WHAT YOU CAN LEARN FROM AIRBNB

Entrepreneur®

Chip and Joanna Gaines Saved Their Business—and Their City

Stars of HGTV's *Fixer Upper*

HOW TO SUCCEED IN 2017

THE TRENDS YOU NEED TO KNOW

THE BEST BIZ SCHOOLS

TEST YOUR CEO SKILLS

MEET THE MAN DISRUPTING... POPCORN?

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It's All About Content

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Michelle Cordeiro Grant, founder of Lively lingerie, does what big brands can't.

PHOTOGRAPH BY PIETER HENKET; GROOMER, ALICIA CAMPBELL

ON THE COVER: Photograph by David Yellen.

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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: PHOTOGRAPH BY CHLOE AFTEL; ILLUSTRATION BY ROBIN DAVEY; ILLUSTRATION BY PAUL SAHRE

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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL FRIBERG; ILLUSTRATION BY JAMES VICTORE; PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRIS DELORENZO

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Stride right: Tracksmith apparel (p. 36) targets hard-core runners, not weekend warriors. Its reward: $4.1 million in funding.

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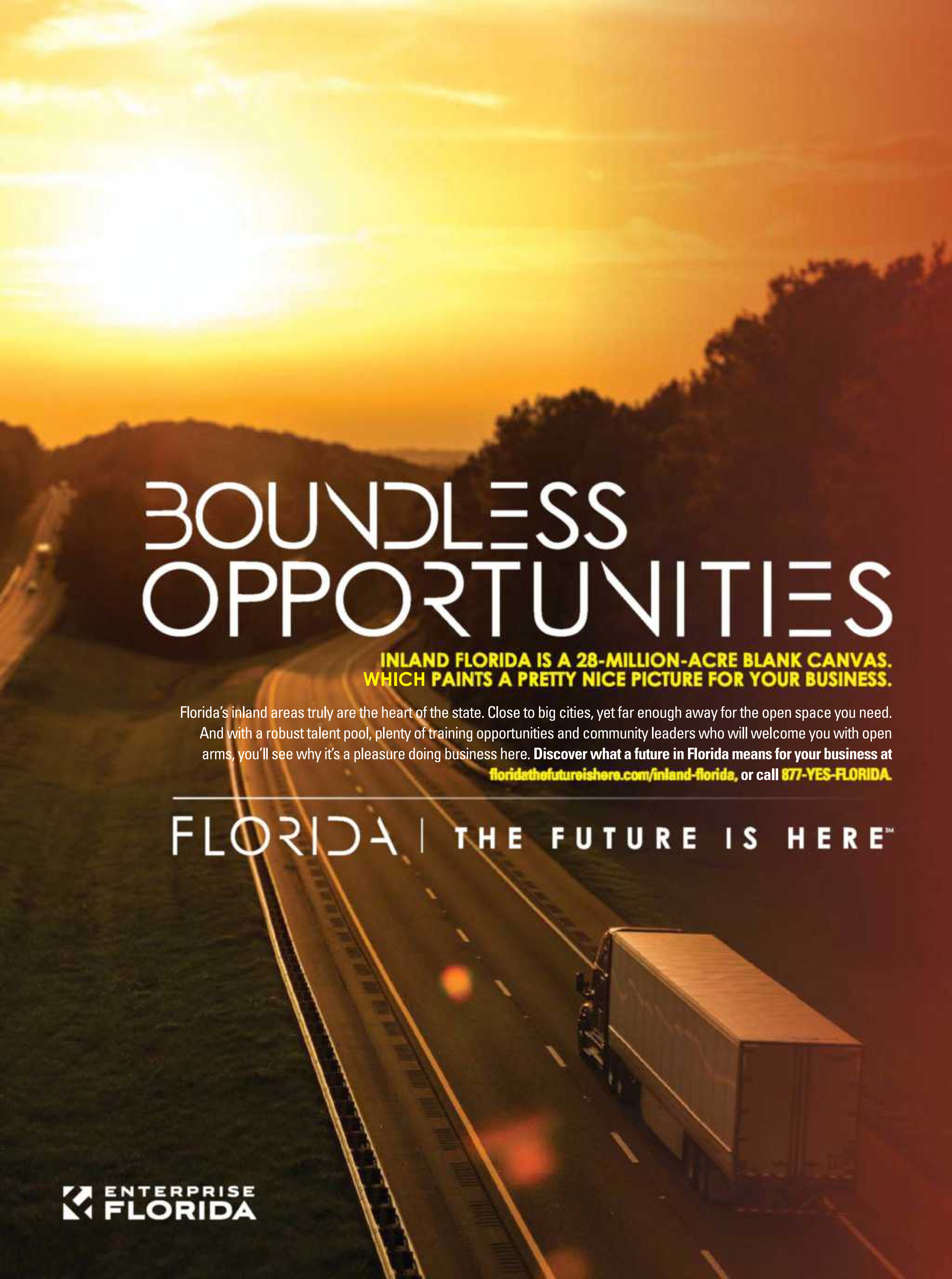
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How the media works

Recently, a CEO was venting to me about how he routinely pitches his business to reporters, but nobody writes about him. So I told him the five words that, harsh as they are, all entrepreneurs need to hear: *Sometimes you're not the story.*

But good news: You could be *part* of the story.

Every month I use this space to explain how I make editorial decisions. I do this because entrepreneurs frequently want press, but they don't often understand how journalists think—so part of my job, as I see it, is to demystify the process. And this distinction, between *being* the story and being *part* of one, is critical. I get it: You want the big showcase, the feature, the photo shoot. And you should! But the truth is, we run very few of them. Only six stories in our December issue focus solely on a single company. The bar for a profile is incredibly high—I'm looking for that perfect mix of timeliness, an interesting company, a founder with a compelling and relatable story, and know-it-when-I-see-it intangibles—so simply pitching yourself or your brand isn't the most direct way into this, or probably any, publication. I have to say no to pitches like this all day, every day.

But here's the thing: I am always looking for surprising, fascinating, and compelling stories. Maybe it's an entrepreneurship trend or a budding industry or a major challenge that business owners are working to overcome. You insiders know that stuff best—and it's what I want to hear about.

That's why I told the CEO to reframe his pitch. Don't make it about him. Instead, write a reporter some (far more detailed) version of this: "Hey. Here's this really interesting new thing happening in my field; it's important and not enough people know about it. I'd be happy to share details about how it impacts my business." That's an email every journalist wants to open. The resulting story may not be the big, splashy feature you wanted—but truth be told, you may have never gotten that anyway. This at least gets you press, and you can build your profile from there.

An example from this very issue: Earlier this year, someone pitched me a company that makes escape rooms. Maybe you've seen one open recently in your city; they're like rooms full of puzzles. I said no—there are tons of these companies, so why would I focus on one? But a few months later, I was talking with writer Ashlea Halpern and we got to wondering how hard it is to open a trendy business—you know, a company whose concept is hot, but it's only a matter of time before the buzz dies down? So Ashlea started making calls and gained some great insight, and soon we had an interesting story about a lot of businesses we'd have never profiled individually (page 74). And we included a few escape rooms.

(By the way, some numbers: She reached out to 25 trend-chasing entrepreneurs; 17 got back to her for an interview, and seven were quoted in the resulting story. "Sometimes you talk to an entrepreneur and they won't tell you anything anyone can learn from. It's as if they think you're going to give away their trade secrets," she tells me. None of those made the cut. "The best interviewees are the most transparent. They talk actual numbers. They're willing to admit mistakes and explain, in detail, how they overcame them.")

Publicists sometimes seem to have broader coverage in mind. I routinely get emails that ask, "Are you working on any stories about...?" and then list some broad category, like health apps or food companies, that their client is in. (One recently asked if I was "working on any stories about unique CEOs." I mean, what am I going to say—*nah, only writing about middle management now?*) This is like throwing a dart in the dark. You might get a bull's-eye, but it'll be dumb luck.

So if you want a better shot at coverage, don't ask what a reporter or an editor is working on and, maybe, don't even tell them why your company is the most amazing thing they've ever heard of. Instead, tell them what they need to know—and how you're a part of it.

Jason Feifer
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Photograph by David Rinella


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etiquette guy

WHO'S THAT GIFT *REALLY* FOR?

BEFORE YOU GIVE, THINK ABOUT HOW THOUGHTFUL YOU'RE ACTUALLY BEING.

