

No ordinary Joe

Andrew Reynolds reveals the secrets of how, as an 'ordinary bloke', he achieved extraordinary success. He talks to *Martin Baker*



ANDREW REYNOLDS IS A QUIET revolutionary. If you met him in the street, you'd pass him off as just another, regular bloke. But beneath the quiet, unassuming exterior is a quite extraordinary person. His success story is that he was just an ordinary guy who discovered the secret of making money, a secret that he now shares with other people.

Reynolds certainly looks like Mr Average. Just the wrong side of 50, he is a regular guy who's taken his fitness seriously. He has frequent sessions with his personal trainer most days of the week, and has a full-time housekeeper to keep him on track with his nutrition – yet he's maintained a down-to-earth, 'in touch with his roots' personality. OK, he drives a rather sexy Bentley GT, the marque favoured by Premiership footballers, but beyond that, there's little surface evidence of anything that might speak of a man who's pulled in £30 million entirely by his own initiative in the past 10 years.

The self-effacing demeanour, the quiet voice, and the eyes that glint with an occasional hint of irony bring to mind a low-profile – perhaps highly successful – accountant or surveyor. Then again, Reynolds might be one of those bods from personnel, someone who's embroiled in the intricate detail and day to day machinations of corporate life – a classic small 'cog' in some huge, faceless multinational. That would be a big mistake. Apart from his fear and loathing of accountancy (see related articles), if you're looking for the leader of the charge against life in the corporate job factory, Reynolds is the man. He describes himself as shy and certainly isn't a natural extrovert, yet he has given a number of bravura performances in front of thousands of entrepreneurs as he explains his *Cash On*

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EARLY YEARS

Memories of a childhood whose legacy was poverty – and a driving ambition

Although Reynolds insists his childhood was a happy one, it was shot through with unremitting poverty. He is now relaxed about the material deprivations he suffered as a child. What rankles is the pain and

terminal disappointment suffered by his father – whose loss he still feels sharply. Here he tells his story in his own words. "I was originally brought up living in a little one-bedroom caravan near Winchester. My parents were absolutely skint. My father started out as a self-employed, door-to-door life insurance salesman. Then my brother was born – he's a couple of years younger than me – and my parents borrowed the cash to put down a deposit on a modest terrace house in Winchester. My Dad had great big ideas.

He always had a yearning to 'be his own boss' – like his father before him, who ran a small cafe in Winchester. Both my father and my grandfather tried a number of businesses and failed. My Dad wanted me to rise above the past and break the chain of financial struggle – and always vowed to send me to a 'Good school' – but there simply wasn't the money. He was struggling just to put food on the table at the time. So I went to school on the nearby council estate.

"Back then my father bought a paraffin delivery round for £50 and worked himself into the ground trying to make a success of working for himself. He was so proud of his van with his name painted on the side promoting his own business – 'Reynolds of Winchester'. It was what he'd dreamed of. The reality of course was very different – he would spend his days carrying these bloody great



Demand® system that is at the heart of his success. Anyone present at the time, or watching DVDs of Reynolds live on stage at one of his Charity Entrepreneur Bootcamps or conferences, can see that this is a man compelled to overcome any innate shyness because he knows he has to deliver a message. That message is simple: You too can do it.

His eureka moment came in 1997 after years of professional unhappiness working for ‘big business.’ “I’d bought some videos of a guy in the States in 1993 which showed you how to make several thousand dollars a month working from home,” he explains. “I’d watched them, and then I did what most people do, I’d put them on the shelf and not done anything about it.

