

Gliebers Dresses - Shark Tank Edition

Business Fiction

by

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SCENE ONE.

Shark Tank, at ABC Studios. Five Sharks await the first pitch. From left to right, are MARK CUBAN, DAYMOND JOHN, KEVIN O'LEARY, LORI GREINER, and ROBERT HERJAVEC

NARRATOR

First into the tank are Roger Morgan and Glenn Glieber from New Hampshire. They are pitching the Sharks on a women's dress brand, named "Gliebers Dresses".

Theme music plays in the background as Roger and Glenn enter the studio, and stand before the Sharks.

ROGER MORGAN

Hi Sharks! My name is Roger Morgan. I am the Chief Operating Officer at Gliebers Dresses. I am seeking two million dollars in exchange for five percent equity in our company.

The Sharks busily write down the offer on note pads. Mark Cuban shakes his head derisively.

ROGER MORGAN

Gliebers Dresses is a well known catalog purveyor of fashion dresses. With forty years of brand equity, we have surprised and delighted customers age eight to eighty. But times are changing. Here, in my hand, I am holding a research report from Woodside Research.

ROBERT HERJAVEC

From who?

ROGER MORGAN

Woodside Research.

ROBERT HERJAVEC

What do they have to do with anything?

ROGER MORGAN

I'm glad you asked. Woodside Research is a trusted brand that provides strategic vision to catalogers, retail brands, and e-commerce businesses.

ROBERT HERJAVEC

Continue.

ROGER MORGAN

This four-hundred-ninety-five dollar report clearly articulates the future of selling, and that future is called Omnichannel.

DAYMOND JOHN

What is Omnichannel?

MARK CUBAN

(looking at his peers)

I'll take that one. Omnichannel is a theory ...

ROGER MORGAN

With all due respect, Mr. Cuban, Omnichannel is not a theory.

MARK CUBAN

(shaking his head, with contempt)

I'm out.

The Sharks giggle in amusement.

ROGER MORGAN

Excuse me?

MARK CUBAN

Rule number one in the Shark Tank is that you don't interrupt a Shark who is trying to defend you. You come in here ...

ROGER MORGAN

Look, Omnichannel is not a theory. It is real. Why would Woodside Research lead us astray?

MARK CUBAN

Do you have a learning disability? You just interrupted me again!

ROGER MORGAN

Honestly, Mr. Cuban, Omnichannel is the future. Woodside Research told us it is the future. Why would they charge me money and then not back it up with solid research?

LORI GREINER

Roger, can you explain what Omnichannel is to the rest of us?

ROGER MORGAN

Gladly! Omnichannel is the future of retail. You see, customers want to shop their way, 24/7/365, be it on a tablet, a phone, a computer, or in a store. All businesses must be Omnichannel, or they will be dead. Glibers Dresses doesn't want to be dead!

LORI GREINER

Excuse me, did you say that you are a cataloger?

ROGER MORGAN

Yes, we're a catalog brand. But we can be so much more. With an investment from the Sharks, we can become an Omichannel brand.

ROBERT HERJAVEC

Lori, when is the last time you thumbed through a catalog?

LORI GREINER

Well, I ...

ROGER MORGAN

That's not the issue, folks. The issue is that, in an Omnichannel future, we're all going to execute a myriad of marketing tactics to earn customer mindshare.

MARK CUBAN

(nearly climbing out of his  
chair)

Roger, you just interrupted Lori.

ROGER MORGAN

Mark, I thought you were out? I'm only interested in what the rest of the Sharks have to say.

KEVIN O'LEARY

Look, I don't care about any of this nonsense. See, ...

ROGER MORGAN

This isn't nonsense.

MARK CUBAN

That's four interruptions.

KEVIN O'LEARY

I don't care about interruptions. I care about money. I care about how I'm going to get my money back. I care about being rich. I care about making other people rich. You haven't explained to me how you will make me rich.

ROGER MORGAN

Of course. We are seeking two million dollars for a five percent share of our business. The money will fund our omnichannel initiatives.

KEVIN O'LEARY

You are valuing your business at forty million dollars. What were your sales and profit numbers from the past twelve months?

ROGER MORGAN

We generated fifty million in net sales in the past year, and cleared a whopping five hundred thousand dollars in pre-tax profit.

The Sharks giggle, again.

ROGER MORGAN

What is so funny about that?

KEVIN O'LEARY

Typical retail businesses sell for anywhere between three and five times earnings. At five hundred thousand dollars of profit, you are telling me that your business is worth, at best, a couple million dollars.

ROGER MORGAN

I can assure you that we're worth more than that.

KEVIN O'LEARY

No, you can't assure me of that. Simple math assures me that you're dreaming.

ROGER MORGAN

You're wrong, Mr. Wonderful. I have a vision, a vision authored by the good folks at Woodside Research, a vision that guarantees riches if we just follow the Omnichannel playbook.

ROBERT HERJAVEC

Describe the Omnichannel playbook, because I'm just not following your logic.

ROGER MORGAN

Of course. When we offer a seamless customer experience, customers spend more with us.

ROBERT HERJAVEC

Do you have any proof to offer us?

