

2013 “Better Your Best” Contest Essay



Jennifer Holmes MIS Solutions

Gross Sales Up \$824,047

Net Profit Up 1,444%

Monthly Recurring Revenue Up \$19,418 per month

“Investing in Robin and the Producers Club Coaching Program has clearly been the best business and personal investment we have ever made. It’s provided the environment, tools, people, proven systems and resources for me to develop as a leader, salesperson and marketer. Without it, we wouldn’t have the success we enjoy today – and I’m not sure we would even be in business.”

January 17, 2013

When the Student Is Ready, An Amazing Transformation Becomes Possible

Dear Robin,

Before finding you, we were isolated like castaways on a deserted island. We didn't know how to get leads, who to ask or where to begin. It's been an amazing journey. To see just how far we've come, let's start with some history:

- **The early years.** In the mid-90s, our first clients came exclusively from referrals. 1999 was a stellar year for MIS Solutions. We sold over \$300,000 in products and services — while Lliam (my business partner/husband) and I both worked full-time jobs elsewhere and I applied to medical school. However, our workload demanded everything we had. We sacrificed on many fronts, financing the business through credit cards and rarely seeing our family.
- **A life-altering decision.** My medical school acceptance letter arrived. Should I pursue my dream of becoming an OB/GYN or become a full-time entrepreneur? Disturbed how insurance companies dictated patient care for profit instead of healthy outcomes, I worried about how imposed limits would impact my focus on quality patient care. I rejected my medical school acceptance and then quit my virologist research job at the Centers for Disease Control in 2000 to become our company's first full-time employee. Lliam stayed as a developer with his employer, using his salary to support the business and hire our first field engineer.
- **Client loss.** Two months later, our main client constituting 90% of our revenue announced they had hired the owner's son, who had been laid off by Microsoft. In crisis mode, we accrued debt. I networked, joined leads clubs and went to every business event I could find, trying to meet people and uncover leads. From 2000 to 2003, I networked, served on boards and relied on referrals to get business. Although we closed most referrals, they were our only lead source but not a reliable one. New leads were sporadic.
- **Loss of funding and referrals.** After 9/11 and the ensuing economic crash, Lliam was laid off from his high-paid developer job. Should he seek full-time employment to continue funding MIS Solutions or should we go for it? At that point, we had two full-time engineers. Our CPA encouraged us to take the risk, helped us secure a line of credit to pay off our credit card debt and provide working capital, and gave us lots of referrals. We grew. In 2003, motherhood ended my networking — and the CPA opened a technical services division so he could keep the leads for himself. Overnight, our main lead source disappeared.
- **Living on the edge.** Because we rarely secured a new lead outside of sporadic referrals, we held onto every client like life depended on it. Some took advantage by paying late or negotiating rock-

bottom rates, and we took what clients dished out. It was painful. We were vulnerable, trapped, and desperate because we never knew when, where or how the next client would arrive.

- **Delegating sales and marketing.** So we hired a sales person. For the next six years, we progressively hired and fired salespeople and business coaches, falsely believing that a salesperson would generate a consistent flow of leads. Delegating didn't work. In 2009, we faced the facts. Our salesperson wasn't generating leads, closing business or even covering costs. We were losing money each month – it was painful. Our strategy had failed — and we had wasted thousands of dollars.
- **When the student is ready, the teacher appears.** Since we had no more cash to pay a salesperson, I finally realized and accepted that I'd have to do sales and marketing myself. I found your Technology Marketing Toolkit online. After listening to the free CD, I was convinced we needed this program, but Lliam was skeptical. It was a lot of money and we were bleeding cash. I convinced him that if we were ever going to learn how to sell and market, we had to do it ourselves. With zero sales experience or training, the idea of becoming a salesperson scared me to death. Selling to very qualified referrals was easy — like taking an order — drastically different from convincing someone who does not know or trust you to buy from you. I had no idea where to begin to generate leads. How do you climb a ladder when you don't even know where the first rung is?

The toolkit was a lot of money for us. We justified it by firing our sales and marketing person, knowing we'd break even in three weeks. I promised Lliam that I would learn how to do this. Thus, a marketing student was born. I bought the Toolkit in February 2009.

