

How to Make Extraordinary Wealth  
Buying Ordinary Businesses



CODIE SANCHEZ

# **MAIN STREET MILLIONAIRE**

**HOW TO MAKE  
EXTRAORDINARY WEALTH  
BUYING ORDINARY BUSINESSES**

**CODIE SANCHEZ**

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*You aren't truly in the game unless you find yourself in the dead of the night, head in hands, sitting in the dark, with no idea what to do next.*

—MY FATHER

*I dedicate this book to those who chose to get into the game of building. Entrepreneurs created this world we live in, and yet you are the few. Thank you for doing what most will not; without you this book would be nothing more than noise. A special thank-you to the best entrepreneur I know, Stan Sanchez. I promise we will continue your legacy.*

*One more thing: Behind every successful entrepreneur is a bad former boss. So, I also dedicate this to that boss you hated—you know which one. Thanks, bud—your doubt was our fuel. Wink.*



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## START HERE

Wayne Huizenga was a billionaire many times over. He was the owner of garbage behemoth Waste Management, AutoNation, and Blockbuster Video (he later sold Blockbuster for \$8.4 billion). He also owned three major league sports teams: the Miami Dolphins (NFL), the Florida Marlins (MLB), and the Florida Panthers (NHL). If you Google Wayne's name, you'll see the words "founder" and "empire builder" again and again.

What's much less known about Wayne is that before he made billions, he was a poor failure who had dropped out of college. Wayne was the son of an immigrant father who beat him and his mother. His childhood was violent, chaotic, and shrouded in secrecy.

After his parents got divorced, Wayne watched his friends go off to college and take white-collar jobs while he drifted from one low-wage job to another. In fact, after a six-month stint in the army, the newly married Wayne had to become a garbage man. One of his old friends recalled seeing Wayne on the job and thinking, "I better hit the books. It must be rough out there if Wayne's already driving a garbage truck."

So how did this floundering young man with no connections, no family, and no wealth become a billionaire? Did he grab himself by the bootstraps, camp out in a garage, and dream up a new company to rule them all? No, he took a job selling trash-hauling services door-to-door. He drove, he sold, and he studied his boss, Wilbur Porter, who ran Porter's Rubbish Service, one of Broward County's first major garbage firms. He figured if he studied a great founder, someday he could become one.

Then one day, something clicked. *Why start a company when he could buy one that already works?* For months, he pressed Porter to let him

purchase a share of the business in an asset sale. Porter relented in 1962. He sold Wayne a snub-nosed truck and \$500 worth of customers. By 1969, Wayne's single truck had become a fleet that dwarfed Porter's. He brought on partners and bought routes and companies from Key West to Tampa. Wayne's climb continued from there. In 1972, he drove across the United States and bought out ninety haulers in nine months.

Those early years taught him three things. First, you don't need a college degree to make more money than you can imagine. Second, there is incredible profit to be made by buying a small, boring business.

And third? The power of *creative financing*. Wayne Huizenga, the kid who originally didn't have two pennies to rub together, who couldn't get a loan even if he begged for it, became a billionaire because of this one essential ingredient. It allowed him to own Waste Management, even though he wasn't the founder. To the victors go the history books.

Why don't we hear more incredible stories like Wayne Huizenga's? Because we've been lied to about who gets rich and how for decades. Today, we take off the blindfold.

This is a book about seeing opportunities for financial freedom all around you, in the overlooked and unassuming businesses that we all take for granted. As someone who specializes in making good, profitable deals, I can promise you that success doesn't require flashy start-ups or cutting-edge new products. In fact, that's where you *lose* money. Instead, you'll see why finding a "Main Street business" with steady cash flow, acquiring it, and using the profits to live life on your terms is the smart, extremely underrated way to build extraordinary wealth.

I will take your hand and show you how. But first, let's define the lie before we can reveal the truth.

# THE 9-TO-5 TRAP: ESCAPING THE SYSTEM THAT KEEPS YOU POOR

Have you ever felt like you'll never make enough money? Like you've been dealt a lifelong sentence of financial stress, worry, and anxiety? That no matter how hard you work, you'll never be able to *relax* and feel financially free?

If so, you're not alone. Billions of workers are hustling all over the world. Trying to keep up with inflation, barely scraping by, and losing hope in the promise of retirement. But here's the thing: it's not their fault. All of us were programmed to be *poor*.