“Then four years later, because I was so depressed and fed up with life and, coincidentally, I’d just been shown by my secretary how to use a computer and how to get on this wonderful thing called the internet, a whole new world opened up. A few weeks before, the guy I’d bought the videos from had launched an internet site. I found him online and emailed him to ask if the tapes I’d bought were still relevant. He

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emailed back and said he’d got a seminar coming up, and if I wanted to, I could attend. It was the following week, and it was in Las Vegas, but I wangled some holiday and went.” Reynolds blagged time off from a comfortable job in the corporate sausage machine and headed off to the States for a week. “I sat quietly at the back of the room, rather jetlagged, wondering what the hell I was doing 5,000 miles from home, acting merely on a gut feeling that this guy had something I needed to learn. Live on stage he showed us how to make \$30,000 a month from home, and something just clicked,” he says. “This was what I was going to do. I just knew it!”

Within a week he’d handed in his notice at work. »

drums of paraffin door to door to try to make money out of it. It was pretty much doomed from the start. He was selling his manual labour, delivering door to door. Then the family opened a hardware store at the bottom of the town. There was a big piece in the paper saying “We’ve arrived!” but the reality was that there’s absolutely no money in retailing at that sort of level. He struggled. He spent 25 years of his life waiting for customers to wander in to spend money. We spent those years as a family, bouncing along the poverty line.

“When I was growing up I had one pair of shoes and one pair of trousers. We didn’t have

loads of clothes and stuff. One winter my mother burnt the neck of my jumper when she left it against a heater. She had to unpick it and re-knit it, because there wasn’t another one. I grew up in poverty because the fundamental plan of the retail business was flawed. My father was borrowing money from the bank to buy stock from a wholesaler to mark it up by a third, in the hope of making a profit – out of which he had to repay the bank and the landlord, the electric and the rates. He couldn’t afford heating in the shop, and we had just a couple of paraffin heaters to try to keep the house warm.

“Winter was always bloody cold. I remember the shop roof leaked and Dad had no money to fix it. Every time it rained, I saw the pained expression – a mix of sheer frustration and tearful rage as my Dad ran around putting bucket and bowls under all the drips so the stock wouldn’t get ruined. That rage and that despairing look haunts me today and drives me on. I count my blessings that I’ve been fortunate to be born at the only time in history so far when one man can run a successful business from his kitchen table, without a ‘bricks and mortar’ shop front to pay for.”



❏ My Dad died a broken man. He’d bounced along the poverty line for almost all his life. That look haunts me today and drives me on ❏



“ So many people spend years of their lives developing a great product – then come to me asking who they can sell it to. I do it the other way around. I find a group of hungry buyers - then find a product to sell them ”



“My boss looked at me as though I was some sort of idiot. He just couldn’t comprehend how anyone could be unhappy in their marvellous career with him and how they could give it all up for some hair-brained notion that someone could make money from their kitchen table at home. ‘It’s just not something that ordinary people like you and me do’, he told me.”

Now, ordinary he may be, but Reynolds has developed an unusual talent. Witness the week when he went out and generated more than half a million pounds – with the whole process captured on camera by a skeptical film crew: “The beauty of the *Cash On Demand*[®] approach to business is that I’m not sitting behind a counter next to a till, six days a week, just waiting for someone to wander in and give me money. With a *Cash On Demand*[®] business, when you want some money, you go and ask your customers for it. Three years ago I got a camera crew to follow me round for a week while I used my system to pull in some money. Live on camera, we pulled in £506,297. Oh yes, and 98 pence.”

So how does it all work? Reynolds is amazingly upfront about it. “The essential thing is to find a

hungry market. So many people spend years of their lives developing a great product – then come to me asking who they can sell it to. I do it the other way around. I find a group of hungry buyers – then find a product to sell them. It’s just so much easier to make money that way. For people just starting out who may not have a suitable product or know how to market it, one of the things we show them in the *Cash On Demand*[®] course is how to create joint ventures with people who have the skills or the products. Most business owners who develop products haven’t a clue what they’re worth, and they’ll sell you a reseller’s license very cheaply. That’s how I started off making my money. I once paid £500 for a licence to a video product that allowed me to sell as many copies as I wanted to - and keep all the profits! I sold over 10,000 copies at around £50 each and cleaned up – all from finding a hungry market and then selling them a product someone else had spent time and money developing, which they were prepared to license to me cheaply. In the *Cash On Demand*[®] course I show people how to do exactly that!”

