STORIES | INFORM INVOLVE INSPIRE!

Jim Bellacera

Jim knows first hand that by merely making a decision in your life you can change your outcome. An example is when an individual is serious about being successful in life. Jim is an example of that!

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Jim Bellacera, it's a pleasure to have the opportunity to talk with you. Our theme for this month is 'Helping Others' and I know you to be passionate about that. Give us a snapshot of your beginnings in this industry.

I've been self-employed since I was 19 but of course, when I was first introduced to network marketing I knew nothing about it. My friends from the early years would sure tell you that whatever it took to inspire people, whether it was charisma or what, I didn't have it.

I was a quiet, shy guy who preferred to be by himself. I recognized quickly when I got involved with network marketing that people talked about 'the dream'. So there I was, with the opportunity to have a dream but how do you have a dream come true? I didn't get it.

Then when I started to understand there were steps to

having your dream come true, I realized I had to overcome me!

My fears were *so big* that I found it hard to believe that I could do it. When I first got involved I was a 27 year old self-employed carpenter. At that time there were hotel meetings where everyone wore a suit and tie. Back then I didn't own a suit or tie and I was totally intimidated by guys who wore them. I was also intimidated by anyone with an education because my education stopped at high school. In fact, I barely made that. But, I decided I would try to 'fit in'. So I went out and bought myself a polyester suit, some clip-on ties and started going to these meetings and listening. I had no clue what I looked like and I stuck out like a sore thumb.

I was just so excited about what was being taught. Someone had said, "In order to change you have to change yourself" and I thought about what I would have to change. I knew I would have to change everything if I were to overcome the things that were holding me back.

So I became a student. I became a student of the people, the books and the audios.

I listened to tapes steadily, probably more than the average person. I would listen to at least two or three tapes a day every single day. And suddenly I was reading! Before getting involved with network marketing I read one book in my entire life! One! But I wanted the dream so bad that I was willing to change and overcome myself.

My two favorite books were *The Magic of Thinking Big* and *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. I probably read each of those 20 times in one year. You see, I knew I had to make some major change if I was going to get what I wanted. Those two books became the mainstay of my entire life. And of course, I didn't stop there. I've continued to read books.

So I went from some long-haired carpenter who had only worked with his hands, never pushed a paper or sold anything, totally doubtful and fearful about my ability to succeed, all the way to someone who has created millions of dollars over the years and has people willing to listen to him.

I've had the opportunity to speak all over the world, impacting people's lives in wonderful ways and it's been the most rewarding thing that has ever happened for me.

That's quite an evolution, Jim. Do you find that as you read and absorb this information, especially in the beginning, that you surprise yourself by hearing some of the words that come out of your mouth in conversations with people?
Oh yes! That's the story of my life! I literally have box after box after box of paperback books that I have read over the last 24 years of my life, that have allowed me to regurgitate brilliant things I've read. It's often startling when I hear myself and wonder where those words came from.

For instance, there are phrases that are wonderful like, "If nothing changes what's going to change?" Most people don't know where to go, they don't know where to find that information or they lack the motivation to seek it out on their own because they don't see themselves as worthy.

I have a major passion. I look at the way these books and the authors that are contributing to your magazine have empowered me and impacted my life, have radically changed my life, and there is so much rich support out there. The biggest problem in life is having structure so you can stay focused.

Yes Jim. Tell us more about your vision of seeing the need for a logical system that places rich information resources in one place and allows people to be guided in a logical way.
Sure! Most people don't start out at anything as a success. You have to crawl before you walk and walk before you run.

> ***By having a structured, organized system it almost ensures that nothing will be left out, if you're dialed into the system.***

Without a structured, organized system life can easily get in the way. You end up scattered all over the place which can result in you being down

when you most need to be up. If you're not mentally and emotionally prepared to do your business, then days go by and sometimes weeks go by and soon months and you realize you don't really have a business. You fell because you dropped the ball.

What I created was Black Diamond University as a training mechanism for people to use so they don't fall off track. This mechanism is universal. If you can take someone who is a baby bud, they're full of excitement, and plug them in they are more likely to succeed.

The most exciting person to work with is that naïve, gullible person that is beaming with enthusiasm and hope. If you plug them in right away, to something like Black Diamond University that takes them by the hand and walks them through the empowering steps of a structured, daily, weekly, monthly system that keeps them focused on their dream and their success, then everybody wins.

Now Black Diamond University is specific to my business but the system itself is universal.