- **The catalyst.** I eagerly opened your Toolkit like a child on Christmas morning. After reading the first three chapters, I froze. How was I going to do all of this and continue to work 80-100 hours per week with a 6-year-old and a 3-year-old who never slept? I didn't — I moved through chapters at a snail's pace and didn't do the work. Overwhelmed, I didn't know where to begin. Analysis paralysis nailed me.

Thankfully, you held an implementation session. I attended, hoping to learn how or where to even start. Your energy ignited my flame and I immediately went home determined to launch a Robinized website. (The Pronto Done-for-You Website package was not yet part of the program so it took five months to launch our site.) To stay energized, I consistently read your Marketing Strategy Brief and participated in monthly Q&A calls for Apprentice Members.

- **Let's sell something.** In November 2009, I ordered the Backup Disaster Recovery Kit and studied your implementation recording where you closed from the front of the room. I told Lliam the whole purpose of seminars was to sell something. Prior to you, we held an annual Tech Exchange event to educate clients on how to prepare their businesses for technology industry changes, but we never even considered selling. We had a false belief that if we positioned ourselves as experts, the sales would come. But that didn't happen. I learned from Robin's coaching that our belief system was so

wrong. Sales don't just show up. You have to work systematically to get them. So I told Liam that our annual Tech Exchange was the perfect venue – we had to sell. Brainstorming, we decided to sell managed firewalls.

In January 2010, we held a two-hour Tech Exchange and sold one-third of the room, walking away with \$39,480 in net new sales. Going from never selling from the front of the room to \$39,480, I was forever changed. This selling stuff and solving real problems was fun, exciting and tapped my passion for servanthood and the stage. I was hooked and ready to do some more selling. For the first time in my life, I was actually excited about the possibility of selling! I immediately wrote to Robin to share how she had changed our course — transformed me from somebody who hated sales to a sales rock star. Our story was featured as The Marketing Genius of the Month in your April 2010 Marketing Strategy Brief. (See the campaigns and lessons learned in Appendix A.)

- **Antidote to not marketing consistently, with no consequences.** Now I was on fire to make this new-found success systematic. If you have a steady flow of new leads and can sell effectively, you have options and ultimate freedom. Then I received your invitation to the 2010 Sales & Marketing Boot Camp and Producers Club Coaching Program. It was over \$1,000 a month — a huge commitment for us. I drooled over the sales letter and Producers Club benefits. Liam pointed out, “You haven't implemented 5% of what you already have. How is more 'stuff' going to help?”

I knew we needed the accountability the Producers Club Coaching Program required. Skeptical, Liam agreed we should invest the money. The event was amazing. I was introduced into an accountability group thanks to Doug Johnson. That was another turning point: We had to make weekly and monthly commitments and goals. It stressed me out, but it was the push I needed to get results and begin building lead generation systems. I started tracking my numbers, doing a print newsletter and running campaigns including a referral program. I set a Big Hairy Audacious Goal (BHAG) and set my sight on securing \$100K in monthly recurring revenue (MRR). Through the Pitbulls Accountability Group, I connected with Debi Bush and began working one-on-one with her to get things done. No excuses.

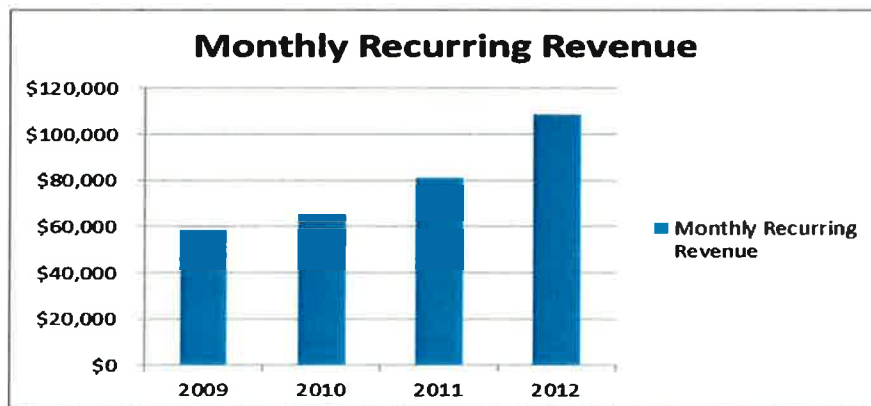
- **Thirsty like a sponge.** In July 2010, I attended my first Producers Club meeting. I met amazing people who were getting new leads and closing MRR consistently each month. I modeled the rock stars and implemented many of their great ideas, as well as asked Marketing Geniuses of the Month lots of questions to learn their routines, activities and strategies.
- **Total focus on marketing and sales.** At my first Producers Club meeting, Tom Malesic revealed his secret weapon: his marketing manager – Rich Crockett. I decided I needed my own secret weapon — I had to fire myself from everything except sales and marketing. In September, I looked for a part-time marketing person to help implement the strategies I was learning. A good friend, Shannon Smith, called saying she was looking for a full-time position. But we didn't have funds for a full-time marketing manager — even part-time would have been a stretch! I proposed to Liam that we cash

