

Patron Tequila, Guns & Roses and Seeing and Doing What Others Do Not

By [Harrison Barnes](#)

One of my neighbors in Malibu is John Paul Dejouria.

According to Forbes, he is worth over 4-billion dollars.

Dejouria started a shampoo company called Paul Mitchell with \$750 while homeless and living in his car.

That company now does close to 1-billion dollars a year in revenue.

Last year I somehow ended up at Dejouria's Christmas party (I have never personally met Dejouria).

On a 60-degree day he had several tons of snow trucked in and built a giant sledding hill at his house. He had genuine reindeer and all sorts of exotic animals to help compliment his party as well.

In one of the many courtyards of his home's hotel-like grounds, there is an imposing giant Roman statue of (what appears to be) himself in the middle of a fountain with water pouring from his hand raised high in the air.

Dejouria has no college education. He's been homeless more than once and apparently knows something that most of us never will. Because this man is quite well known in my neighborhood, I've heard quite a lot about him. After hearing so much about him, I think I know something he knows that makes him very successful. The odds are, though, that you are not going to listen when I tell you. I understand what Dejouria knows too -- but I am not even sure I have listened and completely absorbed it -- and it is quite simple.

Dejouria is a man who becomes successful where others overlook opportunity. He sees and does things that others do not.

You need to see opportunity where others do not. There is opportunity all around you—right now—but the odds are you are not seeing it. This is how most normal businesses and individuals are — and that is why they are normal.

You will succeed to the degree that you see what others do not see and break “unwritten” and unnecessary rules that others are following.

One of Dejouria's recent ventures was Patron Tequila. He asked a friend of his travelling to Mexico to bring him back some tequila. Dejouria enjoyed the tequila and shortly thereafter ended up buying a company that made the tequila for what I heard was no more than \$75,000.

How did Dejouria turn a small tequila company into a multi-billion dollar company in a few years?

Dejouria looked around and realized that all the tequilas basically tasted and were the same. The only way he believed he could differentiate his tequila was in terms of packaging and selling it for more money by calling it “high end”.

He went to Paris and found a famous perfume bottle designer and paid them to design a Patron bottle. He knew nothing about liquor bottles but figured perfume bottles were used to sell expensive “liquids” and doing something similar with tequila would be a good idea.

He repackaged the tequila in the distinctive Patron bottle and the “new” brand was born.

He knew nothing about selling tequila so he started giving away bottles of the tequila to everyone he knew. His friend Clint Eastwood used a bottle of the tequila in his movie *In the Line of Fire*.

His other friend Wolfgang Puck turned his friends in the restaurant business on to it.

Dejouria also started giving it away to people at hair events for Paul Mitchell.

Stores, restaurants and so forth were requesting his tequila en masse and the brand took off.

In most industries—and careers—all it takes is (1) doing things a little bit differently and (2) seeing things others do not see to be successful.

Dejouria did a couple of things that most people do not do:

- He gave it away before he ever asked for anything in return.
- He gave it away to influencers who could positively influence the potential success of the liquor.

Dejouria saw something that other people did not: There was no “premium” tequila. Also, no one in the industry was paying attention to the packaging.

Your success comes down to seeing and doing things that others will not do.

There are multiple ways of doing this.

First, you need to see opportunities where others see rules, barriers and so forth. What sort of opportunities are you missing that others are not seeing?

The odds are very good that you are missing many, many opportunities every hour of each day—and you are missing these because of the way you choose to see the world. Most people look at the world in terms of rules and patterns that must always be followed.

There are certain people like Dejouria and others who are able to look at any business and see new ways to add value and attract clients and customers:

- Dejouria went into the pet shampoo business and from a marketing angle marketed his products as “tested on humans first” (it worked).
- Dejouria went into the diamond mining business and marketed his diamonds as not coming from conflict zones (it worked).

Someone like Richard Branson does simple things like change the interior lighting of an airplane from white to purple, put a

small bar on a plane and create a larger and more opulent airport lounge.

Actions like those that DeJoria and Branson took are simple things; however, they also dramatically increase the success of the businesses they are involved in. All it takes is seeing things a little bit differently. What are you not seeing?

Second, you need to do things that others will not. There are many people out there that are very calculating with their time, effort, affection and so forth. In fact, I have noticed that the further you go down the rung in terms of peoples' success the more they often expect to get a "tit for tat" for every single thing that they do. Most people are afraid to give anything away and, instead, become extremely calculating in everything they do.

In the case of DeJoria, he gave away his tequila profusely before it ever started selling. He apparently gave away thousands of bottles of his tequila in its perfume-like bottles before he ever started selling it. Many people would have insisted people pay—however, DeJoria understood that in order to get something in return you must often give people something first.

You need to figure out what you can do that others do not. The more you do that which others will not do, the more likely you are to be successful in business.

Another one of the richest men in the world is David Geffen. Geffen was one of the founders of DreamWorks and before that became very successful with a company named Geffen Records. One of Geffen's major successes came when he represented Guns & Roses.

The band was popular in the Los Angeles club scene and he saw that they could be successful. He gave the band an advance and helped them produce their first album. They produced *Appetite for Destruction* and for over a year the album languished and did not do well.

At the time, MTV was where a lot of artists were becoming well known. Geffen went and personally met with MTV executives and convinced them to play the album's first single "Welcome to the Jungle" at 4:00 am. Despite the fact that the video was played only once on a Sunday morning, masses of people started requesting the song.

Small things that people do—like requesting a simple meeting—that others might not, can often pay gigantic dividends and make people enormously successful. Geffen ultimately made hundreds of millions of dollars from Guns & Roses. He also saw something in the band that others did not and invested in them.

Seeing what others do not and doing what others do not are both hallmarks of the most successful people out there.

<https://www.harrisonbarnes.com/>