By Ross McCammon

HEY, EVERYONE IN my imaginary office. Gather round. I have some new holiday rules for you all to follow.

Here we go: General cheer is OK. Merriment will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The occasional burst of mirth will be tolerated. Kyle can wear his candy-cane pants. And here comes the really important one: Gifts—material and monetary—are banned unless you think really, really hard before giving one.

I recognize that some of you enjoy giving gifts. I recognize that gift giving is a behavior central to human connection. I get that gift giving helps define and

Illustration by Paul Sahre

3 WAYS THIS BUSINESS OWNER CAPITALIZED ON A BIG OPPORTUNITY

Ed Evanson has lived his entire life in Watford City, N.D. Located near the western state border, his town is about 45 miles southeast of Williston, the closest "big" city. Over the decades, Evanson, who is 53, has witnessed many changes in this little town and, by extension, to his home remodeling and repair business, Evanson Construction.

Right now, Evanson's hometown is undergoing what might be its biggest change ever.

Turns out, Watford City is situated within the Bakken formation, a 200,000-square-mile area spanning North Dakota, Montana and Canada. Oil was discovered there in the 1950s but was previously difficult to get to. Thanks to new technologies and methodologies, such as hydraulic fracturing or "fracking," the oil boom hit Watford City in earnest in 2009 and hasn't stopped.

McKenzie County, where Watford City is located, experienced a 92 percent population increase between 2005 and 2013, according to county statistics. Projections peg the county's annual population growth rate between 1.1 percent and 3.5 percent from 2016 to 2040, depending on oil prices.

For Evanson, the population explosion has meant a huge new demand for his services. After all, many of the houses in Watford City were constructed in the late 1970s and 1980s, he says. Those properties have been in need of serious upgrades.

WHEN THE POPULATION OF HIS LOCAL AREA BOOMED, THIS ENTREPRENEUR STEPPED UP HIS GAME.

Here are three ways a solopreneur like Evanson has capitalized on the local boom.

1. MAINTAIN THE HIGHEST STANDARDS.

The population surge hasn't only brought more residents to the greater Watford City area, Evanson says. There's more competition these days, too.

Something he learned early on from his father, Elmer, who also was a professional carpenter: Keep customers coming by maintaining the highest standards for his work. "Other carpenters have come in, but they don't get done when they say they will, and their quality isn't the same," Evanson says. "I try to help people as much as I can. That's reflected in my work."

After all, one satisfied customer can turn into many. Evanson knows this well.

2. ALWAYS BE READY FOR WORK.

No matter the work or the weather outside, Evanson can always depend on his pair of Chevy Silverado trucks – a 1500 pickup and a 3500 Chassis Cab with a service body – to get the job done. Silverados are built for work, he says, and strong.

"They're dependable and easy to work out of," Evanson says. "I've never had any major trouble or downtime."

If your work truck sits in the shop, that's valuable time lost. "I've never had to skip a day of work," Evanson says. For any entrepreneur, that's crucial.

3. SEIZE NEW OPPORTUNITIES.

Even a solopreneur like Evanson can find new opportunities. Over the last four winters, he started offering snow-plowing services from November through March – months during which his remodeling business was typically slow. The Silverado's towing capacity comes in handy when hauling his skidsteer plow around town. And with technology like StabiliTrak® with traction control, Silverados have no problem handling the snow.

With the population surge, Evanson says snow removal makes up about a quarter of his annual revenues. Not bad for a town that until only a few years ago didn't even have a traffic light, he says.

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strengthen relationships. But the problem is not in the giving. It's in the receiving. Every instance of workplace gift giving involves a quid pro quo. You give the quid. The receiver wonders if you expect some quo. Or some pro. Or a GoPro. Look, I don't know from Latin. The point is: When you give a gift, you produce an inequity that the other person feels obligated to right—be it an increase in productivity, a reciprocal present, or an effusive enough "Thanks!"

So, I was doing some reading. And there are tons of studies on this stuff. A 2014 study by researchers from Yale, USC, and NYU found that gift givers often focus on what they think the receivers would desire, while the receivers often prefer gifts that are practical. This means that what the receiver wants and what they receive are usually totally different things. In one survey, researchers asked people whether they'd rather give a really nice, heavy pen or a lighter, more traditional one. The respondents preferred to give the fancier pen—but they'd rather receive the average pen.

We try to make people happy by giving "fancy" gifts. But people tend not to want fancy gifts. They want ones that aren't very expensive and have an obvious utility. The usefulness of a fancy gift is not always so clear, and the receiver likely wonders: *Whaaat?* What's the intent? Who's the gift really for—the giver, who just gave themselves the gift of thinking they've made someone happy? Or the receiver, who receives both the gift and possibly a feeling that the gift should be reciprocated?

And what kind of gift is that?

Think about gift giving throughout history. The dowry. The potlatch. The donation that gets your name carved in limestone above the entrance to an opera house. You think such extreme giving is about the receiver? Nah; it's about the giver. It's about flaunting your status by showing how much you're able to bestow to a person or an organization in need. Throughout human civilization, we think more highly of people who give the most, not necessarily people who have the most.

Other recent gift-giving studies have shown that...

→ **People want what they want.** Going "off-registry" (for a wedding gift or, metaphorically, any gift) may involve a lot of thought, but the receivers would rather have something they already want than something you think will fit into their lives.

→ **The people most motivated by gifts are those who have the least job security:** students and short-term employees especially.

→ **People don't appreciate charitable donations as much as you'd think.** They much prefer a physical gift. Or money. People love money! It's even more appreciated than a requested item.

→ **The gift giver receives the most psychological benefits from the transaction.** They should thank themselves.

→ **The chimpanzee employs the giving of food and grooming in exchange for sex.** (I really did a deep dive on this research. Fascinating!)

You still want to give someone a holiday gift at work? Be smart about it. Give the average pen. And/or just tell them how great they're doing. When your assistant brings his mom to the office, tell her he's "killin' it." My boss once told my mom that. She still talks about it. "Do you remember the time your boss told me that you were killing everything and everyone?" "Yes, Mom." "What a nice man." That was a gift. It cost nothing. It lasted one second. Yet it made her feel like her son was valued and wasn't going to be fired.

Some of you have asked about doing a "Secret Santa," anonymous gift-giving thing this year. Putting aside the fact that "Secret Santa" sounds like the street name of a particularly lethal strain of heroin, the process requires FedEx–level logistics to pull off successfully. That's the first thing. Second thing: a monogrammed bottle stopper. That was by far the Secret Santa gift I was most excited about getting. And I've never once used it. And it wasn't my monogram. So: Santa is OK, secrets are fine, but no more Secret Santa.

Anyway, I think we should all go home early today. Like, now. Let's take tomorrow off, too. Also, you're all killin' it. □

Ross McCammon is an articles editor at GQ *magazine and the author of* Works Well with Others.

ask a pro

Size You Up

Q How do I best evaluate my performance as chief executive?

A A sober self-assessment is never easy. But Dr. Dee Soder, who has counseled hundreds of chief executives as founder of the CEO Perspective Group in New York, offers these steps. The good news: You don't have to do it alone.

