

Selling Disruption™ Show

With Mark S. A. Smith

*From Disrupting to Disrupted and Back: Sales
Learned from Success and Failure*

Jim Brown

Mark S A Smith: Today's guest on the Selling Disruption Show is Jim Brown. He is a Sales Coach, he is CEO of Sales Tuners, and over the past ten years, Jim has helped two companies go from \$1 million to \$10 million and be sold, so he's a disruptor. And he's also taken a company from \$1 million to zero. Yep, he's been disrupted. Today he works with tech companies and sales people and hosts a weekly podcast where he talks with sales leaders and high-performing individuals about the behaviors, attitudes and techniques that lead to their success. Today we're going to talk with Jim about he made it big and how he blew it up. Welcome, Jim.

Jim Brown: Thank you so much for having me, Mark. Yes, indeed, I have bet it all and I've lost it all, so, here we go.

Mark S A Smith: And we're back again, and that's what matters.

Jim Brown: That's right.

Mark S A Smith: Let's talk about what you see as the differences between your win and when you failed. I think that those comparisons can really teach us a lot.

Jim Brown: The biggest thing that I've told a lot of people about this, Mark, is it's ego. Prior to the success, I had no ego. The first company that I helped go from \$1 million to over \$11 million, we were just scrapping and crawling our way and just making it happen. And I was very fortunate to be surrounded with some great folks and I was grateful to be able to have some big wins there. As we grew that company, I did get more and more confidence in myself and the confidence that I had allowed me to ask for more money, and it led me to bigger opportunities and doors. But I hadn't developed an ego yet. From there, I was recruited to go to another company. We had some success there, we can dive into that. After the success there, I was like, okay, Jim Brown is great, Jim Brown is gold, whatever he touches is going to be amazing, and my head started to swell. That was the problem, and so I think my next one, it was all ego. Everything I did was ego-driven. Definitely the biggest difference.

Mark S A Smith: I'm really grateful that you're willing to make that revelation and confession, and I have to say, Jim, I have experienced the same thing. There's years when I made millions of dollars and I thought I really had it wrapped up, and then I crashed and burned. And I'll bet anybody listening right now, who has built a company or two will agree with us, and they're shaking their heads sadly and saying, yep, you're right. So, how do we avoid getting into ego where we become arrogant, which is ego with talent, or smug, which is ego with no talent?

Jim Brown: You mean there's people like that on the internet that exist?

Mark S A Smith: Yeah, right. A lot of them. How have you found that we can manage this?

Jim Brown: Well, when I figure it out, I'll let you know, but I can tell you some of the ways that I'm trying to do that now, right? And it was just having a center of gravity at

that point. So, you got to have emotional intelligence, and emotional IQ to me is very, very important.

Mark S A Smith: Let's just talk about that, just for a second. One of my very dear colleagues, Chris Stark, believes that EQ is 35% of your success. It's that important-

Jim Brown: I believe that. Yeah.

Mark S A Smith: Absolutely, that important. It's the second most important characteristic that an executive can have when founding a company. The most important is actually cognitive capacity. You got to be smart to get the job done. Number two is EQ, so you're absolutely right on. Please, carry on.

Jim Brown: Yeah, and that's it. I mean, you know, life and business, it's a rollercoaster. And sales, obviously, you just tie that in, but to me, business is sales. When you have the big wins, you cannot get too high because you know the downhill is coming. We make that big, long climb on the rollercoaster because we know what's going to come after it, and we're going to enjoy both sides of it. When we get those big wins and we get real high, we have to understand both sides. But at the same time, when we go through the valley because we will go through valleys, we have to understand that we've seen the other side. We know what comes after that, and just keep going and chucking along.

There was a book by Jim Collins that talks about the idea of the 20 mile march. Every single day I'm going to wake up and I'm going to do 20 miles. Now, if the weather is great, I'm not going to decide to do 100 miles, I'm going to do my 20 miles, but if the weather is bad, I'm not going to decide to do no miles or one mile, I'm still going to do my 20 miles. And it's that idea that has allowed me to continuously put my one foot in front of the other as we go into the next step. It's a work in progress.

Mark S A Smith: It is. Great by Choice is the book that included the-

Jim Brown: Great by Choice.

