

Second Quarter 2023 | April-May-June

INTERNATIONAL RETAIL

An IRG Company

BIG THINGS HAPPENIN' AT PREIT[®] Joseph Coradino

The CEO of PREIT sits down with IRG to talk about transforming 'The Mall' into something bigger... and more sustainable.

CHRIS IGWE GETS SOCIAL

GLOBAL RETAIL AUTHORITY
PART 3 OF OUR CONVERSATION

CONCIERGE SECURITY

FOUNDER OF UNITUS SECURITY, ROB CORDERO,
TRANSFORMS THE "NIGHT WATCHMAN" INTO A
FULL-SERVICE EXPERIENCE

TIME TO GET SERIOUS ABOUT YOUR PERSONAL BRAND

BRAD SZOLLOSE SHARES HIS 7 TIPS ON PERSONAL
BRANDING THAT DRIVE BUSINESS SUCCESS



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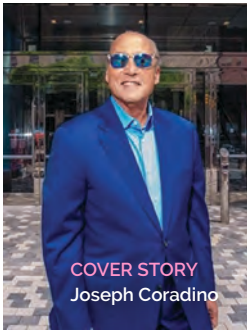


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Letter from the Publisher

As the Founder and CEO of International Retail Group (IRG), I am also delighted to have the opportunity to act as the Publisher of International Retail Magazine, where we work hard to provide real, front-line articles written by acclaimed retail industry leaders. Each quarterly publication gives readers useful tactics and strategies to implement in the ever-changing retail sector.

Our industry-driven magazine showcases interviews with celebrity brands, internationally known retail thought leaders, retail real estate professionals, and brand managers who are making a significant impact in today's retail market. **At IRG Magazine, we're committed to providing practical insights and ideas from authority figures in the retail industry in each and every issue.**

International Retail Group is a boutique international consultancy firm that places direct-to-consumer and digitally native brands in front of consumers. At IRG, we take great pride in bringing new concepts to market and helping entrepreneurs achieve their retail dreams. We're also excited about the opportunity to share our experiences and insights with our IRG Magazine readers.

IRG has placed well-known brands such as **Barbell Apparel, Blue Moon Hemp, Proactiv, Revlon, Hess Toy Truck**, and more into brick-and-mortar retail locations, expanding accessibility and increasing profit margins.

We also work to test and expand new product concepts from various entrepreneurs, including my good friend and mentor, **Daymond John** of the hit **ABC TV series, "Shark Tank."**

Subscribe now at no cost to receive the current and future issues of IRG Magazine brought to you by the International Retail Group. If you'd like to comment, be featured, or are interested in advertising with us, please contact marketing@irg-retail.com. For more information on International Retail Group, please visit irg-retail.com.

Linda Johansen-James

Publisher, International Retail Magazine



**Get Seen.
Get Noticed.
Drive Business.**

7 Steps to Launching Your Personal Brand



Imagine entering a room and people rush forward to introduce themselves. They aren't just there to congratulate you on your latest television appearance, they yearn to do business with you. Now imagine Forbes Magazine, Fast Company or Business Insider call you to get your take on the hottest trends in your business sector.

Plain and simple, business today is driven by your personal brand image.

Think your personal brand doesn't matter? **Forbes magazine discovered that 44% of a company's market value is attributable to the CEOs reputation!** In other words, a little bit of popularity can drive business.

Here's my story:

In March of 1995, my little company K2 Design, Inc. was successful, but money was tight. We had just hired 7 employees and were crammed into incongruous spaces at the former St. Denis Hotel at 799 Broadway, NYC.

Although we had attracted high-level clients like Bell Atlantic, MCI, American Express, and even AOL, we were struggling to make payroll.



International Retail Magazine's Creative Director, Brad Szollose, shares 40+ years of Professional Experience in the Personal Branding Space.

7 STEPS TO LAUNCHING YOUR PERSONAL BRAND

Call it serendipity, kismet, whatever you want, but my personal intuition drove me to put together an investor relations kit, complete with professionally done executive portraits.

Two weeks later we received a phone call from Advertising Age magazine. They were looking for website development companies like ours, and rumor had it, we were at the top of the list in NYC. They asked for samples of our work, which I sent, but I also included our new executive group photo.

From the moment that article appeared in Advertising Age, our phone rang off the hook.

