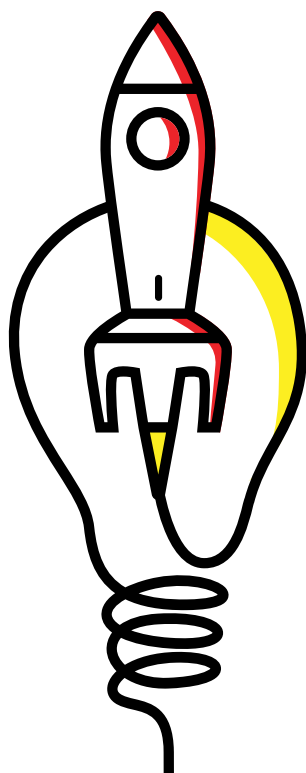


LAUNCH YOUR BRAND



The Fastest Way to Supercharge Any Business

Ramon Peralta

FOREWORD BY CHRIS JARVIS

This book would not have been possible without the inspiration and motivation from my tribe. Thank you to all of the mentors, authors, friends and family that have encouraged me to move forward with this. Thank you to my mom and dad. Thank you for the entire Peralta Squad of my brothers, my sister and my nieces and nephews who rock the PD gear all year and offer support and encouragement. You have all believed from day one. Thank you to my wife Nancy, Brittany and RJ. Thank you, Chris Jarvis for always pushing me to think bigger. Thank you Tom Matthews and Michael Schottey for helping to get me across the finish line. Thank you, Tom Parnon for asking me “where’s the book” and for always being in the audience at the BrandU SCORE workshops. Thank you to my social media family for the likes, loves and shares. Thank you to the entire team at Peralta Design, especially Amanda for helping me lay this out, Jorge, and Fernanda for reviewing and editing your respective sections. You have all truly epitomized teamwork as we bring this vision to reality.

Thank you all.

LAUNCH **YOUR BRAND**

The Fastest Way to Supercharge Any Business

Ramon Peralta

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This book is dedicated to the marginalized small businesses with limited resources and the displaced workers faced with the grim reality that they must take matters into his or her own hands. It is dedicated to the hungry, the sons and daughters of immigrants, the inventors, the dreamers and the doers that will reclaim the American Dream by bravely launching their own brand.

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BE THE GIRAFFE

*“Elevate your perspective.
See a better path. Be the Giraffe.”*

FOREWORD

I've spent 25 years working with hundreds of millionaires and a handful of billionaires. Ramon Peralta is going to show you the secret path to success and happiness that none of them ever will.

What have I observed working with some of the most successful people in this country? Not a single one executed on the original business plan. Each of them has a crazy story. They took convoluted and sometimes unbelievable paths to finally arrive at something very special – and you will learn an invaluable shortcut to finding your “special” thing is in this book. My relationship with Ramon, and the story of how he helped me, is no different.

We met in 1984 – in freshman English at Classical High School in Providence, Rhode Island. A year later, we got to know each other on Saturday mornings in driver's education classes. I was excited to learn all this new material – so I could drive. Ramon spent the entire class drawing cars, cartoons, and caricatures. Didn't he want to get his license?

What I didn't know was that Ramon had been working in his dad's auto shop. He knew everything about cars and had been driving them around the lot for years. What neither of us knew was that Ramon would be building, repairing, and driving my international brand thirty years later.

More Surprises?

While I was using social media as a lazy way to show my family what my kids were doing, Ramon was tirelessly and passionately posting on multiple platforms. It was hard not to notice. When my marketing director resigned to pursue his own business, Ramon was my first call. I asked the usual, “What have you been up to since school?” I was not prepared for his answer.

Ramon had been part of the Jay Walker (of Priceline.com fame) creative team. Working with an eccentric multi-millionaire, he had brainstormed and launched over 100 brands in under three years. He’s like the Beatles of Branding (who recorded 309 songs in seven years). This means that he knows how to work very, very quickly. For entrepreneurs, nothing is more important than speed. You must accelerate quickly to create momentum or your business will die. Ramon had mastered this to keep up with Jay.

Speed often comes at a price. He must be sacrificing quality. Nope. Wrong again. Ramon and his team at Peralta Design were hired by Warren Buffett to promote the Secret Millionaires Club—an animated series teaching literacy to kids. I had judged him in drivers ed, and Ramon ends up drawing the Oracle of Omaha himself—who was the star and teacher in the cartoon. I don’t know Buffett, but his frugality and demand for value are legendary. Fast and a great value? How is this possible?

