

# Keys to Entrepreneurial Success in Business

**New book by sports marketing executive offers proven philosophies for building, managing, and growing a successful small business.**

Exclusive Sports Marketing, Inc. (ESM), the company **STEVE TeBON** founded and led for 23 years, was regarded as one of the leaders in the highly competitive grassroots/recreational sports marketing industry. In addition to producing top notch events and races, ESM was also known as an industry innovator with respect to attracting corporate sponsors, creating cutting edge promotional campaigns, and producing innovative print and electronic media marketing programs. So what was Tebon's secret?

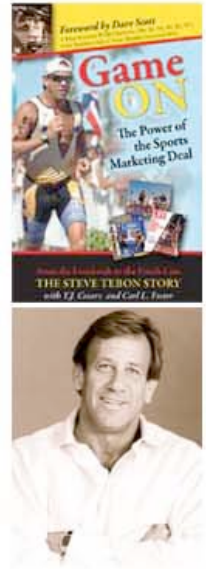
The answers lie in Tebon's new book, ***Game On: The Power of the Sports Marketing Deal***. In it, he lays out the philosophies and principals that enabled ESM to have the success that it did and helped to establish Tebon as one of the most respected CEOs in an industry with a long reputation of chewing up and spitting out small companies.

Instead of the same stale marketing theory often associated with similar books, ***Game On*** is chock full of case studies centering around ESM event programs and marketing strategies, and interviews with Tebon and high level executives from corporate partners such as Anheuser-Busch, Mercedes-Benz, Toyota, Pepsico, Nike, Club Med, Nestle's Brands, Publix Supermarkets, and many others. It focuses on practical applications that will prove enlightening to experienced marketers as well as those just entering the profession.

By seeing Tebon's philosophies in action, readers learn the importance of:

- Establishing, strengthening, and maintaining relationships (professional and personal)
- Creating an identity for your company and capitalizing on it
- Making "out of the box," and sometimes unpopular decisions because the long term benefits far outweigh the short term difficulties
- Using company assets as "building blocks" for future growth
- Going above and beyond what your sponsors/partners expect
- Knowing your "community"
- Hiring employees who "buy into" your vision, and are willing to put the necessary work in to see growth
- Developing into a sales focused CEO
- Never burning a bridge, despite the situation or circumstances
- Learning how your partners do business and adapting it to your own
- Building, living, and selling "The Vision"
- Becoming a visionary with respect to your particular business or industry

Whether the reader is a CEO, small business owner, budding entrepreneur, or a sports marketing student looking for that first job, this book offers important lessons, practical tips, and ideas that can make an immediate impact.



## About the Author & Sports Marketing Expert

**STEVE TEBON** is an entrepreneur, sports marketing expert and the author of *Game On: The Power of the Sports Marketing Deal*.

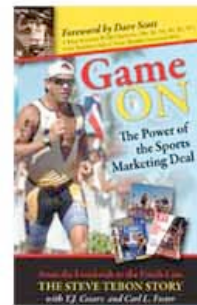
A 30-year veteran of the sports marketing industry, Tebon started Exclusive Sports Marketing in 1983 because he wanted to be his own boss and the one responsible for the success, - or failure - of a start-up company. Starting ESM with only a 3-race, local triathlon Series, Tebon eventually expanded the company's event portfolio to include a number of widely respected and emulated grassroots sports programs including: The Publix Family Fitness Weekend/Sprint Triathlon Series, The Bud Light Beach Volleyball Series, The Toyota Tundra Adventure Racing Series, The Bud Dry Rockin' the Rim 3-on-3 Basketball Series, The A1A Marathon Festival and many others.

One of the best salesmen in the corporate sponsorship business, Tebon attracted a "who's who" of high profile partners for ESM's sports programming, including: Anheuser-Busch, Nike, Coca-Cola, Pepsico, Gatorade, Nestle's Brands, Toyota, Publix Supermarkets, Winn-Dixie, Yamaha, Spalding, Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines, Club Med, and Holiday Inn. At its height, ESM was receiving more than \$2M annually in sponsor support.

Currently, Tebon is founder and CEO of Game On Sports Marketing Group, Inc., a sports marketing consultancy specializing in partnering grassroots-focused sports marketing companies with corporate sponsors and partners. The Boca Raton, Florida-based firm also advises clients on the development of strategic programming, event/athlete management, and the creation of print and electronic marketing pieces. With a client list that includes Mercedes-Benz, Lifetime Fitness, and Florida Atlantic University, Game On is making its mark in the lifestyle sports industry.