Mark S A Smith: The 20 mile march and the thing that I think is really important that Jim is talking about, the 20 mile march is a metaphor for a system that you work consistently. So, one of the things you're telling me is that one of your secrets to success is the consistent system?

Jim Brown: That's it. Before I jumped on this call with you, I was talking about the idea of a five-minute journal. So, I use the five-minute journal, I journal daily. And it talks about what are you going to accomplish today? What are the things you're going to work on? And I get that I should just write down the top three things that I have to get accomplished today, and I know that before my day is out, I have to do those things. And look, there's stuff that I don't want to do. Now, I've gotten way past cold calling being a part of a thing that I don't want to do, it's just a part of my day now, and I just do it. I make six phone calls a day. Six, that's it. Single

digit, six. But that's all I need to do in order to grown my business, but I just do it. And it's those types of things that if you just do on a consistent behavior, it becomes a habit. And then my belief is it's habit that trumps discipline.

Mark S A Smith: Indeed. Well, would you be willing to share your cold call strategy?

Jim Brown: It's very simple. So, you mean who I call on or what I say or what is your question?

Mark S A Smith: Yes.

Jim Brown: Okay.

Mark S A Smith: Yeah, we haven't talked cold calls for quite a while on this show. I'd like to hear how you approach it.

Jim Brown: I call on CEOs of local companies. So, I typically work with tech companies that have two to ten sales reps, and their founder is a technical founder, not a sales person.

Mark S A Smith: We share the same tribe.

Jim Brown: That's right. And so, when I'm calling on these guys, none of them actually want to admit that they have a problem, right?

Mark S A Smith: Never.

Jim Brown: They have built the most wonderful product in the world, and if they can just show it to enough people, the people are just going to buy it because it's amazing technology-

Mark S A Smith: Right.

Jim Brown: And as you know, that's the farthest thing from the truth.

Mark S A Smith: Doesn't happen.

Jim Brown: So, if I were to call you, say, hey Mark, Jim Brown, Sales Tuners. The name probably doesn't ring a bell?

Mark S A Smith: Nope.

Jim Brown: No reason it should, Mark, I'm calling on CEOs of tech companies, I've been doing it for the last hour and a half. A couple of themes have come out of these conversations. I don't know if any of these apply to you, but some of them would tell me that their sales people are great when they get in front of customers. The problem is, they're just not getting in front of enough customers. Now, I don't

know if your team prospects on a daily basis and is getting in front of enough customers for you or not.

Mark S A Smith: Yeah, probably not.

Jim Brown: What do you mean?

Mark S A Smith: They seem to spend a lot of time on LinkedIn looking for leads.

Jim Brown: See, and you just went there for me, right?

Mark S A Smith: Right.

Jim Brown: But that's exactly what I'm getting. I've got you into a conversation immediately. I don't call you up and tell you, I've got the best sales training and best sales coaching and best sales consulting there is in the world. I just call you up and tell you I talk to people like you that have problems like this, and if you have it, we should probably talk.

Mark S A Smith: That's it. It's just that easy.

Jim Brown: And I just have meetings every single day.

Mark S A Smith: You are indeed following the four step formula, which is, you answer these four questions: why are you bothering me? Who cares? Why should I believe you? And why should I do anything?

Jim Brown: That's right.

Mark S A Smith: And then by doing those four things, using the script that you've outlined, that's all you have to do.

Jim Brown: That's right.

Mark S A Smith: And it'll lead to conversations, and some people will, some people won't. So what? I like it. So, thank you for sharing the way that you do it. Excellent.

Jim Brown: Yeah, I'm not reading off a script. That's literally just what I say every single day, so I know I have it built into my head.

Mark S A Smith: Yep, that's it. So, your five-minute journal, the top three things, the six cold calls a day. So, the second thing you're telling me, besides getting the ego in check is have a system. Your system uses your five-minute journal, and I'm so glad you say that because I teach other entrepreneurs that journaling is, without a doubt, the link to success. And when I journal, I have success, and when I stop journaling, my success wanes. It is part of the system. So, how else do you use your journal?