> ***It's like a life coach that is always there ready to meet you wherever you are.***

It solves the problem of the networker who is geographically isolated or has time conflicts. It allows anyone at anytime to receive specific direction when they need it most.

One of the biggest challenges is that in this business, you often have the blind leading the blind. They don't know what they're doing but they are excited. For instance, they have their hands on a killer product and they are excited about it but they might not realize there is more to know about the product. The same goes for the opportunity. Then they run across someone who asks for more information and they don't know how to relay more information properly. So the system can give them that education.

Another challenge with training can be a simple issue of personalities that don't relate well with one another. If someone delivers information in a way that's difficult for us to understand, we simply don't absorb it. But if

that same information could be delivered in a different style, by a different person, then the understanding may come. And we had to find a way to accommodate these differences.

> ***When you have a comprehensive system that's available 24/7 then you have something to plug everyone into that will meet them right where their needs are greatest.***

Without a system you could lose some great people. A system like Black Diamond University is just a way to leverage time and information in order to meet everyone where they are in the moment.

Can you give us a snapshot of what your system entails?
In short it's basically just teaching teachers how to teach teachers. What I mean by that is we first take people and teach them to set their goals. We give them some direction about books to read and CD's to listen to but the point is that we're not just selling them a book. We're guiding them and telling them they need to stay plugged in on a daily and weekly basis. And we give them specific things to do daily and weekly so they learn to hold themselves accountable.

It's designed to keep people in the learning curve. For example, you don't just read a book and you're done. You haven't mastered something just because you read a book. You have to constantly stay on the learning curve. So our goal with the system is to help you stay focused every day of your life, for as long as you want to change and grow.

One of the other benefits of the system is that by using it, you create a habit so that even on those days when you might be thinking it's too much trouble to change, you show up and take action because it's become a habit.

So it provides a constant change for the better. I'm good today and tomorrow I'll be even better?

Well, yes, and you are exposed, through the system, to hearing about people who have overcome. The best selling books in the world are autobiographies. There's a reason for that. Some people will say, "Well, I don't need all that hype and inspiration" and the truth is – *yes you do!* And if you don't, you're group surely does.

People want to hear and learn from people who have overcome something.

> ***In this industry in particular people want to believe and it's so much easier to believe we can succeed if we have and hear the evidence of someone just like us succeeding in the business.***

And even better are the success stories of someone who has it even tougher than you. It raises our belief in ourselves and our possibilities. Know what I mean?

Oh, of course. Especially when we hear about someone facing almost impossible odds! I see from looking at the way the magazine is used that although there is a certain percentage of people clicking on the 'how to' type articles, it is the stories and the articles that inspire belief and confidence that are, by far, the most popular.
What we've done with Black Diamond University is created a balance so that there is a constant cutting edge training mixed with the motivation. The two intertwine and it all serves a great purpose. Without the motivation you won't take the time to listen to the 'how-to' and take the necessary steps that will result in a successful business so you really need both. There is a definite strategy for intertwining the two so that people don't go off on a tangent. In fact you have to make the distinction between busy work and productive work.

I'm looking at my back office and I'm watching my business grow and I can't be asking people why they're not hitting their goals if I'm not doing

what I should be doing. Any of us can be vulnerable to falling into that mode and the system is design to minimize that. The whole thing then is keeping them using the system.

How does Black Diamond University serve both the brand new network marketer as well as the experienced network marketer?

There is definitely a difference between the new person who doesn't even know what the word 'prospecting' is about and the person who has been in the business. The system provides for that by offering the basics as well as training for leadership and how to work with and manage a group of people in order to help them achieve success.

Black Diamond University is always about every level of the business. You're not given a handout but you are given a hand up by using the system no matter what your need. Whether you're a baby bud, you've matured for awhile, or you've been in the business and you've got a substantial growing business. You always want to be able to take your business to another level.

> ***What people sometimes fail to understand is that you can only take your business as far as you are.***

What Black Diamond University does is helps you realize another level of potential for yourself, another level that you can take your people to and it also does something else. And this is probably the most powerful thing, it allows you to be surrounded by other people who have talents and gifts that you don't have. Because of their talents and because of their gifts you can raise your business to a level that you would never, ever attain on your own.

> ***I believe that the best leader is the one who has people far more talented than him all around him.***

They elevate you. They bring out your best and make you look good. In fact, that was the point of Black Diamond University. It's not all about Jim Bellacera; it's all about the distributor, that's why I didn't name the website jimbellacera.com. We all know that a rising tide raises all ships. It's far better to have a lot of people succeeding and not focusing on me because I have pitfalls too. If everybody can find *someone* who meets their need today, we all benefit. The intention is to make Black Diamond University everything to all people.

