

Kevin Monroe Interviews Bobby Hinds

Company: Lifeline USA

1. How were you able to make the transition to selling jump ropes full-time?

A: Bobby started out selling insurance and investments – he had the largest volume around and helped several people become millionaires. Bobby convinced people to re-invest their money they had in regular life insurance and put it in term life insurance (cash value). Bobby told me that he was considered very radical in his time, because instead of wearing a traditional suit and tie – he wore an athletic jump suit (and had a beard). On the back of his athletic jump suit it stated, “Term Insurance is Best,” with his phone number. Bobby would not sit down with someone unless they had their accountant, and lawyer present. Eventually he convinced several people he came in contact with to convert from life insurance to term insurance. Bobby did this even though it made him less money for himself and more for the customer. Every time Bobby sold a term insurance policy he gave away one of his jump ropes with an instructional book that he made in his basement. Hence, the invention of the segmented jump rope and the name of his company today, “Lifeline USA.”

2. Was there ever a point in the beginning of your career that you knew you would achieve greatness? How?

A: Never have – just evolved by taking one challenge at a time. “Successful enough to overcome all negative ness.”

3. What made it possible for the inception of Lifeline USA in 1973?

A: Bobby proclaims that the inception and success was caused by his first selling term life insurance and exposure. Bobby first started out on the Johnny Carson Show, which then led to several other shows (Merv Griffin, “On the road,” with Charles Kuralt, Today Show, and “Tell the Truth,” – show to name just a few). Bobby made it on the Johnny Carson Show - he claims by luck, but after listening to his story, I think he just knew how to sell himself! Bobby contacted NBC and wanted to see if he could get on the Johnny Carson Show. Bobby spoke with Craig Tennis from NBC and told Craig he was the “Jump Rope King,” he could out jump anyone, and make a jump rope disappear in four seconds. Craig asked if he had an agent? Bobby said, “No.” Craig Tennis then tells Bobby that the only way he could get on the Johnny Carson Show was to meet him face to face. So, Bobby flew himself out to Los Angeles, and went to the NBC set. Bobby did not know it at the time, but a person needed to have an ID to get on the NBC set – Bobby did not have an ID. While approaching the NBC set Bobby noticed that he recognized the security guard, which was Art Aragon (boxer). Bobby started telling Art how he knew him. Art asked Bobby, “What are you doing here?” Bobby told Art he was going to be on the Johnny Carson Show, and started showing Art all the tricks he could do with his jump rope. Art then proceeded jumping with Bobby’s jump rope too, and then just let Bobby through the NBC gate. After making it through the gate he walked into the reception area and started talking to Craig Tennis’s secretary, and the secretary was

also trying Bobby's jump rope. Then Craig Tennis came out of his office wondering what all the commotion was about, and asked Bobby whom he was. Bobby told Craig Tennis that he was the "Jump Rope King," and he spoke with Craig on the phone. Bobby reminded Craig that he was the gentleman that told Bobby they needed to meet face-to-face before being on the Johnny Carson Show – "And here I am," Bobby said. Then Craig Tennis said something of the likings, "Oh my God?!... Well what do you have for me?" Bobby showed Craig Tennis from NBC his jump rope tricks and Craig said, "You will be on the Johnny Carson Show tonight!" After making public appearances on television, thousands of people were requesting Bobby's jump ropes, so JC Penny, Sears, and Montgomery Ward sold his ropes with his instructional book (he out sold Muhammad Ali's jump rope 5:1).

4. What are some memorable resources for your career/ business?

A: A book called, "Life Insurance – a legalized racket."

- Bobby was also a street kid – and learned manners and was able to "read people" at a young age by being polite and entertaining when thanking his friend's families for dinner.
- Bobby was in reform school at the age of 12 years old – he was an inmate in Waukesha School for Boys. By age thirteen Bobby was one of earliest golden gloves for boxing.

5. What was a typical day when you started out selling fitness... what is a typical day for one of your sales people today?

A: Bobby does not have sales people – he told me this is a marketing choice. Bobby started out with Retail Stores like JC Penny, Sears, and Montgomery Ward, but today he sells through functional training catalogs, Lifeline USA catalog, infomercials, and the Internet (www.lifelineusa.com). Bobby told me that he pulled his products from retail stores, because they don't care about quality – only volume and sales. Lifeline USA has the best products in their market.

6. What is your competition and how do you try and separate yourself, from your competition?

A: Bobby told me that several companies sell products that are similar, but by far are inferior. Most retail companies sell fitness cables that are made of extruded rubber, which has imperfections and breaks – it is considered cheap and about 1/5 the cost of Lifeline USA products. Bobby Hind's fitness cables are in layers like a candle to last much longer (only wear by usage). Lifeline's fitness cables are able to with stand thousands of pounds stretching and it will not break, which is also a safety feature.

Bobby spends the most money on Research & Development (R&D). Lifeline USA (Bobby Hinds) has in-house R&D, and out of house R&D. Bobby also uses the Monkey Bar Gymnasium (I met his son Jon, the owner of the Monkey Bar, and took a class – great experience) as a lab experiment place for all of his Lifeline USA products, which is operated by his son Jon Hinds.

Bobby has always believed in doing the right thing and has not been money driven – quality comes first, and he is very passionate about what he does.

I can attest to this as well. I watched Bobby demo several of his products. I will be recommending Lifeline USA products to my in-home personal training clients, and anyone I come in contact with. To enhance my own brand equity it is important to pick and choose the best, and I am very convinced in Bobby Hind's Lifeline USA products after meeting with him. My interview with Bobby took place on Friday April 13th, 2007. After meeting Bobby, it made me realize that fate is greatly determined by a person's ambition to succeed. There was nothing about Friday the 13th, 2007 that was bad luck – in fact meeting Bobby Hinds was one of the most memorable, energizing experiences in my life!!

7. Do you ever have certain times of the year that sales are lower? If so, what do you do to increase sales?

A: Summer is generally a little lower, but overall no dips. For example, an infomercial recently advertised one of Bobby Hinds (Lifeline USA) products and sold 410, 000 fitness cables (from one infomercial)!

8. When establishing a new contact or business – does your sales people use e-mail, direct mail, cold-call, or cold-canvas? Which works best for them? How has this changed from when you started out?

A: See answer for question number five.

9. How do establish trust with a new customer?

A: ALWAYS QUALITY – BEING HONEST!!

10. How often do you follow-up with a new customer, and how often do you follow-up?

A: Currently looking to address, but using their web site (www.lifelineusa.com), and newsletters.