Jim Brown: Yeah, 100%. It's funny that you said that because I just got back on the wagon of my journal, but I can go back and see what I was thinking, what I was doing, what I was accomplishing. And then when I look at the month that I took off, and not for any other reason than it just, it fell out of habit-

Mark S A Smith: Yes.

Jim Brown: But when I look back at that month that I was missing, I can't remember what I did, what I accomplished. But if I just flip back to June, I immediately pick up. I know the conversations I had, I know where we were going, I know what we were doing, I know what I was working on. So, it's something to me ... It's why I picked it back up, and all of a sudden, I get more focused and I get more accomplished throughout the day.

Mark S A Smith: Yep. That's right. There's an energetic component of that called pre-paving, where you are actually generating what your day is going to be like and you stick to it, it's part of the system.

Jim Brown: You almost live it before it happens.

Mark S A Smith: Indeed, you do. That's visualization and we've taught forever, visualization is part of the magic of sales. It's how we also sell our customer, imagine having this in your life.

Jim Brown: Absolutely.

Mark S A Smith: I love it. What's next? What's the big comparison between the crash and burn and the flight to the sky?

Jim Brown: During the crash and burn, besides the ego, I just felt like I knew better than the customer. I was building a product that I wanted to exist in the world, I was building a product that solved my pains and my problems and all that, and I just assumed that everyone else had the exact same thing. I kind of called it the curse of knowledge-

Mark S A Smith: Indeed.

Jim Brown: Because I knew this thing and because I believed this thing, everyone else should just flock to it. It just was not true. We spent almost eight months in a cave, if you will, building this product and not getting user feedback, not showing early examples to them, and once we actually put it out into the market and there was no use for it, we were almost kind of out of runway. I raised over \$1 million of venture capital, and I will tell you that telling 14 angel investors their money was gone and never coming back, remains one of the hardest things I've ever had to do.

Mark S A Smith: Wow.

Jim Brown: And that includes going through a divorce.

Mark S A Smith: Yeah because you had the divorce 14 times.

Jim Brown: And tell the exact same story and get beat up 14 different ways, I mean, you're absolutely right.

Mark S A Smith: That's tough. You cannot do things in the absence of customer feedback. The thing that I think kills a lot of people is that they have this really great idea and they're certain that it's going to create value, but value is such a moving target, and the question becomes, is this a value today? Will this be a value tomorrow? Does this solve the blood spurting problem that our customers have? And while I believe that we have to innovate beyond where our customers are today, we also have to find out if we're going to increment our customers into that innovation. I truly believe that we have to work hand in hand with customers, bringing them new ideas, but also it has to be enough for them to bite off and chew.

Jim Brown: That's right. The product that I was building was trying to revolutionize their life and their home, it was a home-based product. It was just too far of a stretch for them to leap. The application was called Haven, and the idea was, we wanted to use big data and the Internet of Things to predict and anticipate the needs of your home and let it talk to you, kind of like a check engine light but for your home, if you will. I'm not a handy person, to the chagrin of my father who is a union contractor and laborer. But I'm just not a handy person, and so I spend over \$7,000 a year to maintain my home, and to some people that seems like an absolutely absurd number and I can tell you that to the investors that invested in my company, they told me they spend that in a month. So, money is relative as it is always-

Mark S A Smith: Indeed.

Jim Brown: As I was going through that, I was already outsourcing everything. I'm from Indiana and we take pride of home ownership very seriously here, but what that taught me, in retrospect now, is that the majority of people spend too much money on their home, of their actual income. And so at that point, they now no longer have the disposable income to outsource the problems with their house, they have to do it on their own, or they just don't do it at all. Those that have the means to do it are actually already doing it, so there's something in place and I don't mean this comment to be sexist, but what I heard from a lot of people that we called on, our customers, they said, my old lady takes care of that. And I'm talking about the affluent neighborhoods where they're spending tens of thousands of dollars, that's what they would say to me. There were multiple things there that I had to disrupt and just to take somebody from where they were today to where I wanted them to be. Way too far of a leap.

Mark S A Smith: Sure. I think that what you created has extraordinary value but we're just not ready for it yet.

Jim Brown: That's right. It will exist in the world, for sure.

Mark S A Smith: Absolutely, we're just not there yet. And those early wins to generate revenue cash flows are just critical to keeping a business alive.