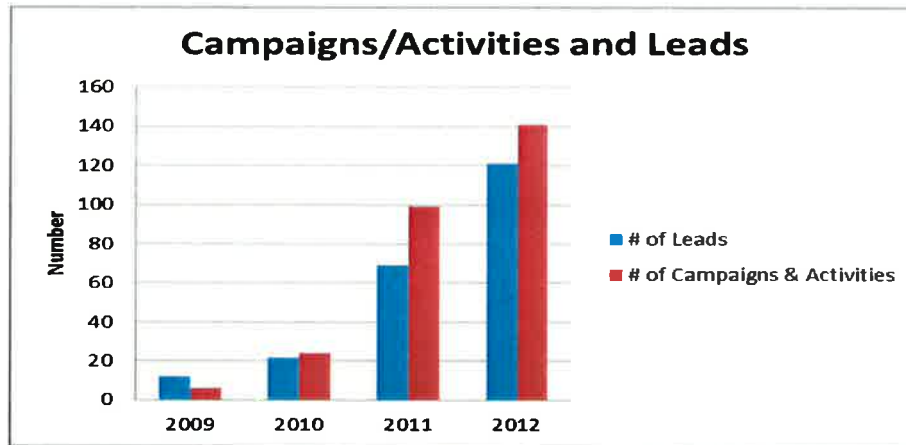
out our last retirement account, which would cover six months’ marketing salary. We had to make significant traction in six months or less because there were no more reserves. (We had been taking withdrawals the last few years to make ends meet and there was no more money.) We were literally at the bottom. Talk about pressure. If I failed, not only would I have blown our remaining retirement funds, but also I’d have to lay off my dear friend who was supporting her family. However, I was convinced that if you do the Robin work, you will get results. Failure was not an option.

I was totally transparent with Shannon. I told her that this was a huge risk, but I had faith. Although she had other great job offers with guaranteed stability and our offer was risky, somehow she felt she was supposed to be with us. I was shocked that she accepted. Now we had our secret weapon. Rich Crockett mentored Shannon and me. His help was invaluable. Rich encouraged us to implement a systematic referral program. He and Tom graciously shared their recipe and Tom’s “referral dollar” template. In late 2010, we added \$3,169 in net new MRR and \$5,818 MRR in 2011 – thanks to this referral program. I’m so grateful for both Tom and Rich’s referral program and their encouragement to use it.

Shannon and I began marketing like crazy people — it was messy. We screwed up, but learned. We did several campaigns, learning, applying our lessons and trying again. It worked. Our MRR increased from \$63,906 in September 2010 to \$69,429 in March 2011. I was counting my lucky stars because this meant we did it and we could afford to keep Shannon. Our numbers tell more of the story:

	2009	2010	2011	2012
Monthly Recurring Revenue	\$58,375	\$65,126	\$81,098	\$108,659
# of Leads	12	22	69	121
# of Campaigns/Activities	6	24	99	141





In 2012, we added a net new \$27,561 in MRR. Since our agreements are for three years, this increase meant an unbelievable \$992,196 in new revenue over the next three years and we broke through the \$100,000 MRR barrier. **We sold nearly one million dollars in new MRR last year — unbelievable!** If you would have told me that number was possible three years ago, I could not even have imagined it. Profits were up too. **From 2011 to 2012, our MRR increased by 134%, gross sales were up by 143% and net profit increased by 2,968%.**

So how did we consistently generate new leads every month? Not with one magic campaign but with many activities per your advice, sales practice, doing the exercises in the Toolkit, Managed Services Blueprint and participating in the Producers Club program. In short, we committed to an activity or campaign, implemented, documented, debriefed, noted the lessons learned and tried again.

