

John Lee

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# BUSINESS HACK

The Wealth Dragon Way to Build  
a Successful Business in the Digital Age

WILEY



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**THE WEALTH DRAGON WAY TO BUILD A SUCCESSFUL  
BUSINESS IN THE DIGITAL AGE**

**John Lee**

**WILEY**

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For Mum,  
*my original “why”.*

*And for Keira,*  
*my new “why”.*





Nothing is impossible; the word itself says, “I’m possible” ...

Audrey Hepburn



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# Preface

**I**magine a world without the Internet is becoming increasingly difficult. The younger generations have never known a world without the availability of instant online information and resources at the touch of a button. Whether you like it or not, business is conducted in cyberspace. Even the most hands-on, tangible products need to be visible and available to purchase online. We receive the majority of our information through the digital medium, and increasingly not even through our laptops, but through our smartphones and tablets. And yet I still come across people with businesses who are not using all the online resources available to them, who feel reluctant to explore cyberspace, who resist investing time and money in their online presence. I try to impress upon them that the days when using Internet tools for business was optional are long gone; having an online presence, a digital business profile, is now an essential, core element of your business. If you are not online, you are very much offline ... i.e. not in the picture! You and your business exist in today's oversaturated, ultracompetitive business environment. If you have a growing business and you do not have an online presence and a digital marketing strategy, you are virtually lifeless.

I am part of a generation that has watched the Internet come into existence. As I grew up and evolved into an entrepreneur, so the Internet has become a core part of my personal life and my professional world. One of my first jobs was selling domains to business owners who barely knew what the Internet was. I have grown all my businesses by making use of the very latest online resources. I have always loved passing on my knowledge to others, and I get huge satisfaction from watching people learn new skills that help them improve and grow their businesses. In this book

I share with you all my knowledge about using online resources for business growth. Whether you are a fledgling start-up enterprise or a well-established business, I hope you find something useful within these pages. And I look forward to hearing about your success!

John Lee,  
October 2018

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## About the Author

John Lee is the co-founder and CEO of Wealth Dragons PLC. John founded Wealth Dragons in 2009 with business partner Vincent Wong and the company grew rapidly to become a global leader in promoting events and training programmes that give people the tools to change their lives through creating asset-based wealth and passive income. Recently, John launched Wealth Dragons Online, which is set to become one of the largest e-learning platforms for entrepreneurs in the world.

After a humble start in life, born to Chinese immigrant parents in the north of England, John went from working shifts in his parents' Chinese takeaway business to becoming a self-made millionaire by the time he was 27. Initially creating his wealth by investing in a successful property portfolio, John went on to become an internationally-recognised public speaker, sharing stages with some of the greatest minds of our time, including former US President Bill Clinton, Alan Sugar, Richard Branson, Jack Welch (ex-CEO of GE) and Randi Zuckerberg. By 2018, John had gained over two million followers on his Facebook page and had been featured in the mainstream media, in publications including The Sunday Times, The Huffington Post and The Wall Street Journal, and on the BBC. In 2017, John Lee was awarded "Man of the Year" at the Global Woman Awards.

*Business Hack* is John Lee's second book published by John Wiley & Sons. He is also the co-author of *The Wealth Dragon Way*, first published in 2015, with its revised edition due out at the end of 2018.



# **Business Hack**



# Introduction: My Business Journey

## Selling the Future

In 1999, I was sitting in a Media Studies class and my tutor asked me to do some research on a topic – I forget exactly what – in the library. I started complaining about it to one of my classmates and he suggested I use the Internet. I'd vaguely heard of this thing called "the Internet", but I hadn't paid much attention to what it was before this point.

My next stop was the library – not to take out books, but to enquire about using the Internet. I assumed it would be a short cut to doing this laborious research. The topic was something I had absolutely no interest in. In my mind, from what my classmate had told me, I imagined a computer programme that would spew out my research for me, which I could then present to my tutor; it seemed like the best cheating machine ever invented!

The reality, however, was far from that simple.

A librarian showed me how to get online, and pointed out how I could type my key search words into a search engine – probably Yahoo! or MSN. The results looked like an absolute mess to my eyes. This was going to take more time than copying it out of books. I was dyslexic, which made it even harder to scroll through the various results and look for the best information. The unfamiliarity of it all made it excruciatingly frustrating; I couldn't make head nor tail of what I was looking at. I soon gave up and resorted to the books. So much for a short cut; in reality it had cost me precious time!