Here's how we're taught to make money in America. First, sit still and listen to authority figures for eight hours a day until we're eighteen years old. Then, go to college and take on \$30,000-plus in unforgivable debt, in exchange for a degree. Without that piece of paper, we're told, we will never succeed. We're not allowed to gain real-world skills through unpaid internships (the ones where you actually do useful work instead of just theorizing) unless they're officially tied to an educational program, because otherwise they're considered illegal.

Then it's graduation day. We're finally allowed to join the working world. Soon after, we discover that most jobs do *not*, in fact, require a college degree. Nevertheless, we all compete for jobs that barely cover our bills, much less our debts. Our top performers pursue the two highest-paying yet least creative jobs: consulting and Wall Street. Or, they play the lottery by joining a start-up. One that requires sleeping on floors and racking up debt from venture capitalists. The concept of "golden handcuffs" becomes very real.

Most of us suspect this game is rigged. We can't afford houses, we hate our jobs, and our loans keep stacking up. Yet we can't stop playing. We have bills to pay, with very real consequences if we don't. So, we stick to what we know. *Keep my job, ask for a raise once a year, and look for another job that pays*

*a bit more.* When we stop wanting to play, the old guard gets mad at us for not working “hard enough” and “quietly quitting.” No wonder so many do not trust the system.

As the proverb goes: *Play stupid games, win stupid prizes.*<sup>[\*1]</sup> Fortunately, people are starting to wake up. They’ve decided to play a better game, one where they actually have a shot at freedom. Millions are leaving their jobs (risky!) and becoming freelancers (literally *half* of all workers in Gen Z). Why? Because we want autonomy, upside, and work that aligns with our values. There’s just one problem: freelancing is just like being an employee, in that it’s nearly impossible to build real wealth. A mistake smart people make is trying to get rich as a freelancer. I have bad news: this probably won’t work.

Why is this? Because of a simple rule that wealthy people follow. One that separates them from everyone else who struggles with money. I had to work for more than a decade in big finance to learn it. You will learn it in a few *hours* with this book. It will turn on what is called your reticular activating system, a bundle of nerves at our brain stem that filters out unnecessary information so the important stuff gets through. Once you see the truth of ownership, you cannot unsee it. Here’s your first and most important lesson:

**Your salary will never set you free. Your financial freedom can only come through *ownership*. More specifically, through equity done the right way.**

This is not what most of us were taught. Every day in school all the way up to your first job, you’ve been trained like Pavlov’s dog to follow the path of *non-ownership*. You’ve been zapped and given treats to believe that a good job is the real key to financial stability. Lies. No matter how hard you work, you will forever be a cocker spaniel begging for biscuits. That’s because you are trading your *time* for money, which means it’s impossible for you to break free. Warren Buffett said it best: “If you don’t find a way to make money while you sleep, you will work until you die.” It’s time to shed those lies and run toward the truth.

The good news is there's a way out. And no, you don't need to come up with a genius invention, buy crypto, or own apartment complexes in Miami. Instead, just like Wayne Huizenga, you'll make a few strategic moves that will allow you to efficiently become an owner. And once you experience the freedom of ownership, you'll never go back.

Here's the best part: it might not even cost you a dime to start.



The central argument of this book is that buying profitable, established, cash-flowing businesses is the most underrated path to wealth. One that, if you do it right and are willing to put in the work, not only pays you enough money to quit your job but also allows you to pay someone else to run it with you. That's right: you own the business, you make a full-time salary, but you're potentially not stuck with another full-time job forever.

And unlike buying a house, you won't always need a big down payment to own this business. The previous owner may even hand you the keys to their legacy for less than you can imagine. But you have to understand the game. They'll want these three things in return:

1. You'll give them the ability to exit their business and retire.
2. You'll keep their business and legacy alive.
3. You'll give them a cut of future profits.

Sound too good to be true? It's not. This is a proven path that allows normal people to become wealthy. Everyone? No. Only those willing to do the work and dedicate themselves to the rarest of things: being a builder in a world of consumers. It's what I've done, more than a hundred times. Which

is how a small corner of the internet came to know me as “the chick who buys laundromats”—not my favorite title, but hey, I’ve been called worse.

I’ve also helped thousands of people just like you do it too.

Like Renan, a medical device salesperson turned millionaire owner of a service business he bought entirely with creative financing...

Or Katie, an employee turned owner of a multi-six-figure dog-grooming business, soon to acquire her second...

Or Chris, the new owner of a plumbing business, a locksmith business, and now building out an eight-figure holding company...