Jim Brown: Yeah, you got to create that flat wheel and ours started way too late and we couldn't get escape velocity on that.

Mark S A Smith: Yes. So what else did you learn going from great to crash and burn?

Jim Brown: I'll get a little bit personal and maybe even a little bit vulnerable-

Mark S A Smith: It's alright. It's all good. I guarantee our listener is vulnerable too.

Jim Brown: I learned a lot about myself. I tried to really understand the why, the why behind what I was doing and so, we almost had a life saver come and get us right at the end. A company called porch.com out of Seattle, Washington, almost acquired us. We were so close to being acquired and I say so close because my wife and I, we were actually looking for houses in Seattle, we knew we were going to have to move out there if we were acquired. We're both from Indiana, we've been in Indiana most of our life, except for the four years that I was in the Marine Corps. We're set on it, we're going to Seattle. And so when it didn't happen, we started to really question, okay well, what are we doing this for? Why are we doing it, etc.? And like a lot of people, our idea was we wanted to retire early and travel the world.

And so, after many dinners and glasses of wine and conversations, we said, well, we're not guaranteed tomorrow and we're not guaranteed health and we're not guaranteed wealth, so why don't we start doing this today? And it really started to change the way we look at life and business, and I had to see a psychiatrist. My brain was messed up, it's still not completely healed. You know, I had a lot of expectations around what I had to do next. I raised \$1 million and yeah, I lost it, but this community knows that Jim Brown is a winner, you got to go do something even bigger, even more risky, just to prove to them how smart you are. And that level of expectation is what I had of myself, and she told me, my psychiatrist, she said, first of all, you have to quit caring what other people think of you, especially people that don't matter. I didn't understand that because the business community matters to me.

She said very clearly, she said, Jim, who will be at your funeral? It took me back, like, I truly had to take a step back and realize what she was saying to me. And then she leaned in and went even further, and she said, and let's go a step further Jim, who are the six men who will carry your box and put it in the ground? She said, these are the people that you need to start living for. It shook me to the core, the failure that I had and the personal development and personal discovery afterward.

Mark S A Smith: That's a really extraordinary story and kudos for sharing that with us. And everybody who's listening has been through something similar, and I guarantee you almost everybody who's listening, who has had at least one company has shared time with a good psychologist or a good psychiatrist because by golly, we go through a lot. Remember, as founders, we are the product. We're very attached to the value and the outcome and what people think and we really do have to get to that point where we really don't care what a lot of people think-

Jim Brown: It becomes your identity.

Mark S A Smith: It does, and I've talked about that many times on this show, especially with Bo Burlingham, how it becomes our identity. So when we sell the company, our identity gets lost, and so we have to create an identity that is separate from our company. That we loan to the company versus the company loaning its identity to us, if we're going to survive this.

Jim Brown: And that's something I'm still working on. By no means am I perfect, but I'm still working on that every single day now.

Mark S A Smith: That's a really important component and I know that our listeners are really appreciating this conversation. It's a critical component, so that means that we build an identity outside of our company. We do that with our community, we do that with our family, we do that with our spiritual community. All those things are really critical to our success when we're successful, and our success when we fail, and you will fail because 17 times on the average, an entrepreneur fails. There's a lot more downtime than there is uptime, but I couldn't live it any other way.

Jim Brown: Amen to that. I can't even imagine working for someone else. I never say never anymore, but I just couldn't imagine it. There's so much of my own destiny I want to be able to control and having someone tell me they're going to pay me a certain amount of money for my time, it just doesn't work for me.

Mark S A Smith: It's a challenge. I've become psychologically unemployable and I don't know if I could work for somebody. I don't know if somebody could hire me. So, I've got to go figure out how to make money every day just like you-

Jim Brown: That's right. That's right.

Mark S A Smith: And that's okay, that's the thrill. The good news is the lights are still on and there's food in the refrigerator. That's good.

Jim Brown: Absolutely. I need to get you to talk to my wife about that. I'm trying to get her to become a sales person because I think she'd be amazing at it, but she just thinks sales it's just all cold calling and all that kind of stuff, so I'm still working on her.

