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**ROBIN WILSON**

**From \$1.23 To \$35 Million In Sales**  
Building HER Brand of Wholeness

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## BUSINESS SUCCESS

# Robin Wilson

## From \$1.23- \$35 Million in Sales- God had His Hand in Her Business Ministry

BY KATHLEEN D MAILER



Hello ladies, you will want to grab your coffee, a highlighter, pen and paper and take lots of notes while we sit down and talk to Robin Wilson of Rob-Wilson Home, New York!

I am excited to introduce you to an extraordinary woman who isn't afraid of hard work! Take a look at just a few of her accomplishments.

Robin is an eco-friendly interior designer and a lifestyle brand with products sold at *Bed Bath & Beyond* and is the **first woman with a branded line of custom kitchen & bath cabinetry sold by over 400 dealers nationwide.**

She was first **featured in Oprah's magazines** and her work and brand has been featured in national press such as *House Beautiful, Elle Décor, Esquire, Essence, and Natural Homes & Gardens*, among others.

Her design firm continues to handle select projects across the country. She is an **ambassador to the Asthma & Allergy Foundation of America**, on the **board of the Sustainable Furnishings Council**, and has partnered with consumer products giant Panasonic to promote their latest line of cutting edge products for the home. In May 2013, **her furniture line, Nest Home by Robin Wilson, premiered at the International Contemporary Furniture Fair (ICFF) in New York.** She is an **author** and so much more!

Welcome Robin, I am so excited to sit down with you and chat a little about the wonderful things you have accomplished!

**RW:** Thank you Kathleen, I am excited too, about this opportunity.

**KM:** Let's just jump right in here as I don't want to waste 1 minute of this incredible gift of time you have given us! Here at TBW we believe that our business is our ministry. How does this fit into your **BRAND of business?**

**RW:** I wholeheartedly agree. I was the kid that had allergies and asthma so bad I couldn't go out to play. I remember looking out the window at the kids playing and really felt how much I was missing out. As I grew, I got more and more educated and wanted desperately to find some answers or some way that I could not only change my life around me but help change others' lives. I then read the book, *The Dream Giver* by Bruce Wilkinson and I remember him clearly speaking to my heart, "With faith you can succeed". This dream on my heart is relevant and important to God! Since then I focus on educating families and providing them a good service to be able to have a life of wellness. That's my ministry!

**KM:** The next question that BEGS to be asked is, of course, your story.... \$1.23 in your pocket to \$35 million in sales. How did that happen?

**RW:** Wow! You want that in a nutshell huh? O.K. I left Corporate America in 1999 when the company I was with went public. I had some shares in the stock and it looked like a great time to take the leap of faith off that cliff and become the entrepreneur. I had screaming inside of me. I was confident that with the right capital I could build a great business, live my dream and my passion. I started my business in 2000.

What I learned was, running a business looks MUCH easier than it really is. By 2008 I was running on FUMES. I had blown through all of my savings, all of my resources, everything. Let me tell you, I made a lot of money but I OWED a lot of money. Do you know what I am saying? This was upside down! I didn't know how to get off of that train at the time. I had a lot going on at this time. Personal issues, life in the way, things everyone faces a time or two in life.

My defining moment came 2 weeks before Christmas. I was having a Christmas party for my staff at this upscale restaurant in New York. They worked so hard for me I knew I had to give them something great this year. Dressed in the 'cute' shoes I came out of the party knowing that all my suppliers are taken care of, all of my staff is set for Christmas, and I am ending the year caught up on everything.

I went to the bank machine and I had \$1.23 in my bank account. It was 2 weeks before Christmas and nothing else coming in that month.

I felt sick and depressed as I turned to walk the 28 blocks to my apartment, in New York, in winter (snow covered streets), in the 'cute' shoes that seemed like a good idea at the moment.

I was praying, "God what am I going to do? I have paid everyone else first and I have nothing left? I don't know if I can keep going? I need you to help me!" That is when the memory of the book, *The Dream Giver* came to me. FAITH! Have faith everything is going to be OK. Then, God brought to mind, in January I had a licencing deal coming through! God would provide for my future! Things were going to be ok. So many times when we are in a 'dark' place we forget that the future is bright. Feeling better, I stepped into my apartment. Then the reality of the moment hit me again. Surfing through my empty cupboards (New Yorkers, right? What can I say, we eat out a lot!) all that was in there were a few crackers, condiments, a whole lot of nothing. With Christmas looming over me, I cried "God you took care of my future, I need you to take care of my needs today!" I shut the cupboard door as my phone rang. My Mom was on the other line. "We couldn't figure out what we should get you for Christmas. We decided the best thing would be is to give you \$500 cash! Is that ok?" BEST CHRISTMAS PRESENT EVER!

When I got the money I made some hard decisions. Here is what I learned moving forward.

1. Get some good food in your cupboards, make healthy food at home.
2. You need a great attorney, a great accountant and great cash flow for your business to succeed.
3. God gives us a shot of 'oxygen' which changes our perspective – and that is what we need to keep on going.

Oh, and by the way? My first licencing deal made over \$7 million! Since 2008 we sold at retail over \$ 35MILLION of our brand, textiles and products.

**KM:** That is an incredible story! I often say, "Remember, the desolate wasteland is your success marker that is on the cusp of the fulfillment of your dreams!" That seems to be the case here too! SMILES

**What was the biggest challenge you had to face or obstacle you had to overcome?**

**RW:** That is an easy one, CASHFLOW. The truth is there are moments when it looks like your business is NOT a success. You get caught. That is business. That is life. What you need to do is the hard things. Have the courage to call a customer or vendor and tell them "I am going to be late in paying you." Whatever you do, do not to hide from it but to acknowledge it head on.

