and corporations.