

**Rob Wrubel, Former CEO - Ask Jeeves
Keynote Speaker – May 20, 2005**

Rob Wrubel, former CEO of Ask Jeeves, spoke at the May 20th Alliance of Chief Executives' breakfast. He credited his Alliance group for helping him make the pivotal decision between two new business ventures – passing up an IT infrastructure software opportunity for his latest passion, Yoga Works.

Rob reflected on his entrepreneurial career and why he's inspired to pursue crazy ideas in crazy new markets to help make the world a better place (educational software at Knowledge Adventure, a butler to help search the Internet at Ask Jeeves, and a chain of yoga studios).

Lessons from Rob

Have a Strong Emotional Connection to the Work

Let personal passion fuel your success. Rob described his return to health and freedom from back pain through his discovery of the practice of yoga as the driving force for his latest venture.

Find the Experts and Tell Your Story

Never be afraid to call someone. Rob contacted 24 Hour Fitness CEO who got behind the concept of Yoga Works, joined the Board and introduced Rob to the network of people who brought access to his management team and capital.

Build Teams with Passion and Expertise

Figure out what motivates your people. Rob was challenged to get independent thinkers, many of them purists, to embrace the idea of a replicated yoga studio model. He explained that the Yoga Works model of strong, independent communities would eliminate the distractions of running a studio, train teachers to deliver high caliber instruction and enable them to reach more people than ever before.

Be Patient – Every Business Hits a Wall Before It Succeeds

Rob believes that every new business idea takes about three years to gel and that the company usually won't truly figure out the business model that works until it hits a wall.

During the Q&A that followed, Rob described the use of focus groups, mystery shoppers and ongoing customer groups as resources for understanding the needs of his customers and ensuring consistent service quality. At Yoga Works, new students talk with a Yoga Advisor who helps them select the right class and teacher. Rob underscored the importance of the initial customer experience to student longevity.

Comparing yoga studios to health clubs, Rob described a much faster return on capital fueled in part by ancillary revenue streams from education, retail, workshops, and retreats. He previewed plans to add Pilates classes and create a common brand identity while giving each studio freedom to put its unique imprint on the student experience. Rob described the importance of sending the right message about yoga and demystifying it for people, like himself, to help them discover how this practice can improve their health.