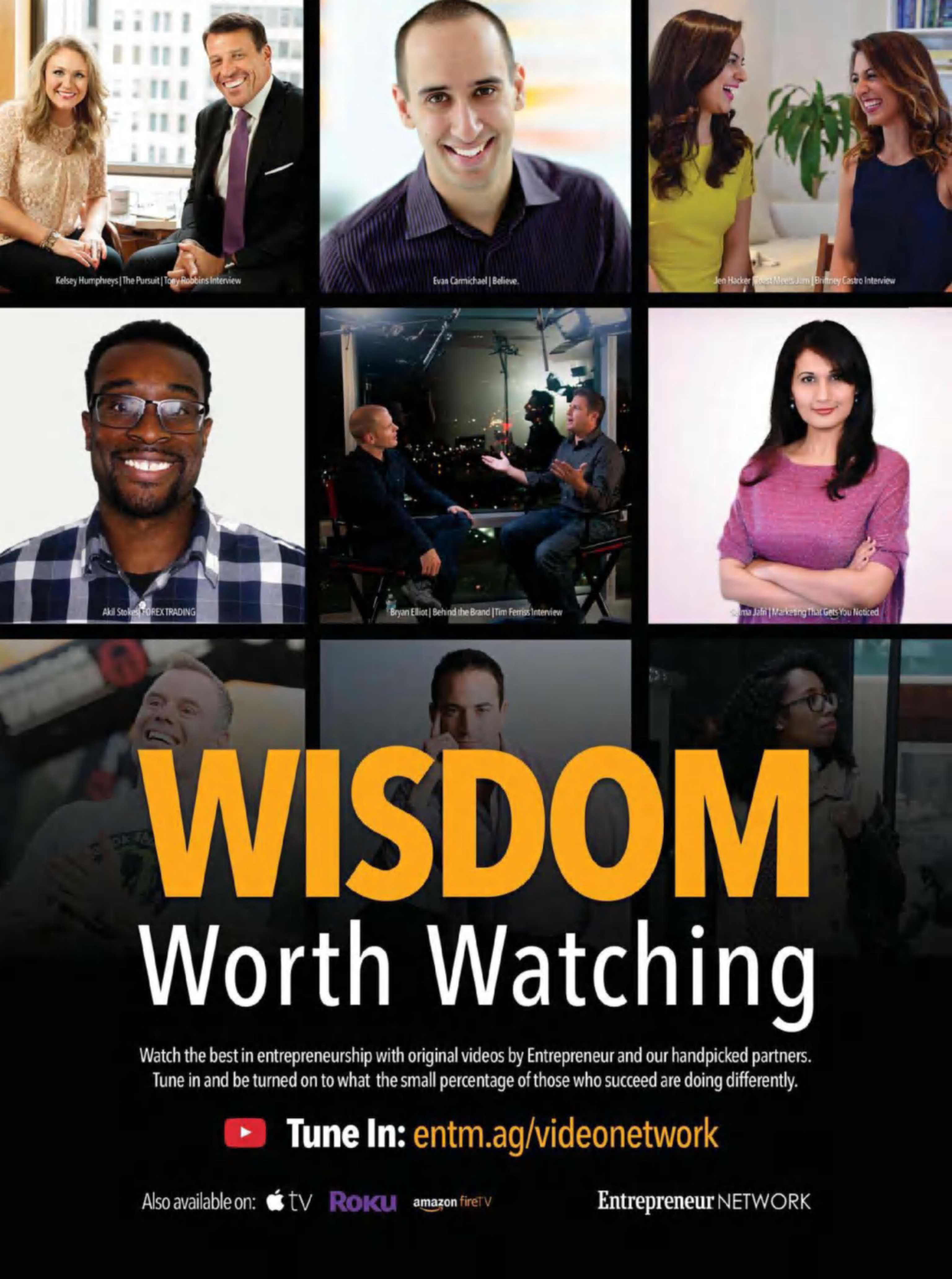
Seek outside counsel. Cultivate what Soder calls a "personal cabinet," three to five people who know you, know your business, and aren't afraid to speak up. "It's a way to stay out of the echo chamber," she says.

Reflect daily. Set aside 30 to 60 minutes each day to write down your thoughts. Sounds ridiculous—who has time for that, right? But it's a practice long championed by management guru Tom Peters. Journaling gives you time "to listen to that nagging suspicion, the instinct that tells you something's off," Soder says.

Hire a superb assistant. We're not talking about the fastest typist. You want "somebody with good judgment," Soder says. "Somebody with a fair amount of experience." That way, they can also serve as a professional sounding board—and give you honest responses.

—*Christopher Hann*

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID BEYDA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THE COFOUNDERS' GUIDE TO GIFT GIVING

Don't know what to get your business partner for the holidays? For inspiration, four pairs of entrepreneurs share their shopping lists with us.

By Stephanie Schomer

WHO: RAAJA NEMANI AND AARON FIRESTEIN, COFOUNDERS OF ARTIST-DESIGNED SNEAKER BRAND BUCKETFEET

For Aaron: "We met volunteering in Argentina in 2008—we would have never crossed paths if we both didn't love travel," Raaja says. "Aaron loves going off the beaten path, so having a suitcase that's nimble is important. This brand is superinnovative—it has Bluetooth tracking and ports for charging your devices." ***(Raden A22 Carry, $295; raden.com)***

For Raaja: Aaron will also honor their roots with a travel-related treat. "Having a fun little map that helps you remember and collect your experiences from your trips is perfect," he says. ***(Scratch Map Deluxe, $32; uncommongoods.com)***

WHO: PAUL AND NIK STEWART-STAND, THE HUSBAND-AND-WIFE TEAM BEHIND STEWART/STAND STAINLESS STEEL WALLETS

For Paul: "I'd love to get Paul immunotherapy shots so he's no longer allergic to kittens," Nik says, only partially joking. "And then I'd get a booking at Meow Parlour, New York's cat café. It'd be good for him to safeguard himself against allergies. Or we can just load him up with Allegra." ***(Meow Parlour reservation, $6 per half hour; meowparlour.com)***

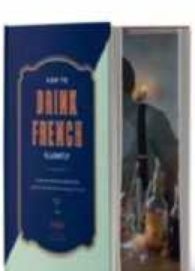
For Nik: A trip to a spa near the Grand Canyon. "We travel so much for work, and often not within the U.S. By exposing ourselves to a new experience, we gain a new source of inspiration." Added bonus: It's an almost exact replica of where they were married in Mexico, minus the ocean. ***(Amangiri, $1,707/night; aman.com/resorts/amangiri)***

WHO: JAMES AND ALEXA HIRSCHFELD, BROTHER-AND-SISTER COFOUNDERS OF PAPERLESS POST

For Alexa: "We live in New York, so walking is part of Alexa's morning exercise, but she needs a bag big enough for her laptop," James says. "This is elegant and has a sense of humor, and Alexa is such an optimist. And she doesn't take accessories too seriously." ***(Anya Hindmarch Smiley Backpack, $1,450; anyahindmarch.com)***

For James: "Movies are a way for James to enter someone else's creative world," Alexa says. The family has long-standing holiday-movie traditions—the original *Miracle on 34th Street* and *It's a Wonderful Life*—so this is really a gift for the whole group. ***(Optoma Technology GT5500 Full HD DLP Home Theater Projector, $1,299; bhphotovideo.com)***

WHO: NICK KOSEVICH AND IRA KOPLOWITZ, COFOUNDERS OF CRAFT BITTERS COMPANY BITTERCUBE



For Ira: This coffee-table book from the folks at St-Germain features recipes and tips from top bartenders. "We started as bartenders, and St-Germain is one of the first cocktail ingredients you utilize in the beginning of your career and realize, *Oh, I can make drinks and add new twists!*" says Nick. **(How to Drink French Fluently, *$20; stgermain.fr)***

For Nick: "Cognac is having a real moment," Ira says. "This particular XO expression from D'ussé recently launched, and it's on the pricier side, but the liquid has been aged 10 years in French oak barrels and is the epitome of an ultrapremium cognac. And if it's good enough for Jay-Z, it's good enough for Nick!" ***(D'ussé XO, $230; dusse.com)***

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What Everyone Can Learn from Airbnb

I'VE STAYED IN MORE THAN 70 OF THEM AND FOUND OUT A LOT ABOUT BUSINESS ALONG THE WAY. *By Ashlea Halpern*

WHEN A FOUR-FOOT snake slithered through our window, we screamed and hopped around, then chased it out with a broomstick. Next we emailed our host. We were at an Airbnb in Koh Lanta, Thailand. It took 24 hours to hear back. Locals, she wrote, believe "a snake in the home is good luck." ¶ Wrong answer! And wrong attitude. Let's get one thing straight: For all of Airbnb's live-like-a-local propaganda, it's about paying money to sleep in a stranger's bed. An Airbnb listing is a small business: Guests are clients, hosts are vendors. This simplicity makes Airbnb an instructive space to discover what makes a good business.

I've been traveling full-time with my boyfriend for two years, staying in more than 70 Airbnbs around the globe. Each offers insight into why some hosts stand out while others fail. Based on my collective experience, here are seven ways to thrive.

1. Don't launch until you're ready. We've seen so many places like this: The dishware and throw pillows are new, but there are no pots in the kitchen and the bed is a sleep-deprivation device. I'm sure our hosts were eager to recoup their investment, but they've rushed to market before their service was ready—and now they've disappointed their earliest customers, who are going to alert future ones. There's a reason Broadway shows have previews and restaurants do soft openings. Imagine if these Airbnb hosts let their friends stay over for a few days and took the feedback to heart.