My company grew 425% for 5 straight years, increasing revenue from \$500,000 a year to \$9.3 million and an IPO on NASDAQ, raising over \$7 million in private and public monies. We won awards and accolades for our work on IBM Deep Blue versus Garry Kasparov Chess Challenge, Audi, AOL, Sumitomo, JP Morgan Chase CD ROM hybrid, and many, many more...

This extraordinary hyper-growth was directly connected to our media appearances in Forbes, Crain's Business Week, Inc Magazine, and Brand Week - which attracted clients - and consistent mentions of K2 in The Wall Street Journal, Barron's and The New York Times financial pages piqued investor interest.

I learned a valuable lesson from my experience at K2; **if you don't step into the spotlight, you're leaving big revenue on the table.**

It's time to stop playing small and start creating a personal brand image that drives revenue. Here's 3-Steps that I use with my own clients to get you started.



1: Start with a Self-Assessment

When I mention Starbucks what comes to mind? Coffee, right?

Now take a good look when you are standing online in a Starbucks. Every item that is a quick sale and aligns with coffee is right in front of you; lollipop cakes, cookies, brownies, and breakfast sandwiches are all at eye level. All aligned with coffee.

What's my point? YOU have to treat yourself like a brand and that starts with being brutally honest about what you represent and what you sell.

Start asking questions about your strengths.

Are you a serious person or do you have a sense of humor? What is your business background? Do you dress well? Do you have favorite colors? Are you a heart-based person - artistic type, or are you a left-brain person whose language is numbers?

Next, be brutally honest about your weaknesses. *Am I able to get to the point on camera or do I ramble? Does public speaking scare me? If my company is not doing well, can I still articulate the vision for getting back on track, or will I get flustered?*

These questions will start to build your conscious awareness of who you are and what you need to work on.

Then you get to tie all of that information together and see how you are showing up when you represent your company.

2: Craft Your Origin Story

Years ago I was competing for a lucrative speaking contract. After months of negotiating, I thought I had it. The meeting planner called me up and stated *"It's between you and 5 other speakers."*

I had sent everything to their decision-making committee; articles from major publications, my sizzle reel video and a killer speaker one sheet...even a signed copy of my first book, *Liquid Leadership*.

Without thinking, I blurted out *"well, have them watch my TEDxTalk."*

The phone went silent for five-seconds... *"You did a TEDxTalk?!"*

From that moment on, I seemed to have moved to the front of the line. Within a few days I was informed that I had been chosen to be their keynote speaker at a 4-day conference.

My origin story is woven into everything I do. From growing up in a small town in Pennsylvania, to building the first digital agency to go public on NASDAQ, to becoming an award-winning business author.

My origin story and the lessons learned, has closed more deals than I can count. And your origin story will close deals too.

3: Create Compelling Content

Master Plumber Roger Wakefield almost went bankrupt. While attending a marketing seminar, he accidentally wandered into a breakout session entitled;



"How to Use YouTube Marketing to Grow Your Business."

When he returned to Dallas, Texas, Roger immediately applied what he had learned starting with live broadcasts on YouTube. Each broadcast explained the ins and outs of a particular plumbing job. Since Roger was one of the few Green Plumbers in Dallas, Texas, **his channel blew up, and so did his business.**

Within weeks of launching his channel, Roger had 35,000 subscribers. By the time I interviewed him on my podcast *Awakened Nation*, he had 135,000 subscribers. Today Roger Wakefield has over 530,000 YouTube subscribers, 561,000 TikTok followers, 118,000 Facebook followers, 1,100 videos, and over 82,000,000 views on YouTube and counting.

Why does this matter? Roger's business was tied directly to his growing popularity. Before that, no one knew he existed.

Believe it or not, most of Roger's followers are fellow plumbers and handymen. Why you may ask? Well, Roger gives practical, step-by-step instructions on plumbing, but specifically green plumbing using not-so-harsh chemicals and 30+ years of, as Roger puts it *"getting up to your waste in poop."*

Roger has now increased his business by a thousand percent (and growing), with multiple employees and several new vehicles. In addition to all this, he recently started an apprenticeship program.



Aquila with Nicole Petallides
The NY Stock Exchange Live,



Aquila with Maria Bartiromo
Mornings with Maria



Aquila with Neil Cavuto
Fox Business Network

4: Define Your Niche

Becoming a household name doesn't happen overnight. Aquiles Larrea came to me years ago and asked what to do with his first book "**Your Money and You: The Ultimate Wealth Guide for Latino Entrepreneurs and Executives: Helping You to Create Your Empanada of Success**".

