An Interview with Susan Wilson Solovic

Susan Wilson Solovic, CEO, SBTV.com, speaks with
Growthink University’s Dave Lavinsky
Dave Lavinsky: Hello everyone. Dave Lavinsky here from Growthink and I’m really excited today to be able to interview Susan Wilson Solovic.

Susan Wilson Solovic is the CEO of SBTV.com – Small Business Television.

SBTV.com is the first and only video news and information destination site for America’s small businesses.

Susan and SBTV.com have won the Stevie Award (the Oscars of business) for the Most Innovative Company up to 100 employees. And, AT&T awarded SBTV.com and Susan the Innovator of the Year award for pioneering a new industry.

Susan is also the author of “The Girls’ Guide to Building a Million Dollar Business” which is consistently ranked among the top 25 books for women in business on Amazon and was listed as a “must read” in Entrepreneur magazine.

Importantly, when I first heard of Susan and SBTV.com, I was really impressed by the company and her accomplishments, but when I heard that she had accomplished what she did without outside capital, I simply had to interview her to find out more.

So, Susan, thank you so much for taking the time to speak with us today.

Susan Wilson Solovic: It’s my pleasure, Dave. It is a great introduction, too, I hope I can live up to that.

Dave Lavinsky: I’m sure you will. Can you start by telling us a little bit about SBTV? And how can entrepreneurs and business owners who are listening to this call get the most out of your site?

Susan Wilson Solovic: Sure. SBTV got its origin because I actually grew up in an entrepreneurial family, and I started out as a traditional television as a news anchor and reporter, and I was always dismayed and disappointed that I can never sell stories to my news director about small business.

And so my career took me on, and life goes on, as they say, but when the opportunity came to me to purchase the name SBTV, I started thinking about what can become of that. What could SBTV, small business television, be. And of course the first thing you think of is a cable channel, but I have a couple of partners and we all agreed that cable was to be outdated eventually and that really, when and where you want to consume media is going to be a consumer’s choice not a scheduler’s choice.
So if you want to watch it on your mobile phone, or you want to watch it on your television set or your computer, you know, its going to be everywhere, anywhere, and anytime based on consumer needs.

So we started to talk about television on the internet, and so we focused on that because there was no electronic media, and there really isn’t - up to this day - no electronic media that just focuses on small business. So we launched SBTV in January of 2004 on the internet and people said we were nuts.

Video on the internet will never work. I can’t tell you how many times we heard that. But we believed, and we kept pushing forward, and as they say, the rest is history. Because everything is starting on the internet, or video on the internet, rather. But what we’ve built, and what our goal and our mission has always been, is to focus on the need of our primary audience, and that is small businesses.

They are starting, they are growing, they are learning to manage. They are beginning to find that capital you were just talking about. And even some of them are looking for an exit strategies. And so our goal was to provide them with timely news and information that they needed in their businesses.

So timely from the respect that we do broadcast news, so we actually produce a daily news broadcast just for small businesses, and then also timely in those high-level critical information thing that they need to know right there and there to help them with their businesses.

So, for example, it might be, “What are the three things that I should think about if I’m trying to write a business plan to get a loan?” They can come to us for that kind of information. Now, you might say, “Okay, Susan. But there are other resources like that on the internet.” There certainly are.

But there are two key differentiators for us. One is that, according to a University of Michigan research study, it takes an average reader about four minutes to read a 2000-word article. We can deliver that same information in about 60 seconds. So, business owners with time and resource constraint obviously want to consume that information in the most expedient way.

But the second thing is, while there are a lot of great media brands, some of my competitors of course in the print arena are out there, but none of them have a human personality. So we wanted to create a side that feels like, this is your next door neighbour who also happens to be like a successful smart business person that you can talk to anytime, day or night, and trust the advice the information it provides.

So I started out as the primary face of small business on SBTV. In fact, they joke around here and call me the Susie Orman of small business. And we’re developing now our team
of advisors of other small business experts, I should say, who are on the site. You know, we want to talk “with” our audience, not “at” them, because it really is all about their needs and their time.