2. Manage expectations. No business is under obligation to please the whole world, but it's important to be up front about your offerings. You'd be shocked at how many Airbnbs we've seen that didn't live up to their promise—a listing that looked like the Four Seasons turned out to be a moldy hovel, and places listed as "pet friendly" then insisted we tie our dogs up.

3. Price competitively. Assume your customers are comparison shopping, then either price accordingly or make it clear why you're more expensive. We'll always give an Airbnb newbie a go if they've set a lower-than-average nightly price and put considerable effort into their listing. But we'll blow off a well-reviewed host who doesn't offer a weekly discount if others do. (P.S.: Asking for a $50 cleaning fee when the neighbor charges $15 makes you look delusional.)

4. Get a personality. Branding matters, even for the smallest of businesses. Ace Airbnb hosts do things like naming their rental, building stand-alone websites, and giving it hashtags for guests to use. Then they design with personality (and no soulless IKEA furniture). We once stayed with a host in South Carolina who decked out her cabin in camouflage curtains, stuffed animal heads, and baskets of spent casings. I didn't share her taste, but I'll never forget it.

5. Anticipate needs. We checked into a bungalow in Colorado and found a half bottle of ranch dressing and a Hula-Hoop—but no spoons, TV, or working internet. Think preemptively about your clients' needs, no matter what you're selling. Is your Airbnb near train tracks? Place earplugs on the bedside table. Rainy day? Set out umbrellas and a list of indoor activities. The less customers have to ask for, the better.

6. Show your humanity. Would it have killed the couple in Baton Rouge to wave? We stayed in their guest cottage for three days, and they practically drew the blinds on their house anytime we were outside. No matter the business I'm paying, I want to feel like I'm supporting a person. I want a relationship, even if it's just a hello. It also makes it harder for me to get angry (because you're human!) or to leave a scathing review (because it might hurt your very human feelings!). Not good with people? Deputize someone likable to do the face-to-face stuff.

7. Don't lose your cool online, ever. We've left a few bad reviews on Airbnb, and hosts respond in one of three ways: (1) Ignore it (fine). (2) Thank us, then either explain the situation or offer ways to improve (better). Or (3) every so often, they get angry and argue with us in a public forum. Please know: You can never win this battle. It just turns off future clients. There's only one way forward: Listen, process, and respond diplomatically.

The best Airbnbs, like the best businesses, are works in progress. That's a good thing; there's always room for improvement. ◻

Illustration by Robin Davey

Inspiration Anywhere!

A failed trip to Big Sur led Alyssa Ravasio, founder of Hipcamp, to build a comprehensive camping resource for America—and unlock access to private lands in the process.

As told to Ashlea Halpern

I WANTED TO SPEND New Year's Eve of 2012 somewhere quiet and beautiful, but I couldn't believe how difficult it was to find a campsite by the ocean. There are websites for county parks, state parks, and other federal land, but there's no easy way to search them. Eventually, I found Andrew Molera State Park in Big Sur, Calif. I arrived and began setting up my tent, and then realized everybody had a surfboard and a wetsuit. I walked to the beach and saw one of the most beautiful point breaks of my life. It was so frustrating, because I could have brought my surfboard—but I'd spent hours reading about the campground, and not one source mentioned this perfect wave!

That's when I decided to build a web platform that would connect people more easily to nature and camping.

I had no funding or savings to hire someone to build the site, so I enrolled in Dev Bootcamp, a three-month coding program that cost $9,000. Speakers came in each week, and I always asked the same question: "Should I launch my own company or spend a year working as an engineer somewhere first?" Reddit and Hipmunk cofounder Steve Huffman's answer was the most inspiring. First, he asked if my company would solve a problem I have. Yes, it would. Then he asked, "Is this a problem other people have?" Yes. His last question: "Will people pay you to solve this problem for them?"

"I DISCOVERED A BIGGER PROBLEM: I'D SET OUT TO MAKE A DATABASE OF CAMPGROUNDS, BUT AMERICA HAS A SHORTAGE!"

I thought back to doing five hours of research to find Andrew Molera State Park. I totally would have paid for an easier way. Others will, too, I said. I had my answer: Launch the company.

I recruited a friend and my siblings and started with California parks. We read state websites and reviews to create an organized data set: Are there showers? Can I bring my dog? We compiled it onto a website called CaliforniaCamping.ca and went live in June 2013... but nobody came. It was demoralizing. Was this a horrible idea? No, I decided: We just needed to add more campsites. We rebranded as Hipcamp, and as we worked, I started to fund-raise—first casually, accepting small checks from friends, until I was able to meet some angel investors. We hired a team of 40 writers, building out huge data sets and expanding state by state. Two years later, in summer 2015, we had coverage countrywide.

As we grew, however, I discovered a bigger problem: I'd originally set out to make a database of campgrounds, but America has a shortage! State and national parks have only limited, reserved spots, and they book up six months in advance. If I could create more campsites, Hipcamp could be more than just a listings site: It could do bookings, where we'd connect campers with locations.

We started reaching out to private citizens who own tons of land. Many were receptive: They don't want to subdivide, sell, or develop their property, but they would like to make money off it. So we partnered with them to create entirely new places for people to get outside—camping, hiking, fishing, you name it. The property owners set a price, which ranges from $10 to $300, and we facilitate the transaction and take a commission.

Today Hipcamp has a full-time staff of seven and a mix of offerings. We have 1,700 private-land sites that people can book through us, and we add hundreds by the month. We also have more than 285,000 listings, which include state and national lands; the government controls the bookings for those areas, but our comprehensive database is great for SEO, and it's how a lot of people discover us.

Website traffic also tells us a lot about where people want to camp, so we can focus on finding private lands in that area. It's a creative way to crack the classic chicken-and-egg conundrum of marketplaces. And that's why our biggest initiative for 2017 is reaching more private landowners, especially those living in rural areas or who are disconnected from the internet. We have some ranchers who've made more than $40,000 this year. It creates great value for them—and, we hope, doubles as a conservation effort. When people can make money off open land, there will be more open land for everyone. □

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF HIPCAMP.COM

the ethics coach

A (POSSIBLE) CASE OF KICKBACKS

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU THINK AN EMPLOYEE IS ON THE TAKE.

By Gael O'Brien

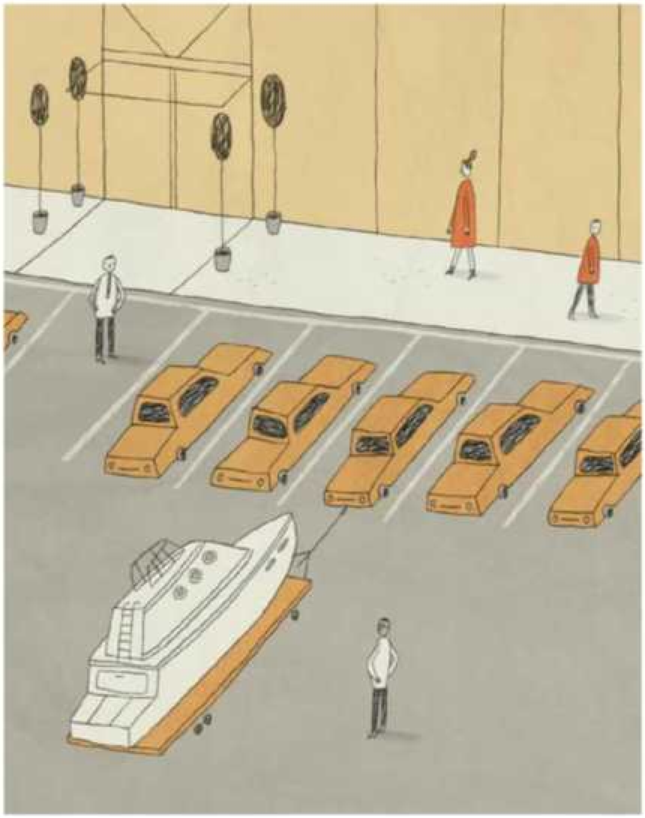
Q I suspect one of my employees is taking gifts from customers, which, I've made clear, is against our policy. How do I make sure? I don't want to wrongly accuse someone.

A NO MATTER HOW good you are at solving crimes before a TV detective does, things get tricky when the mystery is at your business. Best-case scenario, there's a misunderstanding over what constitutes "gifts." Worst case, customers are being pressured into kickbacks or are offering presents for preferential treatment. Either way, you need facts and evidence. Don't presume dishonesty. If you can't handle this with objectivity and diplomacy, then find someone experienced on your team.

