

Make Millions Selling on QVC

**INSIDER SECRETS TO LAUNCHING
YOUR PRODUCT ON TELEVISION AND
TRANSFORMING YOUR BUSINESS
(AND LIFE) FOREVER**

Nick Romer



John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Make Millions Selling on QVC

**INSIDER SECRETS TO LAUNCHING
YOUR PRODUCT ON TELEVISION AND
TRANSFORMING YOUR BUSINESS
(AND LIFE) FOREVER**

Nick Romer



John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Copyright © 2008 by Nick Romer. All rights reserved.

Published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey.

Published simultaneously in Canada.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise, except as permitted under Section 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without either the prior written permission of the Publisher, or authorization through payment of the appropriate per-copy fee to the Copyright Clearance Center, Inc., 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 01923, (978) 750-8400, fax (978) 646-8600, or on the Web at www.copyright.com. Requests to the Publisher for permission should be addressed to the Permissions Department, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030, (201) 748-6011, fax (201) 748-6008, or online at <http://www.wiley.com/go/permissions>.

Limit of Liability/Disclaimer of Warranty: While the publisher and author have used their best efforts in preparing this book, they make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this book and specifically disclaim any implied warranties of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose. No warranty may be created or extended by sales representatives or written sales materials. The advice and strategies contained herein may not be suitable for your situation. You should consult with a professional where appropriate. Neither the publisher nor author shall be liable for any loss of profit or other commercial damages, including but not limited to special, incidental, consequential, or other damages.

QVC, Inc., is not associated with any portion of this informational publication.

QVC® is a registered trademark of QVC, Inc.

All other product or brand names are trademarks of their respective owners.

For general information on our other products and services or for technical support, please contact our Customer Care Department within the United States at (800) 762-2974, outside the United States at (317) 572-3993 or fax (317) 572-4002.

Wiley also publishes its books in a variety of electronic formats. Some content that appears in print may not be available in electronic formats. For more information about Wiley products, visit our Web site at www.wiley.com.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data:

Romer, Nick.

Make millions selling on QVC : insider secrets to launching your product on television and transforming your business (and life) forever / Nick Romer.

p. cm.

Includes index.

ISBN 978-0-470-22645-2 (cloth)

1. QVC (Firm) 2. Telemarketing. 3. Teleshopping. 4. Cable television advertising. I. Title.

HF5415.1265.R67 2008

658.8'72—dc22

2007031888

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

*For Joella, Ava, Nicholas, and Madelyn.
The love that lights the way.*

Contents

Acknowledgments	vii
Introduction	ix
Chapter 1 How a Niche Product Generated \$441,158.40 in Ten Minutes	1
Chapter 2 The Home Shopping Phenomenon	7
Chapter 3 How to Find or Create Hot Products	11
Chapter 4 Be First and Fastest to Mass Market	17
Chapter 5 How to Protect Your Product	25
Chapter 6 How to Get on QVC	31
Chapter 7 What QVC Looks for in a Product	43
Chapter 8 Your First Meeting—Pitching Your Product for Acceptance	49
Chapter 9 Your Product Has Been Accepted—Now What?	57

Chapter 10	How to Prepare for Your Big Moment on TV	63
Chapter 11	A Day in the Life at QVC	77
Chapter 12	The Two Most Important Words You Can Associate With Your Product	83
Chapter 13	Getting Paid, Returns, Backorders, and Surges	85
Chapter 14	How to Add Easy Money to Your Bottom Line, and Other Ways to Drive Your Success	89
Chapter 15	Six Mistakes that Can Snap the Back of Your Business, and How to Avoid Them	99
Chapter 16	Open Doors to Greater Success	109
Chapter 17	Beyond QVC—The Big Picture	117
Final Thoughts		123
Appendix A: Resource Directory		125
Appendix B: Frequently Asked Questions		129
Glossary of Terms		132
About the Author		138
Index		139

Acknowledgments

I am grateful for many amazing people in my life who have all been instrumental in illuminating the path and keeping the foundation of my business and life endeavors intact and upright.

First and foremost, Joella, my love. Thank you for listening to my dreams with or without the spoken words and for believing in me unconditionally.

To Marina, you are a great sister, thanks for always coming to my games and for being there in every other way throughout the years.

When I first thought I could launch a business and create an assembly line in my small condominium, my dear friends Brian and Diana Urbanski immediately offered the large basement of their home along with their willing hands for our countless packing parties. Their generosity and true friendship is something I will remain grateful for and will never forget.

To Rich Ennis and Frank Montemurro—thanks for taking the meeting and for all the guidance thereafter. Paul Haviland and Sergio Acle, true friends and believers, thanks for your constant interest, insights, and encouragement. Thank you Herb Niemi for great advice and manufacturing support throughout the years and Joyce Krompegel for keeping it all going in so many ways.