All these people chose the path of the Main Street Millionaire.<sup>[\*2]</sup> Their companies aren’t fly-by-night, meaningless commodities. They are essential businesses that have contributed real value to their local communities for decades. They have hundreds of paying customers and a profit margin that earns their owners a very healthy income and a newfound ability to live life on their terms.

It is scary, but maybe that’s how you know it’s worth it. I’m here to find you, the aspiring owner in a world of owned. Are you one of us? We are a group that rejects the status quo and all the broken systems attached to it. Together, we are taking back Main Street.

• • •

*While the rest of the world laughs at “dry cleaning,” we make millions.*

—JIM BOWEN, CEO OF FIRST TRUST

You might be wondering: **What is a Main Street business?**

It’s a small, local business—typically run by mom and pop—that involves minimal intellectual property and provides a needed product or service. I’m talking about car washes, laundromats, vending machines, storage centers,

repair shops, pack-and-ship centers, porta-potty rentals, landscaping, electrical services, bookkeeping, carpet cleaning, tiling and grouting, plumbing, pet grooming, and HVAC installation. These are the modest yet profitable businesses that most people overlook.

I call them “Main Street” or “boring” businesses because they lack the societal sexiness of Wall Street, tech start-ups, and social media side hustles. Their owners are rarely on the covers of magazines or interviewed on *Good Morning America*. Instead, they get rich quietly. They build “stealth wealth” by owning the types of businesses that make up the backbone of America. These businesses are dependable, meaningful, successful, and cash flowing. And yet they are rarely considered a go-to option for entrepreneurs. (I aim to change that with this book.) Don’t be fooled; boring businesses do not equal boring lives. A business that has steady cash flow, lets you be with your family, is simple, has great customers, gives you a happy life...that is the REAL unicorn.

The hundred-plus businesses I’ve owned and invested in are mostly run-of-the-mill operations that have been around for a long time, surviving and thriving through economic downturns, bringing in profits year after year. Do they have down periods? Yes. But they are not rocket ships that take off or explode spectacularly.

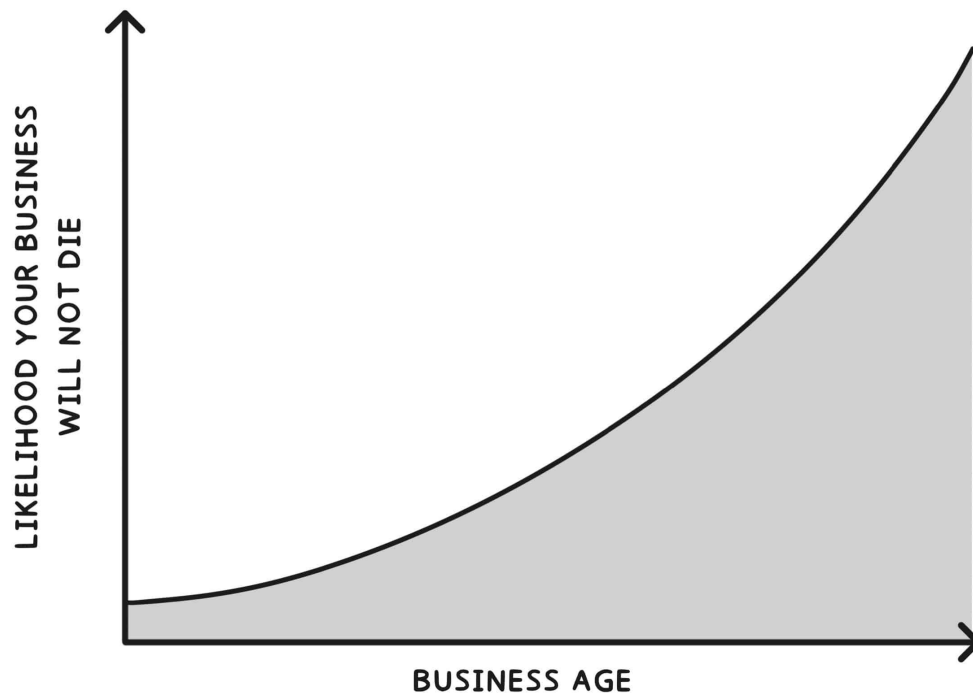
Why? There’s an idea called the Lindy effect. It states that if something has been successful for a long time, its success will likely continue for just as long. Nassim Taleb said it best in his book *Antifragile*:

If a book has been in print for forty years, I can expect it to be in print for another forty years. But...if it survives another decade, then it will be expected to be in print for another fifty years.