I had to find out. I hired Ramon to help me grow my previous company and sell it. Once that was done, he helped me launch my new brand—one that would be based on my personality and my strongest beliefs. Ramon helped me to elevate my perspective and to see my better path. He helped transform me into a giraffe.

What does it mean to Be the Giraffe?

The giraffe is the only animal that has evolved to be more vulnerable. The neck is the most vulnerable place on any animal—and the 18-foot-tall giraffe can't hide how exposed it is. It can't climb a tree or burrow to hide from predators. And the giraffe does not migrate with a herd for protection.

Starting a business is always a high-risk proposition. Maybe you already feel vulnerable for one of these other reasons:

- Are you a woman living in a man's world?
- Is English your second (third or fifth) language?
- Are you a person of color?
- Have you been the victim of abuse or prejudice?
- Do you have a learning disability?
- Was school difficult for you?
- Did you drop out of college (or high school)?
- Were you adopted or orphaned?
- Are you divorced or widowed?
- Did you file bankruptcy?
- Would you consider yourself nonbinary?
- Were you fired or laid off?
- Are you ashamed of being poor? Or ashamed of being rich?
- Do you look different?
- Do you feel misunderstood?

Being, or feeling different, may be the reason you aren't invited to join the herd. Let me tell you something. You don't want to be there anyway.

Despite having no place to hide, and not being part of the masses, the giraffe has greater freedom than the migrating herds. This vulnerable long neck allows the giraffe to keep its head out of the weeds and see things others can't. It can also reach things others won't.

Don't you want the freedom to make decisions for yourself and to go places others can't? Wouldn't it be great to be able to see paths others can't? As an entrepreneur you must stick your neck out, break free from the herd, find a better path, and strut your strange stuff. Forget about all the things other people have that you don't. Be grateful that your past, your circumstances, and perhaps your appearance, make you different.

When you brand yourself properly, what makes you different is neither a hindrance nor an obstacle. Your unconventional or nontraditional upbringing, attitudes, or challenges are a blessing. To steal a line from one my favorite speakers, Sally Hogshead, "it's good to be better, but it's better to be different!"

When I started embracing my giraffe branding, I stopped hiding things about my past. I stopped trying to give the world the impression that I was the lion who was king of the savannah. By embracing and sharing my failures, fears, and shortcomings, I not only freed myself of the fears of "being found out." I encouraged people to share their own fears and worries.

This relatability attracted clients who appreciated me for who I really was, not for who I wanted them to think I was. It also attracted families who valued the things that I value—connection, purpose, health, family, community. As a result, I am working less and earning more. Most importantly, I never struggle with any ethical or moral dilemmas with my clients—since we have such deep connections.

Thanks to Ramon's guidance on branding, I can say without any hesitation that the single most important thing you can do is embrace who you are—and to *Launch Your Brand*.

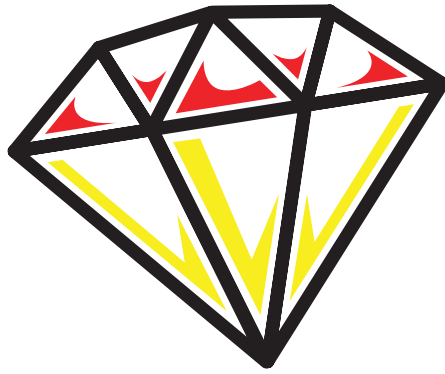
I have come to deeply trust Ramon and his advice. I have trusted Ramon Peralta and Peralta Design to build, and promote my own brand – which will be my legacy. In a service industry, where your reputation and brand are your greatest assets, you can't afford to make bad referrals. I have proudly introduced dozens of clients and friends to Peralta Design without hesitation.

If you want to achieve great things, get there faster, deal with less frustration, and make smaller sacrifices, the best thing you can do is commit to finding your brand. I suggest you that you too trust Ramon to teach you how to do that by reading *Launch Your Brand*. When you're done, contact the team at Peralta Design to see just how fast, how creative, and how much easier marketing and branding can be.

