

# Billy



## COOKS LIKE A MOTHER

**A Guide to Starting  
Your Own Business by  
Someone Who's Been  
There and Done That**

**BILLY KOUNOUPIS**



*Billy* COOKS  
LIKE A MOTHER!



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**Billy Kounoupis**

Star City Publishing

*Billy Cooks Like a Mother: A Guide to Starting Your Own Business by  
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Bethlehem, PA 18016

[www.billysdiner.com](http://www.billysdiner.com)

Printed in the United States of America

*Billy Cooks Like a Mother: A Guide to Starting Your Own Business by  
Someone Who's Been There and Done That*

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1. Author 2. Title 3. Business

Library of Congress Control Number: 2011940362

ISBN 13: 978-0-61555049-7

*To my mother Georgia Kounoupis. To my father, Pete Kounoupis, and my brother, George Kounoupis, whom I miss. They will live in my memory forever. And to my beautiful and loving wife, Yanna, and my wonderful children, Panayioti, Georgia, and Michael, who bless my life with joy and happiness.*



JULY, 1957



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## Acknowledgments

The City of Bethlehem, the Lehigh Valley, and all of our loyal customers who were with us from the beginning.

The crew of Billy's Downtown Diner: you're the best!

My wife, Yanna: without you there would have been no Billy's Downtown Diner.

My mom, Georgia Kounoupis, the greatest mom in the world: there would have been no second chance for me without you.

My children, Panayioti, Georgia, and Michael: you three fill my heart with happiness, joy, and love.

My father-in-law, Michael: you are not only a great donut maker but an awesome DAD.

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Uncle Gus, Thea Eleni, Thea Dora, Theo Panayioti, Theo Yanni, Thea Irene, Thea Dimitra, Thea Penelope, and Thea Eleni of Greece: I LOVE YOU!

Dean Tantaros, a great brother and my best friend, la la la.

John Freund, Esquire, my martini buddy.

Keith Bachman, CPA, my great friend and numbers guy.

Christopher Werley. The ultimate luxury and lifestyle publisher as well as my good friend, ([valleysocialmag.com](http://valleysocialmag.com)).

Larry Holmes, Jr.: we need a Vegas trip, bro!

John Callahan, mayor of Bethlehem: thanks for your support and friendship.

My cousins, Johnny Zannakis, Spiro Kounoupis, George C. Kounoupis, and Maria Manakos: xoxo always.

To all of our koumbari and godchildren: thank you for allowing us to be part of your family and for being a part of ours. I love you.

Peter “the eye” Gourniak, the photographer that shot me ([petergourniak.com](http://petergourniak.com)).

Tim Miller Photography ([timmillerphoto.com](http://timmillerphoto.com)); thank you for the great photos. You are truly a great artist.

## Introduction

I have been asked many times, why write a book about business? What are your qualifications? I'm not a chef or a college graduate. Hell, I barely graduated high school. There were 600 students in my graduating class, and I was ranked 599! I looked over at 600 and said, "Dude, you're an idiot!" Just kidding. But the fact is I didn't graduate at the top of my class, not by a long shot. Not only that, but I also *felt* like I was at the bottom of the barrel.

I think what actually drove me to succeed was my hero, my father, Pete Kounoupis. I lost my dad before I graduated high school due to a doctor's misdiagnosis.

Let me share with you the event that completely changed my life forever. When I was fifteen, I walked to my parents' diner after school, a daily event since my mom, Georgia, and my father, Pete, were workaholics. To my surprise that day, my mom and dad were not in the diner. I knew something was up, but I couldn't put my finger on it till the phone rang. I answered; it was the hospital asking me to come. I went to the kitchen and told Paul, the cook, "I need your car." He said, "No way! You don't have a license." I told him the hospital had called and my dad was sick. He reluctantly gave me his keys, and I drove to the hospital. When I arrived, I saw my family in tears. They said my dad was not going to make it.

