



Business Brain Trust – Joel Roberts

Here is a manuscript of when Jay Abraham met Joel Roberts

JOEL ROBERTS: People are usually curious to know what happened to me, so I'll just tell you very quickly... About nine, ten years ago I had a life-changing accident. I was at a big public event. I was standing in front of a huge bank of loudspeakers. The audio engineer hit the wrong button, and I got blasted and lost 40% of my hearing in ten seconds, and it's gone.

And don't feel sorry for me. I have rebounded very successfully. But I just wanted to explain to people why I'm not on the air anymore. The answer really is that I had severe damage to my auditory nerves, and I can't wear headphones because it tends to cause noise in my head called tinnitus.

So I had to reinvent myself. And you and I met very shortly after I did that. That happened one day when I was invited by Mark Victor Hansen to sit in his audience. He was doing a seminar called "How To Build Your Speaking And Writing Empire," and I was just hanging out, and suddenly he said, "This is ridiculous. I'm up here talking about media, and we've got Joel Roberts, who did afternoon drive in the radio capital of Planet Earth. You come up here and talk about media.

JAY: OK.





JOEL: I was at one of those tables, and I had six seconds to write a few words on a napkin, came up and talked about it. And by the time I left that stage I had created a seminar of my own. I was up there and had the experience of sort of a bifurcated consciousness. There was part of me that kept talking, and part of me that said, “Hmm... This is a business opportunity,” when I saw 300 people writing it all down.

So I announced that I was doing a seminar of my own called “Excellence In Media,” which I fabricated on the spot. And the embarrassing part of it was when somebody said to me, “Great! How much?” And I said, “Short question.” And I thought, “What’s Mark charging for this gig? I’ll just go with that number, because if it’s kosher for him, it’s kosher for me.”

Anyway, I fell in love with teaching people what I had learned in 5,000 hours behind the microphone and 1,000 hours in front of the TV camera. And originally ---

JAY: But I’m going to do you a service: What you have learned --- not just what you’ve learned, but you’ve translated it to what you’ve learned to make them resonate, to make them impactful...

JOEL: Yeah. Look, when I was on KABC Radio, my former partner Steve Edwards and I were promoted to prime time one fine day, and the general manager brought us into his office and said, “OK, guys, 50 people competed for this slot. You got it. Congratulations. I want to give you your mission.” He said, “Your mission is grab ‘em fast, and keep ‘em long.” I’m going to repeat it once: Grab ‘em fast, and keep ‘em long. And he walked out of the room.

And Steve Edwards, a veteran TV guy, said to me, “I’m a little puzzled. Were we just promoted?” And I said, “Yeah, I do believe we were.” And that was our mission.





And I had no idea at the time, since I intended to stay in talk radio, that that would have such broad application to other fields.

Now we jump to the phase where you and I met. I coached you for your book tour. My job was to help you nail it in an interview. If you've got four minutes on "The Today Show" to distill 25 years' worth of your wisdom, obviously you're not going to be able to tell the whole story. You've really got to be able to leverage that time. As as of the phase when we met, that's the mission that I had for myself.

Then one fine day changed that. I had been hired Novartis Pharmaceuticals to help them market a drug which became one of the most famous cancer breakthroughs, really of all time called Gleveck, which was the first discriminating cancer therapy that could tell the difference between a healthy cell and a cancer cell.

And I was training somebody one day to be on "The Today Show" the next morning. And at the end of the session I was zipping up my briefcase, ready to get into the limo back to Manhattan from New Jersey, and in walks the door with 15 people that I did not expect to see. Behind me, Communications Director from Novartis, and I said, "Who are they? Are they going to be on the air?" And she said, "Never as long as they live." And I said, "Who are they?" And she said, "Our sales managers. And if they could articulate our selling proposition the way you do, we'd be a different company. Have a seat."

And at that point, by the time I got to my hotel in Manhattan, I had a different business.

JAY: How would you describe what that business was?

JOEL: Applying media principles, mass communications principles to any kind of macro





communication whatever it might be. So maybe you're an attorney making an opening or a closing statement in front of a jury... or maybe you're speaking to venture capitalists... or maybe you're testifying on Capitol Hill... or maybe you're closing a deal... or maybe you're an author promoting a book... or maybe you're a CEO enrolling people in a new vision... But there is one common demoninator.

JAY: And you've got to give them your catch phrase, because I love it. But go ahead.

JOEL: The common denominator is this: "When the stakes are high, and the moment is brief."

JAY: Yeah. The stakes are high, and the moment is brief.

JOEL: So I am not a media coach. I'm not a communications coach. I am an impact specialist in when the stakes are high, and the moment is brief.

JAY: I love the distinction. OK.

JOEL: I've got to tell you one more thing about that if I may.

JAY: No.

JOEL: Ah, well, I will anyway.

JAY: Go ahead.

JOEL: How many of you have read Tom Freidman's book, The World Is Flat? Those of you who haven't, I cannot recommend it enough. It's --- Tom Friedman's a columnist for The New York Times, and it's about globalization. It's about India and China. It's





about the fact that our economy is different now. It's about the fact that your accountant used to do your taxes, and now no longer does your taxes. He or she may do the strategizing, but they don't do the so-called "grunt work." Who does the grunt work? Some accountant in India. OK.

So here's the deal: That's one half of the dynamic that we specialize in. Due to globalization... due to the fact that the North American economy and our assumptions of longevity no longer apply, we have greater competition than ever before, which means the stakes are higher than ever before. At the same time, within the last five, ten, fifteen, twenty years, the American attention span has become the most threatened resource in our national life.

So here we have a dual dynamic. The stakes are higher than ever before; the moment is briefer than ever before. That's the challenge of our current time.

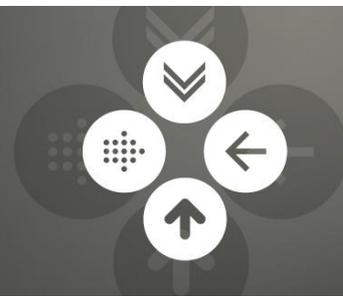
One of the speakers that you had on the phone a little while ago said that the kind of mass communication era has ended, and now it's all niche, and people have 200 channels.

True, but false. The thing is, the mass communications culture pervaded all those 200 channels. And people still watch Charlie Gibson, and people still watch Brian Williams and Katie Couric. It's just that they have a whole lot more of that mentality to choose from. So what we do... what I do --- I view myself as a "democratizer."

JAY: Oh, I like that.

JOEL: I take the techniques of mass communication in the seminars that we do, and I make them available to entrepreneurs, to purveyors of any kind of idea, product, service, "-ism" --- whatever. It's kind of like, metaphorically speaking, I show people not just the street lamps in the neighborhood. I peel off the pavement, and show them





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JAY: He's not good at analogies, is he?