Starr Hall—I am grateful for your friendship and your nonstop pillar of positive get-it-done-and-I'll-make-it-happen support and inspiration. You are perfect in every way.

And to Alisha Wright. Thank you for your endless generosity and friendship—just one phone call and see what happened. To Debra Englander and Stacey Small at Wiley, thank you for your insights and continued support.

I am also grateful to many others including Bill Wright, Neal Inscoe, Susan Stewart, Cindy Zontek, Patti Goodyear, Suzanne

viii Acknowledgments

Runyan, Olga Romer, Miklos Homolka, Tom Annerino, Barbara Eastwick, Alicia Sheerin, Louie Ponstingel, Melinda Oakes, and also all the great people at QVC in front of the camera, behind the camera, and operating behind the scenes.

In the beginning, the middle, and the present, Divine Guidance brought it and us all together.

Introduction

I just might be the person sitting next to you on the train as you read this. I might be the man next to you at our children's school function. I might be the man you see pumping his own gas at the gas station as you pass by. For I am an everyday person, with everyday needs not unlike any of your own, and I do everyday things with my family and friends, just like any other person.

One day though, in the course of a regular day, a remarkable thing happened to me. I invented something. It all started when a friend asked me to go to lunch with her. During the course of lunch she pulled out a shoebox filled with colorful envelopes. I have a very diverse background, so it's not uncommon for one of my friends to seek me out for advice.

The envelopes were quite different. Other than the hand-decorated envelopes I used to receive from one of my high school friends after we went off to college, I had seen colored envelopes only around the holidays.

The envelopes she showed me that day weren't just a solid color, though. They contained popular cartoon characters and other fun images. She was thinking about starting a business and wanted to know my opinion about whether she could sell the envelopes she had made.

The problem with her envelopes was that they contained characters that were trademarked and protected by law. It would involve getting in contact with the various companies and entering into a licensing agreement, a process a little more involved than going to the local church fair and setting up a table.

But as she was putting them away she said, "That's okay; it takes me forever to make one anyway." And in a flash, I saw a shape in my mind's eye. It looked like a baseball diamond with a rectangle cut out of the middle. The image wouldn't go away.

After I came home, the shape was still haunting me, so I made one out of cardboard. I literally cut it out of a manila folder and began tearing up whatever magazines and paper were near me to see if it would work. When I obliterated my immediate supply, I turned to the corner of the living room, where my roommate had piled magazines from various subscriptions. I couldn't resist. In seconds I was at it again, cranking out unique envelope after unique envelope until I could hear the chirp of morning birds and saw the sun coming through the windows. By this time I had made about five hundred amazing one-of-a-kind envelopes. I was addicted. I needed more paper. In the kitchen I found some old newspapers and an old calendar and got back to business.

When my roommate woke up that morning and came into the living room he found me sitting at the table still going at it, a mess of shredded paper in my midst. Rubbing his eyes, he took it all in. As he looked around the room he spotted the empty corner and asked, "Where are my magazines?" I smiled a mile wide and handed him my colorful stack of envelopes. "You're looking at them. Aren't they cool?" I said. He smiled back, nodding his head, understanding fully what I had done. He totally got it, and didn't mind at all. We still laugh about it to this day.

The tool was magic. Soon I had some made out of plastic and started selling them at a nearby shopping mall, along with my friend who I had had lunch with that fateful day. Then one day soon after, another friend told me to go to the local rubber stamp store. I didn't know what my friend was talking about. I had never heard of a rubber stamp store before, but apparently there was one in my town, so off I went.

The store owner, Helen, was amazed. She said she wanted to stock them, but not with all the paper and stickers I had by then put in a box to be included with each one. Then, she had a thought. She was having a small open house that weekend in her store and wanted me to come. She told me, "Bring as many of those plastic things as you can."

I showed up with sixty five. I was led to a room packed with eager rubber stampers, all women. I looked at Helen and wondered aloud if I was in the wrong room. She said, no, they were there to see me.

She explained that not too many men show up to these things unless they're dragged.

This I understood all too well. I didn't know a thing about this rubber stamping thing—or crafts, for that matter—and seeing this room filled with what I thought were crazed women, I wasn't sure I was in the right place. I was, after all, interested in sports and the normal guy things, not paper crafts and rubber stamping.

When the time came, I nervously began my demonstration. With the first tear of paper, one of the onlookers yelled, "How much?" I hesitated. I was unraveling as fast as a ball of yarn in the claws of a skilled kitten. I was just getting started. I remember thinking to myself, what did I get myself into? I continued working the magical template and ignored the question.