Mark S A Smith: Well, here's what you need to reposition, Jim, it's that cold calling is not sales. Cold calling is cold calling, it's actually part of the marketing scheme. And the reason why you have to cold call is because your marketing sucks.

Jim Brown: I like that. Alright. Wait, did you just tell me my marketing sucks though, 'cause I think that's what you just did? 'Cause I told-

Mark S A Smith: I just ... I just said that you don't have a marketing plan. Your marketing plan is six cold calls a day-

Jim Brown: That's right, it's me.

Mark S A Smith: But that's okay. That's okay if that's how you want to play the game, if you're finding all the business you need based on six cold calls a day, this is fine. The question then becomes, if you have a great big group of people and they've got to make cold calls and they hate cold calls, then you have to create a marketing strategy that generates the conversations and ... My view of the planet is that marketing is everything you do that creates a relevant conversation, and sales is everything you do to facilitate a mutually profitable transaction. People tend to overlap sales and marketing in small organizations by doing cold calling. That said, if you have a process, it's okay.

Jim Brown: There's those of us that think that sales rules the world, so we would trump marketing anyway, so-

Mark S A Smith: Marketing is what keeps your sales people busy-

Jim Brown: That's right.

Mark S A Smith: And sales is what keeps everybody else busy.

Jim Brown: That's right.

Mark S A Smith: Give me one more thing you learned from the rise to the top and the fall to the bottom.

Jim Brown: This is going to relate to the last one, but it's really having empathy for a buyer and a customer. Truly understanding them and what they need, and I don't mean showing them the features and the benefits and what you can do, it's truly understanding what they need solved and building to that. Even if you have a product that doesn't even fit all the criteria, if you show them how to use your tool to accomplish what they actually want solved, you can sell them something that doesn't have a complete fit, and if you do it correctly, you can actually sell it for more than what a competing product that fits all of their needs could be. You could sell it for more than that because you've truly taken the time to understand where they are in their world. So, I would definitely just say having empathy for the real buyer and their real problem.

Mark S A Smith: Indeed, in fact, it's the only way we can create a mutually profitable transaction. Until you understand your customer's objectives, priorities, and criteria, your value propositions have no meaning.

Jim Brown: Zero. Absolutely zero.

Mark S A Smith: That's it. That is the law of sales. Until you can research what they're trying to accomplish, and that empathy only comes from having a conversation, then it's a whole lot easier. And the tribe that you and I tend to work with, with the world of IT, it's a complex, high consideration, high risk sale. And the more that it's high consideration, the more that it's high risk, the more that it's complex, the less it's about the product and the more it's about the trusted outcome that you're going to deliver.

Jim Brown: And sometimes that can even be just personal trust. They actually trust and believe in you, that you're going to be there for them, that you're going to be the one holding their hand and making sure they get their promotion, or that they get their raise. And I think that's often lost as well-

Mark S A Smith: It is.

Jim Brown: Is that human connection to the solution and the outcome.

Mark S A Smith: It is. In fact, I recently did an article about that, the risk is personal in a lot of cases because in the world of IT, if a CIO buys the wrong technology and they experience downtime, it's not just about risk to their job, it's risk to their career.

Jim Brown: Yeah, that's true.

Mark S A Smith: Because IT directors that have experienced massive downtime end up working for the Geek Squad.

Jim Brown: Wow, okay.

Mark S A Smith: Right?

Jim Brown: Yeah.

Mark S A Smith: And so, that's the reason why it is personal trust. It's the covert reason why they choose a vendor, not the overt reason, they won't tell you that. They'll tell you the reasons why they're buying is for the outcome, here's what we need to accomplish, here's our budget. But what they don't tell you is the reason why they choose you is because they trust you. So in those particular cases, trust is about showing up on time, keeping all your promises, delivering value, that means you support their career. All of those things become way more important than the product. You've seen that.

Jim Brown: Many a times over.

Mark S A Smith: That's how that works. You operate in an industry there's a lot of competition. There are thousands and thousands of sales coaches in the world. I am one of many. How do you differentiate yourself and your market?

