



1,000 Dollars and an Idea: Entrepreneur to Billionaire: Expanded Edition

By Sam Wyly

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By Sam Wyly

Expanded edition with new chapters on the Great Crash of 2008 and looking ahead.

Self-made billionaire Sam Wyly is a natural storyteller. In this expanded edition of his memoir, he recounts his experiences establishing and expanding companies on the leading edge of advancements in technology, energy, retail, and investments over the last five decades. From the hardships his family faced trying to hold on to their cotton farm during the Depression to the coaching he received on the high school football field, Wyly describes how his early years in Louisiana prepared him for what lay ahead.

Risking \$1,000 of his savings, Wyly founded University Computing in 1963 and took it public two years later, becoming a millionaire at the age of thirty. Throughout this book, he reveals the decisions and strategies behind his many business successes, including founding Sterling Software, growing the small chains of Michaels Stores and Bonanza Steakhouses into nationwide brands, and founding Green Mountain Energy, the largest provider of cleaner energy in America today.

Wyly also discusses the "Great Crash of 2008" in historical perspective, offering insights on our current financial crisis and the path to recovery including the importance of green energy for the future.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Country boy makes good in this down-home tale of self-made multimillionaire Wyly. In his humble post-Depression Louisiana roots, Wyly learned his first business lessons from football strategy, his father's tiny newspaper business and his mother's bargaining skills. A lucky meeting propelled him to the University of Michigan's Business School and his first corporate job at IBM, where he had to work fast to keep from succumbing to culture shock as he discovered there ain't no Bubbas in Michigan. Energetic and restless, he soon left IBM for Honeywell and then created his own technology companies, rescuing failing businesses, founding Green Mountain Energy and devoting himself to environmentalism. Citing Sam Walton as a hero and Ross Perot as a personal friend, Wyly stresses the power and privilege of self-creation and speaks honestly about what he's learned: that failure is crucial to achieving success, independent thought is imperative, luck serendipitous and power useless unless it is wielded for good. Though the message is a good one, the meandering storytelling and not well-known author might make this book a hard sell to a trade audience. (*Sept.*)

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From School Library Journal

As a highly successful entrepreneur who has been involved in a steady stream of successful business ventures, Wyly could have felt compelled simply to write the usual autobiography. Instead he also shares with the reader a set of universal lessons that he learned throughout his life and that he adroitly weaves into his story. Starting with his experiences growing up on a Depression-era cotton farm in Louisiana through his early days as salesman for IBM and Honeywell, Wyly lures the reader into his tale. The stories about his role leading companies such as Sterling Software, Bonanza Steakhouses, Michaels Stores, and Green Mountain Energy, among others, will also capture the attention of the general business reader. His description of his involvement in these ventures and the lessons he learned therein, when combined with business advice gleaned from years of interaction with such leading capitalists as Ross Perot, Michael Milken, and T. Boone Pickens, help to make this a solid business memoir; recommended for business collections.—Richard Paustenbaugh, Oklahoma State Univ., Stillwater

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Review

"1,000 Dollars and an Idea is more than mere memoirs. Each personal tale, written with humor, candor, and spirituality, has an underlying business or life lesson." *—Dallas Morning News*

"Wyly clearly loves beating the competition and pursuing goals…[he] keeps looking for new forms of success." *—Wall Street Journal*

"A joy to read…Sam Wyly is a wonderful American character: a natural entrepreneur and builder with an outsized personality and humor to match his success. This book captures the magic of the American dream." *—Walter Isaacson, CEO of the Aspen Institute and author of Einstein: His Life and Universe*

"Sam Wyly has been an extraordinary visionary for the long term…I highly recommend this exceptionally entertaining and inspiring book." *—John Mackey, Founder, Whole Foods*

"Sam Wyly is an entrepreneurial genius who inspires both new business ideas and spiritual renewal. *1,000 Dollars and an Idea* is a courageous tale of a creative and generous life." #8212The Rev. Canon Sally G. Bingham, President and Founder, The Regeneration Project

"Sam's book is an inspirational journey through the early years of online computing, the creation and growth of the software products industry, and the many and diverse achievements of one of the most important entrepreneurs of the 20th century." #8212Ross Perot

"Spanning four decades and remarkably diverse industries, the career of Sam Wyly#8212a true original#8212shows what good ideas, strong will, and access to capital can accomplish. #8212Michael Milken, Chairman, The Milken Institute

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