Since selling ESM in 2006, Tebon spent his time studying the grassroots sports marketing industry, lecturing, and lending his expertise as a marketing consultant. He also stepped up his triathlon training, and is a 7-time Ironman Finisher. He is confident that his Ironman experiences will play a major role in helping Game On Sports Marketing Group become a leader in the industry, as is noted in Chapter 9 of *Game On*:

*"There's no question that many corporations are headed in the direction of events to get their message across to the consumer. I don't think there's any question that being a 7-time Ironman finisher will help my credibility as far as sponsors and partners are concerned. It shows them that I've got significant experience on both sides of the business, and I think that is going to be extremely important as the industry continues to grow."*



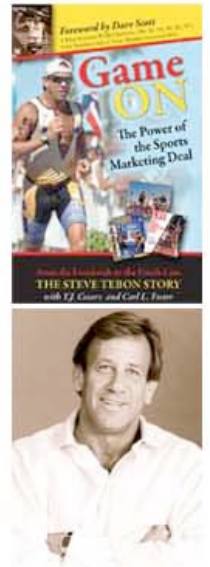
## Segment Ideas/Interview Topics

### Why ESM's programs were considered the "Gold Standard"

#### Learn how Tebon enabled ESM to become a leader in the industry

It's a business where you have to think "out of the box," and take chances to succeed and grow, and that's exactly what Tebon did. Tebon capitalized on successes to get the next opportunity. He discusses:

- How to get to the next level
- Why it's important to take chances, even if circumstances are not the best
- Why corporate partners want your business to succeed
- What business owners can do to insure they get the opportunity to grow



### Listen. Learn. Implement

#### Why it's vital to listen to those in your "community" and consider new ideas

As a CEO or leader, it's crucial that you take the time to listen to others and consider new ideas and philosophies, even if they are radically different from the way your company normally operates. Learn:

- The importance of giving customers & partners the chance to contribute
- What you can do to become more receptive to someone else's ideas
- How to implement new ideas/suggestions
- Why respect from customers/partners will grow simply by listening to them

### Why Relationships are EVERYTHING

#### Why Tebon's ability to maintain relationships was ESM's key to success

Nothing is more important to the success of your business than the leader's ability to create and maintain relationships. Tebon is a master of the craft, at both the professional and personal level. Discover:

- How relationships can lead to new business opportunities
- Why constant networking can become such a valuable tool
- The importance of NEVER "burning a bridge"
- What you can do to insure that your relationships stay solid

### Learning how industry leaders do Business

#### How learning what ESM's partners did brought the company success

Tebon has always been bullish on learning how industry leaders, and those you respect and work with, do business. Taking the time to learn what others do can pay huge dividends for your company. He explains:

- Why it makes sense to "follow the leaders"
- Why learning how others do it will make you a better businessman
- The value of being educated in areas outside your own expertise
- Why your partners success means success for your business

## **Sales Focused CEO = Successful CEO**

### **Why your ability to sell is your biggest asset**

Tebon learned quickly that if you can't sell, your company's life will be a short one. His ability to sell is what made him stand out among his peers and established ESM as a leader in the grassroots sports industry. Learn:

- The importance of becoming a sales oriented CEO
- Methods to help you conquer Corporate America
- Why hearing, "No," can be a good thing
- How just one success sets the stage for a future of successes

## **Using Assets as Building Blocks**

### **Learn the importance of using company assets as a foundation for success**

Tebon says that a huge reason for ESM's success was that the company was able to capitalize on existing assets time and time again, allowing him to build new assets in the process. He discusses:

- The importance of ESM's "5-Star Service" company philosophy
- How the word "Championship" became so important in the ESM culture
- Why it's vital to your company to develop new revenue streams
- Why employees are your companies biggest asset, bar none

## **Become a Visionary**

### **To get big, you have to think big**

To get to the next level, you have to constantly be looking for the next opportunity, and creating ways to develop that next revenue source. Tebon has long been considered a visionary in his industry, and the reasons why are clear. He explains:

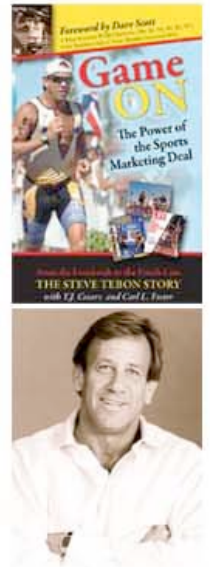
- Why an idea that sounds good in the boardroom often does not equate to success when put into practice
- Why it's important to reinvest in your company, despite the costs
- How innovation will set you apart from the competition
- What you need to do as a CEO to improve on this skill

## **Why the Future of grassroots/participant sports is so Bright**

### **The value of "participants" over "spectators" has finally been noticed**

Experts, including Tebon, believe that Corporate America has finally been able to see that "participants" are now competing with "spectators" with respect to becoming the more important customer base. Discover:

- Why smart companies are activating more participatory programs
- Why consumers have been successful in getting Corporate America to respond to their needs
- How companies like Ironman, The Competitor Group, and Lifetime Fitness have been so successful in responding to consumer demand



# What the Experts are saying about Tebon & ESM

“With Steve, you knew his best interest was your best interest. In the face of adversity or a challenge, he proved himself to be a winner, and in this business, you always want to go with a winner.”