I went into my dad's room, and I couldn't control my sobbing. My dad said with a smile, "Why're you crying?" I told him I was scared and couldn't live without him. He said, "Don't be scared of anything. Death is a part of life, and life is not a dress rehearsal." He said, "Realize that you live in a country of endless opportunities, and you have so many more opportunities than I did."

At the time I had no clue what he was talking about, but I get it now that I am older and wiser. My dad left his homeland of Sparta, Greece, during World War II, with no education, on a ship bound for America. Heck, he

# So You Want to Start Your Own Business

Congratulations! You're making a great choice and a big step toward being free from The Man and instead *being* The Man. Your journey is going to be like the movie *300*. It will be you against many, but trust me, next to being a proud parent, making your business dreams come true is probably the most awesome thing you will do, so let's begin this journey.

First, you must determine the type of business you want. Be honest with yourself and take a basic self-evaluation test. Ask yourself these questions:

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1. What am I good at and why?
2. What is my idea?
3. Can I visualize my future business?
4. Is there a market for what I want to do?
5. Do I love what I want to do? (Trust me—the money will come if you are passionate about what you do. If you are doing it just for the money, chances are you will fail.)
6. What is my concept?

As we go forward in this book and continue to ask these questions, I will share with you how I answered them for myself and why, because as basic as these questions are, you need to be thorough in order to determine your self-worth.

Here are my answers, in order:

1. Sales, marketing, and cooking.
2. Casual cuisine with a flair, reasonably priced, fresh, delivered with super-fast service.
3. When I closed my eyes, I saw my wall filled with photos of people I had met who have inspired my life and brought

me funny memories. I saw plasma TVs and a surround-sound system playing cool music that touched my soul, comfortable booths, an open-concept kitchen, big plates filled with mounds of cool dishes my wife, Yanna, and I created, a menu that was innovative and presented items not ordinarily served with breakfast, and menu covers embracing our beautiful city of Bethlehem.

4. We did some basic research to check what some of the most popular foods in our country were. We also looked into casual dining places, the most popular eateries on the East Coast as well as the West Coast. This told us the basic types of meals folks liked. But after doing so, we took what we'd learned and pretty much did our own thing. Our concept was to play with our food, something kids all over the world are told not to do...unless they want to someday become a chef.

In other words, we knew we had no

# BUSINESS LESSONS FROM BEHIND THE GRILL OR WHEREVER YOU WANT TO BE

As anyone who's ever watched cable TV knows, running a restaurant may be one of the toughest businesses out there—but it has a lot of lessons to teach any would-be entrepreneur.

From Gordon Ramsay (BBC's *Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares*) to Robert Irvine (Food Network's *Dinner Impossible*), people have been enthralled by just what goes in to that secret recipe for success.

Now, in *Billy Cooks Like a Mother*, renowned restaurateur Billy Kounoupis gives you the special scoop on how to whip up your own successful enterprise no matter what business you choose to go into. You'll learn how to:

- Add spice and flavor to your overall project
  - Scout the right location to get loads of hungry customers
  - Plan the perfect menu for your patrons (whether it's products or services)
  - Set the right prices to make your biz boom
  - Hire and train key managers and staff every time
  - Welcome customer complaints to improve your business
- Beat your competition; scramble to become number one
  - Stir in the proper amount of promotion, branding, and marketing
  - Serve up the tastiest treats to keep your customers coming back for more
  - Make that cash register go ka-ching 24/7



Don't let your dream end up in life's dumpster. Here is the kind of practical business advice you can sink your teeth into. Follow Billy's directions and you can't go wrong!

## About the Author

Billy Kounoupis is the owner of Billy's Downtown Diner, an award-winning eatery in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. The son of Greek immigrants, Billy learned early on the importance of combining vision, hard work, customer service, marketing, and just a hint of Mom's secret recipes to make any business a huge success.

ISBN: 978-0-61555049-7

\$16.95



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