ROGER MORGAN

Woodside Research, in this report I'm holding in my hand, says that Omnichannel buyers spend nine times as much as single channel customers spend. By having the money to invest in an Omnichannel future, we'll reap the rewards.

MARK CUBAN

Let me make this simple for everybody. Channels do not create better customers. Better customers use multiple channels. This pitch is vapid, and for that reason, once again, I want to emphatically reinforce that I am out.

LORI GREINER

Can you please be specific about exactly how you are going to use our money?

ROGER MORGAN

Of course. And if I may be so bold, Lori, you look absolutely stunning today.

Mark Cuban appears to be in severe discomfort.

ROGER MORGAN

With the money, we will do two things. We will open the first ever Gliebers Dresses retail store. This is a linchpin in our Omnichannel strategy. By having a retail presence, we will be able to serve customers who want to try on dresses in person. We also expect to be able to capture myriad social benefits by having a retail store.

LORI GREINER

Social benefits?

DAYMOND JOHN

I think Roger is suggesting that retail stores will generate word of mouth, and word of mouth acts a lot like free marketing.

GLENN GLIEBER

I love free marketing!

KEVIN O'LEARY

(staring at Glenn Glieber)  
Who, exactly, are you?

GLENN GLIEBER

I am Glenn Glieber.

KEVIN O'LEARY

You are the Glieber in Gliebers Dresses?

GLENN GLIEBER

Yes sir.

KEVIN O'LEARY

Why aren't you talking?

GLENN GLIEBER

I like to empower my employees.

MARK CUBAN

You might want to re-think that strategy.

LORI GREINER

What is the second thing you want to do with our money, Roger?

ROGER MORGAN

Good question! I want to integrate all of our channels, our catalogs, our e-commerce website, our mobile platform, our tablet strategy, our social strategy, creating an Omnichannel framework that yields more high-value customers.

KEVIN O'LEARY

Roger, what's to stop Amazon from squashing you? You sell dresses, they sell dresses. Why don't you just sell on Amazon and let them do all the heavy lifting? You could cut staffing levels by 90%. You could get rid of your catalog, and save tens of millions in marketing expense. You could shut down your distribution center and outsource the work to Amazon. Let Amazon do all the work. You're a cataloger. Catalogers are like trilobites in the Darwinistic evolution of the digital world. You're a fossil. Why not make a real difference, and help Amazon run over the competition?

DAYMOND JOHN

Roger, don't listen to him, he's just being mean. What I don't understand is how Omnichannel is going to help you? Your problem is that you're still trying to sell dresses, using a technology that is a hundred years old. As a result, you attract a customer that has to be a hundred years old as well. Why not license your product to Macy's? Shut down your unproductive website and catalog business, and just sell through Macy's? Let Macy's do the heaving lifting.

ROGER MORGAN

Folks, you're missing the point. Omnichannel is the path to riches. Woodside Research says so.

KEVIN O'LEARY

I don't care if Woodside Research tells me to wear purple suits. They don't have any skin in the game. I only care about one thing, and that is making money. And so far, I haven't heard a peep from either of you that passes the logic test. However, I am going to make you an offer.

LORI GREINER

What?

ROBERT HERJAVEC

Before he makes the offer, let me ask you a question. What is your average selling price, and what is your cost of goods?

ROGER MORGAN

The average dress sells for \$69.99 and our cost of goods is \$19.99.

ROBERT HERJAVEC

That's impressive.

KEVIN O'LEARY

Here's my offer. I am going to give you the two million dollars you're asking for, but I don't want equity in your business. I want \$15 from every dress you sell, and when I get my two million dollars back, I want \$5 from every dress you sell, in perpetuity.

MARK CUBAN

Roger, you might be a moron, but you are the biggest moron on the planet if you take that offer.

KEVIN O'LEARY

(looking directly at Mark)

I don't care what you think. I want to get my money back, and with my plan, I'll get my money back in just three months. Everybody wins. He doesn't want to dilute ownership, he just wants a loan.

LORI GREINER

Roger, why can't your CFO fund your request?

ROGER MORGAN

Our Executive team isn't exactly a strategic group. Our Marketing leader is tactical, our CFO is a bean counter who lacks vision, and our Chief Merchandising Officer owns a flip phone.

MARK CUBAN

I'll bet you're a real delight to work with, Roger.

ROGER MORGAN

Look, I have a vision, and I cannot get funding from my Executive team partners. So I am standing here, in front of you, asking for assistance.

LORI GREINER

Roger, I'll make you an offer. I will give you two million dollars, but I want 60% ownership of your business.

GLENN GLIEBER

I'm sorry. Maybe I didn't make myself clear. I am the owner of Gliebers Dresses.

LORI GREINER

Not if you accept my offer.

GLENN GLIEBER

Roger, what is happening?

LORI GREINER

What is happening is that I am asking for 60% of your business. I will shut down your catalog, and I will honor Roger's omnichannel theory by running your business as a QVC / E-commerce hybrid. I will sell your dresses on QVC, and we'll make a killing. My demographic is perfectly aligned with your brand.

