

Hey! Sandwichman!

Selling sandwiches for an income

By Donn Rochlin

There's a saying in Sedona: "The surest way to make a million dollars in Sedona is to move there with a million dollars. Well according to my experience that turned out to be true with money in general, but the decision to move to the beautiful and seductive red rocks of Sedona, Arizona, turned out to be one of the greatest experiences of my life.

Not knowing quite what to expect in making the transition from the "hubbub" of Fresno, California, and having been born and raised in Los Angeles, I was about to embark on an entirely new and challenging life change. Imagine, a town with only one stop light, one movie theater, two markets, and a main street you could hear a pin drop on after 9 p.m.

Even in the light of this major downsizing now going on in my life, I remember thinking, "With my background in sales and marketing it shouldn't be any problem to get a well paying job."

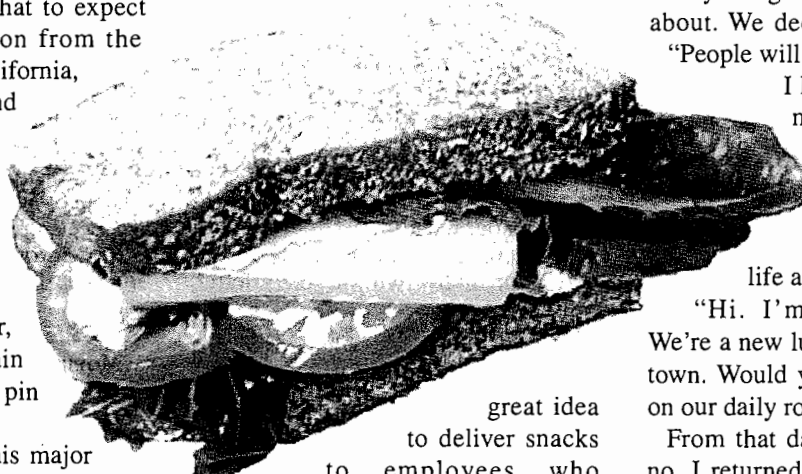
Well, rude awakening #1: *No jobs*. With no savings or finances to fall back on, the financial realities of living in a small town started to set in. After months of scraping up odd jobs (hodding bricks, singing telegrams, landscape helper, housecleaning, and even washing dishes), I had had it.

I remember laying in my bed staring at the ceiling and thinking, "There's got to be something I can do to show this town and myself, I'm here to stay. I'm not going to be one of the financial casualties forced to

abandon my dream of living where I want."

Interestingly enough, it happened to be the day after Thanksgiving and I started to think about all that leftover turkey and how for weeks after the feast my family would live on it (turkey soup, turkey sandwiches, etc.).

I started reminiscing back to years ago, in Los Angeles, when my wife came up with a



great idea to deliver snacks to employees who worked the graveyard shift at several of the convalescent hospitals in our area. Having once worked at one of them, she knew that it was difficult for them to find anyplace to eat at that hour of the morning. She prepared some sandwiches and various snacks and hit the streets. Even though it provided a little extra income, the business was short lived, as she got weary of getting up at midnight every night.

So here it is, at least six years later, and as I'm laying there a light goes on: "That's it! I'll start a lunch delivery service."

I jumped out of bed and called a friend of mine who I thought of because of her culinary talents. I told

her about my idea. The next morning we appraised the leftover turkey and agreed we could get 12 to 15 sandwiches out of it. I said "Let's do it. You make 'em and I'll sell 'em."

When I arrived at her apartment the next morning, I was amazed. She had worked her magic. I mean these were the most beautiful sandwiches in the world, three inches high with crispy lettuce, bright red fresh tomatoes, mayonnaise and spices, and everything a turkey sandwich is about. We decided to charge \$3.75.

"People will go crazy," I predicted.

I loaded the beauties into my cooler and headed out into the winter frost at 9 a.m. I walked into any business showing signs of life and announced myself.

"Hi. I'm the Sandwichman. We're a new lunch delivery service in town. Would you like to be included on our daily route?"

From that day on, I rarely heard a no. I returned three hours later with nothing more than crumbs in my cooler.

Needless to say it was the beginning of a lot of fun, a profitable business, and a genuine service to the community. Each day we'd add a few more sandwiches to the cooler.

About four weeks into our enterprise, and with steady growth on the horizon, we decided we'd better get legal. We were definitely going to outgrow our apartment kitchen, not to mention the attention we'd soon draw from the health department.

Before securing the necessary permits we would need an approved commercial kitchen. It needed to be something affordable and available to us every morning at 5 a.m. I came up

with the idea of contacting the local Elks Lodge. They only used their kitchen for special events and never early in the morning. It was perfect.

We struck a deal with them and set up production. With our permits in order, we now qualified to purchase all of our supplies through a wholesale food distributor. I remember how excited I was to watch those sandwiches run down our assembly line, each one being christened with the "Sandwichman" label and popped into the cooler.

By now we had hired our first employee to help build sandwiches, and within a couple of months we had to hire three more salesmen. Our route had grown over five times. We were really on the map now.

We expanded our menu to include not only turkey but tuna, chicken salad, pastrami, and seafood burritos. One of our most requested items was our homemade fudge brownies. In the

summer months we offered salads and fruit kabobs.

We became so well known I remember people coming up to me in the parking lot on my day off, "Hey, Sandwichman, can I get a sandwich?"

So, in less than six months with the help of some good friends, a good product, the support of our community, and the desire to live in one of the most beautiful parts of the world, we were a success.

Even though we moved on to fulfill other dreams, I always look back on those two years as a testament to the human spirit and a constant reminder to go for the dream to live the way I want, trusting that I'll always have the resources I need when I need them. I think it always gets back to a basic success principal I learned years ago: No matter where you are, find out what people want, give it to them at a fair price, and count your blessings. Δ



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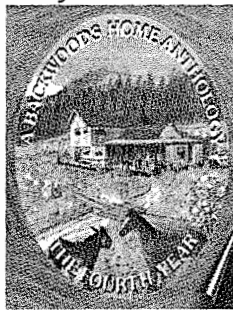
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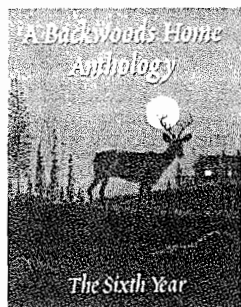
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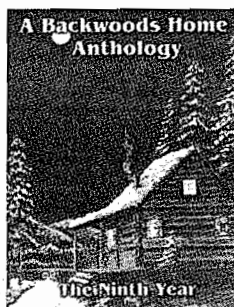
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