Highest-yield MRR and ROI Campaigns and Activities

We implemented 99 marketing activities and campaigns in 2011 and 141 in 2012. In 2012, the following campaigns and activities provided our highest yield in net new MRR and Return on Investment (ROI):

- **Section 179 followed by the Producers Club Done-for-You Book.** We used your Section 179 campaign (direct mail and email) in November 2011. Although no prospects opted in, 20 on the list were opening emails as tracked by Vertical Response. In late December, we mailed them our new book entitled “21 Questions You Must Ask Before You Hire an IT Consultant.” Two called for an appointment, and we closed one in January for \$4,322 MRR and another in February for \$4,975 MRR. In late February, a third called and we closed another \$2,391 MRR. Combined, these three wins total \$11,688 MRR and \$420,768 over the life of the agreements. These three — in one quarter alone — accounted for almost as much as the entire previous year (\$15,972). We were now enjoying the snowball effect of our marketing efforts that began in 2009. New to marketing, it was hard to get started. However, combined consistency and persistence yielded great returns. Activities and campaigns work in a synergistic way to produce some pretty amazing results.

- **Cloud Computing Strategy and Sales.** Using your Cloud Blueprint, we implemented our own cloud platform. We had been talking about cloud computing in our monthly newsletter since 2010. (This highlights the importance of a monthly newsletter.) In June 2012, we held your standard cloud computing webinar, which started active conversations with existing clients.

In July, we sold a new prospect our cloud services for \$1,470 MRR. In fourth quarter 2012, we sold three existing clients cloud services for a total of \$8,798 MRR. The newsletter and webinar started positioning MIS Solutions as the first company to call when considering cloud computing. Had we not been positioned to sell cloud services, these clients would have left — taking \$6,149 existing MRR with them. Altogether, the four cloud MRR wins represent \$369,648 over the life of their agreements. We anticipate transitioning another two clients in first quarter of 2013.

- **Google Adwords Program.** We started the Adwords Beta Program in June 2012. That year it generated 23 leads, three new clients and we closed \$8,611 in new MRR, which is \$309,996 over the life of the contracts. As of January 2013, we closed another \$2,048 MRR and we have a preliminary “yes” on another deal for \$3,673 MRR. Because we’re in a large market, this strategy has been one of our most effective to date. A big thank you goes to Tim Conkle and Robin Robins for creating this pilot beta program. I also appreciate the following individuals of the Genius League for being guinea pigs on the beta program: Tim Shea, Tom Malesic, Sitima Fowler, John Motazed, and Linda Lynch. In 2012, I spent \$14,027 on Google Adwords to sell \$309,996. This is an amazing 22 times ROI! This program alone accounted for 30% of our net new MRR in 2012.
- **Client Upsell Focus and Strategy.** We followed your advice to run at least one client promotion quarterly, keep a record of services not yet sold to current clients and target them to buy more services. This is low-hanging fruit. In July, we hired an account manager and began systematically talking with clients outside of service calls. Our account manager started calling clients each month to talk about how we could help, how business was, etc. (relationship building). We also ran promotions in our newsletter for managed firewalls, phones systems, cloud services, two-factor authentication, secure passwords and our backup disaster recovery services. We upsold eight existing clients, for a total of \$6,802 in MRR — \$244,872 over the life of the contracts.

Several activities contributed to this success: monthly print newsletters, monthly e-newsletters, webinars, email marketing, ask campaigns, account management calls, business technology reviews for clients, email hardware promotions, and a laser focus on looking for opportunities within our client base for services not yet purchased. We developed an ascension path for our client base. If they are not using all of our services, we consistently engage them in conversations and when trigger events occur, we consultatively sell to get more services sold. Our biggest win was selling managed firewalls/UTMs (unified threat management) that provide automatic fail-over for Internet connectivity, content filtering, traffic shaping and detailed reporting on surfing activity.

- **Seminars.** Beginning in January 2010, we began selling at our annual client Tech Exchange event and sold \$39,480 in a two-hour event. Eager to develop my seminar selling skills, I participated in your two-day speaker training held in July 2011. This fantastic event helped me put work into action for our next Tech Exchange. In 2011, we marketed to 483 folks, had 40 RSPVs and 30 in attendance. We scheduled 12 technology business reviews, sold seven upgrades for our Backup Disaster Recovery (BDR) Service, one BDR trial, positioned ourselves as experts on cloud computing, social media and marketing, and obtained four video testimonials. Three of the 12 technology review meetings generated \$8,000 in project revenue, \$45,400 in product sales and \$4,541 MRR — for a grand total of \$216,876 over the life of the contracts. We spent \$7,200 for 30 times ROI. When I shared the details of this event at the 2011 October Producers Club meeting, I competed and won the first-ever Golden Cone Award.