Some questions to consider before you start sleuthing: Are a disproportionate number of customers receiving discounts without legitimate business reasons? Have customers commented on the high cost of doing business with you, even though you haven't raised prices? Has anyone stopped their orders? Have you questioned this employee's honesty before? Are there changes in their social life, like big vacations or box seats at games?

If all signs still point to something being fishy, move ahead. Conduct a satisfaction audit with a sampling of customers, including anywhere you suspect irregularities, to ask about their needs, what they value, and how they rate your service. Hopefully the truth will come out—between the lines or directly. If anyone tells you that kickbacks were involved, apologize for policy violations and make amends.

Now it's time to deal with the employee. Talk to them about what you've learned and the consequences your policy spells out. If you have proof, follow through with the consequences. Not enough proof? Clarify your company's policy on receiving gifts. No consequences in place? Fix that!



Q WE LOST A PROSPECT; they didn't like our straight talk about how they should clean up their problems. Instead, they hired somebody who said what they wanted to hear. What's the best way to speak honestly to an in-denial client (or potential client) without hurting the relationship?

A BUSINESS OWNERS should never rely on yes-men. That's always trouble. But it happens. So when you're faced with stressed-out prospects and clients, you need to help them understand that you've got their back—even if it's painful.

During your first meeting, when prospects are sitting there rattling off their troubles, try to see the problems through their eyes. The more empathetic you are, the more you'll see how their denial is really self-protection. And the more you learn about their values, their company's strengths, and their mission, the more you'll be able to offer solutions with language they won't shut down. Common ground always helps smooth things out, with clients new and old. And most important of all, once you two understand each other, the client will see that your goal is their goal—and that you're the right person to pull it off. □

GAEL O'BRIEN IS PUBLISHER OF THE WEEK IN ETHICS *AND FOUNDER OF COACHING/CONSULTING FIRM STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES GROUP.*

Illustration by Brian Rea

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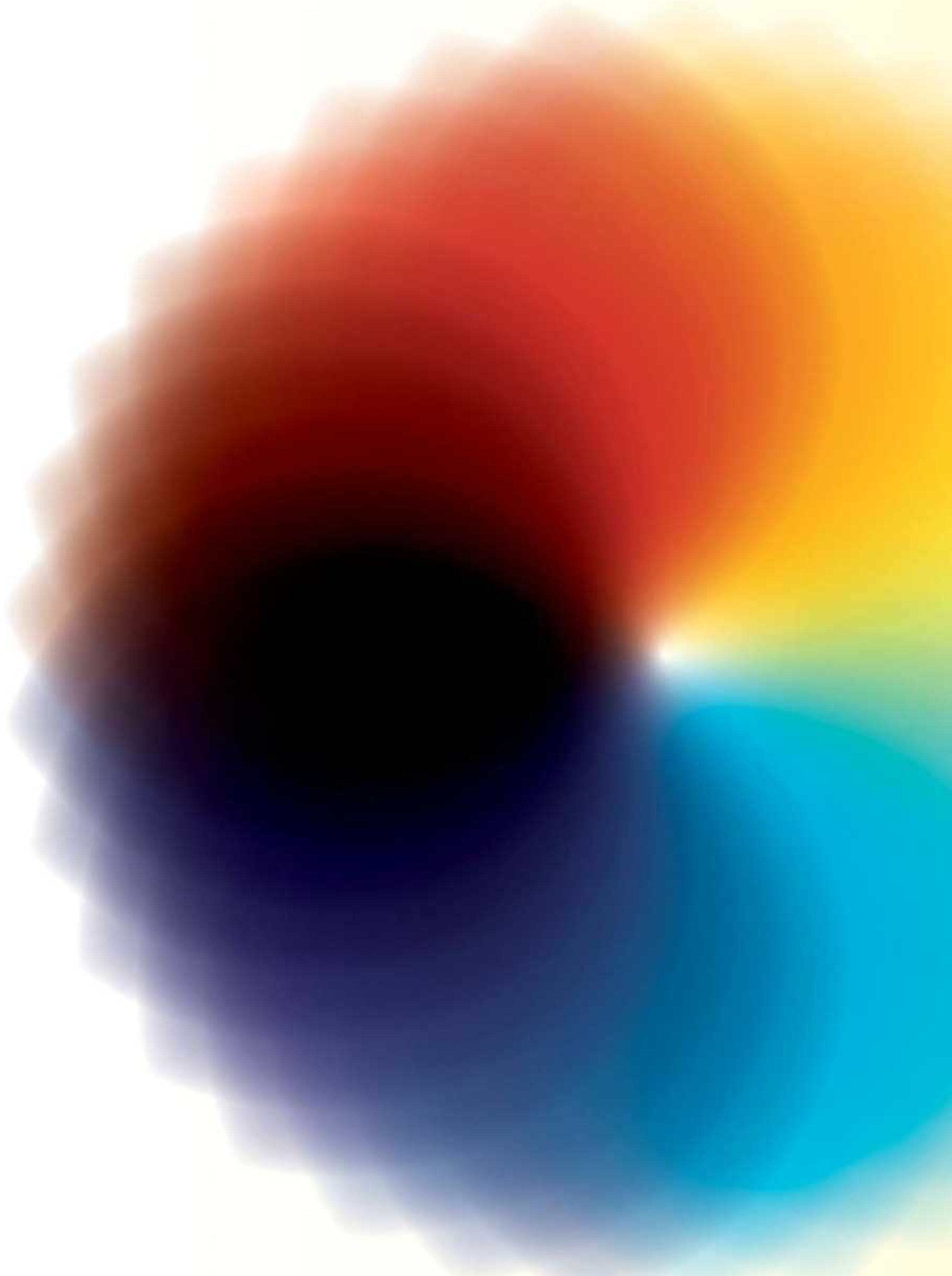


TRENDS

WHAT TO EXPECT IN 2017

THE OPPORTUNITIES, TRENDS, PLAYERS, AND INDUSTRIES THAT ENTREPRENEURS WILL BE CHASING—AND YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT—IN THE COMING YEAR.

Chip and Joanna Gaines will have this place fixed right up.

1

Entrepreneurs Are Transforming Small Cities

BY MAGGIE GORDON
PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID YELLEN

EXHIBIT A: CHIP AND JOANNA GAINES, OF HGTV'S *FIXER UPPER,* HAVE MADE A HUGE IMPACT ON WACO, TEX.

ONE NIGHT A FEW YEARS AGO, DUSTIN ANDERSON WAS HAVING dinner with his wife, and he spotted Chip and Joanna Gaines out with some friends. Anderson felt immediate tension. He owns a Waco, Tex., glass shop called Anderson Glass and had been doing some work with the Gaineses, who owned a construction company. But the Gaineses were past due on paying him—30, maybe close to 60 days over.

"There was an elephant in the room," Anderson recalls. "We sat down for dinner, and then after a while, Chip walks over and slides into the booth, puts his arm around me, and says, 'Hey, buddy. I know we're behind. Things are rough, but bear with me. I have a solution.' And he just kind of loved on me. When he got up and left, I told my wife, 'That's what I want.' Just talk to me. Tell me. Keep me in the loop."

The moment was pure Chip: He's a lovable, charming guy. But he'd also gotten used to conversations like that. Back then, around 2011, Chip and Joanna didn't think they'd make payroll most weeks, as they flipped homes on a shoestring budget. ("It's not like shiplap was always my top design choice," says Joanna. "I was just trying to save money.") Monday and Tuesday would be full of angst as they crunched numbers. Friday would be gut-wrenching when they had to ask employees or contractors to hold checks. "I think it would have been easier to quit if it was just me and Chip," Joanna says now. But many of their employees had worked alongside them for years. "And we had these guys who were now family. We knew their wives; we knew their kids. We were like, 'We can't not do this for them.' Even though they couldn't cash their checks on some Fridays, they were


TRADE IN YOUR OLD VEHICLE FOR A WORKHORSE.
TRADE IN & TRADE UP EVENT
CONSUMER CASH $2,500
CONQUEST BONUS CASH $2,000
ON THE JOB BONUS ALLOWANCE $1,000
UPFIT BONUS ALLOWANCE $500
PROMASTER TOTAL SAVINGS $6,000
CONSUMER CASH $2,500
CONQUEST BONUS CASH $2,000
ON THE JOB BONUS ALLOWANCE $500
UPFIT BONUS ALLOWANCE $500
PROMASTER CITY TOTAL SAVINGS $5,500
+ GET UP TO $500,000 IN AGGREGATE TOTAL TAX DEDUCTIONS WHEN USING SECTION 179[1]
RAM
COMMERCIAL VAN SEASON
ramtrucks.com/commercial
BUSINESS LINK
ON THE JOB

HGTV fans know The Magnolia Market, home to this city's former grain silos, now a highlight of Waco. For the uninitiated (*from top*): The main market at night; the food truck seating area; Chip at work on the bakery; the finished bakery.

