

Personal Journey

article from
the
[Dec 1999 /](#)
[Jan 2000](#)
Issue



[« Previous
Article](#)
[Next Article](#)

[»](#)

The Journey of John Kalench

WHY THIS TOP TRAINER AND AUTHOR GAVE UP A SUCCESSFUL CAREER TO BECOME A NETWORK MARKETER

By [ANA MCCLELLAN](#)



15 years ago, there was no "network marketing industry." There were individual companies. If you wanted good materials or great training for your downline, you had three choices: use your company's, pray for brilliant upline, or make it yourself.

John Kalench changed all that. His books, *Being the Best You*

Can Be in MLM (1991), *The Greatest Opportunity in the History of the World* (1992), and *17 Secrets of the Master Prospectors* (1994) have been printed in 16 languages and are industry classics. He has been the keynote speaker at conferences and conventions for more than 200 network marketing companies, has spoken to nearly one million people worldwide, and has personally coached tens of thousands of network marketers to achieve their dreams of success in this industry.

A decade later, he startled us all again. He actually hung up his badge, re-entered the field, and is building an organization that's spreading like a grass fire on a hot summer day. We met up with John recently at his home in San Diego, where he lives with his wife, Yvonne, and their two sons, Cole and Jackson.

"I was first introduced to network marketing almost 21 years ago. Prior to that, I was in conventional business, working as a salesman for orthopedic devices. Eventually, I became their sales manager. That was my first experience in teaching and training, and I fell in love with it."

He also quickly learned the limitations of working for others. "I was making them a lot more money than they were willing to pay me. By the time I was 31, I was bitten by the

entrepreneurial bug and branched out on my own."

Photos by Kim Kulish / SABA

The Entrepreneurial Journey

John founded a company that specialized in the distribution of innovative orthopedic products and devices. He began contacting small manufacturers of innovative products and offered to set up distribution networks for them. He then created and trained a national field of distributors - and earned a percentage. Within a few years, he had built a very successful brokerage business.

"I was making more money than I'd ever made in my life, more money than I even thought I was worth back then." But John realized that he needed more than money - he needed to do something he loved with a passion. That's when he was introduced to network marketing. A friend invited him to a meeting.

"That night, I fell in love with the concept of network marketing. I recognized then and there that this was a business where my success was totally dependent on helping other people become successful.

"I had always wanted to be a teacher, to contribute to my fellow man through sharing information, education, and the principles that have made a difference in my life. In my medical brokerage business, I was actually penalized for doing that: often the people I'd trained went out and set up competing businesses! So I found myself holding back. No matter how much money I earned, it never made up for the dissonance this created with my values. When I saw network marketing, I said, "Hey, the more you give, the more you get - you never have to concern yourself with competition. Just contribute, and add value to everyone."

A Million Friends

That very first night, John was so excited that he lay awake all night. "I set a goal right then and there that, by the time I die, I want to have a million friends. That has been my goal ever since. I named my company Millionaires in Motion after that lifetime goal.

"I jumped in with both feet. I wish I could say that my first nine years in network marketing were some of my best. They were the best learning years, but they were also some of my most turbulent." Like many, John had thought that in order to do well in the business, you had to get involved with a startup company. In his first nine years, he built three large, successful networks - with three different companies. "Back then," says John, "our industry was quite volatile. None of the three stood the test of time." Discouraged, John turned to full-time training.

"I saw the vision that one day, people would embrace network marketing with open arms. By creating Millionaires in Motion, I found a way of participating in this industry that I loved." John launched Millionaires in Motion in February 1987, and today it is recognized as one of the world's premiere training and educational companies for the network marketing industry.

Over the next 11 years, John jetted around the world, training, speaking at conferences - and making friends. "Honestly, I never expected that I would be back building a business again as I am today. I thought I'd found my niche. I knew I could have made more money as a distributor, but I was doing very well financially as an independent trainer, and I had freedom and independence. I was able to serve the entire industry - and I wasn't vulnerable to any one company."

