

John DeGraff Bio



John DeGraff is a Managing Director of the Competing Values Firm. He has over 25 years experience as a marketing professional; his skills are in building brands, guerilla marketing, innovative new products, strategic planning, E-commerce and turnarounds.

John's early career is defined by his role as a young leader and creativizer who realized that innovation was the surest path to growth. John, a specialist in consumer packaged goods, went on a fifteen year innovation rampage bringing 150 new products to market. At Gerber Baby Foods to keep up with John's aggressive innovation process they promoted him to lead an elite team to streamline Gerber's new product process. This team accomplished the unthinkable, retooling Gerber's new product process from a three year development cycle to a six month jumpstart. The results of this approach include the highly successful Gerber Graduates, Gerber Tropical (first Hispanic line of baby food), Gerber Pure and Simple, and Gerber Formula, a company record of 43 products in one year. The end result of this innovation was enormous growth for Gerber Baby food; the company attained an industry record 71% share of market. DeGraff's other notable successes include: inventing the first multi-pack microwave popcorn in Wal-Mart for Weaver Popcorn, popularize Trail's End fund raising program for the Boy's Scouts, developing Jones Dairy Farms foodservice precooked line of products, and sparking Kellogg's new venture program with Whitney Yogurt.

John built his reputation as a guerilla marketer. It became one of John's mottos "In marketing like war, if you cannot compete on this field, change the field." This David versus Goliath mentality led to many innovative solutions. At Lykes Brothers he leveraged the strength of the Coca-Cola brand accomplishing the first southeastern regional hotdog tie-in with 300 regional Coca-Cola bottlers. This resulted in 20% growth in hot dog sales versus competitors like Oscar Mayer. During the dot.com craze of the late 90's John became part owner in HBG New Media and developed a joint venture with Fannie May Candies; John grew HBG's web E-commerce business 250% and Fannie May Candies grew 300% on the web.

Most recently, John was the Vice President of Sales and Marketing for Auto Glass Specialists, he was a member of the strategic management team that restructured Auto Glass Specialists to secure sale of the company to Belron Inc., the world leader in auto glass repair and replacement.

John brings a unique combination of entrepreneurial ownership, guerrilla marketing, new products development and technical expertise to innovation projects. John holds a MSBA from Indiana University and a BS degree in Biology and Chemistry from Western Michigan University. He lives with his wife, two sons and dog in Madison, Wisconsin.