**Dave Lavinsky:** Excellent. On the site, you have lots of different topics from green business, to legal, and management, then marketing. So, a lot of small business owners and entrepreneur are going here and learning all the different tactics that they should be using. Is that a correct statement?

**Susan Wilson Solovic:** Right. Like I said, we’re kind of a three-legged stool. We have the daily “this is what’s hot today”. This is happening on Capitol Hill, with health insurance, and this is why you need to know about it because it’s gonna impact your business.

And then we do what we call the “critical information transfer” so the key thing that you need to do on certain aspects that you have questions about, or here is what you need to know about protecting your intellectual property, and things like that. And then the third element is that sort of inspirational entertainment aspect of some of our content of a business owner’s story who successfully took an idea from the mind to the market site.

What we don’t do is we are not a seminar resource. We’re not a trainer, if you will. So what we like to do is partner with the right organizations and direct our audience to those resources after they have seen our article on, or watched a segment from us about protecting their intellectual property.

They may say, “Oh, that is really something I need to pay attention to more closely and to learn more,” then we can direct them to an organization like Score or a small business development center that can really work with them and train them more about that particular subject.

**Dave Lavinsky:** Excellent. Can we turn a little bit to bootstrapping because I was really excited with what you did. I hear bootstrapping a lot. What does it mean and how does it affect our listeners?

**Susan Wilson Solovic:** Well, you know I think that, first of all, one of the main questions we get, and Dave I bet you get it, too. People say, “Oh, I’ve got this great business idea, but I just need this money. Where can I go to find some money?” And so,
I look at everyone and say, look you know if you got this idea and you know it’s viable, and you’ve done your research, and you’ve done your planning, most businesses start off with very little funding.

You know, usually less that 10 thousand dollars, and they are funding it out of their pockets, or they’re going to a family member or something like that, or using credit cards, even. But, entrepreneurs are really innovative. They are very practical. They are very frugal.

They know how to get a lot done with very little. And I think that what makes great companies successful - because you do know how to be flexible, and you do know how to really make a lot out of nothing. So, for me, even now when people say, “Oh economy is so bad,” or “Oh no, what am I going to do?”

You know, the impact on small business because we certainly aren’t getting handouts from the government. But you know what? We’re used to bootstrapping all the time. We are used to saying, “Okay, I just gotta cut my corners here a little bit, and do this, and scale back”. We are used to that. Bootstrapping to me is just being creative enough how to get something done without a big budget to fund what you are trying to achieve.

Dave Lavinsky: Got it. What are the advantages of bootstrapping? As you mentioned, it forces you to be creative to grow in your business. Any other advantages?

Susan Wilson Solovic: Yes, certainly. I mean, when you are bootstrapping, you can’t grow as fast. But certainly, if you want to take out loan, let’s say... there is always the risk of your bank calling that loan, or you putting up a personal collateral. If you default, I mean, you could lose your home.

So there is a lot of risk involved there. But also, if you are taking outside investors into your business, it’s very easy to loose control of your own vision of that company. Depending on how many those investors, how much money they are putting in, and how much of your business you are willing to sell them for that amount of money, you know they can really come in and they can even fire you at that point in time.

So the cost varies from the cost of getting outside money as a loan, or the cost of the possibility of losing control of the company and certainly diluting your interest in the company.
Dave Lavinsky: Are there any disadvantages you see or things that you really wanted to do but just could not do because of lacked the capital?

Susan Wilson Solovic: Oh absolutely, everyday. (Laughs.) Absolutely. I mean, as I’ve said, we have grown in a very smart way. We became profitable in July of ‘06. So, we have planned so our growth can be incremental growth based on how much we are able to bite off depending on our revenue.

If we had outside capital, my goodness, we could have really ramped up. We could have hired more people. We could have bought more equipment and things that we needed, done more marketing. Absolutely, we would have grown much faster. But as they always say, “The race is not always to the swiftest.”

