

Insider Promo  
Secrets To  
Winning More  
Deals

Gabe Gerhardt

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# GOING FROM \$0-\$5 MILLION

## **Introduction**

My name is Gabe Gerhardt; I'm the CEO of US Flash & Technologies. Let me start off by saying that I never intended to be in this industry. To be quite honest, before getting into this industry, I really never gave a second thought to where logo'd products came from or how they got here. Sure, I noticed a golf ball or a pen with a company logo on it, but I never thought about all that. I was greener than most when I got into the promo business.

## **My Background**

From the time I was very young, the game of baseball was a huge part of my life. Pretty much everything revolved around my baseball schedule. I played through high school and won a league championship, then went on to play at a local junior

college, where we won a state championship, and then received multiple scholarship offers to play for Universities. I chose to play baseball for Hawaii and spent the next few years on the Island of Oahu playing baseball and Majoring in Business.

After graduation, I had the chance to play for an MLB organization. It wasn't exactly the deal I was looking for, so I turned it down and waited for the next opportunity. However, the next opportunity never came. While waiting for that next chance, I ended up getting hurt, and that led to me hanging up my cleats for the last time.

Although I was very sad to see the game pass me by, it did leave a blank slate from which I could start to build something outside the game of baseball.

### **Starting US Flash & Technologies**

In college, I had majored in Business and Marketing, but never really focused on a specific industry. Upon graduating, I immediately jumped into the world of insurance. Although the industry wasn't for me, I did learn that I really liked working with clients, and I certainly had a desire to be a consultant of some sort.

The next industry I plugged away in was the mortgage industry. I was lucky enough to work for a very reputable mortgage company, and soon became a top producer and was given my own team to manage. It was here that I really learned the value both of working

with clients, and of teaching others what I had learned and being a part of their success.

When the mortgage industry collapsed in 2007, and with a new wife and child, I started again from a blank slate. I had no idea what I would do next. I was referred to the promotional industry and within a short time I was hooked. I knew I had found my new home.

With a new direction to pursue, US Flash was created in 2008. It was just about the worst economic time to start a company. The US financial system as a whole was on the brink of dissolving. Banks were on lock down and foreclosures were at an all-time high. It was pretty much a world-wide depression.

Against everyone's advice, we decided to start a new company. We certainly struggled for quite some time. We were selling the same products as quite a few suppliers. We were trying to make a name for ourselves, but sometimes it felt like we were too late to the party. We were on limited funds and couldn't get a bank loan anywhere.

When we were probably a couple months away from folding up US Flash, I was thinking about what we were going to do, and remembered something my professor told me in college, "make it easy to do business with you and they will".

Honestly, this one thought changed our business for the better. We shifted our focus away from the

products we were selling, and moved our focus to our distributors. We started focusing on what makes it easier for our distributors to make more sales. We blatantly asked the ones who would pick up the phone what would make their jobs easier.

The answers from our distributors were so helpful. We came up with our '20 Hot Styles at one low price.' We instituted weekly pricing, where prices would remain the same for a week instead of changing daily as most companies did at the time. Daily changes made it extremely difficult for distributors to quote their clients. We took the 20 best selling styles, combined them with the most popular standard colors, and said, "Here you go distributors. Give your clients options, choices, and don't worry about the price...it's all the same."

This new approach to the USB market took off. We went from \$0 - \$5 million in sales in less than 2 years. Since then, our idea has been repeated, and it has led to an industry standard of offering clients multiple options at the same price; we helped shape the industry.

Please know that the purpose of my telling you this is not to brag, but simply to illustrate how a simple change in focus was all that was needed to turn failure into success.

### **The Industry Imperative**

I have seen more distributors losing deals to other distributors, losing clients to suppliers that put re-order

paperwork in the packaging they deliver to your client, and most of all, losing clients to online direct sellers.

This book is for every promotional product distributor who hates to be asked, “Can you match this price I found online?” It is for every product distributor that wants to start experiencing a lifetime of loyal clients who won’t leave you for lower prices.

Let’s get started!