Then another yelled again, "How much?" I thought I was being heckled. This time I answered, "They're five dollars each but I only have 65 of them with me." And with that it was as if I was one of the Beatles. There was a sudden rush of women hurling themselves in my direction. In a matter of seconds, I found myself stuffed in the corner of the room until Helen rushed to my rescue and told the ladies to settle down, there were enough for everyone.

I ended up calling my two little pieces of plastic The Kreate-a-lope® Envelope Maker. It is a template system that shows anyone how to make an envelope out of any kind of paper in seconds. I bill it as The Fastest Envelope Maker on the Planet!™ And it really is. I can make an envelope in 11 seconds!

At the time I was working in the field of energy conservation for a subsidiary of ALCOA, the Aluminum Company of America. We would go into commercial buildings and retrofit their lighting and heating systems with new technology and, in the process, save the occupants as much as 70 percent on their utility bills. I had recently started a new sales territory for the company in the Washington, D.C./Baltimore area.

Additionally, I was flipping real estate on the side. I would find dilapidated homes and refurbish them to either rent or sell. Since then, and much in part to the recent real estate boom, this form has been popularized with more than one television show on the subject.

My regular job was like any other. It paid the bills. I felt it was important and that I was contributing to society, but after seven years I was ready for something else, and the envelope maker came along at the right time for me to make a change. Out of the blue one day, I called my boss and gave my two weeks notice. He asked me what I was going to do, and I said I didn't really know. But I knew I was very interested in seeing what the Kreate-a-lope® had in store for me.

Somewhere before the craziness started, a patent was filed and subsequently issued in twelve months, which is quick. I was told there was nothing like it.

So once I quit my job and turned my focus on my two little pieces of plastic, I found myself in an industry far from my own. I was clueless as to what steps to take in order to share my idea with many. I had hundreds of questions about the marketing process, retailing, pricing, manufacturing, and everything else one could possibly think of the first time they ever develop an idea. The most pressing question of all, though, was where to begin.

If you have the same questions, you're in luck, because this book contains information about what many believe to be a high-speed rocket to launching a new or existing product. It contains answers to many of the questions I had and have road-tested since the beginning to great success.

My little template was not an earth-shattering invention like the television, microchip, or the light bulb, but a simple little tool that could be used by a very small part of the population. It was a first for me in many respects, and I bumbled along with my innovative idea like the proverbial fish out of water.

A short time into this journey, another remarkable thing happened. I call it divine intervention, or perhaps—with respect for those who might be sensitive to such a description—a turn of synchronistic events. But no matter how I describe the path of destiny that seemed to open before me, the end result was that I went from being confused about where to begin to sitting in front of buyers for a then-fledgling television home-shopping channel called QVC.

The beauty of getting on QVC was that I could bypass most of the ground-level activities involved with launching a product, and

the grueling learning curve of how to do it, and go straight to the top—direct to market in a plain brown box—broadcasting to millions.

That day changed the course of my life. This story is the testimonial of how an average person with a great idea and limited resources—but just the right opportunity—can make millions of dollars on QVC. This story is about what to do to get on, stay on, and change your business and life forever by getting you and your products in front of millions of eager people waiting for your idea in the comfort of their own homes.

This story is a billion-dollar inside look at QVC, the largest television retailer in the world. The information within can be used by anyone in any industry in any facet, whether an inventor, entrepreneur, salesperson, large or small corporation, mother of three asked to demonstrate a product for her inventor neighbor, or anyone preparing for their first meeting with the kingpin of the home shopping industry.

If the greatest product in the world were being shown in the middle of the woods, would anyone buy it? But bring in the cameras, pipe in 87 million viewers, and even the smallest business with the smallest innovative idea in the world can find success.

I did it. So can you. Here's an anatomical view of how.

CHAPTER 1

How a Niche Product Generated \$441,158.40 in Ten Minutes

Host: “Okay, we’re live with our next guest, Nick Romer . . . and he brings us a brand new product today. . . .” Bang! The demonstration. The back and forth chatter. The camera angles. Hand-held camera coming close. An off-stage clatter of pans. An on-air caller with a question. Blip—ten minutes. Over. Done. What? What just happened? Where am I? How did I get here?

Just like that. Ten minutes, 22,080 units, over \$400,000 in sales—seemingly unfathomable: \$44,116 per *minute*.

Host: “Nick, thanks for bringing your product to us today. . . .”

Huh? Screech. Halt. Snap back to reality.

Let me put that in slow motion. Forty—four—thousand—one—hundred—sixteen—dollars—per miiiiinnnnnnuuuuute. This is *not* the part of the story where the writer interjects, “and then he woke up.” It’s the part of the story where I come forward and say, “That’s what happened to me.” This is my story. What happened to me is what happens to many others just like me every day at QVC. Everyday people with a new or existing product, broadcast into the homes of millions of people, are generating millions of dollars in sales.