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF MAGNOLIA

the reason why we were like, 'We've got to make this work.'"

Their fortunes changed in 2013, as any fan of reality television knows. Chip and Joanna became the stars of an HGTV show called *Fixer Upper*, a home-remodeling program in which their loving rapport takes center stage, and it turned them into America's sweethearts. Viewers live-tweet episodes with the hashtag #RelationshipGoals and heart emojis. Now the Gaineses are building a personal empire: They run the construction and design business (which is booming) and the show (which just wrapped filming of season four) alongside their new magazine, *The Magnolia Journal*. ("Magnolia" is the Gaineses' umbrella corporate name. Their construction company, for example, is Magnolia Homes.) Their first book, *The Magnolia Story*, came out in October and became an instant best-seller. Joanna has a line of furniture, and they're considering a second show focusing on her design process.

Reality television has, of course, transformed many such struggling businesspeople before them. But the couple's response to fame has very much separated them from their newly famous peers: They've invested heavily in Waco, a city of 130,000 that's also something of a fixer-upper. In opening multiple businesses there, they've helped turn the city into a certifiable tourist destination—sparking not just an ecosystem of other businesses that serve the tens of thousands of fans rolling in each week but also a model of how entrepreneurs in other cities, even without the backing of a cable TV show, can make an enormous difference.

It's something the Gaineses are proof of: Successful entrepreneurs inspire other entrepreneurs, and their collective success is transformative.

"We want Waco to be part of the package, part of the equation," says Chip. "It's become exciting to watch people come to town and go back home and say, 'We had a great time. This place was great.'"

WACO WAS ONCE BOOMING. IN THE LATE-19TH AND EARLY-20th centuries, it was Texas's major cotton exchange. Today most people think of it as the stained site of sensational tragedy—the siege that destroyed a cult called the Branch Davidians in 1993—but the city's troubles began long before then. The Great Depression left lasting damage, followed by an F-5 tornado in 1953 that shredded the town like a colossal rogue weed whacker. After that, downtown Waco began to look like a far-flung first cousin of the small, forgotten cities that make up the Northeast's Rust Belt.

The losses kept mounting. In 1964, 5,000 people were out of work when Waco's James Connally Air Force Base closed. Nineteen years later, 1,400 people were out when General Tire Co. shuttered its plant—and left a 300,000-square-foot factory to stand vacant, a symbol of Waco's daunting future. "When I was younger, I couldn't wait to get the hell out of here," says Kristina Collins, senior vice president for economic development at the Greater Waco Chamber of Commerce, who has lived here since the early '90s.

The city did have one potential economic engine: Baylor University, a private Baptist college in the heart of downtown. But like many small cities with big colleges, Waco struggled to keep its freshly educated young people in town. They'd often drive an hour and a half to Dallas or Austin, where they'd find better job opportunities and a more vibrant community. Chip and Joanna could have been a part of that common story. Neither grew up in the town they now call home.

Chip was raised in the Dallas–Ft. Worth area and moved to Waco to attend Baylor. He'd considered himself a serial entrepreneur since his teens, and by his sophomore year he'd launched a business mowing lawns; a wash-and-fold business would follow, and he even experimented with selling firecrackers at a roadside stand. After graduating in 1998, having saved up some cash, he decided to buy and fix up a local house. The profit he made when he sold it six months later was more than he'd made in a year of mowing lawns.

"That's when things started making real sense to me," Chip says. So he did it again, learning as he went. "When I bought the house, the windows were broken, so I had to figure out how to fix windows. The wood floors were rotten, and I had to figure out how to replace hardwood floors. It was a backward way to do it, and I wouldn't recommend it."

The year 2001 brought the meet-cute story that *Fixer Upper* fans are familiar with. Chip had always admired the photo of a pretty girl—the owner's daughter—at his local auto shop. Then one day he went in to get his brakes fixed, and there was the girl: Joanna. She grew up in Austin, but her family moved to Waco when she was a teenager. She is four years younger than Chip (he is now 42; she is 38) and had recently graduated Baylor herself. Their hashtag-able chemistry sparked, and they were married in 2003.

The two wanted to make life work in Waco. They liked living in a small place that was only an hour-and-a-half drive from major cities, should they want a big night out on the town. Joanna opened a home-goods store in 2004 but closed it a few years after so they could both focus on Chip's construction business and their growing family. Joanna became a self-taught interior decorator so she and Chip could work as a team.

By staying in Waco, the Gaineses unwittingly joined a new kind of small-city American story. It goes like this: Local entrepreneur gets serious about saving (or simply improving) the city they love, and, with success, becomes the focal point for a bustling business scene that changes the way that city sees itself. "Twenty years ago, the most talented people tried to find their way to New York, Boston, and San Francisco," says Weston Wamp, principal of Lamp Post Ventures, in Chattanooga. "And some people still do that. But now, because of the way the world works, anyone in any sector can do it in any place of their choosing." Case in point: Lamp Post operates a venture capital fund that lures companies from the coast to the often overlooked core of America, including Chattanooga, a city that used to lose young professionals to nearby Atlanta and Nashville. Lamp Post is now transforming an old hotel into tiny apartments for all the new startup types it has lured there.

Among the top 10 most expensive U.S. cities, 51.1 percent of people moving out are 18 to 34, according to Trulia, a rate significantly higher than that of average migration. Sometimes, these millennials are just moving to the suburbs to start families. Other times, they're headed to places where somebody has sparked an entrepreneurial fire.

The igniter can take all forms, and it doesn't have to involve couples made famous by reality television. In Greenville, S.C., it's a small-business incubator. In Baltimore, it's a craft-brewing incubator and Under Armour. In Madison, Wis., it's companies like Epic, the largest healthcare IT company in the country. "Epic started up with a handful of people, and now they have, like, 8,000 employees," says Bill McMeekin, an editor at Livability.com, a site that promotes small- and medium-size cities, who sees stories like this one all the time. "Those employees are leaving and starting their own companies, and doing that in Madison, creating a really vibrant scene."

Building that scene in Waco wasn't easy going. Both Chip and Joanna had a lot to learn, and they leaned on others in the community. That's how Chip first met Dustin Anderson, the glass contractor: "He said to me, 'You're the guy who knows the field. Tell me what I need,'" Anderson says. "Chip learned his craft that way. He listened to the guys who were experts." In the forensic dissection of why an entrepreneur stays in a community, such moments cannot be overestimated. Local businesses in a small city like Waco are often collaborative; they know they need each other to succeed. "We've had so many times when we didn't know if it was going to work—if we were going to make it," says Chip. "More of those than not," Joanna chimes in. "We could cry when we think about the people who held their checks without us knowing it for four weeks. These people wanted us to make it, and we were wanting us to make it. It was like this family effort, and so looking back now, without their effort, we don't know how we would have been able to do it."

But they kept at it, and pure luck struck in the biggest of ways: In 2011, an HGTV producer came upon Joanna's blog, where she wrote about projects and home life with Chip. The producer liked Chip and Joanna's authenticity and set up some test shoots with them. Network execs swooned when they saw the footage and soon ordered up one season of the show that would become *Fixer Upper*.

The pilot aired in 2013, and demand for Chip's craftsmanship and Joanna's design sense soared along with their name recognition. It was an odd kind of fame. They hadn't switched jobs or learned acting or moved to Hollywood or done anything, really, other than what they were already doing, but now with cameras rolling. Maybe this would have happened to them in any town; it's impossible to know. But it happened here, with the people they'd known for years. They saw Waco as a natural part of their success.