- **Kevin Sreenan, General Manager – Southern Division, Mercedes-Benz, USA**

“Steve took the time to find out what we wanted, and then wasn’t afraid to get his hands dirty and go above and beyond the branding partnership. That earned out trust and longstanding sponsorships.”

- **Mark Wilson, Senior Manager of Sports Marketing, Anheuser-Busch**

“A huge reason you want to associate with Steve is that he genuinely wants you to succeed and believes that if his friends and associates succeed, he will too.”

- **Chon Searfoss, Senior VP Nestles Waters/Zephyrhills Water**

“Steve’s vision helped ESM write the race director’s handbook with respect to packaging the sport of triathlon. During the 1990’s, ESM was the gold standard among Florida promoters.”

- **Steve Meckfessel, COO, Ironman**

“People like to be around winners, and that’s what Steve and ESM are! It was a true honor for my family’s business to be associated with the Publix Family Fitness Weekend for as long as we were.”

- **Richard Gonzmart, President & CEO of The Columbia Restaurant Group**

“What separated Steve from his peers was his ability to establish relationships. He developed them to the point where each party obtained successes because of the other. He redefined the art of networking.”

- **Steve Scott, Nike Senior Sales Executive**

“Steve was a pioneer in developing creative ways to get brands exposure among a younger, lifestyle consumer group. That spelled success for events, and bottom line sales for Toyota auto dealers.”

- **Greg Turner, Current Director of OEM at the JM Family Group (Toyota)**

“Unlike many executives, Steve took things personally, because more than anyone else’s, his name was on the event. Publix always appreciated that mindset and passion.”

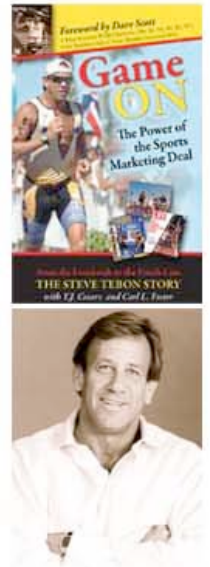
- **Mark Lang, former Publix Director of Marketing, and current faculty member at St. Joseph’s (PA) University, and Business Administration Ph. D. candidate at Temple University**

“Creating events for sites is an art, and Steve was a master. ESM events put heads-in-beds, and created significant economic impact for local communities. Working with him was always a win-win.”

- **Mark Jackson, Director of Central Florida Tourism & Sports Marketing**

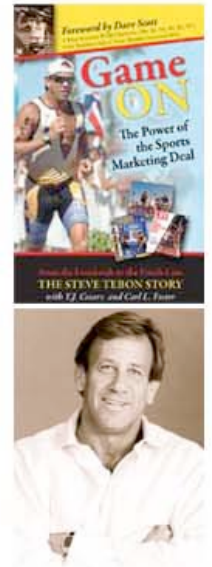
“Steve always gave sponsors more than their fair share. He was always more than just about his own company, that’s why so many worked with him and ESM for so long.”

- **Jorge Hancock, Honest Tea Sales Exec, former Coca-Cola Region Manager**





# Suggested Interview Questions



1. Why was the Family Fitness Weekend considered to be so cutting edge?
2. Over time, most of ESM's programs included a retail element. Why?
3. You spend a lot of time discussing the importance of using existing assets as company building blocks. Provide a few examples of what you mean.
4. Talk about the challenges of selling "non mainstream" sports to potential corporate sponsors and partners.
5. What's your best advice for the up and coming CEO in the sports business industry?
6. What were some of the strategies ESM used to keep sponsorship relationships with partners like Publix and Anheuser-Busch for so long?
7. Tell us about ESM's "5-Star Service" business philosophy.
8. Do you see your new venture, Game On Sports Marketing Group, going in the same direction as Exclusive Sports Marketing, or will the mission be different?
9. You stress having the ability to put ego aside, as you and your brother Dennis did when you decided to get out of the basketball business. Why is that so important?
10. Describe a situation at ESM where an existing relationship led to a new opportunity.
11. How have your Ironman experiences affected you as a businessman?
12. You consider the Bud Light Beach Volleyball Series to be one of the best grassroots sports properties the industry as a whole has ever seen. Explain that praise.
13. How did you get ESM employees to buy into your business model, with respect to the number of skills they were required to learn, and the number of "hats" they were required to wear?
14. Why do you see the book being such a valuable tool for entrepreneurs, business owners, and those interested in pursuing a career in sports marketing?
15. Why are you so "bullish" on the future of participant sports, especially endurance participant sports?
16. What do you most admire about Ironman, The Competitor Group, and Lifetime Fitness, the companies that have emerged as leaders in the endurance sports niche?