Jim Brown: I don't talk bad about my competition to my prospects, I just don't do it. If they're already working with somebody, I will edify them and talk about how great they are. And it's amazing what happens when you do that. If they tell me they're working with Billy Bob, first thing I'm going to say is, oh wow, Billy Bob, I've heard about him, he's really good. Just by saying that, you've taken all the pressure off of them, and all of a sudden, they lean in and they say, well, between you and me, Jim, he's not that great. And I just get to say, oh, really? And now, all of a sudden, they just unload and they tell me everything that I need to know and they tell me why their person is so bad. But what I'm seeing in this competitive landscape is, you're right, there's literally 100 people probably here in the Indianapolis Metro Area that I "compete against", but what I'm seeing more often than not, is my competition has never actually sold anything-

Mark S A Smith: Wow.

Jim Brown: The only thing they've sold is sales training and I'll give you a very specific story there. I had somebody call me that I've worked with in the past, they called me and they said, hey Jim, got a question for you, and it was a friend so I joked and I jabbed at him a little bit, and I said hey, don't you have a sales trainer? Don't you have a sales coach? Just call them. And they said, shut up Jim, just help me and answer this question. I said, okay, I'm listening. So they said, hey, we're starting to go upmarket, we're starting to sell bigger and bigger deals and, as a result, we're starting to go to procurement and we don't really know how to navigate those waters, could you help us out? I said, you know what? I'd be happy to help you with that, but I do have to ask, when you called your trainer and you asked him that question, what did he tell you? And they said, well, his response was if we were any good at our job, we wouldn't actually have to go to procurement-

Mark S A Smith: What?

Jim Brown: I kind of had a gasp and a reaction very similar to yours and I said, wow, really? That sounds to me like someone who's actually never sold anything into the enterprise space. And they said, yeah, that's why we're on calling you. It's humorous to me that there's people out there claiming to be professionals that have never actually done what you've done. I tell people, keep that in mind, it's very important.

Mark S A Smith: If you have a sales trainer that the first thing they do is insult you when you come at them with a problem, fire them.

Jim Brown: There's a lot of trainers out there that they think that keeping you in pain is what their job is because it keeps you coming back to them.

Mark S A Smith: That's an old model. It's-

Jim Brown: I agree.

Mark S A Smith: Done, done, done. Don't use that pain-based model anymore. My friends, we are a bunch of dreamers, we are no longer motivated by the pain that we used to have, which is a really beautiful thing.

Jim Brown: Yeah, there's not a lion sitting around the corner about to eat us anymore-

Mark S A Smith: No.

Jim Brown: So I'm with you.

Mark S A Smith: Nope. Not at all. How do you position yourself against all of those other potential competitors when you don't want to bash them at all?

Jim Brown: I just simply ask questions. If I know I'm in a competitive situation, I'll just ask a question, hey, you know, Mark, as you're evaluating this, there's plenty of great people out there, I just want to better understand what your evaluation criteria is, does it matter to you what your sales trainer or your sales coach has sold before in the past? I'll just simply ask that, and they're like, absolutely, it definitely does. And I say, oh really, okay, well do me a favor, as you're doing your due diligence, make sure you really dive into that question with anybody that you're talking to because, believe it or not, I've seen a lot of people out there that, they've never really sold anything. So, just make sure that is a point of contingent for you that you actually address it. And that's one of the biggest things. You know, for me, when I can start to talk about CAC and LTV and churn and raising capital and series A, series B, all of a sudden, they're like, okay, this guy gets it, he talks my language, he lives in my world.

Where, as opposed to some of the other models, or systems, or trainers that are out there, they very much are living in the late 80's, early 90's. Their stuff works in blue collar trade sales, but in high-tech, it's just a different game.

Mark S A Smith: What you just did is you created the landmine. That's what we used to call it when we were selling, back in the days when I was doing those sales training events too. Create a question that you have them ask all the competitors that essentially the competitors step on, they blow themselves up 'cause you've already established that that creates value for your customer and so, stepping on that landmine removes value of that competitor. And it keeps you totally clean. It's helping customers decide what's important, how are you going to choose? It's such a powerful question as we go through the sales process.

Jim Brown: Adding to that, it's also helping them define the actual problem. We've talked today a lot about empathy and we've talked about getting to that core, but oftentimes, they don't actually know what their real problem is. Google is the biggest search engine in the world, it contains all of the world's information, but

the idea that you can get the answer that you need assumes the fact that you know which question to ask-

Mark S A Smith: That's right.