In 2012, we focused on a soft consultative sell for our cloud services (I could have sold the room but wasn't ready as we were still beta on our cloud services) and provided insight into industry changes that most impacted business. Distilling what's going on in the industry for clients grows their trust in you, deepens your relationship, and breeds brand loyalty and advocacy. Our topics were cloud computing, wikis, password management, phone systems and email marketing. This event contributed to our cloud conversions of existing clients. The results were one phone system deal for \$14,343 and four clients thanking us for all we do, which translated into contract renewals of \$9,851 MRR or \$354,636 over the life of the agreements. This event contributed to our 97% renewal rate for contract clients in 2012. Our seminar track record clearly demonstrates that seminars are a powerful strategy for selling, trust building, generating leads and referrals, and client retention.

- **Shock and Awe Box + Sales Process.** Leads don't automatically convert to paying customers. In fact, securing a lead is only half the battle. Once you secure a new lead, you must successfully close it. A proven sales process encompassing differentiating techniques, minimal risk for the prospect, credibility, professionalism, and fun is required to convert your leads into good, paying customers. We used your Slippery Slope Sales Program, Sessions 3 & 4 from the Managed Services Blueprint and information gained from various Producers Club meeting sales trainers (Gary Pica, Randy Schwantz, Tom Hopkins, Robert Stevenson, and Steve Miller). These helped us standardize our sales process and develop our closing tools, including our Shock and Awe Box, our "17 Reasons Why You Want To Outsource Your Computer Support to MIS Solutions" booklet, "12 Reasons We Are Better" document (directly from the Blueprint) and Apple Basket Technique. In 2012, our sales process enabled us to **CLOSE** new prospects totaling \$20,299 in MRR or \$730,764 over the life of the agreements. I'm not sure we would have successfully closed these leads had I not participated in the 12-week implementation session led by Jeff Johnson in December 2011.
- **Monthly Print Newsletter.** To build relationships with clients and prospects beyond just services, we have consistently mailed out a printed Tech Times newsletter to our list of 367 clients and serious prospects since May 2010. Initially, we used lumpy mail (Legos) to launch our print newsletter and

continue to use lumpy items 3 or 4 times per year to engage readers, have fun and generate demand.

Clients and prospects tell us our content is informative, educational and fun. In fact, when debriefing a prospect-turned-client (a gain of \$4,095 MRR in 2012), he stated that our newsletter had helped him BEFORE he was a customer. He said it was good content, sparked ideas and illustrated we were the real meal deal. Photos and stories of our kids and community involvement snag the biggest readership. Many clients feel connected to us and, therefore, share on a more personal level, which leads to referrals. Although it's difficult to show a specific ROI, our print newsletter generates active client engagement and deepens our relationship — resulting in 18 referrals in 2011, and 20 referrals and eight leads in 2012.

Winning Marketing Activities and Campaigns

Our success stems from many different marketing activities and campaigns — not a single silver bullet. Below is a list of additional activities we used to get results. (See Appendix B for a complete list and calendar of activities used in 2012.)

- Monthly print newsletter and email newsletter
- Referral campaigns: cruise contest, iPad contest, valentines, free turkey/ham offer
- TMTK's Done-for-You Tech Tip Postcards and email teasers (with opt-in landing page)
- Online marketing including search engine optimization (SEO), Google Adwords PPC, website video enhancements, home page redesign, Robinized Done-for-You Website
- Direct Mail: three-step backup disaster recovery (BDR), Best of Gwinnett Winners BDR campaign, Whale Campaign with books mailed bi-monthly
- Nibblers (We mailed our Done-for-You Book to those who were active online but didn't call.)
- Telemarketing by inexpensive Odesk person (scrub lists, webinar invites, direct mail follow-ups)
- Email Campaigns (Section 179, hardware promotions to clients)
- Webinars and seminars including our Annual Tech Exchange (topics included network security, BDR, efolder, email marketing, a Joint Venture BDR breakfast, cloud computing, and a wiki titled: "How To Avoid Pointless Meetings")
- Public Relations (Guest columnist in Gwinnett Business Journal, recognized as Best IT Consulting Firm in Gwinnett from 2006 – 2012, Best of Gwinnett voting contest by local magazine. Note: We encouraged clients and readers of our newsletter to vote for us and we'd thank them with a free ice cream cone.)
- Community activities (winter coat drive, two FREE computer recycle campaigns, canned food drive)
- Client Upsell/Relationship-building (offers in newsletter, email hardware campaigns, monthly account manager calls to clients, monthly health score/dashboard trending analysis, Business Technology reviews, random thank-you notes and gifts to top clients, Godiva chocolates to clients, holiday cards to clients, client interviews/client of the month features, pet of the month contests, Client Praise Wall, customer satisfaction surveys and formal complaint process)