Assessing Aquiles as a Brand: breaking down his best attributes, this is what I came up with: Aquiles is Latino, earned his Series 6 and 7 licenses, and had a 20-year track record in the financial sector with multiple happy clients while working for the very top names in the financial industry. He is also a black belt in karate with a family run dojo that have been around since his grandfather founded the school.

At the time, there was no one in the Latino community who had crossed over from the Spanish Speaking Market to address the next generation of Hispanics born in the USA who had created generational wealth.

"Aquiles, do you realize you own the market my friend. No one is doing this at your level. This new generation has money, and stability, is bilingual, and no one is addressing their needs as investors."

From that moment on, Aquiles' book became a bestseller and he has appeared on Fox Business Network with Neil Cavuto, Mornings with Maria hosted by Maria Bartiromo, The New York Stock Exchange Live with Nicole Petallides, The TD Ameritrade Network, as well as multiple Spanish speaking financial programs on Univision and Telemundo.

Aquila is a shining example of getting clear about **what you are selling, what market you represent**, and then **defining your niche market**. If you put in the time and effort to gain clarity in these three areas, customers and investors will start to chase you.

As marketing guru Dan Kennedy calls it, "*Magnetic Marketing*"...when you become so popular in your business niche that your efforts make people chase you.

Aquila is a champion for the Latino community. He knows what it's like to be the first generation born in the USA from immigrant parents, earning every dime through hard work and sacrifice. This is why step 1 is so important. Once you figure out who you are, what you sell, and what and whom you represent, then you can dominate your category.



5: Create a Lead Generator



In late 2022 Linda Johansen-James approached me to design her new magazine, **International Retail**.

With forty years of experience in the design industry in NYC, I was excited to bring to life something extraordinary for Linda—a magazine that not only made an impact in the retail world, but would instantly launch Linda's personal brand and speaking career.

Since Linda is the CEO and founder of **International Retail Group**, the purpose of this magazine was to establish her credibility in the retail industry, while reaching current and potential clients with cutting edge content that could potentially drive business to her company.

IRG provides onsite employees for multiple brands in malls all across America and Europe. Linda also designs Pop-Up displays and carts and provides training programs for frontline sales reps for brands like Proactiv+®, Barbell Apparel and .

To make any magazine successful, there are three key elements to consider when it comes to launching properly; 1) the cover should be of a celebrity within the industry the magazine focuses upon. **In this case, retail.** 2) all supporting articles need to be trendy and written by people who are recognized in the industry...and, 3) you must have a targeted mailing list.

Without a mailing list, your magazine is just a waste of time and money. Your list is your power!

Don't have a list? Guess what, you can buy a mailing list that is uniquely targeted by demographics and psychographics, as well as income, status, title, industry, etc...

And lastly, stop hiring amateur designers. Partner with a designer who knows how to lay out content and make each article spread come to life. Why you may ask? **Because great design gets your magazine noticed and eventually you can charge a premium for people to appear in your magazine.**

So, how'd we do? Linda is good friends with **Daymond John** from **ABC's Shark Tank**. When we published that magazine, it took



off like a shot. Linda landed new clients and now we have multiple retail industry professionals clamoring to write articles in the magazine.

And as we prepare the next edition, Linda is looking to launch her speaking career as well.

The magazine and her work got noticed.

Now Linda has a regular segment on a major CBS station in Las Vegas as the show's exclusive retail correspondent where she talks about the latest trends in retail.

Get ready for International Retail Magazine's 5th Issue in the summer of 2023.

6: Build Your Own Audience

For years people told me I should have my own podcast. After appearing on over 100 podcasts, either as a guest or a host, I didn't feel the conversation was what I wanted.

Business podcasts back then were always the same story: *"Do you know how successful I am? Well, let me tell you..."*

I yearned for deeper, more meaningful conversations. But no one seemed to be doing that.

When Tony Rubleski asked me to be on his **Captured Wisdom** interview series, something astounding happened; I was accidentally exposed to the conversation I was looking for.

I was on a panel discussion with Jim Palmer,



founder of **The Dream Business Academy**, and Ben Gay III, author of the book **The Closers** (15 million copies sold so far). Heavy hitters in their own business sectors.

