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Corporate  
Executive  
to

*Entrepreneur*

MASTERING RETAIL GROWTH STRATEGY



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# Introduction

Robbing Peter to pay Paul is how I strategically leveraged my corporate experience, financial creativity, and industry relationships to open eight AT&T Authorized Retail Locations in just six years. I built a multi-million-dollar company using my retirement funds, AT&T's resources, Landlord TI money, and strong partnerships with contractors, brokers, and landlords.

This book is a blueprint for retail growth strategy, revealing the critical skills and techniques needed to find and execute on the right location—without giving away all my secrets.



# The Corporate Lessons

## LESSONS FROM AT&T

Before becoming an entrepreneur, I spent over 20 years at AT&T, where I was a leader in distribution strategy and retail expansion.

This experience shaped my ability to:

- Identify prime locations for maximum market penetration
- Negotiate leases and landlord incentives to minimize upfront investment
- Developing high-performing retail teams
- Execute cost-efficient store launches

These skills became invaluable when I decided to step into retail ownership.



## THE POWER OF CORPORATE TRAINING

AT&T gave me a front-row seat to retail success. I wasn't just learning theories but executing fundamental strategies that influenced multimillion-dollar decisions. I saw firsthand how store locations made or broke a business, how corporate negotiations shaped profitability, and how teams turned strategy into execution.

## LESSONS IN SITE SELECTION

One of my first lessons was understanding that location isn't just about visibility but strategy.

AT&T's site selection involved deep data analysis, and I learned to ask the right questions:

- Who is the target customer?
- What is the foot traffic volume?
- How does the surrounding area influence purchasing behavior?
- What are the lease terms, and how do they impact profit margins?

These lessons gave me a competitive advantage when I stepped into entrepreneurship.

## BUILDING AND LEADING HIGH-PERFORMING TEAMS

Retail success doesn't just rely on location; it depends on the people inside the store. AT&T's leadership development programs taught me how to:

- Recruit talent that is aligned with business objectives
- Train employees on customer engagement and sales techniques
- Measure performance metrics to optimize efficiency

By mastering these elements, I didn't just open stores; I built a repeatable formula for success.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Corporate experience provides a strategic foundation for entrepreneurship.
- Data-driven site selection minimizes risks and maximizes profits.
- Building strong teams is as critical as choosing the correct location.

This is just the beginning. In the next chapter, I'll explain how I made the leap from executive to entrepreneur—the risks, rewards, and financial maneuvers that made it all possible.

# The Leap

## FROM EXECUTIVE TO ENTREPRENEUR

Leaving behind corporate security was one of the most significant risks I ever took. However, my deep understanding of AT&T's business operations and financial structuring gave me the confidence to take the plunge. I knew how to leverage corporate relationships, negotiate strategic deals, and secure funding to create a thriving business.

## HOW I FUNDED MY BUSINESS

One of the biggest barriers to entrepreneurship is capital. I had options: personal savings, loans, or investors.

Instead, I took a strategic approach:

- Retirement Funds: I used my 401(k) strategically to invest in my first location.
- AT&T Incentives: Leveraging my insider knowledge, I negotiated AT&T subsidies to help with store build-out.
- Landlord Concessions: I secured Tenant Improvement (TI) money to minimize my upfront costs.

This three-pronged approach allowed me to start strong without taking on overwhelming debt.

## WHY BRAND PARTNERSHIPS MATTER

Aligning with an established brand like AT&T provided instant credibility. Customers already trusted the brand—I just had to ensure my stores met their expectations. This partnership gave me a built-in customer base, reducing my marketing costs and accelerating profitability.



# The Science of Location

## LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Success in retail starts with location, but it's more than just visibility and foot traffic. The perfect location must align with your target market, have a sustainable rent-to-revenue ratio, and be negotiated strategically.



## WHAT MAKES A GREAT LOCATION?

Before signing a lease, I ask four key questions:

- Who is the target customer? Understanding demographics ensures the location aligns with customer demand.
- Is the location accessible? Convenience is crucial—customers won't go out of their way to shop.
- What's the rent-to-revenue ratio? The cost of rent must be justifiable based on projected sales.
- What is the surrounding business environment? Complementary businesses can drive additional traffic.