Dave Lavinsky: Agreed. So, what does your decision making look like today, after you have grown the company to a point where your revenues are up and you are profitable? What does your decision look like today if an outsider came to you and said, “Hey, I’m willing to give you X dollars for X percent.” What is your rationale at this point?

Susan Wilson Solovic: Well, we’re at a much negotiating point at this point. If somebody went in and gave us outside money, we are at less of a risk of losing control of the company at this point in time. That puts us in a much stronger position, and we are looking for some outside capital now for the first time to help us grow faster.

And I also think that the decision making really goes in this manner: We know we’re not going to go out of business if we keep doing what we’re doing. We are going to be a solid company. So if we are going to go out and get outside capital, and bring in investors, whether it’s an institutional investor or a pool of investors, the key for us would be to bring in someone who can bring in a certain level of expertise and contacts that we don’t have at this current time.

So it’s not just about handing over a check and saying, “Here you go, Susan. Call me up if I have a huge return of my investment.” (Laughs.)

But we really need someone who becomes an integral part of the business in terms of not controlling it, but certainly helps us from a strategic direction standpoint, and opening doors, and making those contacts for us.
**Dave Lavinsky:** Excellent. I’ve had some interviews with prominent angel investors and VCs, and really, the key point is that those investors, as you say, they’re really a partner, they’re not someone to write you a check.

The right people have a lot of expertise, have a lot of contacts that can have a lot of value. I like what you are saying here. Correct me if I’m wrong. What I’m hearing is that, when you are at the earliest phases, the entrepreneur or small business owner, it’s good for them to bootstrap at the earliest phases.

It forces them to be more creative. It forces them to make progress and to get to a point to raise capital on much better terms - (a) They don’t desperately need a capital and continue to grow, and (b) because the enterprise has a much bigger value, and they can give up a lot less control. Do you agree with that statement?

**Susan Wilson Solovic:** Yes. I totally agree with that. It’s a whole different ball game, and I think people who take money on too quickly often find themselves in a situation where, let’s say that the company grows, and they have an opportunity to sell it to big, big company.

Unfortunately, you know, they won’t get as much return from all that initial vision and hard work and equity that they could have had they not diluted themselves along the way.

**Dave Lavinsky:** Got it. I definitely agree with that. What do you see as the biggest challenges of bootstrapping?

**Susan Wilson Solovic:** The biggest challenge I think is, when you start growing and see the opportunities out there, you have to prioritize. You can’t do it all, not with the resources that you have.

So it’s typically sitting down in the room and throwing everything out there and then deciding, okay, what are the three or four things you’re going to pick and focus on and put those above the line. And then, draw a line and then put all the other opportunities below the line. And that’s hard to do.

When you are a growing company and you see things out there, and you say, “Wow. I got to do this, but I can’t let this one go.” But, you can’t do everything and do it well. So you have to decide, these are the things I’m going to focus on. This is the direction I’m gonna go.
Dave Lavinsky: Got it. On the flipside, that’s also a benefit. If there’s one word that I probably use more than any other word, it’s “focus.” As a company, you have to focus. You can do 10 things okay, but you can only do one thing great. The flipside is that when you focus on three or four priorities, you can do a great job on them because you have to. And that’s great. When you focus, that is great.

Susan Wilson Solovic: You know sometimes, that’s tough for an entrepreneur. Because typically the entrepreneur is the visionary, they’re creative, they’re innovative, and they see opportunity around every corner. I sometimes kid my staff here, and my partners, that I have ADD (laughs) because I’m constantly coming up with things. Luckily, my partners are great.

They understand that aspect of my personality. My team does. So, they’ll walk and say, “Okay fine, Susan, and which of these other things do you want us now to stop?” (Laughs) Yeah, it brings you back to reality.

Dave Lavinsky: What about partners? You mentioned partners a couple of times. Did that help you in terms... are these partners in a sense... they also own equity shares? And does that help you in terms of running and starting and growing the company without capital? The fact that like yourself, they chipped in sweat equity or some of their own personal time?