Turning Point

In 1994, John's son Jonathan Cole Kalench was born. "The moment he was born and I held him in my arms, I knew that my life was going to change. I had a whole new priority now." As much as he loved doing what he was doing, John realized that he was gone six months out of the year, if not more. He knew that he wanted to be home with his wife and new child. "I wanted to be instrumental in Cole's development and nurturing. I was 50 and ready for this. I didn't want to miss these wonderful years.

"I remember coming home from the hospital the night Cole was born, thinking to myself, 'God, John, you're going to have to change - things are different now.' I knew I needed to go back and build a network."

John went home that night, pulled out a note pad, and started making a list of criteria for choosing a company. However, John's situation was very different than that of the average person getting into network marketing.

"I knew that the moment I put my name on an application and aligned myself with one company, I could never go back to being an independent trainer again. I was burning a very handsome bridge - a bridge that had helped me establish a very credible and reputable name."

After an extensive search, he chose Nikken, a natural health care company. "Over time, it became evident that this was a company I could feel unconditionally comfortable aligning myself with. And something unexpected happened: the more I recognized that this was the company, the more difficult it was for me to make the decision to do it - even though I knew it was the best thing for me and my family.

"Every once in a while in our lives, we get to a point where we recognize, intellectually, that here's the wisest decision, but we have some emotional baggage that holds us back from that decision. That's where I was. After 11 years as an independent trainer, my number one asset was my reputation: 'John can be trusted.' I knew that the moment that I made a decision to join a company, that trust would be questioned. Some people would understand; most wouldn't."

John also recognized that his action would put Millionaires in Motion at risk, and affect the lives of the people he'd brought into his company, potentially with disastrous consequences. John felt paralyzed.

"I needed some kind of sign that would tell me it was okay for me to put my family first. A sign that said, 'John, you've done good; you've added value to a lot of people and to an industry that you love; things have changed for you, and now it's important for you to identify these new priorities in your life, to move towards them, to embrace them.' "

The Sign

That sign was on the horizon. In October 1997, John was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. The statistics were grim: fewer than three percent survive. "It came out of nowhere," recalls John. "It's a miracle that I'm here today." Yvonne was five months pregnant with their second child, Jackson.

Three days after his diagnosis, he underwent major surgery. His physicians went into the surgery optimistic - and came out very concerned. The cancer had spread into the bile duct and likely invaded his liver. Only a pathologist's report would tell them for sure.

"During the three days we waited for the pathology report, news of my condition leaked out to the industry. The networking word spread so quickly, it was unbelievable. My office was inundated with thousands upon thousands of faxes, cards, emails, messages from people who were praying for me and my family all over the world."

When the pathology report came back three days later, the doctors said that it was nothing short of a miracle: the last dissection was absolutely free of cancer. They couldn't explain it. John can.

"I believe it was the result of all the positive thoughts and prayers from all over the world. If there were ever a time when I could say that I had collected on my goal of having a million friends, it would be those three days." That was the sign John needed to make his decision. In May '98, seven months after his surgery, John became a Nikken distributor. His team pushed him to the Diamond level in only seven months, the fastest

it has ever been done.

The Future

How did he do it? Simply by following his own advice - the same advice that has supported the success of hundreds of thousands of others.

"When I started, I made a promise to my upline that I would not use Millionaires in Motion or any of my prior contacts within the industry to build my business. Of all the people I ever introduced or sponsored, there were only two whom I knew before joining Nikken, and one of them was my sister."

Using the classic networking tools of three-way calls, conference calls, home meetings, and large events, John added the tools of the newer technologies, especially video-teleconferencing.

At home now and secure in his family life with Yvonne, Cole, and Jackson, John reflects on the future.

"As wonderful as the last 12 years have been, I'm even more excited about the next 12. As I see it, the industry is on the threshold of establishing itself as the distribution system of the new millennium. A handful of companies need to step up to a new standard, a new benchmark for how this business should be conducted.

"A new moral and ethical standard is emerging, that rewards and blesses us in ways that add value to our community and society as a whole. We are the creators of this new standard. Networking is coming into its own."

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