Jim Brown: And if that were the case, if you could go to Google and type the exact right question, you would get the answer, you wouldn't need a sales person at all. One of the things that I work with, both my actual prospects, but also my clients, for their prospects, is to help them reframe the conversation and questions to get to what really matters. For me, when I'm selling to some tech CEOs and sometimes these VPs of sales, I start to get them to understand, where are you actually in a problem? Because you could train your people, you could actually go on sales calls with them, you could coach them, you could do all these things so, what is it that you're actually looking for? Where's the real problem? That's one of the things I like to uncover.

Mark S A Smith: For a lot of owners, they just don't have the time and the other challenge is, who taught them how to sell.

Jim Brown: That's right. That's right.

Mark S A Smith: And just because they can sell, doesn't mean that they have the ability to transfer those skills.

Jim Brown: I have a client right now that, we were just talking this morning, who has that exact same problem. He was an extremely successful sales person, millions and millions and millions of dollars in commission. He hired a completely green sales team. These people have never sold anything, they have no business acumen whatsoever-

Mark S A Smith: Ouch.

Jim Brown: And he just thought, yeah he just thought, well, they've got grit, they've got hustle, they've got determination. I can sit them in a room for 30 minutes, tell them what we're doing and they're going to beat the streets just like I did. And it's just not the case, especially in today's world, it's just not the case. They just need some of the basics, like, let me give them the basics of what is a prospecting call, what does that actually mean? If they get someone on the phone, what should they say? How should they act? And you're right, they can't transfer their success into a program that allows someone else to be successful with their information.

Mark S A Smith: Another aspect to this is just the issue of high consideration sales versus low consideration sales, they're radically different. They require completely different approaches, different tactics, people buy for different reasons. So, if you hire somebody and they've been using low consideration sales techniques and you ask them to sale a high consideration product, which is the way it works for IT, they're not going to work-

Jim Brown: That's right.

Mark S A Smith: They're going to wash out. You and I could probably take a look at those hires based on either their experience, or lack of training, or what they've sold in the past and identify very quickly who's going to make it and who's not.

Jim Brown: You're right, 100%, but the problem is, there's been this explosion of technology companies. But there has not been an explosion of sales talent, so what do they do? Where do they go get people? How do they fill those seats? And so they think, if I've got to hit a number to get to my series A raise, I just need bodies, and there were no other bodies available, so, something is better than nothing. I see you're shaking your head, you're totally right, but that's the mentality of a lot of these people. And so, I would rather have a couple of great people than six or seven mediocre ones all day long.

Mark S A Smith: Absolutely 'cause those mediocre ones are screwing up your prospect base.

Jim Brown: Oh, for sure. The opportunity cost is much higher than the salary that you're paying them. It is every single prospect they touch and the bad name that they give your company, and even the cost of sale. So if one of your good reps was the person who called on that prospect, what would the value of that sale have been? So, there's so much opportunity cost with bad sales hire.

Mark S A Smith: Indeed. This has been a great conversation, Jim. I really enjoyed the sharing and the insights that you've shared with me and that you've pulled out of me, as well. How can our listener contact you? What would you like to offer? What would you like for them to do?

Jim Brown: A couple of different ways, you know, one of the things, Mark, that I did for your audience is, a lot of companies that I see, whether they be a sales rep or a CEO, they set really big goals, they want to do \$1 million in revenue, or they want to do \$1 million in sales and so, they start at zero on January 1st and they have no idea actually how to get to that big number. So I've created a workbook and I want to emphasize the word work, they will have to put in some real effort into this, but it's completely free to download, it's at salestuners.com/roadmap. And literally, it'll take your big goal, whether it be \$1 million or \$100,000 and break it down into daily activities that you need to do in order to achieve that goal.

So that's one way, or if you'd like to check out my daily dribble, you can get me on twitter @jim_brown and we'll talk about anything from sports to beer to obviously the world of sales.

Mark S A Smith: Of course those links will also be on the show page. Thanks so much, Jim, for being a great guest on the Selling Disruption Show.

Jim Brown: Mark, this is awesome. I really appreciate you having me today.