GLENN GLIEBER

You can't kill our catalog. We're a catalog brand. Always have been.

LORI GREINER

Do we have a deal?

ROGER MORGAN

Glenn, this is a bad deal.

KEVIN O'LEARY

We have two deals on the table. I'm offering you a loan, and I get \$15 from every dress you sell until I get my money back, then I get \$5 for every dress in perpetuity. Lori has a truly greedy offer on the table for sixty percent of your business. Which offer are you going to accept?

GLENN GLIEBER

Roger, I don't want to accept either offer. These offers are terribly unfair. You told me the Sharks would adore our business.

ROGER MORGAN

We haven't heard from Daymond or Robert yet.

DAYMOND JOHN

There's a reason for that. I'm out.

ROGER MORGAN

Why?

DAYMOND JOHN

While you stand there and talk about omnichannel, whatever the heck that is, my fashion brands are out there winning customers with exceptional merchandise and outstanding marketing strategies. I only invest in brands that have the potential to appeal to a younger demographic. I think Lori's offer, while greedy, is appropriate for your demographic. For that reason, I'm out.

ROGER MORGAN

Thank you for your consideration, Daymond. Robert, what say you?

ROBERT HERJAVEC

I don't understand how you got in here to make this pitch in the first place? We invest in startups, you are most decidedly not a startup.

ROGER MORGAN

Woodside Research ranked us as the forty-seventh most agile cataloger of 2012, so I take umbrage with your statement. And so you know, they were so impressed with our progress that they paid to get us placed on the show.

MARK CUBAN

This is an ad for Woodside Research?

ROGER MORGAN

This is an opportunity for you, the Sharks, to reinvigorate a great American brand.

ROBERT HERJAVEC

Honestly, Roger, I like working with nice people. For that reason, I'm out.

GLENN GLIEBER

Roger, what is happening?

KEVIN O'LEARY

I'll tell you what's happening, Mr. Glieber. You have two offers on the table. I want to give you a loan, Lori wants to take your business from you.

GLENN GLIEBER

Would you consider giving us the loan, and when we pay back the two million dollars, we just call it even?

KEVIN O'LEARY

Glenn, I like you. Your home spun business instincts took you a long way in life. But I love money, Glenn. I can't make money by giving your a loan that you simply repay, without interest. I need to earn a premium. Because you just insulted my intelligence, I regret to inform you that I am out.

ROGER MORGAN

Are you sure, Kevin? Because I like your offer a lot. Can we negotiate some more?

KEVIN O'LEARY

Of course we can. For insulting my intelligence, I now want \$20 for every dress you sell, and then I want \$10 for every dress sold thereafter, in perpetuity.

GLENN GLIEBER

What?

KEVIN O'LEARY

I'm out.

GLENN GLIEBER

Why are you so mean, Kevin?

KEVIN O'LEARY

I'm not mean, I'm Mr. Wonderful!

ROGER MORGAN

Lori, 60% is extortion.

GLENN GLIEBER

I can't make a deal that involves the elimination of the catalog. The catalog is our heritage. The catalog is our brand. It's all we've ever loved at Gliebers Dresses.

LORI GREINER

Glenn, at some point, you have to love the merchandise. Have you ever watched QVC? We adore the merchandise we sell. I think your dresses are aligned with our demographic. I know I can make you money. I'll make one final offer. \$2,000,000 for 55% of your business.

GLENN GLIEBER

Roger, we can't do that.

ROGER MORGAN

I'll handle this, Glenn. Lori, how about \$2,000,000 for 15% of the business?

LORI GREINER

No.

ROGER MORGAN

For 20%?

LORI GREINER

No.

ROGER MORGAN

For 22%?

LORI GREINER

Roger, stop it.

GLENN GLIEBER

Roger, stop it.

LORI GREINER

Glenn, you're such a sweet man. But we're just too far apart. For that reason, I'm out.

GLENN GLIEBER

Roger, you told me this show gave companies money. You mean we're not going to get anything?

MARK CUBAN

Talk to your CFO, Glenn.

GLENN GLIEBER

My CFO scares me.

ROBERT HERJAVEC

Gentlemen, thanks.

Glenn and Roger walk backstage. The Sharks talk amongst themselves.

DAYMOND JOHN

How did they even get on the show?

MARK CUBAN

They're dead.

LORI GREINER

They've been in business for forty years, Mark. Come on.

KEVIN O'LEARY

I think they should fire Roger, give Glenn an honorary position, and let the terrifying CFO have a crack at running the business.

ROBERT HERJAVEC

They should probably sell out to Amazon or Macy's, and call it a day.

LORI GREINER

I could turn them into a \$100,000,000 business at 10% pre-tax profit in a year.

Backstage, Glenn and Roger pause to chat with the camera operator.

ROGER MORGAN

Like so many people, the Sharks didn't understand the myriad ways that brands can leverage omnichannel strategies and reap the rewards of an interconnected customer who craves agile marketing strategies.

GLENN GLIEBER

I was told the Sharks were supposed to give us money.

NARRATOR

Next into the Shark Tank are Nancy and Norman Jones, who have invented a solution to keep tree needles out of your gutter.

END OF SCENE