



32 Ways to Be a Champion in Business

By Earvin Magic Johnson

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As a young man, Earvin “Magic” Johnson admired his father and other small-town entrepreneurs who created jobs and served as leaders in his Midwestern community. He worked for them, watched them, and his interest in building communities through economic development grew even while his basketball career flourished. His fame as an NBA star gave him access to some of the most successful business leaders in the country. It was Earvin’s own entrepreneurial spirit that inspired them to serve as his mentors.

Earvin made the transition from great athlete to greater entrepreneur through hard work and by avidly pursuing opportunities. He recognized that densely populated urban communities were ripe for commercial and residential development. He partnered with major brands like Starbucks, 24 Hour Fitness, and T.G.I. Friday’s to lead a major economic push in these communities. The success of his businesses proved that ethnically diverse urban residents would welcome and support major brands if given the opportunity. Earvin continues to be a leader of urban economic development that provides jobs, goods, and a new spirit of community.

32 Ways to Be a Champion in Business will inspire and enlighten readers who wish to make a similar impact with their careers and business endeavors.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

EARVIN “MAGIC” JOHNSON—known worldwide for his talent on the basketball court—has an equally impressive career off the court. As the chairman and chief executive officer of Magic Johnson Enterprises, he has helped launch major business initiatives focused on revitalizing ethnically diverse urban communities by bringing brand-name businesses into them. He has been voted number one among organizations and individuals in representing the urban community, and is the celebrity most able to influence minority consumer purchasing.

For speaking engagements or to book Earvin “Magic” Johnson for your next corporate engagement, e-mail: info@magicjent.com.

From the Hardcover edition.

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Chapter 1

The Mission

Each of us can make a difference, even if it is one street corner at a time.

My father and other entrepreneurs in my hometown, Lansing, Michigan, were my first business role models and mentors. Later, I got to know major entertainment executives such as Joe Smith of Elektra/Asylum Records and Peter Guber of Sony Pictures because they had courtside Lakers tickets. When we socialized after games, they’d ask me about basketball—and I’d pick their brains about business.

Still, it was J. Bruce Llewellyn, one of the most successful black men in America, who sent me off with a mission on my journey from basketball player to businessman. The son of Jamaican immigrants, he built an empire that includes one of the nation’s largest Coca-Cola distributorships, a cable and broadcasting company, and *Essence* magazine.

When we met, I got right to the point.

“I want to be a businessman after basketball,” I told him. “I want to make a lot of money like you.”

Mr. Llewellyn let me babble on like that for several minutes before he cut me off with a wave of his hand.

“No, Magic,” he said; “if money is all you want, there will never be enough of it and you will never be happy. You’ve got to be about more than that.”

He had my attention. What did he mean?

“You have the opportunity to be a leader who can do great things and change people’s lives for the better,” he said. “You can be a businessman who is also a catalyst for change.”

This great entrepreneur offered me more than I’d bargained for. Since high school, I’d sought out advice

from every successful businessperson I'd met. This was the first person who had a bigger vision for me than I had for myself.

A catalyst for change?

That was a role I'd never imagined. I thought you had to be Nelson Mandela or the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., to change the world. I learned instead that each of us can make a difference, even if it is one street corner at a time.

I still saw myself as an athlete—a player who performed well on the basketball court and hopefully excited a few fans. I figured once my NBA days were over I'd fade from the public view and focus on building wealth and a family.

God has a way of telling you what you are supposed to be doing. He gets the message out one way or another until you finally pay attention.

That meeting with J. Bruce Llewellyn was a defining moment. He changed my perspective by challenging me to expand my goals as a person and as an entrepreneur.

A few weeks after my talk with him, God sent another messenger by the name of John Mack, who led the Urban League of Los Angeles for more than thirty-five years.

Mr. Mack asked me to join the Urban League. Then he too challenged me.

“You’ve got to become a leader in this community,” he said. “You need to get involved and learn how things work.”

Bruce Llewellyn and John Mack opened my eyes and my mind to a much bigger world.

I’d thought I was living large as a member of the Lakers. Yet once I immersed myself in business and joined the Urban League, I realized that an athlete’s life offers a very limited perspective.

Over time, I came to understand the vision others had for me. I made the next big step in my manhood when I heeded the advice of those two strong and committed leaders. They refocused my vision for my life, and I resolved to first make a difference in the world and let the money take care of itself.

To accomplish that mission, I went back to school in the classroom of the real world. I was lucky. I had access to brilliant men and women of all races who gave me guidance—from *Black Enterprise* publisher Earl Graves to Lakers owner Jerry Buss and Hollywood superagent Michael Ovitz.

Even with those great minds to guide me, I had a lot to learn. Certainly, I made mistakes, and I will share what I learned from them in the pages that follow. To stay true to my mission, I will share the story of my journey from basketball to boardroom while also providing guidance to aspiring entrepreneurs.

Before we begin, I encourage you, just as Mr. Llewellyn and Mr. Mack encouraged me, to think of yourself and your business as catalysts for positive change in your community. Make a difference, and making money will follow.

Users Review

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Guadalupe Eggleston:

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Gordon Woods:

A lot of people always spent their very own free time to vacation or perhaps go to the outside with them household or their friend. Do you know? Many a lot of people spent many people free time just watching TV, or maybe playing video games all day long. If you wish to try to find a new activity that is look different you can read some sort of book. It is really fun in your case. If you enjoy the book that you read you can spent the whole day to reading a book. The book 32 Ways to Be a Champion in Business it doesn't matter what good to read. There are a lot of people that recommended this book. These people were enjoying reading this book. If you did not have enough space to bring this book you can buy the particular e-book. You can m0ore very easily to read this book through your smart phone. The price is not too costly but this book offers high quality.

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