"TWENTY YEARS AGO, TALENTED PEOPLE TRIED TO FIND THEIR WAY TO NEW YORK, BOSTON, AND SAN FRANCISCO. NOW ANYONE IN ANY SECTOR CAN DO IT IN ANY PLACE OF THEIR CHOOSING."

ON A THURSDAY THIS PAST OCTOBER, JOANNA IS WHERE SHE usually is: hunkered down in her office. While many of the homes she designs on TV are staged with whitewashed or pale shiplap walls, three of her office walls are black and one is yellow. The room looks like a Pinterest page come to life—full of breezy quotes pinned to the wall ("It's not the load that breaks you down, it's the way you carry it")—and, today, a summertime candle from her home collection is turning the air bright with citrus. Her designers parade through in 30-minute blocks, one after another to present her with design options for the seemingly endless supply of projects on deck—a new restaurant, a potential home for season five, a prospective vacation rental, and so on.

As she works with her senior project manager, Kristen Bufton, sorting through choices for exterior lighting on an upcoming renovation, Joanna through choices for exterior lighting on an upcoming renovation, Joanna hears Chip's voice boom through the walls as he tells a story a few rooms away, and she pauses.

"So loud. So long-winded," she says, turning to face the direction his voice is traveling from. She smiles. "I love it."

Chip is working on separate projects. Right now he is in the upstairs portion of their office space, balancing calls with the network and meetings with their real estate firm. In the years since the TV show began, the Gaineses have regularly increased their stake in Waco. The show certainly does some of the heavy lifting: It features local contractors like Anderson, which helps those businesses, and the homes the Gaineses flip sometimes become hot Airbnb attractions. Earlier this year, they bought a historic restaurant just outside downtown. When they saw a story in the local newspaper about another small-business owner seeking donations to open a grocery store in low-income North Waco, which has been dubbed a food desert, they held an auction to raise money for the cause.

"We don't want to end up stupid rich while a bunch of people are trying to make ends meet," says Chip. "We want everyone to be on the opposite side of this decades from now, looking back and saying, 'Hey, our lives are better because of us taking that leap of faith.'"

The city has clearly factored that into its plans.

"I don't mean to brag, but I'd call her a mega-fan," Chip offers.

"No," Joanna chides him, trying to keep a straight face.

But Chip is on a roll. "I'd say stalker."

"Stop." Joanna is using her mom voice now.

"Mega-fan," Chip tosses out before the subject is changed on him.

Laura Bush's level of fandom aside, the city's chamber of commerce is certainly a mega-fan. "What Magnolia has done has also spurred a lot of other businesses," says Collins, the chamber of commerce executive who once wanted to flee her hometown. "Our downtown is going through a renaissance right now—a complete rebirth." The Gaineses' project has spawned a design district that appeals to tourists, sure, but also a growing band of locals. Between 2011 and 2014, downtown Waco's 76701 zip code's population grew by 32 percent—a deluge compared with the current annual American growth rate of less than 1 percent. Its largest gains are in residents between the ages of 25 and 34. Now more restaurants, bars, and other businesses are popping up to support these new people. There's even a renewed focus on improving downtown's parks.

And no one is waiting to cash the Gaineses' checks.

WHEN JOANNA MET CHIP, THE TWO WORKED AT DIFFERENT speeds. Joanna preferred to focus on one thing at a time. Chip wanted to run multiple businesses and flip multiple houses at once. It's clear which partner influenced the other. "If we just have one house, we're bored with that," Joanna says now. "So I think Chip has taught me—or has rubbed off on me—but it's, like, the busier, the better. We like to stay busy, and I think we love to stay inspired, and that's the best place for us to be."

SINCE THE TV SHOW BEGAN, THE GAINESES HAVE INCREASED THEIR STAKE IN WACO. "WE DON'T WANT TO END UP STUPID RICH WHILE PEOPLE ARE TRYING TO MAKE ENDS MEET."

Chip and Joanna, to be clear, are not the only thing going in Waco. In 2009, that old tire factory—the one that closed in 1985—was donated to Baylor and slowly became the Baylor Research and Innovation Collaborative, a place to provide budding entrepreneurs with resources to help build their companies. It fully opened this year, and Baylor cites research showing that for every job created at a research park like this, 2.57 jobs are created elsewhere—often in local, emerging industries. "We're designed specifically to keep people here," says Truell Hyde, vice provost for research at Baylor and the center's director.

But Waco also knows the reach the Gaineses have and has given them the tools to expand. In 2014, it provided $208,376 in tax incentives for the couple to transform a 2.6-acre site, including a 20,000-square-foot barn, into what Joanna calls "an amusement park for adults." With HGTV cameras rolling, they rebuilt the place as Magnolia Market at the Silos—a sprawling space with a home-goods store, a garden, a bakery, space for food trucks, and open space to lounge and play yard games. They also own a nearby vacation rental home called The Magnolia House, where visitors can stay for $695 to $995 a night.

Today white-sneakered visitors pour from a tour bus, phones at the ready to capture a photo sure to make their Facebook friends jealous. The place now attracts more than 20,000 tourists a week. The couple stops by when they can—even in a city this small, they're now often too busy—and sometimes run into unexpected visitors.

"Chip would get into people's cars—he still does this—and ask if they want a picture with him, and he's out there doing that and then all of a sudden Laura Bush is there," Joanna says, laughing.

Turns out, the former First Lady is a fan.

"She's come to the Silos a couple times," says Joanna.

Their shared insatiable appetite to keep going—to keep building, to make Waco a destination—has another side. In a short time, Waco has faced a lot of change. And the reality is, change can be hard.

When the *Fixer Upper* pilot aired in 2013, the median home value in Waco was $96,102, according to Trulia. By 2016, it had increased to $110,254—up 14 percent. That's still much more affordable than the median price in the U.S., which rings in at $187,000. But this kind of increase can easily affect up-and-comers' ability to buy a place of their own. And even those who have already bought in saw big issues this year, when property assessments went up by as much as 50 percent. The Gaineses can't possibly have caused all this, of course, but people around town often call it a *Fixer Upper* side effect.

"There's been a tremendous amount of redevelopment in the downtown area, and the fact that you have all these visitors coming in caused property values to skyrocket and taxes to rise as a result," says Collins. "And there were a lot of concerns with that, because we don't want to stifle the growth and either force the people who have invested out because they can't afford to pay their taxes or make it cost-prohibitive for new people to come in."

Small cities that have yet to find their own Chip and Joanna might call this a nice problem to have. But it's also a problem that could solve someone else's problem: If Waco becomes too expensive, say, the next Chip and Joanna might move somewhere even smaller and start the whole cycle again. □

Maggie Gordon is a features reporter for the Houston Chronicle.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF MAGNOLIA

Chip and Joanna prepping their vacation rental house.

2

There's a Coworking Space for Everyone

COWORKING IS BOOMING. AT THIS YEAR'S GLOBAL COWORKING UNCONFERENCE CONFERENCE, CARSTEN FOERTSCH, THE founder of *Deskmag*—a whole magazine devoted to, yes, coworking—predicted that by 2018, more than one million people will conduct business from a shared space. WeWork has dominated the market since launching in 2010, but the industry is quickly diversifying to cater to niche needs. Here are five alternatives.

MORE MATURE

"A lot of coworking companies seem built to fulfill the fantasies of male 20-something engineers," says Industrious CEO Jamie Hodari. But **INDUSTRIOUS** goes above and beyond to offer inclusivity instead. The company's 12 locations across the country have private rooms for nursing moms to pump milk, and recently, Hodari says, "our regional director in New York took three hours out of her day to help a member prepare for her citizenship test." The approach clicks: Industrious raised $37 million in funding in September.

LOW-COMMITMENT

Technically, **CROISSANT** isn't a coworking space. It's an app. Through it, remote workers can "rent" available desks at established coworking spaces in New York, San Francisco, Boston, and D.C. Croissant offers three monthly subscription plans that range from $39 to $299—far less than most coworking memberships. "We just wanted to meet for a couple of hours a week, so $400 per person for one location didn't make sense for us," says cofounder Nisha Garigan.

FANCY!

BUSINESS DISTRICT is for professionals who care less about free beer and more about the flagship office's brag-worthy home in an I.M. Pei–designed building. Matt LoGuidice founded the Boston-based company after time spent overseeing his East Coast property management business out of a shared space in Los Angeles. "I couldn't find a center that occupied the niche I wanted—a center that feels more like a boutique hotel," he says, explaining his design sense. "We might be the only center of its type in the country where every office has an adjustable-height Herman Miller desk."