# Subpar to Profitable

## HOW I TOOK SUBPAR LOCATIONS AND TURNED THEM PROFITABLE

Not every location starts as a winner, but with the right strategy, lease terms, and operational execution, struggling locations can be transformed into profitable ones.

### CASE STUDY #1

#### TURNING AROUND AN UNDERPERFORMING STORE

When I took over a store that was losing money, I implemented a three-step strategy:

- Lease Renegotiation: I convinced the landlord to adjust the lease terms to improve cash flow.
- Operational Optimization: Improved staffing, customer service, and inventory management.
- Strategic Marketing: Targeted advertising and local promotions increased store traffic by 40%.

### CASE STUDY #2

#### LEVERAGING LEASE NEGOTIATIONS FOR PROFITABILITY

Another struggling location was transformed by shifting the financial burden to the landlord:

- Secured additional TI money to cover renovation costs.
- Negotiated a percentage-based rent structure, aligning expenses with sales performance.
- Revamped store layout to improve customer experience and drive sales.

## CASE STUDY #3

### UNDERSTANDING CUSTOMER BEHAVIOR

A seemingly unsuccessful location suffered from poor visibility. By repositioning the entrance and improving signage, sales increased significantly.

#### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Even struggling locations can become profitable with strategic adjustments.
- Lease negotiations are a powerful tool for improving margins.
- Understanding customer behavior can turn an underperforming store around

Next, I'll share how I turned struggling locations into profitable stores—proving that a challenging start doesn't have to mean failure.

#### **ASK YOURSELF/ACTIVITY/YOUR TURN:**

What systems or support structures do you need to thrive in this next chapter?

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# Making the Landlord Pay

## NEGOTIATING THE RIGHT LEASE

When capital is limited, the landlord's money becomes your best asset. Smart negotiation ensures that your lease agreement protects your business while maximizing financial support from the landlord.

## HOW I SECURED FAVORABLE LEASE TERMS

I mastered lease negotiations by focusing on three critical factors:

- **Tenant Improvement (TI) Money:** I ensured landlords covered most build-out costs, reducing my initial investment.
- **Revenue-Based Rent:** I negotiated percentage-based rent tied to sales performance instead of fixed high rents.
- **Lease Flexibility:** Exit clauses and renewal options gave me an escape strategy if the location underperformed.

## CASE STUDY

### HOW A SMART LEASE SAVED ME THOUSANDS

One of my locations required extensive renovations. Negotiating a higher TI package saved over \$50,000 in upfront costs. My revenue-based rent structure also ensured that rent expenses aligned with business performance.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Tenant Improvement (TI) money can significantly reduce your initial costs.
- Revenue-based rent structures protect your margins during slow periods.
- Lease flexibility provides a strategic safety net.

Next, we'll discuss the balance between rent costs and profit margins—because even a great location can be too expensive.

# The Balancing Act

## RENT VS. PROFIT MARGINS

A major pitfall in retail is overpaying for rent. Many businesses fail not because of low sales but because of poorly negotiated leases.

## THE FORMULA I USED TO DETERMINE SUSTAINABLE RENT EXPENSES

To ensure profitability, I followed a strict rent-to-revenue ratio:

- Target rent as a percentage of revenue: I kept my rent below 10% of projected gross sales.
- Lease-term flexibility: I avoided long-term commitments unless the location was successful.
- Operating cost awareness: Compounding utilities, maintenance, and additional fees ensured a comprehensive cost analysis.

## WHEN TO WALK AWAY FROM A 'GREAT' LOCATION

Sometimes, a prime location isn't worth the rent. If projected revenue couldn't support sustainable profit margins, I walked away - even if the location seemed perfect.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Rent should never exceed 10% of projected gross sales.
- Long-term commitments should be avoided until a location proves profitable.
- A 'great' location is only great if it aligns with your financial strategy.

Next, we'll discuss why location is the best marketing investment you can make.