Ben started the conversation with the death of his son. He explained how he had to get up and go back to work despite such an extraordinary loss.

The Jim started talking about being fired from his dream job only to be diagnosed with skin cancer all within the same week.

Both Ben and Jim shared the very worst moments of their life, and the resilience and grit it took to climb up and out of despair, and into success.

In 2019 I launched **Awakened Nation** with the intent to have deeper conversations with today's outliers, entrepreneurs, faith-based healers and game changers.

I am honored to have interviewed Dov Baron, who fell 120 feet to his death and lived, The Peaceful Warrior himself, Dan Millman, NY Times Bestseller Panache Desai, Stephen M.R. Covey son of Stephen R Covey, author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Bruce Buffer, ring announcer for the UFC, the founder of

UGGS Brian Smith, Major League Baseball Player Shea Hillenbrand, and Dog The Bounty Hunter and his wife Francie Chapman.

I have built my own audience by simply stepping into the spotlight and going for what I believed were better conversations. I've also been fearless about asking for high-profile guests. This is about serving my audience with the very best content I can pull out of my guests.

The tagline for the show says it all:
A Deep Dive Into The Extraordinary.

Awakened Nation is listened to in 85 countries, with 125 brand new listeners each week, and the most successful episodes reaching 2300 downloads on Apple Podcasts, and a YouTube episode with 35,000 viewers.

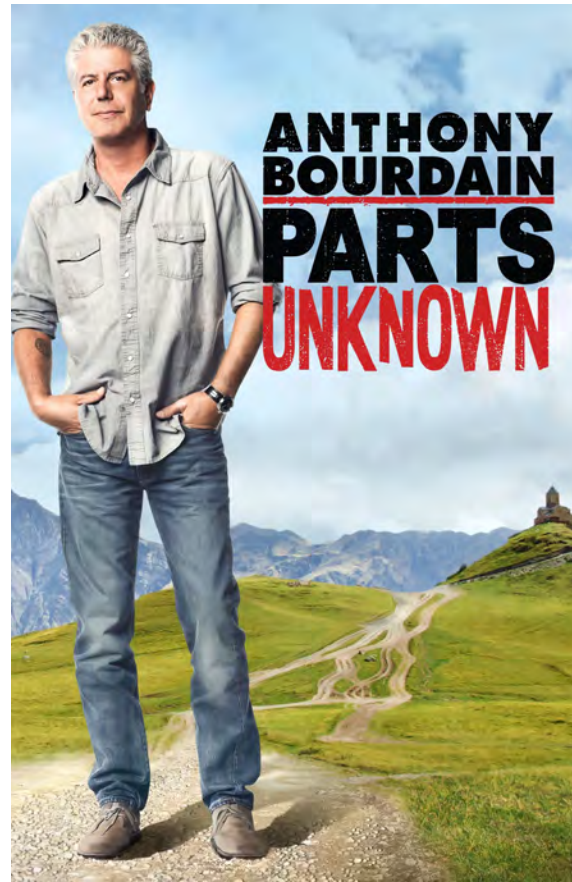
You can do the same. Just start. Don't be afraid if you suck in the first 10 episodes... trust that you WILL get better. And you WILL build an audience that years for your content.

And that leads me to my final point...

7: Be Bold. Have an Opinion

Anthony Bourdain was working in the restaurant industry when he started a blog. He gave a true and enlightened view of what it was like to work in the kitchen of a high-end restaurant.

Well, one of his blog posts got noticed. It lead to being featured in The NY Times, and eventually led to 4 of his own television shows (Parts Unknown was my favorite), guest appearances on Top Chef, The Chew and MasterChef Australia, along with multiple bestselling cookbooks.



Whether you write a book or a blog, start a podcast or push to be on national television, you are stepping into the spotlight. Don't worry about how to drive business to your brand, just start talking about your industry and the people you admire who are working in it. Ask them to be on your show or in your book. Interview them and listen.

Just know...you need to be: consistent. Be convergent or different. Build an audience. Get noticed.

It takes time to dominate your category, but with the right platform, and compelling content, you can increase your business a thousandfold. Consistently make it part of your marketing efforts!

I hope this simple step-by-step guide has helped. **Fame for fame's sake is a waste of time.** Stop being the best kept secret in your industry. Step into the spotlight my friends. You'll be glad you did. ■