I hated that first experience of the Internet; I couldn't imagine why anyone would go online to find information!

Cut to almost 20 years later and, like most people, I'm Googling stuff and scrolling through search results countless times a day; effortlessly switching between screen sizes depending on whether I am using my phone, tablet, laptop or desktop. The process of browsing the Internet is so second nature to me that I can have a conversation

and watch TV at the *same time* as surfing the net. So can most people I know.

The difference in how we all operate in our lives, between now and less than 20 years ago, is phenomenal. I hardly dare imagine where we will be 20 years from now.

Shortly after my experience of trying to use the Internet to find information for my Media Studies class, I found myself working for a company called Touch Communications. I was 18 years old. I had to “cold call” people and then try to sell them domain names for £350. I would call up some phone company in Manchester and say, “Hello, I’m calling to offer you the domain name ManchesterPhones dot com for a great price today ...” When they asked why they should buy it when they didn’t do any business on the Internet, my pre-prepared script told me to assure them that in a few years everyone would have their businesses online, and that the best domain names would get the most customers, and that people would be shopping online more than in shops.

The irony was that I didn’t actually believe a word of it myself. But I still sold a lot of domain names because, as I quickly discovered, I was a natural salesman. I am one of those people who can “sell ice to Eskimos” as the saying goes. *I* didn’t need to believe that those customers needed those domains ... I simply had to make *them* believe it.

“If you don’t buy it, your competitor will,” was one of the most effective lines I used.

Back in those days, people had a fair point when they argued that no one would ever go online when they could simply walk into a shop or pick up the phone. The Internet was slow and unreliable. We weren’t even using broadband at that point; we only had dial-up connection. These days, fibre-optic cables ensure that information is at our fingertips in the blink of an eye. When our connection slows down we all get extremely frustrated.

“In ten years, everyone’s going to be online, everyone’s going to be using the Internet to do their business, socialise and shop,” I would say, without believing a word of it. Knowing what I know now, I obviously wish I’d bought up all those domain names myself. I’d have made a killing!

**In ten years from now, everyone’s going to be online, everyone’s going to be using the Internet to do their business, socialise and shop.  
(My sales script. circa 1999)**

## From a Northern Town

I was born and raised in Colne, a small town in Yorkshire, England, where my Hong-Kong-born parents owned and ran – with the help of extended family members – the local Chinese takeaway. Growing up in the north of England in the 1980s, when I was literally the only Chinese kid in the school, was tough at times. I got teased and bullied for my ethnicity in a way that is completely unacceptable these days but was sort of tolerated by general British society back then. My family also received a fair amount of abuse from racist people within the local community, but my parents never let it stop them working hard at their business, and they instilled a strong work ethic in me.

During my childhood, watching my family work long hours to keep the business going, I was resentful that I hardly saw my parents, but as I got older I began to appreciate the sacrifices they'd made for me. They were very proud of the Chinese takeaway business that they built and they expected my older brother and me to take over the family business when we left school, as was common in our culture ... but I had other plans.

As soon as I was old enough (and even before that) I worked hard at whatever I could find in order to make pocket money at first and then money to support myself through college. At one point I remember I was working in three different jobs at the same time. As well as selling those domain names in the telesales job that I mentioned above, I was also working in a shoe shop at weekends and doing regular evening shifts in my parents' Chinese takeaway. I went through some lonely years in my late teens, when I had no time to socialise and build friendships, but I was determined to follow my own path rather than simply fall into the family business.

One of my strongest motivations was my desire *not* to work the kind of hours I'd seen my parents working. My attitude was, "What kind of life is it if you never get to see your children, or venture out and explore the world?" I wanted time to have new experiences, and money to give me the freedom to travel. I wanted to make sure my future children had more options than I had had while growing up. I also wanted to help my parents out financially, so that they could take more time off; it hurt me to see them working long hours for days on end. I wanted to thank them for all the sacrifices they'd made for me. I was sure that, if I could earn decent money, I could make life much easier for them.

I got the A level grades to get me into the University of Hull to study Animation. I loved every minute of my degree, graduated with