Susan Wilson Solovic: Right. Absolutely. I am an attorney by education. I went to night law school and the corporation I was working for was sold shortly after I graduated. So, I said, “Timeout. I wont practice law for a while.” So, what I ended up doing was doing a lot of divorce cases, but also the fun part of what I did was working with small companies and setting up their legal structures.

And I used to despise it when someone comes into my office and says, “We’re gonna go and be partners.” Because typically it was a couple of friends. They say, “Oh, we have been best friends since kindergarten, and this is going to be great and wonderful.” And there was no why or reason to why, whether they were a good fit or not.

They weren’t agreeable ever to put up a buy-sell agreement, or having one with the 51 percent or 49 percent. And so often, I would see those things blow up after a year, two years, three years. And friendships are lost. If it happened to be a family member, you
know, it would alienate and strain those family relationships. So I was really against partnerships.

But today, I will tell you that SBTV.com will not be where we are today, if I weren’t not fortunate enough to have two great partners. The interesting thing about the partnership is that, I actually own the largest number of shares. But we all three put in money and lots of sweat equity.

But the thing that made us grow quickly and make it effective is that we are all very different people. So, we all have our strengths and weaknesses. We all came from different backgrounds and areas of expertise.

And when we approach a product, we’re naturally gonna approach it in very different ways. What happens with that diversity of experience and perspective, typically, we come up with the best answer. And we also have our strengths so we run with those strengths. I am the creative, you know, the editorial, the visionary kind of a person.

My partner Dan is the one who runs our sales and the finance side of things. And then my other partner Michael is the technology genius behind the platform that we have built. If you have tried to start a company like SBTV in 2004, without a partner like that - someone who is willing to put money and sweat equity into the game - it would have cost you a fortune.

**Dave Lavinsky:** ...with that kind of technology...

**Susan Wilson Solovic:** Absolutely. Right. You could have done it, but, you know, you have to raise a lot of money to have done something like that.

**Dave Lavinsky:** Excellent. Actually, we'll add this...we'll it should be added to our list of finance resources...which is partners – taking on a partner that has an area of expertise.

Now you have somebody that’s willing to put in possibly some dollars and also their sweat equity, which when you look at the amount of sweat equity, like Michael’s putting on the tech side, would probably cost you millions of dollars in outside financing that you didn’t have to go to the process of getting.

**Susan Wilson Solovic:** Absolutely. That is so true. It’s our differences that make us strong.
Dave Lavinsky: Agreed. I have a partner at Growthink, Jay Turo. We’ve been partners for over a decade now. He’s more in the finance side, I’m more into the marketing side. I think, our story is that we just clicked very, very well. We are different people, and we don’t always get along, but when we fight, we fight with smiles on our faces and we get into a conclusion, and we believe in each other and like each other. You have a similar thing with your partners?

Susan Wilson Solovic: Right. Absolutely. I mean, we have arguments in our offices. We’re all three, you know, almost yelling at each other. And then, we sit down, and stare at each other and we would just start laughing. But, we are all passionate about what we are doing and that’s good.

Dave Lavinsky: That is great. What about some of the mistakes that you or one of your team might have made early on? Any lessons you learned that you think that might help other entrepreneurs and business owners?

Susan Wilson Solovic: Number one…I Think that we made a mistake early on, when we started hiring some of our team, not all of them, but some of them - we hired at a very young age and inexperienced, and as opposed to paying a little bit more and getting a more experienced, higher-level of individual to do a particular job. We were counting our pennies.

A couple of times that backfired on us. It probably ended up costing us more to do it that way because you had to go back and redo. We could have just hired someone with the experience to do it. So that’s one mistake. And I think the other mistake is, that when we first started, we probably did not spend enough time researching how to really sell a website.

Part of that was, there really wasn’t anything like us at that time. So how do you compare? But nonetheless, I can remember when my partner Dan and I made a few sales calls, and we said “We can put your logo on our website, and it’s all about small business, and this and that...” And they started talking to us about, “What is your traffic?” or “How many uniques do you have?”