My first endeavor, that I spent over 20 years in, allowed me to travel around the world speaking and doing exactly what I wanted to do because I was making millions of dollars a year because I had plugged people into a system. If it had all been up to me then I would have to have been there. And that's the beauty of Black Diamond University. It's not about any one person. It's about the people that are plugged in.

> ***The whole reason to build a passive income is to have money to invest because you have some discretionary income and to enjoy the things that you love to do.***

If you have to exchange time for money, you'll never have the time to use the money. A true passive income does not depend on your ability to produce it and I know exactly what that feels like. That's why it's my goal, with Black Diamond University to help others to be able to do that once they put their time in here.

> ***We all become messengers. The more we're willing to deliver the message and the better we get at delivering the message, the more***

people we can expose to the right message

When I was in Amway we used to say that a dog with a tape in his mouth could go Diamond. There is *some* truth to that, obviously not much, but in my company there are really so many people who have locked into success because we have a product that delivers. But the key is that until the distributor can comfortably place that bottle of product into someone's hand, it really doesn't matter how great the product is because you only make money and get those results when people use the product.

Then they need to know how to take that person who experienced great product results to the next step and how to talk to the person who doesn't experience immediate product results and take them to the next step. If we can teach distributors these little idiosyncrasies that make a tremendous difference in their success, we will empower people that would never, ever, *ever* made it in this industry, just because we're teaching them how to deliver the message properly.

I've been traveling around the US and Canada for the last few months and I've run into so many distributors that are frustrated. They don't have a clue how to introduce their product to others. All they know is that the product works great for them but they don't know where to go from that.

There are little things that you need to be doing and that you want to be aware of. If you have a liquid product like we do you want to know if it tastes better cold. You want to be able to pour the product out for someone to taste. You might want to follow up within 24 hours to make sure the new user is actually taking the product and reminding them that it doesn't do much good in the refrigerator or on the shelf. You need to follow up and be available to consistently answer questions and you need to know how to close the sale.

Too many people don't realize that you have to voice these things.

The new distributor who is excited about their product results is wonderful in the enthusiasm area but they need the information to go along with that enthusiasm in order to maximize their results with the business, along with their product results.

It's amazing to watch people turn their business around when they get plugged into a system like Black Diamond University. It's just amazing to see that success as a result of them simply being good students and delivering the proper message in the way they've been trained.

Wow! I really see how that applies no matter what your product or service. If people aren't plugged into a training that explains the next step, we risk losing them.
Yes, everything I've been talking about is truly universal. I've been studying this for years.

> ***And when I said idiosyncrasies, they really are just that, they are little things that people leave out because they just don't know better.***

They haven't learned to either do it or say it.

I believe that with an organized, structured system that makes sure that certain things are taught, from beginning to end, a person won't *have* to *find* that leader to answer *that* question. And the problem with relying only on the leaders is that by the time the distributor might have crossed paths with just the right leader they may have already quit. With our system they are literally taken by the hand through each and every step. The brand new guy has to know, he *has* to know the basics of how to place that bottle in the hands of the customer and why that product works so well. Then the next step comes when he starts sponsoring and he has to know how to help that brand new distributor. And from there he actually has a group of people and he has to know how to teach them to hit their pin levels and how to drive their volume from the bottom up, and how to drive depth and how to motivate all the people in between.

There are so many different phases of the business that if someone has to ask someone else for information at every single step then most of us would never get there. We would just keep trying; doing what we hoped was right and repeating the same results.

You know, I started with Amway and I spent 20 years, hit Executive Diamond and had over 100,000 people in my organization and I made millions of dollars. Then I came into this company and I hit a wall like you wouldn't believe. I met people who knew absolutely nothing about network marketing and had never had their own business in their life and they were an overnight success. Now, I have a pretty big ego yet all I could ask myself was, "What's wrong with me?" I shouldn't have even been asking that but you know what happened? The people I was plugged into didn't know what the successful people were doing!

And because they didn't know, they didn't tell me. Because they didn't tell me I couldn't act on it and because I couldn't act on it I was trying to build a business the way I did with Amway. So I was just putting people in but not generating the volume. That's pretty depressing when you're working as hard as anybody is, and in some cases harder. And the people that were above me didn't want me to know because they didn't want me to pass them up.

See, it's the little things.