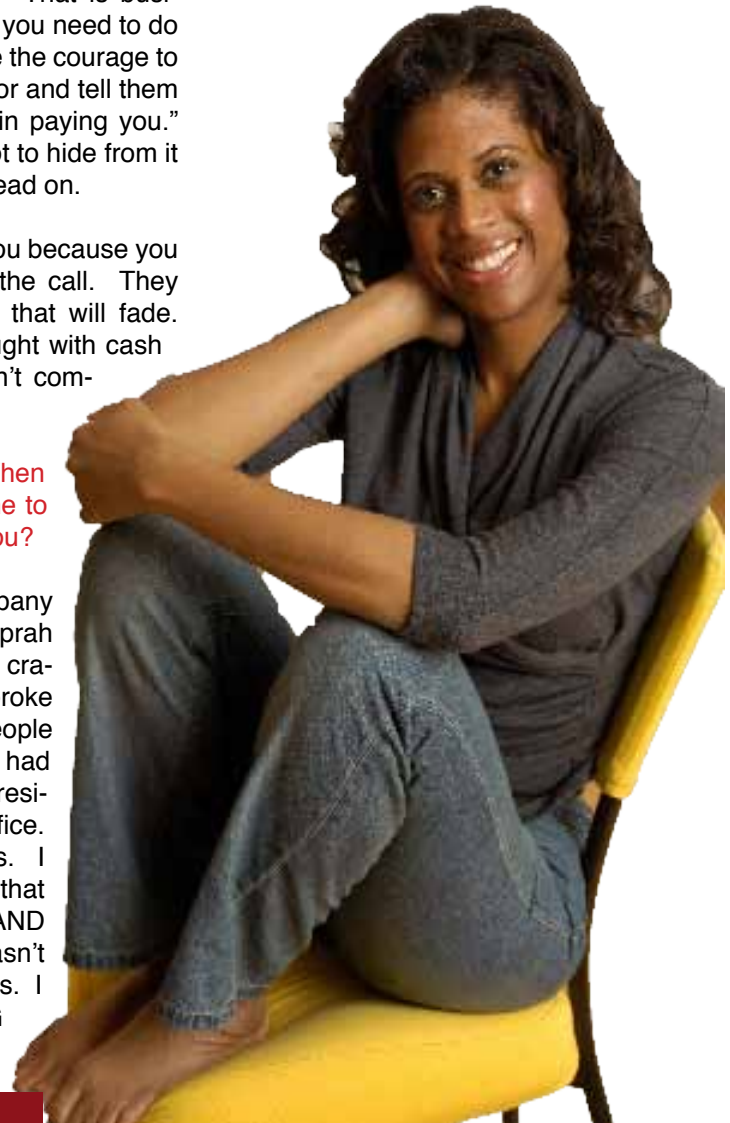
They will have faith in you because you had the guts to make the call. They may not be happy but that will fade. They know you got caught with cash flow down but you didn't compromise your integrity.

**KM:** GOOD STUFF! When did you know it was time to hire someone to help you?

**RW:** In 2004 our company had been featured in Oprah Magazine. That was a crazy time. Our server broke because so many people looked at our website. I had all of these calls to President Clinton's home office. I had to still see clients. I didn't really understand that we were building a BRAND at that moment so I wasn't prepared for the success. I would get 18 VERY BIG

CALLS a day, but couldn't get to the phones to call people back or even do the billing! It was time to get someone to answer my phones. It was time to get a bookkeeper. I needed help.

At some point along the way, I also took stock of what I loved to do, and didn't love to do. I didn't like the nuts and bolts of design. I am a visionary. I want someone to use their skills. This is when I learned to work ON my business and not IN my business. Standing in a paint shop figuring out what shade of paint for hours? NOT me, young designers who want a start love that stuff. So, I now train them and give them a start. It makes me feel good to give back, but also makes it easier to take care of business.





**KM-** What would be your top 3 pieces of advice to build a successful brand

**RW:**

**1.** Do something that is authentic. Live your brand. For example, if you are a smoker don't be the wellness business.

**2.** Be honest even if it hurts. Like I said, call the vendor and say, "I can't pay you now." It will go a long way to build trust.

**3.** Be slow to hire and quick to fire. You have to ensure your staff, and consultants understand your company brand inside and out. They need to know it is built on integrity. It is YOUR name on the door NOT theirs. Ultimately it your responsibility.

**4.** Here is my BONUS one, train your team up, just like what the bible says you need to do with a child. They need love and support and training. You can't expect them to know what is on your heart unless you are willing to pour out in theirs.

**KM:** What's next for Robin?

**RW:** Well, the ink is still wet, I just signed with Panasonic! I am so excited. I am promoting their eco-friendly styled products that are great for homes of wellness.

Their products are also energy efficient. Many people don't know this but Panasonic is 100 years old and is a \$100 BILLION company. They are the #1 provider for phones and baby monitoring and so much more! I am thrilled to be a part of this. I am writing my second book which is always easier (as you know Kathleen) than your first one! (chuckles)... My first book, I can remember, sitting on the subway and writing it with my Blackberry! Hey! It worked! LOL

Building our brand and quality, affordable, eco-friendly, and allergy-free environments. Now we are expanding to many sub-brands. It is all very exciting!

**KM:** Thank you SO much for taking time out of your schedule and away from your daughter today to sit and share with us. We are praying blessings over you and your business. May God take your good heart, great works, and new season of life and multiply it for HIS glory and HIS greatness is Jesus' name!

Ladies go on over to, <http://www.robinwilsonhome.com> to find out MORE about this incredible woman. There is so much she has to offer that we could not do it justice on these few short pages.

Be sure to put some of these tips into action TODAY!

Robin's answers (as told to) Kathleen Mailer.