This, simply, as a rule, tells you why things that have been around for a long time are not “aging” like persons, but “aging” in reverse. Every year that passes without extinction doubles the additional life expectancy.

I use that theory to ensure that I don't fail in business, and it's worked like a charm. And yet, in the fast-paced world of entrepreneurship, where the siren call of starting a brand-new company drowns out everything else, the Lindy effect continues to be ignored. Business failure abounds, with founders wearing their Fs like badges of honor.

## THE LINDY EFFECT



Guess what: 35 percent of boomer-owned businesses have been in operation for more than a decade. Nearly 80 percent are profitable, with steady, loyal customers. Want to guess how much longer their success will continue? Just ask Lindy.

This is the secret that Main Street Millionaires know and that most modern entrepreneurs completely ignore: **Steady cash flow is NOT found in flashy start-ups or trendy new products.** It's in those established small businesses in your neighborhood, the ones you drive by



without a second glance. This is where millions are being made, right here on Main Street.

## WHAT YOU'LL GET FROM THIS BOOK

Here's a big, hefty question for you: Instead of working for decades to make a million dollars, how can you acquire a cash-flowing business that's making a million dollars *right now*?

At the heart of *Main Street Millionaire* lies the answer to that question—a simple yet profoundly effective formula: R.I.C.H. This acronym encapsulates the step-by-step process you'll use to buy your way into becoming a Main Street business owner:

**R FOR RESEARCH** ensures that you pursue the business opportunities that are best aligned with *you*. You'll clarify your unique skills, the type of owner experience you want, your risk appetite, and how much you need to get paid. You'll also learn how to find motivated sellers, the right way to talk with them about the prospect of buying their business, and how to evaluate whether it's a good acquisition or not.

**I FOR INVEST** opens up a whole new world of possibilities, with multiple strategies to buy cash-flowing businesses for little money down or using creative financing. You'll learn how to informally propose a deal to the owner, work with professionals on due diligence, get the right financing, draft the papers, and seal the deal. You'll also get my battle-tested negotiation tips, which have saved me millions of dollars over the last decade.

**C FOR COMMAND** shows you how to avoid the “whoops, I bought myself a job” trap, or worse yet, “whoops, I bought myself a nightmare.” You'll learn

how to find, interview, and hire an operator—and eventually a team—who can help you run your business. You'll learn the most important things to do (and avoid) in your first ninety days. You'll establish a culture of continual improvement, track your money, and implement simple marketing systems that efficiently double your profits.

**H FOR HARNESS** is where you'll learn how to manage multiple businesses on autopilot, without losing your sanity. You'll get a simple scorecard that will keep your businesses on track, add more revenue streams, and prepare for your next acquisition (or an exit).

R.I.C.H. is the most efficient path I've found to financial freedom. Why? Because it doesn't hinge on having extensive capital or brilliant ideas to start. You can acquire a cash-flowing business that not only replaces your salary but also sets you financially free. I've done it, and so have countless business owners. You can do it too.



## RESEARCH:

- FIND YOUR PERFECT BUSINESS
- FIND YOUR PERFECT SELLER



## INVEST:

- GET MONEY
- FIND TRUTH
- NEGOTIATE TO WIN



## COMMAND:

- AVOID PITFALLS
- HIRE A TEAM
- RUN THE BIZ



## HARNESS:

- SCALE
- ADD ON BUSINESSES

# DISCLAIMER: THE REALITIES OF BECOMING A MAIN STREET MILLIONAIRE

A lot of business books set the wrong expectations. My dad always said, “Just tell the truth, it’s easier to remember.” So, here’s the truth: you’ll need to buckle up for the ride ahead. I won’t promise you this journey will be rainbows and kittens (I’m allergic, probably to both). The path I teach is *hard*. Becoming an owner is 10 percent the business you buy, 10 percent knowledge, 10 percent talent, and 70 percent don’t F-ing stop. Grit is the secret ingredient that makes it all work.

Here’s what you can expect during the journey to becoming a Main Street Millionaire:

**YOU WON’T LOOK COOL.** There’s no drop-shipping, no crypto, no start-ups, no inventing, and no picture of you on the cover of *Forbes*. If you want to be the next Steve Jobs or Elon Musk, I am not your girl. If you want to run a pleasure parlor in the Metaverse, be my guest. But you ain’t gonna find it here. Why? Because all those paths share the same fatal flaw: your revenue starts at \$0.