He and I were looking at each other and like, “Uh-oh”. (Laughs.) So now we know that all. And I watch as now see younger website companies start up. They often come to us and say, “Hey, let collaborate” and I’m all about collaborating. I think that is so critical
particularly in the small business arena, but really, in any business. Friendly collaboration does nothing but strengthen the whole package of both companies if done right.

So, we have a lot of websites that want to collaborate with us, and usually it’s a yes, but sometimes you see that it’s a situation that they’re just doing nothing but trying to get a jumpstart based on your education and experience. So, we’re sort of reluctant to do that.

So I’m just asking the same questions that I was asked in the early days – “How many unique visitors” or “What’s your traffic?” and “What’s your loyalty?” And I get a lot of, “Well, we get so many hits.” I’m thinking, okay, well, when you can answer the questions the way they need to be answered, call me back.

**Dave Lavinsky:** Right. They should get their metrics down.

**Susan Wilson Solovic:** Right. Exactly. You really need to understand what it really is that you are offering before you start that path of trying to sell or set up partnerships.

**Dave Lavinsky:** Agreed. I’ve heard a tape of you, speaking about the four keys to building a million dollar business. I thought that was really awesome. I was hoping that you can explain what they are.

**Susan Wilson Solovic:** I hope I can remember them. I think one of the first one probably was that I believe that one of the reasons that businesses stay small or they just flounder and get by is because businesses start off thinking small, and if you’re thinking small, you are hindering yourself from the get-go to growing big.

What I encourage people to do is, on a best day, at the end of the day, what would you like your business to look like? What kind of company would you like to be running? And then work backwards from that vision. Because that helps you put the steps, and the measurements, and the guides in place to know what you need to do to get to that level.

**Dave Lavinsky:** That’s what you do monthly, quarterly, annually or just when you start a business or ...
**Susan Wilson Solovic:** It certainly evolves. Absolutely. It’s an ongoing thing, but it has to start somewhere. It’s very important because let’s say you start out on your own. You are working every single day, and by the time you get your work done when it need to be done for customers and clients, and you’ve done some sales calls to keep something on the pipeline, and you’ve done your bookwork, and you know what its like.... you don’t have time for that strategic thinking.

So, if you are thinking in advance and you put little pieces in place so you know that okay... when I get about this level, I’m going to need this type of person to come in and help me to go to the next level that I want to get to. So it’s kinda like putting a puzzle together.

But, if you don’t at least have some pieces out on the table, you’re just going to sit there, and you’re just gonna keep doing it doing it doing it, and one of these days you’re gonna be burned out. Or, you’re going to make missteps along the way and be frustrated.

**Dave Lavinsky:** Got it. That was the first one.

**Susan Wilson Solovic:** That’s the first one. The second thing, I think, is just making sure that... I’ve kinda alluded to this, but... you are hiring the right people also. Which is, if you start a business, and it starts to grow, and you are scared to bring in somebody else, and then all of a sudden you’re overwhelmed... a lot of companies reach out and they say I just have to have somebody now, and they just grab the first warm body they see.

Typically that’s gonna be one of your friends, a family member, or somebody you know pretty well. They may or may not have the kind of skill sets that you need to grow at that level. So if you think in advance about what the job description is, what are the skill sets that you are going to need to augment your own skill set so that you can focus on what you do best for the business, then the initial critical hires will be right hires to help you build the company to next level.

It is also important to understand, when you are starting a company, what you want the culture of the company to be. The mistake that people make, and I’ve made that same mistake myself, is you focus on skill and you forget about the fit. And I always tell/say, “Look, skills can be taught.” I mean, you certainly have to have the basic ability but skills can be taught.
But if you get someone that does not match the culture or is not inline with your values, it’s going to cripple your company. That is also a very important feature.

And then the third aspect of that is, when you are growing a company, particularly when you start own your own, maybe with a couple of people, and then you are all working together, you are all team, you are all down on the trenches, and then as the company starts to grow, and you’re adding more people, you as the CEO have to learn how to step up to that role and actually be the CEO.