> ***If they would have empowered me with the knowledge, sure I would have passed them up, but wouldn't they have made more money anyway?***

When you have a lack of information and ego's clashing everybody misses out. Because once you know how it all works the success grows for everybody!

You can take the newest person in the business, plug them into a solid system and they could pass us all up. That's okay. That's GREAT!

What would your advice be to the readers of our magazine who are in that spot right now, where they are hitting their own brick wall?
Well, my advice is that they are going to have to get a hold of someone, upline that has succeeded, and interview that person.

> ***Allow that successful person to share some nuggets, to teach them some basics.***

That's what I did when I finally got frustrated enough. I picked up the phone and called the successful people in my company and I listened to everything that they were willing to tell me.

Unfortunately, I've come to realize that there are a lot of companies out there that think they have a great system but all they really have is a mismatched assortment of tools. Now, if someone pays attention to those tools and applies them they are going to have some success. But never the kind of success they could have if they were able to plug their group into a structured, organized system that takes people through from beginning to end. That's duplicatable and not reliant on an individual.

> ***Systems are duplicatable, people are not.***

I think you can learn more things from the guy in the field than you can from the office so it's a fallacy to say, if it's not broke don't fix it. There are always ways to improve, and to discover what could use improving you have to talk with the distributor in the field. I think that every company should have a distributor advisory board that's made up of a brand new distributor, a distributor who moved up quickly, and the distributor who has been there for awhile because there is wisdom in all levels. I don't think corporate can make good decisions for distributors without contribution from distributors. Understand I'm speaking from the field. And there are a lot of great companies out there but I've been exposed to a lot of what people are calling 'systems' and I find it really frustrating. They have *great* tools but the systems are not powerful, structured systems.

Describe a couple of things that defines a 'structured' system, would you Jim?
We created something called a Success Mastery Training Module. It covers all the basics, how to set your goals, how to place a bottle, etc. The next thing they are taught is how to drive volume from the bottom up in order to maximize the compensation plan and how to extend your hand to help those people beneath you to get to their next level of the business.

> ***It's structured in such a way that distributors receive the information they need in the order in which they need it.***

And it includes weekly calls and monthly seminars.

Right now we have an academy and this is 100% basic training; how to use your back office, how to place the bottles of product in people's hands and how to follow up and follow through.

Then we have Black Diamond University which is where you do advance training. We take that person who was once a regular distributor but now he has a group. He needs to know different things in order to move on so now we're taking him by the hand and showing him exactly how to help his downline hit their goals. That's what I mean by structure. We have something for everyone at every level and it's like a constant conveyor belt.

Oh… I understand now. It's like you don't put the cart before the horse. I know when I started in this business, the group I was with was wonderful at talking about how to help your downline but it didn't serve me at all in terms of creating a downline first. That was really frustrating.
Yes, that's the kind of frustration I felt and I had brought in many, many people but I wasn't getting the training I needed for where I was. I was watching people pass me up like I was stranded on a super highway. I had a great number of people but it was clear I was missing something so that's ultimately why I created Black Diamond University.

I also realize that there is a point where you can give people too much information. You can load them up too much too fast and you have to meet them where there are at if you expect the information to be absorbed. And yet it can be a delicate balance because you still want to keep the carrot dangling and the interest there.

That's why you need to balance the 'how to' with the motivational.

I'm launching something called Success Mastery for Women which should be out in the next couple of weeks. It's basically a program for women by women. There are more women in this industry than men and basically it is designed for all the various life experiences that woman have and provides a place for them to share information with one another. Our commitment is to serving people by meeting them each where they are at in the moment!

So Jim, what do you feel is the *best* thing about network marketing?

Two things- allowing people to have hope again and opening the door for them to achieve things they never thought they could achieve; and secondly, living the life of my dreams.

If it hadn't been for network marketing I would never have known what it was like to be there for my children when they were first born, change their diapers, learn that babies don't make tears for a while, to get on airplanes and go wherever I want to go. To watch other people succeed, grow and change. That really is the best for me!

***Jim Bellacera** has enjoyed a successful career in educating and inspiring people around the world. He is well aware of what it is like to lack belief in his own abilities. When interviewing Jim Bellacera one can see the passion he has in helping people overcome their inhibitions and in learning to believe in their potential. In fact, Jim states that potential minus commitment equals nothing. He knows most people have incredible potential latent within but because they struggle with the same issues he had once faced in the early days prior to his success, they don't know how to empower themselves to overcome and create greatness in their lives.*

You can find his Black Diamond University HERE