

# Entrepreneurs: Mavericks of Progress

In this issue we take a look at who we consider to be the 50 greatest self-made entrepreneurs of all time—men and women who helped discover, develop and shape the world we now experience and enjoy. Throughout the stratosphere of our economic hierarchy, it is the entrepreneur who is the most important. Our entire free-market system is rooted and even dependent upon the productive innovation of entrepreneurs. It is the entrepreneur who is the backbone of our economy.



Often labeled renegades, mavericks, and even rebels and defectors, entrepreneurs break away from the safety of the herd and against conventional wisdom to journey into the unknown armed only with their creative imagination and courage of conviction. If it weren't for the entrepreneur, the progress and advancement of our society would not be as it is today. Every great industry and every *Fortune* 500 company was started by an entrepreneur. Great companies and revolutionary progress will undoubtedly come from the entrepreneur with an idea and a bold spirit—the entrepreneurial spirit.

Here is what I love about America. You can start out as nobody, with nothing but an idea, some passion and lots of perseverance and become the next Martha Stewart, Ray Kroc, Fred Smith or Levi Strauss. You can be a youngster like Michael Dell or Steve Jobs. You can even start later in life like Harland “Colonel” Sanders. You can begin poor like Oprah Winfrey or Andrew Carnegie. You can come from an Ivy League school or have no formal education to speak of. You can be black, white, male or female, from “The Establishment” or an immigrant. Entrepreneurialism has no restrictions or qualifications—all it takes is guts, determination and a belief in yourself. With those things, anything is possible.

The profiles on our list are not meant to impress, but to inspire and instruct. These men and women are or were people just like you and me. They had ideas and dreams and did not let difficulties dull their ambition. These profiles are an affirmation that you, too, can achieve great things from even the most humble beginnings and difficult circumstances.

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Optimism, curiosity, creativity and drive are universal qualities found in our profiles. Most did not start out in pursuit of fame and fortune; they focused on solving a problem. They were also constant learners and “tryers,” unafraid to attempt new things, even at the risk of looking foolish to their peers. Their success and wealth were byproducts of these qualities.

The spirit of entrepreneurship and limitless possibility is as alive and well as at any other moment in history. More than 25 million Americans have forsaken traditional jobs in the workforce to focus on building their own businesses. Every day, new technologies emerge and opportunities open up for those with the courage and tenacity to chase after their dreams. We hope this issue of *SUCCESS* will stimulate your creative imagination and arm you with the audacity to seek your place on the list of great renegades, mavericks and revolutionaries.

Be bold!

Darren Hardy,  
*SUCCESS* Publisher and Editorial Director