Reynolds is now the master of his own carefully

refined technique of making money. But he started out tentatively back in 1997. “Back then I had to do a lot of testing to see which of the things I’d learned in the States would work over here in the UK. But while I worked out my notice at work, I tried and tested things to see which would pull in the money. It was a ‘seat of the pants’ time as I’d burned my bridges and HAD to make it work. In fairness, looking back – quitting my job on the strength of an idea was about the dumbest thing you could do. I’d never recommend it to anybody, now I know what I know. In fact I now teach people to start their business off on a modest part-time basis. You don’t have to burn your bridges to get started.” The corporate pay package included a Mercedes, a healthcare package and a high five-figure salary. Yet Reynolds had enough fire in his belly to walk away.

“I started by putting a tiny £60 classified ad in the newspaper directing people to a little website I’d built. As the money came in, I took out more little ads and started to build the business that way. Of course, it took a while for the business to take off, as I was testing stuff to see what would work and what didn’t. Now I know exactly what to do, subscribers to my *Cash On Demand*[®] course get the benefit of that experience and can leap over all the hurdles I came across in those early days.”

In a world full of corporate dinosaurs, Reynolds has evolved into a different kind of mammal – able to live completely differently. He revels in the flexibility of having minimal overheads while being able to generate a mighty income. One gets the sense that he revels in the power-to-weight ratio of his business model. “I don’t really believe in having loads and loads of staff,” he says. “One of the ways of getting round that is to outsource all of the admin and the dispatch of orders,

using a fulfilment centre that specializes in offering a complete ‘virtual warehouse and office service’. They handle all of my phone calls from customers; they process the payments for me and ship the goods to the customer. At the end of the month they send me a big cheque!”

He uses simple, one-page websites, which he gets someone to put up for him, to show his wares. “When customers visit a website they don’t know whether there’s a massive office full of people and some huge great overheads going on or whether you’re sitting at home in the kitchen in your shorts. As long as when they order they get their package quickly and with no fuss or hassle – they are happy.” Using fulfilment companies means Reynolds can be sitting on a beach somewhere while the money comes in.

“We don’t even have to have stock, doing what we do. Primarily we sell paper products like newsletters and books; CDs and DVDs – items that can all be duplicated at short notice. In fact when you start out, it’s possible to wait until your customer sends you an order – and their payment – and then burn the CDs.”

So what gets Reynolds out of bed nowadays? He’s made plenty of money, taken care of his family and friends, and now donates a lot to charity. It seems that what gives him most pleasure is succeeding for its own sake – somewhat in the manner of the mountaineers who climb mountains simply because they’re there. “I still get that great buzz, when you put out a new offer and that first email arrives saying ‘You have a new order,’” he says. “It was an amazing ‘rush’ when I got my first one, back in 1997 and it’s still an amazing rush even today. It’s just the numbers are a wee bit bigger these days.”

More info: www.andrew-reynolds.org

CHARITY

Making a difference matters to Reynolds – and charitable work helps him do just that

“When I was young, I always promised myself that if I ever made any money, I would do something useful with it – rather than just fritter it away on the usual hollow and meaningless trappings of success.” He is reluctant to talk about his charitable work, but from public record, we know he has twice raised more than a quarter of a million pounds for Great Ormond Street Children’s Hospital. Reynolds is also passionate about helping young people. As well as contributing over £100,000 as a patron of The Prince’s Trust,

and taking on the role of ambassador to the Make A Wish Foundation, he also funded the highly praised ‘Make Your Mark with a Tenner’ scheme to teach school kids nationwide about social enterprise. The Surrey-based Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice recently benefited from a three-year rolling commitment from Reynolds to fund a community nursing team, to enable terminally sick people to spend their last days in their own homes.