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- Tracking critical numbers monthly (gross sales, net profit, leads, lead sources, close rate, new MRR sold)
- Shock and Awe Box
- Done-for-you book: “21 Questions To Ask Before You Hire An IT Consultant”
- Sales document: “12 Reasons We Are Better Than The Rest”
- Robin’s Slippery Slope sales process and free network audit for consultative sale
- Training: one-day implementation session, two implementation 12-week sessions, Speaker Training, Cloud Summit, Toolkit, Managed Services Blueprint, Quarterly Producer Club Meetings
- Monthly marketing calendar worksheet and 90-day marketing plan
- Testimonial book
- Guarantees: full 90-day money back, pay for performance for guaranteed response time to critical issues, network health score guarantee with financial penalties
- Quarterly Marketing Report Card (located on the TMTK dashboard)

Producers Club and TMTK Programs: an Absolute “Must”

Participating in the Producers Club and the multitude of programs offered by TMTK is definitely a critical ingredient for our successes. (See Appendix C for a snapshot of our involvement, participation and recognition in TMTK/Producers Club.)

Key Benefits and Breakthroughs

Our investment in the Producers Club Coaching Program has clearly been the best business and personal investment we have ever made. It’s provided the environment, tools, people, examples, systems, proven track records, and resources for me to develop as a leader, salesperson and marketer. It has delivered 15 major benefits and breakthroughs to make Liam and me smarter, more strategic business owners:

1. **First you have to undergo a mind shift and belief system transformation.** It’s challenging running a business — doubt knocks at your door often. Quarterly Producers Club meetings inspired, motivated and encouraged us. Being on the phone or in the room with other successful IT business owners who gave ideas, challenged us to stretch, and encouraged us forward really empowered us and helped change my belief system about sales. Deep down, I believed sales was not a respectable profession. Learning that it’s really connecting solutions to people with problems and ultimately about serving others transformed me. I realized and experienced that selling was reputable, fun and exhilarating.
2. **Generating new leads every month is doable even if you have NO sales or entrepreneur experience.** Your material, especially the Slippery Slope program and the sales trainer programs featured at Producers Club meetings, can help you become a student of sales and marketing, train and continually improve. Every time we go to Nashville for a meeting, Liam tells our kids we’re

going to work on our MBAs. It's true — there is a ton of practical real-life education at each meeting.

3. **There is no one magic campaign or activity.** Marketing activities are like the ingredients of one mouth-watering, delicious chocolate cake. Combined, they work together synergistically to generate great results not possible separately. To get real momentum, you have to do lots of things consistently, constantly build your list, and match each marketing activity's message to the target. In the beginning, I thought, "How in the world can we do more than one campaign a month?" Although the first newsletter and campaigns were hard, each month they got easier — and then fun.
4. **Build and display confidence to get sales.** You told me that you cannot fix the world with broken hands. Taking this as a personal challenge, I read books, trained, practiced my sales process, and built my confidence through experience. If you want to get confident doing sales and marketing, get going. The lesson is in the doing. Last summer I was sharing our numbers with my fellow Pitbulls Accountability group when Adam asked how we were getting such traction. Michael Mellott said, "Look, she's confident now and prospects are buying because of it." It's true. My new confidence was a game changer for us.
5. **Embrace failure as your ally.** Before Robin, I was a perfectionist afraid to fail. Now I'm a recovering perfectionist. I realize when you fail, you learn and you can't learn unless you try. Keep trying, repeat what works and stop what's failing you. If you do the work and follow Robin's advice, you will have success — as well as failures that make you stronger. Reading Brett Harward's book "The Five Laws That Determine All of Life's Outcomes" or listening to your interview with him is a "must."

