



Jim McKelvey

AUTHOR

Co-Founder of Square (w/ Jack Dorsey), Founder & CEO of Invisibly

About:

- **Gender:** Male
- **Languages:** English
- **Travels from:** United States

Engagement Types:

- Speaking

Topics:

- Growth Strategy
- Innovation & Digital Transformation

Biography Highlights

- Jim McKelvey co-founded payments firm Square after he had trouble selling an art piece from his studio. The company, co-founded alongside Jack Dorsey — also the co-founder of Twitter — has more than 2500 employees and is now valued at over \$30 billion. McKelvey remains on Square's board, but has started a new company, Invisibly, which powers micropayments for journalism and publishing. A serial entrepreneur, he has started at least seven companies, ranging from a CD cabinet maker to a glass-blowing studio. He also sits on the board of the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis and started a nonprofit, LaunchCode, to teach people how to program.

Biography

Meet Jim McKelvey

Chances are good you've run across a Square device at some point, especially if you've recently visited a food truck or mobile small business. The tiny piece of plastic that allows you to accept credit cards on your smartphone is all over the US and recently landed in Australia, along with a suite of business-management tools. The company, co-founded by Jim McKelvey and Jack Dorsey — also the co-founder of Twitter — has more than 2500 employees and is now valued at over \$30 billion.

While best known for co-founding Square, McKelvey is, in some circles, better known as a master glass artist and author, having written the world's most widely read text on the subject, *The Art Of Fire*. His industrial design work is part of the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art in NYC and The Smithsonian in Washington DC. His glass studio, Third Degree Glass Factory in St. Louis, one of the United States' main centers of glassblowing arts.

After founding Square, Jim created the nonprofit LaunchCode, making it possible for anyone to learn programming and land a full-time job in under six months—for free. LaunchCode is an open model that may be freely copied by anyone and aims to solve the worldwide shortage of programmers. Jim's also founded Invisibly, which gives people control of their online identities.

A 1987 Washington University Economics and Computer Science graduate, McKelvey can discuss founding successful companies in payments, education, scientific publishing, construction, printing, glassblowing and software. Though an eclectic mix, each business is founded upon a simple idea and run by people committed to that idea. Jim has never sold any of his companies and as a result now oversees a diverse portfolio of businesses. Referencing personal experiences and local challenges, McKelvey offers a fresh approach to problem solving.

Jim is the author of three textbooks, two on computer programming and one on glassblowing. McKelvey's latest book, *The Innovation Stack*, explains how world-changing companies are built on the strategy of an "Innovation Stack," revealing a repeatable pattern of ground-breaking, competition-proof entrepreneurship. He lectures internationally on art and entrepreneurship.

McKelvey was appointed as an Independent Director of the St. Louis Federal Reserve in January 2017.

Videos



Jim's Topics

The Innovation Stack: Building an Unbeatable Business One Crazy Idea at a Time

Just as Square was taking off, Amazon launched a similar product, marketed it aggressively, and undercut Square on price. For most ordinary startups, this would have spelled the end. Instead, less than a year later, Amazon was in retreat and soon discontinued its service. How did Square beat the most dangerous company on the planet?

Square co-founder Jim McKelvey reveals the strategy that led to the company's success: the Innovation Stack

McKelvey's fascinating and humorous stories of Square's early days are blended with historical examples of other world-changing companies built on the Innovation Stack to reveal a pattern of ground-breaking, competition-proof entrepreneurship that is rare but repeatable.

The Innovation Stack is a thrilling business narrative that's much bigger than the story of Square. It is an irreverent look inside the world of entrepreneurship, and a call to action for all of us to find the entrepreneur within ourselves and identify and fix unsolved problems—one crazy idea at a time.

Available: Virtually

The Outdated Ritual of Asking for Permission

What's stopping you from doing what you would like to do? We no longer need to ask anybody permission to do anything. The tools that exist today thanks to the Internet allow you to get started by ourselves and to learn as we go along, at our own pace.

Available: Virtually

The Role of Focus in Solving a Problem

Jim noticed a very talented artist who was living in his beat up car and wondered why. He was a talented artist who could be getting paid well for his work. Why wasn't he? Jim realized the artist had no access to the systems that paid him. As he built Square, Jim always kept this one artist in mind and thought about how he was solving this one artist's problem.

Available: Virtually

Speaker Bureaus And Talent Agencies

Jim McKelvey is available to book via these agencies

 **Recommended**



Speaking Agency