I wish you well on your journey to finding yourself and sharing it with the world. Elevate your perspective. See a better path. Be the Giraffe

Chris Jarvis

*Bestselling author of GiraffeMONEY and Go Wild,
Host of the Be the Giraffe podcast.*



BELIEVE IN YOURSELF

*“Every great story starts
with adversity.”*

P R O L O G U E

ADVERSITY CAN BE YOUR GREATEST BLESSING

The Great Recession and COVID-19

Every one of my BrandU workshops begins with me sharing about how I was on the original startup team behind Priceline.com. Shared at the risk of dating myself, it was one of the most exciting times in my professional life. Working alongside an eccentric millionaire inventor for 10 years really shaped the foundation of Peralta Design's mission and expertise to this day: launching brands fast. As a general rule of thumb, taking a major brand from your career history where you may have 'cut your teeth' and using it in your brand story for your own career differentiator is a good idea. As you'll learn later in this book*, I chose to remain at Walker Digital in Stamford, CT, the startup incubator behind Priceline, instead of taking a full time job at Priceline in Norwalk, CT. The allure of trying to catch lightning in a bottle twice was just too exciting. Having already experienced the corporate in-house creative department life, the prospect of churning businesses and not business cards out in rapid-fire sequence as a full-time job was just too good not to pass up.

**For the full story of my professional career and the evolution of Peralta Design, go to My Story on page 129.*

Losing My Job During The Great Recession

My tenure as part of the Walker Family ranged from 1998 through 2008 and during that time I lost track of how often I was listed on paper as a consultant, an employee or was pink slipped. 2008 will forever be known as the year the recession hit hard and it profoundly impacted me and everyone else who worked in innovation at Walker Digital at that time. When the stock market crashed and the economy tanked, my hopes of cashing in on a big idea came crumbling down as well.

I will never forget that day I was summoned to his office for the last time. Jay Walker, who Forbes Magazine named the New Age Edison for his genius and prowess for invention, informed me that my creative services were no longer needed. This time the pink slip was for real. I remember thinking how I had given 10 long years of my life, and, at the time, I thought that they had been the BEST 10 years of my life, when in reality, I had no idea that the BEST years were yet to come. Although I was deeply hurt and shocked, I kept my cool and simply recited the Serenity Prayer to myself as I dealt with the pain of acceptance that I had just lost my job. I remember just sitting there, smiling and listening. It was somewhat of an out-of-body experience.

When the Worst Thing Becomes the Best Thing

Up until that moment, if I'm completely honest, I am not sure that I ever would have gone full-time with Peralta Design unless I had been pushed off the ledge the way this layoff had done to me. My dream, at that time, was to receive a major windfall from one of these Walker inventions I had been so diligently working on. After all, this was the place where Priceline.com was born. Priceline made many people instant millionaires and it is still one of the few

dot coms to still be a real-life viable business to this day. I was scared, but also very grateful to have received such an incredible education in entrepreneurship and leadership as well as a generous severance package from Walker Digital.

Again, to be honest, I didn't look at my severance package as seed capital for Peralta Design. Instead, I initially looked at it more as an hourglass of funds and I knew that every dollar I spent was going to bring my family and me closer to bankruptcy. The pressure was on. My first reaction was to reach out to headhunters to get my resume out there. I was pounding the pavement to find a job, and my main objective was to find a new position and continue to run Peralta Design on the side as I had been for many years. Well, guess what? In 2008, nobody was hiring; it was a recession and everybody was getting laid off. I couldn't come home with as much as a DVD or CD (we used to buy those back then) without feeling guilty that I hadn't found another full time job yet.

"God, if you want me to sell my house and my cars, I will do that. I trust in you." In that same prayer, I went on to also say, "Well, God, if this is what you want me to do, then I'm going to trust you. I'm gonna take this as a sign that I'm not supposed to get a full-time job and that instead I'm supposed to build my company." - My prayer the day I turned my future over to my Higher Power and asked Him to remove all fear of financial insecurity.

At that moment a decision was made: Peralta Design was going to be built; not as a side hustle anymore, but as a full time business.

A normal human reaction when anything negative happens to us is to ask, "Why me?" It was at that moment that I made the conscious decision to use 100% of energy toward where I was going, and not waste any energy looking back. When tragedy strikes, even if it may

not make sense at the time, we have to trust that there is a bigger mission, a higher calling and a higher purpose. That moment of grace and clarity helped me realize that I was going to need all of my energy focused on moving forward if I was really going to build a company and launch my own brand.

COVID-19 Pandemic Entrepreneurs

According to the US Census Bureau, more than 4.4 million new businesses were created in the U.S. during 2020—the highest total on record. For reference, that’s a 24.3% increase from 2019 and 51.0% higher than the 2010-19 average.

While we mourn those we have lost during the pandemic, it has been a boon to new business creation. Over 5.4 million new businesses were launched in 2021, which broke all previous US records. This increase in the number of new business applications surpassed the 2020 record of 4.4 million. In the pandemic, millions of people have decided this is the moment to chase their dreams and launch their brands. In comparison, The Great Recession of 2008 forced many people out of the safety of their full time jobs as many companies were forced to shut down. The Pandemic (which is now being considered an Endemic) has caused many people to resign from their full time jobs (also known as the Great Resignation) because they realized something very important: life is short and why stay where you are not valued or not needed or not wanted? They also realized that what matters most to them may not just be financial, but it may be mental. Their happiness matters.