After you pointed out that I was NOT going on enough appointments, I hired an appointment-setter. At first I failed miserably at selling, but I learned each time and revamped our sales process to create a winning formula. I never would have developed this proven process had I been afraid or unwilling to fail.

6. **Exclusive access to winners and rainmakers is worth its weight in gold.** When you are a member of the Producers Club, you have access to high-profile, successful people, their stories and secrets for success. Through your programs, I've personally talked with Mark Sanborn, Lou Ferrigno (the Hulk), Joe Polish, Patrick Thean, Verne Harnish, Bill Rancic, Nido Qubein, Arnie Bellini, Robert Stevenson, Sean Stephenson, Jim Camp and Tom Hopkins — they all shared their secrets and were a great inspiration. (In addition, connecting with Bart White from your circle of friends will save me over \$50,000 in 2012 taxes.) It pays to be in TMTK's circle of influence.
7. **Better toolsets translate to higher managed services profits.** Pre-Robin, we had no sounding board for products and vendors — we made educated guesses about the best PSA, backups and ticket management tools. You introduced us Connectwise, eFolder, Sophos, and RapidFire Tools. Connectwise transformed our business and empowered our team to deliver, helping us keep a

pulse on customer satisfaction, response times and ticket counts. Before implementing a new tool, Lliam seeks opinions, perspectives and invaluable advice from fellow Producers Club members.

8. **Super-implementers get results.** You round out your communications with frequent client success stories. The common thread: They all implement your material frequently and consistently to achieve amazing results.
9. **Skate to where the puck is going to be.** Your most successful clients constantly do market research and ask campaigns, stay up to date on industry trends, and prepare. In 2011, we studied cloud computing, thanks to your Boot Camp speakers and following the Cloud Blueprint Series. Those events and programs helped us develop our own cloud offering. Without this, we would have lost over \$6,802 in MRR in 2012 (or 6% of our MRR). When our first qualified lead from Google Adwords wanted to fire its cloud provider, we were positioned — ready and able to sell \$1,470 in new cloud MRR.
10. **We claimed freedom.** Now that we have a consistent flow of new leads and close MRR on a regular basis, we have freedom to fire bad clients (and “weather” a client’s leaving). In 2012, we fired one client totaling \$2,189 MRR. This freedom is priceless.
11. **Telemarketing is key for direct mail.** Your direct mail campaigns generate leads if you include telemarketing to scrub and build a highly qualified list. Now, we use voicedrops and telemarketing in all direct mail campaigns.
12. **Tapping the power and resources of the brain trust is a huge benefit.** There is real power in belonging to a group of IT business owners. No matter what problem you face, someone in the Producers Club program has not only been there but survived. Call Robin Central — Jeff, Andrea or Robin Yost will connect you quickly with someone to help you avoid pitfalls and mistakes. Last year, one of our top clients was doing a job for their biggest client near Memphis. They needed boots on the ground and called us. I called Jeff Johnson, TMTK’s Head Marketing Coach; he connected me to Jon Parks, who had someone onsite immediately. Likewise, we’ve put engineers onsite in Atlanta for other Producers Club members as well.
13. **The Shock and Awe Box is one of many available tools and a very powerful Producers Club benefit.** Adding it to our sales process warms up the prospect, shortens the sales cycle and even has prompted some prospects to sign at our first meeting. Other tools that have greatly helped us are: the Done-for-You Book, Pronto Robinized Done-for-You website, Point of View Persuader, Disaster Recovery plan template, and the monthly e-tech tip campaigns with Done-for-You landing pages.
14. **This degree of personal and professional growth would not have been possible without your help.** Your Producers Club program has taught me that I truly love to teach, sell and grow as a leader. Our

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company's growth in leads, revenue, MRR and profits are proof-positive that your programs build and grow IT business owners and their companies.

15. Quality of members is one of the biggest advantages of being in the Producers Club. Prior to you, I had never been in a room of competitors who are warm, generous and willing to share their wins, failures and things they would do differently, and challenge and support others. This creates an amazing, safe environment to grow and develop your business. For example, at the January 2010 Producers Club meeting, Sitima Fowler shared with me how she maps out and tracks campaigns. (Appendix B, tracking our campaign activity by month is a direct result of Sitima's guidance.) Through the Producers Club, we have met absolutely brilliant people and built friendships that extend beyond business.