You can’t be a part of the team anymore. You can’t be down in the trenches doing the daily detailed work. You are the one who now has to run the company. That means making decisions that are based on objective facts. Not, you know, and this is particularly true for women - a lot of women think that their businesses are their families.

So they get emotionally involved. When they are not making decisions that are for the best of their companies and based on their objective criteria, they often postpone or delay those decisions until it really does have an impact on the company.

And one of the examples I give is, in January of 2008, I fired an employee. On the day that I fired her, towards the end of the day, she went out and packed up her things off her desk and everything, and said goodbyes and then left the building. And when she left, everyone started applauding. Now I knew she was causing trouble, she was a morale drag, and she was hard to work with. But I had no idea that it was that disruptive. And I should have done it sooner. Yeah but, you know, that’s part of that sense of... She’s been here a while. Gosh, she’s been a part of the team. I really hate to do this. But you have to do, at the end of the day, what’s best for the company.

The third thing is really about marketing. This is not about Marketing 101. This is about building a brand, that is one of those brands that people fall in love with. If you are going to start a business, and you say, this is what I do, this is what I’m great at, this is why you should do business with me...and you could take off your label and your logo and head at the top of that list and splashes somebody else’s on there and it would still fit, you don’t have a value proposition. You are not creating a strong brand.

So you need to look at the market place and you need to say and identify, “What is missing?” What is missing in the market that I could deliver that would add value and would set me apart from the rest of the people doing what I am doing. You know a lot of people say, “Well, I can’t I invent anything.”

No – it’s not about inventing. It’s about the process and the way of doing business. It takes some time. It takes asking questions of potential customers, of vendors, of getting a sense of “If could offer something to you that could make your job easier or give you
more of what you want, what would that be?” And then, how could you as a business do that? That’s what makes a great brand. That’s what makes great companies. If you think about... I’ve just interviewed David Barger who is the CEO of Jet Blue.

If you think about it, theirs is the company that went up against well-established airlines. You know, new kid on the block, but very creative and innovative in their approach to how they were delivering what has become a really commodity product. And now they are the seventh largest airline in the industry. So, it was their being innovative and creative - nothing earth shattering, but just a different approach.

**Dave Lavinsky:** There’s no new technology or something novel they have. They just did it better.

**Susan Wilson Solovic:** They didn’t run out or get a patent or anything. They were just very innovative and identified some things that the passengers were not getting that they would like. So that is third thing.

The fourth thing, I think, is to really be able to understand the financials, the process, and the operations of a business. There is a much different, a big difference between creating a job for yourself and having income coming in and putting a shingle out that says I’m in business, and creating a real business.

A business is something that is going to become bigger that you, and is going to be sustainable with or without you. And you want to make sure that 1) You have operations and processes in place that can maintain that continuity of the business and allow it to continue and operate smoothly as people move in and out of the business. 2) The second thing is that you really need to understand is the financial side of your company.

And I talk that a lot more with women than I do with men. But a lot of people get into business because they are passionate about something related to that business. Something they really want to do or something they are good at. But they know how to pay attention to the nuts and bolts of the finances of the company. And they could look at maybe a spreadsheet say “Oh, so we made some money. Great, we are doing good.” But they don’t know how to sit down and analyze it and see if there are areas that... things that we’re doing that are less profitable that we could be doing differently...that would make us more profitable in certain areas.

The same is true for understanding financial markets. So getting to know the banking community, the finance community, and understanding all of the various types of
financial tools that are available to a small business. A lot of people say “I want to get a loan.” Or “I’m going to get investors”. That’s about all they know.

But what kind of loan do you want? Do you want a credit line? Or do you want a straight business loan? Are you interested in AR financing? There is mezzanine financing, angel investors, capital ... you know, venture capital.... And so getting familiar with the various aspects that are available to you to help you grow your business. It may be one of those things... it may be a whole combination of those things that help you grow your business.