We’re also seeing a big push for Entrepreneurship programs in higher education that wasn’t as prevalent 10 or 15 years ago. My generation, for example, was taught that if you went to college

you would graduate with a guaranteed job. That is sadly no longer the case. Instead we are beginning to instill a sense of entrepreneurship at an even earlier age. The Warren Buffett Secret Millionaires Club project I was blessed to work on introduces financial literacy and business concepts to grade school students.

Being an entrepreneur no longer carries the stigma of being 'unemployed', instead, we're seeing more and more institutions of higher learning launching their own entrepreneurial and innovation centers as generous donors fund these programs that we know will inspire more and more small businesses to launch and thus help create a strong economy and a more vibrant society.


If you're reading this and have an idea for a business that you want to bring to life, then this book is for you.

WHY I WROTE THIS BOOK

& How to Use It

I'm writing this book because I'm passionate about the American dream of starting your own business and I'm also very much a believer in the adage that "to whom much is given, much is required." I have been blessed with many second chances and have had many people help me along the way, so this book is my way of paying it forward. I believe that if we can make a good honest living, by sharing our God-given gifts all while helping people along the way, then that is the trifecta; the triple threat; the Home Run; the Holy Grail. We're truly fulfilling our purpose if we can use our talents to leave the world better than we found it. I hope that if you are reading this, it is because you have a dream to launch your own brand, and my hope is that this book not only inspires you to do so, but that it helps you do it FASTER.

Socio-economically, first-generation American, black & brown small business owners typically start their companies at a disadvantage: they often do not start with seed funding or enough capital to get beyond the self-employed/*solo-preneur* stage in their development. Historically, access to capital, whether it be from a bank or from a family member and/or inheritance, has been much more difficult to attain for the Black and Brown population. These same people don't often have the resources to educate themselves financially, or put themselves in a better position to succeed simply because they didn't have people



they could relate to that had been successful in business. I fell into this category when launching my business. I am first-generation Dominican-American and had little access to capital when I decided to launch my business in 2008.

You may be considered a disadvantaged business owner if you're a woman, a veteran, or disabled, but I'm here to remind you that whatever you think your "disadvantage" is, that can also be your superpower. Your intuition was born out of generational sacrifices and your mother's prayers mixed with your own life experiences. Tapping into your intuition will bring more authenticity into your work and your business.

Going into business on your own will require more grit and fortitude than any other endeavor you may undertake. I also firmly believe that everything you have ever gone through has prepared you for exactly where you are at this moment. Yes, both professionally and personally. I believe that for many of us our steps are predestined. If you truly believe that you are living your purpose and are using your gifts to help others then you will succeed. My goal is to help you do that with this book. So hang on, strap on your seatbelt and get ready for the ride of your life.

This book is meant to provide those entrepreneurs, small business owners and wanna-preneurs with the basic steps to launching your own brand. It's based off the many BrandU workshops I've presented as a SCORE volunteer and as a speaker for organizations such as the Minority Construction Council and the Connecticut Department of Transportation among others.

There are three main parts to launching your brand. Let's call it a launch sequence:

- **Branding:** Includes naming your company or product and creating a logo
- **Digital Footprint:** Includes establishing a website and an online presence
- **Digital Marketing:** Includes brand awareness and driving traffic to your site



As you read through each section, you should pause to really think about your answers to the questions posed to you as they along with a sound business plan and monetization strategy will really help you formulate a true picture of how 'flight worthy' your new business is.

Take the time to determine what aspects of the deliverables are going to be outsourced to an agency or to an employee and if you're like most entrepreneurs, you probably think you can do this all yourself. Understand this: you cannot be good at everything so reading this book and actually executing on these actions will take rigorous honesty on your part.

In addition to the practical, step by step instructions presented in this launch sequence, there are actual case studies of real clients that you may identify with better and those examples are meant to provide you with context for a deeper understanding of the principles of brand launching. We have also provided concrete examples of what the big brands are doing which will provide some guidance for you as you move towards your very own brand launch.

Finally, the appendix will give you a peek into the history of Peralta Design and a bit of context into my own life that I hope will inspire you to think bigger and to realize that we all have the ability to overcome insurmountable odds if we truly believe we are all predestined for greatness.

***LET'S GET READY
TO LAUNCH!***