Without these rock stars' contributions, we would not have the success we enjoy today — and I'm not sure we would even be in business: Robin Robins, Andrea Welch, Jeff Johnson, Robin Yost, Debi and Phil Bush, Tom Malesic, Rich Crockett, Sitima Fowler, John Motazed, Diana Spurgus, Doug Johnson, Andrea Woolf, Michael Mellott, Chris Freeman, Adam Morris, Dave Johnson, Dan Izydorek, Daniel Wang, Nathan Viverios, Tom Andrulis, Randy Hall, and Tim Conkle. Others who supported our journey are Jan Spring, Ted Hulse, Regina Vignone, Tim Shea, Linda Lynch, Tom Conway, Victoria and Brad Meyers, Jon Parks, Peter Verlezza, Alex and Jennifer Bleam, Jeff Brodie, Dennis Barry, Brian Guenther, Elizabeth Hill, Matt Carter, Wayne & Gloria Klug, Courtney Kaufman, Wendy Gaunt, Jim Stocker, Marc and Cami Ross, Robin Cole, and Erik Havens.

My marketing pros at MIS Solutions helped execute like crazy to make our success possible. Thanks goes to Shannon Smith, Chelsea Coggins, Betsy Wynkoop, and my entire MIS team (including my mom, mother-in-law and brother who take turns looking after our kids while we attend Nashville meetings).

I send a big thank you to the Kaizen group (Fred Holzager, James Gast Jr., Gary Habel, Kirsten and Steve Smith, Nancy Bradley, and Kendall and Elisa Reinford). It's been a true pleasure mentoring the Kaizen Accountability Group. They are absolute rock stars! Through our time together, I've become a stronger marketer, leader and salesperson.

Our incredible profits enabled us to pay off all business loans in 2012. As for the future of MIS Solutions, I anticipate a steady growth rate of 30% in 2013 and beyond. Going forward, my goals are to sell \$8,000 to \$10,000 new MRR per quarter and build a team and processes that can sustain our new marketing machine.

In five years, I anticipate MIS Solutions will be one of the top MSPs in the Atlanta market. Ten years from now I hope to continue growing at 30% per year so we can philanthropically give back to our local community in bigger ways than we do today. I plan to use my gifts of speaking and marketing to lead, encourage and grow others. Humbly and in gratitude, I thank you. Thank you for having the vision, commitment and relentless red-headed determination to train and build 250 millionaires through your programs.

Words of Wisdom

A true marketing system is like a chocolate cake recipe – it delivers a consistent and reliable outcome, repeatedly. Engaging with Robin through her Technology Marketing Toolkit, Managed Services Blueprint, Producers Club and supporting programs is like baking an award winning chocolate cake. She gives you the exact recipe, a comprehensive ingredient list and the techniques (in order) to produce a true sales and marketing engine that delivers consistent results, reliably. If you are serious about transforming your sales and marketing results into an award winning chocolate cake recipe, then engage with Robin and her team. Our results are proof positive that anybody, regardless of background or current situation, can get unbelievable results by working with her.

Final Thoughts

My Papa TJ said, “Get an education because it’s one of the most valuable things you can get and nobody can ever take it away from you.” Robin, by investing in your programs, I’ve gotten an incredible education on how to generate leads, make sales, speak on stage and be a confident role model for others. Our business will continue to thrive and succeed because we’ve mastered marketing and selling. You say most problems can be solved with money and new sales. Thank you for teaching us how to accumulate both. We are in the best position we have ever been. You’ve given us the freedom to become financially stable, enjoy our work, balance our lives and focus on what matters most.

I hope our story can be an inspiration and encouragement for others to implement your marketing strategies, join your Producers Club and succeed. As a teacher at heart, I will continue sharing what we’re learning to help other business owners reach their full potential. I would love and be deeply honored to serve as your 2013 Spokesperson. I look forward to continued opportunities to help you achieve your mission of developing 250 IT business-owner millionaires.

Your marketing student,



Jennifer Holmes

P.S. I believe I’m an excellent candidate for your 2013 Spokesperson position. But don’t take my word for it. In Appendix D, hear what 32 fellow Producers Club members are saying about Jennifer Holmes and her team at MIS Solutions, Inc.