

CELEBRATING ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Review by AHMAD CENDANA

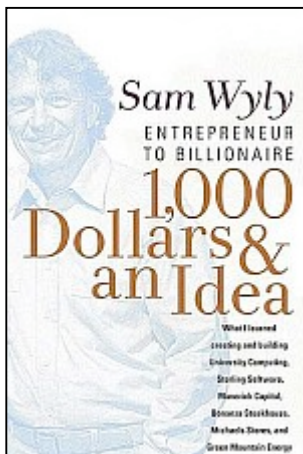
1,000 Dollars & An Idea

Author: Sam Wyly

Publisher: Newmarket Press

LONG suffering souls whose lives have been a series of failures, take heart. You are actually sitting on a treasure trove that is just waiting to be utilised!

“The best teacher of all is failure” and if you become a good student, you will know what to do to achieve success. It is reassuring to know that Sam Wyly – the person attesting to this – is someone who has gone through the grind and knows what he’s talking about.



And he has companies worth billions to prove it, if success is to be defined by personal fortune. *1,000 Dollars & An Idea* - the title of Wyly’s autobiography – is a giveaway of how he had started out on his way towards the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

But this is not the typical rags-to-riches story. Despite being a celebration of the spirit of entrepreneurship, the book does not over-glorify the process of accumulating fortune, where success or failure is judged by the bottomline alone.

Although Wyly is extremely competitive – and relishes the business contests he had encountered along the way – he also emphasises the need to build up one’s character, and to adhere to honourable values.

Throughout the book, Wyly shows that one need not be a manipulative wheeler-dealer to succeed at all the levels of business although it is mandatory to have a fighter’s spirit to survive.

In a nutshell, *1,000 Dollars & An Idea* is a combination of an autobiography, an entrepreneur's handbook, a history of computer systems, a study of American society, an environmentalist's tract, and self-help and motivational lessons. It is the blending of these elements that makes the book an engrossing read.

Education policy makers might be interested to know how Wyly had developed his competitive streak, creativity and resilience: it was through American football.

So important is it that Wyly begins the book with a chapter that recounts his footballing experiences and this conviction: "Business is a lot like football". He mentions how influential his coach was: "He made me get up and keep running. He wasn't being mean; he was teaching me to recognise the huge reservoir of energy, enthusiasm, and strength that we all have within us... what we perceive as our limitations are often only mental obstacles".

That and other lessons from football were to hold him in good stead when he started his entrepreneurial life – giving up a coveted position with computer giant IBM to later compete as an underdog against his former employer and others.

Despite various obstacles and meeting with failures along the way, Wyle was to prosper. "If you let frustration take control, your precious infant idea won't mature. When you're knocked down, don't give up – get up".

Wyly may be self-made when it comes to his billionaire status, but his family did give him a headstart when it comes to character building. Wyly pays tribute to his stoic and compassionate parents for the values he had learned from their examples during his early years in Louisiana.

It is surprising that Wyle, now 75, remains in the shadows of the technology world despite his involvement and achievements since the early years of the computer industry.

He was already there during the era of huge vacuum-tube computers, and is still involved in the current fourth generation computers that come with the Internet, as we now know it.

Wyle has been involved in various industries, and accounts of the business-related events over the decades form the main content of the book. They include the starting up and development of companies, and their sales and purchases – matters that involve high finance.

These transactions are never dull, for the author provides intimate details and perspectives of how these develop, making the reader feel involved with the proceedings.

The books also comes with vivid descriptions of how things were in American society and many of the happenings involving Wyly were of international relevance. They include the 1963 assassination of President John F. Kennedy, whom Wyly saw in person passing by moments before the fatal shots.

It is quite a surprise that *1,000 Dollars & An Idea* is also a heart-warming read. If you are suffering some setback, or feeling pessimistic and lacking in confidence, this book might help you see things clearer – and maybe inspiring towards daring to aim for loftier targets in life.

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There are two main printing plants that publish the four editions of The Star on a daily basis. The northern editions are printed at the newly opened Star Northern Hub in Bayan Lepas, Penang, while the other two editions are printed at the Star Media Hub in Bukit Jelutong, Shah Alam, Selangor.

The Star is packaged as a 3-in-1 paper, comprising the **Main Paper**, **StarBiz** and **StarTwo**. It recently underwent a revamp at the beginning of 2007, whereby snazzier, sharper elements were incorporated into its various sections, making for a new, fresh and contemporary look for the new millennium.

The **Main Paper** covers the latest in both local and international news while **StarBiz** offers a comprehensive coverage of business developments, market trends, financial reports and updates in the stock market. **StarTwo** features articles on lifestyle, entertainment, health, parenting, social etiquette, science, environment