But at some point in time, as you are growing, you’re going to come to a point when you are going to need some access to capital. So if you have absolutely no understanding of the financial tools that are available to you, and how to speak the financial language, then you are going to have a real disadvantage when it comes to that point in time.

**Dave Lavinsky:** Those are four great points. I really appreciate you walking through that. It’s going to help a lot of entrepreneurs and business owners grow their business. I think that is great.

I have another question for you, which is about outside advisors. I know you talked through, your three partners and different functional areas. Has SBTV tapped any outside advisors to help you grow at all?

**Susan Wilson Solovic:** Not formally. Personally, there are people that I admire and look up to and have been able to talk with at times when I needed advice and some insights. People who have already gone down the path before me.

So that has been a great help. And also, a couple of people who have built internet sites that have been helpful when we’re wrestling issues about, “You know ok now... what do we do... which way do we go... which is the better place to place our resources?” That has been extremely helpful. Those people continue to stay available to me. We don’t really have a formalized advisory board.

**Dave Lavinsky:** Is that something you recommend - getting advisors for other business and entrepreneurs?
**Susan Wilson Solovic:** I do. I absolutely do. People who can come in with an outside perspective with what you are doing. Because you get so close to it that you can't see the forest from the trees. So someone who has, even if it's a different industry... someone who has business experience that can look at what you are doing and maybe immediately say, “Wait a minute - Why are you doing this? It makes no sense,” and help you walk through that. It can save you a lot of time and a lot of heartache.

**Dave Lavinsky:** I totally agree. So really just one big broad final question, which is, what other or final words of wisdom which you would like to pass on to everyone listening to the call?

**Susan Wilson Solovic:** I would just like to say that one of the things that, we all hear...I bet everybody has heard this.... “Oh, I’ve got this great idea to start a business...” and I also hear that from people who want to write a book, “Oh, I’ve got this great idea for a book.

I’ve been wanting to write this book.” And then you hear all of the reasons why they haven’t done it. And later on, down the road, somebody else done your idea, and then you sit back and go “Oh, man! I was gonna do that three years ago!”

So my biggest advice to people is, if you’re convinced that you have a great idea, stop making excuses and start planning and do it. Because if you don’t do it, somebody else is going to do it and you will have missed the boat. So, don’t allow yourself to rationalize and feed yourself with excuses... a million excuses. Just give yourself a timetable, start your planning process, and get to work.

**Dave Lavinsky:** I think that is a great advice. The other day, I was just mentioning, you know, Mark Zuckerberg at Facebook...many, many other entrepreneurs had come up with same idea years before him, but he was the first one who actually implemented it.

**Susan Wilson Solovic:** Sure. Right. And you know the same thing... I spoke in an author’s event. It was for a business group and they have three or four authors there to speak. And a lot people in the audience.

They were business people and they would say, “Oh, you know, I don’t know how you did it. I got this idea and I just don’t have time. And you know one of these days I guess
I'll get around to it”. And my answer is, “Then you really don’t want to write that book very much. Because you just have to decide. I am going to do this, you got to schedule some time, and you got to have the discipline to do it.” Same thing with business. You know, Tiger Woods did not walk into the golf course at 20 something and start hitting the golf ball like a champion.

And you know, I play the piano and I did not start...you know, I play classical music and I did not play Fantaisie Impromptu by Chopin when I just...you know, hit my teens. It takes a lot of practice and a lot of discipline, and business is no different, writing a book is no different. It’s the people who have the stick, intuitiveness, the determination, and the discipline to do it everyday, are the ones who get it done.

**Dave Lavinsky:** Excellent. I hope that a lot or all of the entrepreneurs and business owners listening to this call will heed that advice and everything else that you said. You gave a lot of words of wisdom in terms of starting your company, growing your company, what to think about, and the lessons you learned. Susan, I really appreciate your time speaking with us today.

**Susan Wilson Solovic:** Well Dave, it was my pleasure, and anytime. It was great talking with you too.