

eight

ways to
monetize
your IP



An
Intellectual
Capital
Development
Firm.

thewisdomlink



Imagine the scenario:

We interview a client we've never met before and over the course of several hours listen and learn about how and why they are so consistently successful with their business. What's the process? What are the cues they watch for? What are the techniques? We ask a seemingly unrelated range of questions until we uncover insights that typically surprise them. We then present observations about their background, worldview, the thoroughly singular set of values that define their style, and then outline the details of the unique client experience they create because of it.

For a moment or two they think our observations are unrelated and non-correlated to their results. Then we start repeating back to them a long string of specific activities that they conduct with clients and the intellectual heritage for each (a strongly held economic or political belief, a childhood experience, a lesson learned early in their career, an uncanny alignment between ideal clients and themselves or a parent or a spouse). We show them it's no accident that they've been successful and in the particular way they've done it. We emphatically explain that they have great wisdom and they've only begun to leverage it.

Slowly it starts sinking in,

“Wow. Maybe I do have something here. Maybe it could be valuable to others. Maybe it can take on a form that generates revenue.**”**

It's at that moment they recognize the potential.



Imagine the scenario: continued

Once a successful entrepreneur defines and packages their **Intellectual Property** — their unique systems and processes underpinned by a wholly unique worldview they've done something quite powerful – they've converted it into a higher form of utilization.

Their **wisdom** stops merely being one person's gift and transforms into a corporate asset that can be monetized in a variety of ways.

When a company makes this switch we call it a **Wisdom Driven Enterprise™.**

Over the last 14 years at The Wisdom Link we've supported our entrepreneur clients with strategies and tactical support for monetizing their Intellectual Property from latent assets into revenue generating systems, people and technologies. We've helped almost 500 clients pull their wisdom (or IP) out of their heads, package it, and get it in play.

Here's an outline of the eight most popular models we've seen (or built) to support the ambitions of our clients. By no means an exhaustive guide to accomplish each model – we have, however, gained an incredible advantage by being in the trenches with clients and so can identify a few key recommendations. The best part, many of these models are complementary with one another, (they can snap together) and can be added as needed or as opportunity arises.



grow it

This is the standard model where we see the entrepreneur hire and train a junior or build an entire team to scale. This certainly isn't a new idea but it's how most entrepreneurs leverage their wisdom and capture more opportunity. This model leverages time, focus, and the wisdom of the founder to accelerate the learning curve. When it's done right, it also leverages the skillset (or book of existing clients) of every new hire (which can sometimes be superior or at least complementary to that of their employer). The best part is that at the end of the road the business, now scalable, has a higher valuation potential to a buyer - **exit strategy nirvana**.

top recommendations

1 Don't try to hire your clone.

Break down all of your roles and hire one person for each. Looking for someone to fill your shoes is too tall an order.

2 Turn everything you do into a process.

Define the steps, tools, and the wisdom requisite to deliver it - think franchise.

3 Don't train a person, train a Learning Management Software.

We built a video-based software for this called Playbook Builder to help our clients and it's a fine example of how training a system can improve recruiting, accelerate onboarding and protect you from the loss of a key player.

4 Want to move faster?

Once you have your approach nailed down you're ready to grow through acquisition if you'd like. It's the same process except more people are involved at once.



teach it

Employ the classic workshop model – the original “one to many” solution – to train others in your program, ideas, or tools in an effective leverage play for your time and focus. Workshops come in several flavors. You’ll want to scout the right plan for your larger vision.

The Bootcamp – A one-time training event that is usually a “loss leader” to promote programs, products or services. Many of our clients who are licensing their IP include an annual Bootcamp to introduce ideas and build a foundation.

The Traveling Show – Like the Bootcamp, these are often delivered to a “study group” or local audience to promote a concept or product. The big difference is that you go to them instead of them traveling to you.

The Mastermind or Study Group – This group might meet routinely throughout the year at a variety of locations to discuss relevant topics in an intimate setting. The caliber of the attendees is the cache here and instead of being a “teacher” your role is more that of a facilitator.

The Formal Workshop Model – A monthly or quarterly workshop that is held in a location. Attendees come to you and are there to learn a “series” or “curriculum” using your materials and a coaching format to train them.

top recommendations

1 Build a formal business model.

Anticipate sunk and incremental costs before you start.

2 Plan our exit early.

If you don’t plan to ever hang up the coaching role, plan how you’ll train your other coaches or your own success will be your undoing.

3 Build a curriculum stringing all the insights or capabilities you want to teach.

Use key concepts, tools, and experiences.

4 If you’re building a Mastermind Group –

remember to solicit feedback from the group routinely so they can create the direction of the program.



license it

This is a model whereby the author of a training program enables others to use it for a one-time or recurring licensing fee. Typically, this information is offered to the audience in a Bootcamp environment and then supported with print or online resources or both. Different from a Workshop model where the tools are taught over a longer period of time in a curriculum, this model is a product model with a “do-it-yourself” dynamic that makes it less burdensome on the entrepreneur who offers it.

top recommendations

1 Consider making it idiot-proof.

If not, else you'll be spending a lot of time handholding. People who sign up for these programs aren't the same sort of people who build them.

2 Look into technology solutions here to share the content.

Kajabi or PlaybookIt are good delivery systems for tools and video training.

