

CANDY WRAPPER

“The Jer,” formally known as Jerry Swain, began making his chocolates as a young man in college. On a study break he made his now famous *Original IncrediBall*, a unique and tasty form of the peanut butter ball with a twist. This labor of love metamorphosed into an avocation upon graduation, however, as Swain began working for IBM, climbing his way up the corporate ladder as an award-winning salesperson and sales manager.



Jerry Swain, founder and ceo of Jer's Handmade Chocolates, Solana Beach, Calif.

Five years later, upon moving to San Diego, Swain became involved with several companies, serving as their respective executive vice president of marketing and business development and

fulfilling the corporate objectives of both. That success eventually led him to create his own business consulting practice. The entrepreneurial Swain offered training, workshops and executive coaching to large and small firms, guiding businesses toward their goals and stimulating performance improvement.

Swain's enthusiasm and energy quickly parlayed into speaking engagements domestically and abroad touching on such topics as sales, leadership and business development.

Swain's entry into chocolate emerged after a conversation he had with his father. That discussion prompted Swain to once again change careers to pursue a chocolate business, which he started in 2001. In only one year Jer's Handmade Chocolates was awarded the Silver Cup Award for "Best First Time Confection" at the 2001 International Confectioner's Conference in Boston for the *Original IncrediBall*. This was the first of four awards at this prestigious conference.

In 2002, the new *Pretzo Change-O* won two awards - "Best New Piece" and "Best of Show." In 2003 *Cara Mella* was recognized with "Best in Show." It became clear that Swain was committed to making only unique award-winning chocolate.



What did you think you would be when you grew up?

A professional baseball player. I loved playing all types of sports, but reality set in when I got past high school that there were too many bigger, stronger, faster and much better players to take those jobs!

Name one or some of your favorite movies.

"It's a Wonderful Life" – love the message of enjoying the journey and the difference we can make; "The Shawshank Redemption" – love the message of "hope" is a good thing; "Forrest Gump" – not because of the chocolate reference! Just innocent good; and "When Harry Met Sally" – love comedies; love the dialogue!

Describe your perfect dream vacation.

With an 8-week-old baby right now, anything with him (Jason) and my wife (Mariella). I always prefer a mix of adventure, sports, relaxation, entertainment and good food! Ice cream every day as well.

What book are you currently reading?

"Blink" by Malcolm Gladwell. Also, some paragraphs out of "new" parenting books...our little boy didn't come with an instruction manual!

Aside from a family member, whom would you most want to be stranded with on a deserted island?

Halle Berry; she seems she'd be resourceful to keep us alive; right? Or, whoever wins "Survivor."

What's your pet peeve?

Those who stereotype others.

I'd give anything to meet:

Martin Luther King, Jr. or Walt Disney – great dreamers and doers.

The best piece of advice that I've gotten:

I've gotten a lot of great advice. One I remember from my late Grandpa, "Never fall victim to loving things and using people; people should be loved, and things used."

What excites you most about your job?

I'm learning every day. The journey of a dream. Also, the happiness and emotions expressed by customers that taste our products. ☺