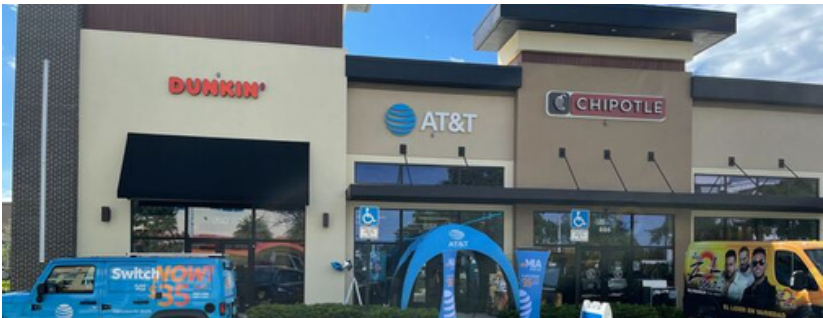
# Marketing

## THE BEST MARKETING DOLLARS ARE SPENT ON LOCATION

Many retailers overspend on marketing when their real problem is poor location selection.

### WHY A WELL-POSITIONED STORE REDUCES MARKETING COSTS

- Organic Traffic: High-visibility locations naturally attract more customers.
- Demographic Targeting: Being near your ideal customer base minimizes the need for aggressive advertising.
- Brand Awareness: A strong location is a constant advertisement for your business.



## STRATEGIC BRANDING VS. REACTIVE MARKETING

Instead of constantly running promotions, I focused on choosing locations that did the marketing for me. This reduced my dependency on costly advertising campaigns.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- A great location attracts customers without excessive marketing.
- Strategic site selection reduces ongoing advertising expenses.
- Location itself serves as a 24/7 branding opportunity.

Next, I'll discuss how I scaled from one store to eight while maintaining profitability.

# Scaling Smartly

## FROM ONE STORE TO EIGHT

Growth isn't about opening as many stores as possible—it's about strategic scaling to ensure each new location is profitable.

### CASE STUDY

#### HOW I EXPANDED WITHOUT SACRIFICING PROFITABILITY

- Proven Success Before Expansion: Each store had to be profitable before opening another.
- Operational Consistency: Standardized training and processes ensured smooth scaling.
- Financial Planning: I reinvested profits strategically rather than taking on unnecessary debt.

## THE RISKS OF GROWING TOO FAST

Rapid expansion can stretch finances, dilute brand identity, and lead to operational inefficiencies. By scaling deliberately, I avoided these pitfalls.

#### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Expansion should only happen when the existing business is profitable.
- Standardized operations streamline growth.
- Strategic financial planning prevents overextension.

Next, I'll explain how to build a business with high market value for a lucrative exit strategy.



# The Exit Strategy

## CREATING A BUSINESS WITH HIGH MARKET VALUE

Scaling a business is one thing—positioning it as a valuable asset is another. I built a company that was not only profitable but also attractive to potential buyers.

### CASE STUDY

#### HOW I MADE MY BUSINESS ATTRACTIVE FOR ACQUISITION

- Operational Efficiency: I created systems that allowed the business to run smoothly without direct involvement.
- Strong Financials: Clean books and solid revenue streams made valuation easier.
- Scalability: Buyers want a business with growth potential, not just a profitable location.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF RELATIONSHIPS IN THE SALE PROCESS

I built strong relationships with potential buyers long before I was ready to sell. This made the exit process smoother and more profitable.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- A valuable business operates efficiently without the owner.
- Strong financials attract buyers and increase valuation.
- Preparing for an exit starts long before the sale.

# Now what?

## WHY YOU NEED A RETAIL GROWTH STRATEGIST

The difference between a struggling store and a thriving chain isn't luck—strategy.

### WHY DIY RETAIL EXPANSION CAN BE RISKY

Many entrepreneurs make costly mistakes when expanding without expert guidance:

- Poor Site Selection: Choosing locations without proper analysis.
- Weak Lease Negotiations: Failing to secure favorable terms.
- Operational Challenges: Scaling too quickly without standardized processes.

## HOW A RETAIL STRATEGIST ADDS VALUE

### WORKING WITH AN EXPERT ENSURES

- Smart site selection and lease negotiations.
- Efficient operational scaling.
- Higher long-term profitability.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Expert guidance prevents costly expansion mistakes.
- Strategic decision-making enhances long-term success.
- A retail strategist ensures a profitable and sustainable growth.





# Conclusion

This book has given you a glimpse into the strategy behind retail success, but proper execution requires expertise, relationships, and real-world application. If you're serious about growing a profitable retail business, let's connect.

## **EMAIL ME:**

vividconsulting@vividinc.net to schedule a strategy consultation.

## **CALL ME:**

Call me at 615-916-1771

## **SCHEDULE A CONSULTATION:**

<https://www.vividinc.net/discovery>