3 Don't forget to anticipate additional revenue streams from this model or you'll leave a lot of money on the table.

Like what? Personalized coaching, “white labeled” materials, annual events, and additional support for the client's staff are just a few ideas.



sell it

Considered the “Holy Grail” of monetization models for IP – selling the idea outright is the most sought-after payoff due to the “lotto-like” dynamic of big checks and easy exits. And it happens occasionally. Sometimes entrepreneurs build companies that the larger competition just pay to take out of the game while they’re small, other times, the bigger fish seek a revenue stream they can’t build themselves or a market they haven’t yet captured.

top recommendations

- 1 Depending on where you work you might need to check some fine print.**
I had a client who’s gone on to become a major executive for a top financial firm who built a training program while working there and was told by the company lawyers that the company owned his IP, not him. When in doubt, talk to an attorney first.
- 2 Consider hiring a broker**
to help you move projects along through the myriad corporate processes, negotiations and legal maze.
- 3 Get some traction first.**
It’s always easier to come to the table with success as a bargaining chip.
- 4 Cover your assets.**
Trademark or copyright what you’ve built before you take it out to market.



write & speak about it

A traditional model that has changed from pure revenue pursuit to more market positioning play – the speaker/author model is now more often employed to build credibility and an audience instead of for book sales or speaker fees which have decreased significantly. With self-publishing, the price point of entry here is low and with some solid packaging of content, a compelling message and promotional skill, this model can position the speaker/author as an expert thereby opening opportunities for other monetization opportunities.

top recommendations

- 1 Think of the book as a loss leader and you'll not get lost in the details or overly attached to the book's text.**
Big idea: Don't get lost in the weeds of trying to write a Pulitzer and instead get it to market.
- 2 Hire a ghostwriter.**
For a relatively small fee you get to move fast, borrow best practices, and garner support from an ally with a lot of experience with the publishing part.
- 3 Get over the "self-publishing" thing.**
If you can get your manuscript even read by a big house in a relatively good timeline, and then published with little or no meddling please let me know how you pulled that off.
- 4 Build your database before you finish the book.**
If you find a publisher or go it alone you'll benefit from a big list of people to promote it to.



franchise it

The classic model whereby IP is packaged into a “dummy-proof” system and a franchisee or several franchisees are trained on it. These franchisees pay a considerable fee to use the systems and brand but instead of the licensing fee whereby they are still operating with their own brand, in this model they are rolling out “units” of the entrepreneurs business in other trading areas.

top recommendations

1 This is the classic E-Myth play.

If you aren't familiar with Michael Gerber's work, I highly and routinely recommend reading E-Myth Revisited for a solid guide on how to think through this process.

2 Do your research

into the markets, brokers and platforms that provide franchise models and learn about what makes them tick.

3 Recognize your audience is looking for “turnkey”.

If they wanted to build something they wouldn't be looking for a franchise. Make sure you've got a system a 17-year old can operate and you'll be well on your way.



productize it

The Information Marketing Industry has largely embraced this model. The idea here is to build a large following (either through direct efforts or through affiliate marketing that leverages other people's prospect or client lists) and then offer products to them periodically through email marketing. These products can be webinars, e-books, physical products (like a box with CDs and a workbook), online video trainings or a book.

top recommendations

- 1 The requirement to be successful here is to master the nuances of information marketing and promotion, which is no small matter.**
Even if your content rocks, this is a very noisy market. Read books, go to seminars, and verify proof that someone in your industry is successful with these methods BEFORE you commit.
- 2 This model requires an almost constant push of content and communication to your list, which - while not expensive in terms of hard costs - can be time consuming.**
Consider hiring this job out but understand the costs and ROI implications.
- 3 This model is also somewhat tainted by practitioners who do not always deliver what they promise thereby harming the perception for others.**
Just remember to ask if these methods would resonate with your market.



software enable it

Build a service as software (SaaS) solution that houses your productize solution online. There is little or no phone or face-to-face interaction between you and your clients and aside from promotional costs and maintenance of the software, there are fairly low costs to maintain it. That's the good news. Depending on what you have in mind, development costs can range from the low five-figure arena to the high sixes and timelines vary dramatically.

top recommendations

- 1 The requirement to be successful here is to master the nuances of information marketing and promotion, which is no small matter.**
Even if your content rocks, this is a very noisy market. Read books, go to seminars, and verify proof that someone in your industry is successful with these methods BEFORE you commit.
- 2 This model requires an almost constant push of content and communication to your list, which - while not expensive in terms of hard costs - can be time consuming.**
Consider hiring this job out but understand the costs and ROI implications.
- 3 This model is also somewhat tainted by practitioners who do not always deliver what they promise thereby harming the perception for others.**
Just remember to ask if these methods would resonate with your market.



Your wisdom is your single greatest asset and competitive advantage. The fun of using it for increased sales and better market positioning is just the beginning. Once you have it nailed down and productized, the options for monetization open right up. Take some time to think through what models work best for your goals, investment potential, and personal style and get out there and experiment.



Jon LoDuca
Founder and CEO
The Wisdom Link, Inc.

about the author

Jon LoDuca is founder and CEO of **The Wisdom Link, Inc.** He has over a decade's experience helping business owners across the U.S, U.K and Canada develop their intellectual property and bring it to the marketplace. He has presented for groups such as *AALU, MDRT, NAIFA, Lincoln Financial* and *The Advisor's Center*. He is a thought leader for RIA Central and has been featured in *Forbes, Advisor Today, The Daily Herald, Chiro Economics* and *The Wall Street Journal*.

Jon is also the co-founder of two software firms, **Playbook Builder** (www.playbookit.com), a learning management software, and **Proposal App** (www.proposalapp.com), a video-enabled sales proposal software.



about the wisdom link

Founded in 2002, The Wisdom Link is an intellectual capital consulting and packaging firm that provides IP harvesting services, design, marketing, and a proprietary learning management software for internal sales and operations training.