MORE PROFESSIONAL

"We often become the destination for individuals who have 'graduated' from coworking as their business grows, either by way of capital raised or by new customer acquisition," says **TECHSPACE** CEO Vic Memenas. TechSpace's offices sport a slick aesthetic—more like what you'd expect from a corporate office than a startup—and cater to entire teams working in offices, rather than individuals camping out on sofas.

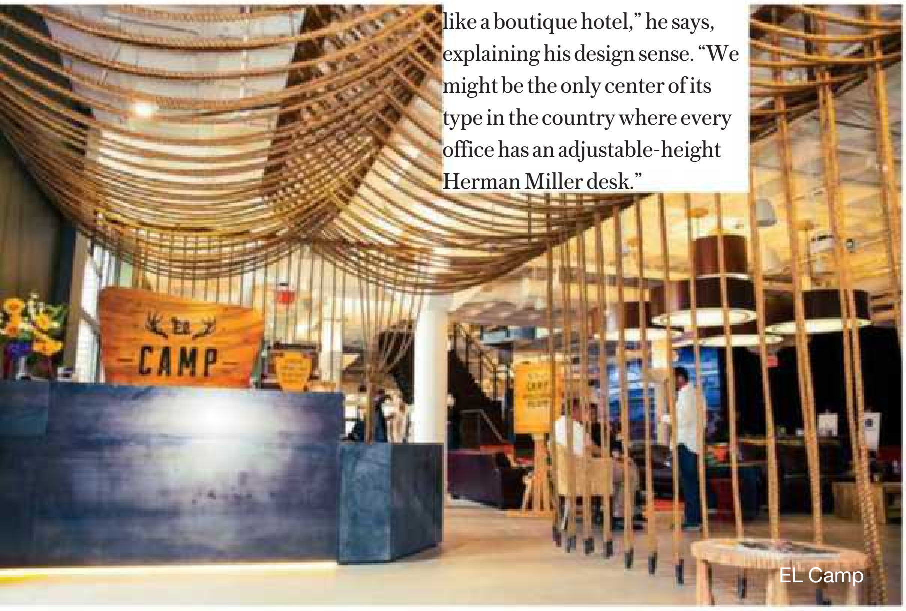
MEDIA-FOCUSED

GRIND has a serious media pedigree: Three of its founders hail from Behance, Cool Hunting, and creative consultancy Co:Collective. Upworthy, the viral content creator, is a member, as are plenty of bloggers, artists, and photojournalists. To foster collaboration between its members (or "Grindists"), Grind marks off 30 to 50 percent of its floors to common space.

PLAYFUL AND OUTDOORSY

EL CAMP, a young coworking venture in Los Angeles, is designed like a summer camp—right down to the wooden mess hall and outdoor fire pit. "It's to tap into the idea of childlike creativity and curiosity," says Jessica Kim, the community manager. To join El Camp, members need two things: a job in the advertising world and a desire to help the El Camp community. "We are all about sharing resources and capabilities," Kim says. With that ethos, El Commune might be a more fitting name for this feel-good workplace. *—Maggie Wiley*

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF EL CAMP; PHOTOGRAPH BY RAJ DAS PHOTOGRAPHY



EL Camp

WHAT TREND DO YOU PREDICT FOR YOUR INDUSTRY IN 2017?

"As more and more devices are coming online and exchanging data, we'll start to see more impactful advances in home automation, energy management, and entertainment."

—Nick Weaver, founder of home wi-fi system Eero

"Look for competition in private student lending and refinancing to heat up in 2017 as more traditional lenders see opportunities to fill underserved niches and acquire high-value millennial customers."

—Stephen Dash, CEO of multi-lender marketplace Credible

"People are going to start using more color in spaces. Because of design blogs, people are more knowledgeable about design and are able to make more educated decisions about what they like rather than play it safe."

—Sasha Bikoff, founder of Sasha Bikoff Interior Design

"We predict the rise of the internal agency for large corporate clients. Large and small agencies will build and scale in-house creative teams for clients—McDonald's and Omnicom is a prime example."

—Samantha Edwards, cofounder of The Charles digital agency

"Mobile tools for real estate agents. They will not only save time and improve life for the one million agents out there but also improve the experience for customers on the hunt for their next home."

—Matt Barba, CEO of online real estate tool Placester

"Business technology should not just serve IT managers and people who sit behind a computer all day. This year, we'll see a big wave of innovation in so-called blue-collar industries where business often still runs on paper."

—Stacey Epstein, founder of messaging app Zinc

PHOTOGRAPH BY SANCAR AYALP & LUCIA BELLINI

Business District

Croissant

3

Companies Reevaluate Their Hiring Practices

IMPLICIT BIAS IN HIRING IS SO HARD TO ROOT OUT BECAUSE, well, it's implicit. Even when managers talk a good game about increasing diversity at the office, their actions rarely match their intent: In three studies, researchers at MIT and Indiana University found that organizations that tout meritocracy actually show the greatest bias against women. And homogeny isn't only unfair—it's bad for business. Companies with the most ethnically diverse teams are 35 percent more likely to have returns above the national industry median, according to McKinsey.

But how can a company fix the problem, and avoid fueling managers' conscious and subconscious biases? A new crop of startups has a solution: blind recruitment. It's a hiring method that conceals candidates' gender, race, and education background—enabling a person to interview or perform job-related tests and be considered solely on those merits. Think of *The Voice*, but with a job offer rather than a recording contract. Here's how three startups can help you go blind.

GAPJUMPERS

The GapJumpers team strips a job description of subjective junk (like *passionate* and *team player*) and creates an objective test for candidates, pulling from more than 750 challenges that span domain expertise and specific skills. "Just by applying blind auditions to the hiring funnel that already exists, we've seen a 60 percent increase in diverse applicants making it through to the interview, and a 200 percent increase in women," says cofounder Kédar Iyer. GapJumpers has done more than 1,600 blind auditions for companies including BBC, Dolby, and Return Path.

INTERVIEWING.IO

This platform allows tech companies to assess coding skills through an anonymous system. If a candidate is up to snuff, the interview can be handled through voice-masking technology that obscures the applicant's gender. (A 2014 study found that candidates with "vocal fry"—a low-pitched, creaky-sounding speech pattern common among young American women—are perceived as less competent, less educated, less trustworthy, and less hirable.) Twitch, Lyft, and Asana are early embracers of the site.

BLENDOOR

Created by Stephanie Lampkin, an African-American woman who was once told that her background wasn't technical enough for a job—despite an engineering degree from Stanford and past gigs at Microsoft and Deloitte—this app matches applicants to open positions Tinder-style (but minus photos). Hiring managers can swipe on profiles scrubbed clean of identifying info. If both sides have interest, they set up an interview. Launched in March, Blendoor is being tested by companies including Airbnb and Twitter. *—Kate Rockwood*

4

Small Brands Build Relationships in Ways Big Brands Can't

BY ADAM ELDER

Matt Taylor of Tracksmith.

Benji Wagner, cofounder of Poler Outdoor Stuff.

BENJI WAGNER KNOWS A DIRTY LITTLE secret about the outdoor apparel industry: Big brands like Patagonia and The North Face may advertise their gear being put to the test in the highest mountains and at the ends of the Earth, but 83 percent of all camping trips in the United States actually take place within a few feet of a car or a house. So Wagner is going straight at those consumers—people who want to feel comfortable inside a tent perhaps just a few feet above sea level.

"The outdoor industry was founded on mountaineering, but most people are wearing their jacket to go grocery shopping," says Wagner, cofounder and creative director of Poler Outdoor Stuff, which, since its 2011 launch, now sees double-digit growth every year. "The industry went down the rabbit hole in terms of creating more and more technical products for a consumer that's essentially a weekend warrior. Poler makes a great jacket, but we're not going to pretend you're gonna climb Mount Everest in it."

It may have once seemed impossible to go up against giant, established brands, but that increasingly just isn't the case. Poler, and the apparel industry at large, tells an important story that's true across all types of businesses: Broad but overlooked segments of consumers are being forgotten by big brands' mass appeal, and even the smallest of players can use the internet to build strong personal connections with those left behind. The key is to tell seductive, inspiring (yet realistic!) stories that resonate, and to give customers what the biggest companies can't: a sense that *Yeah, we get you.*

"What many brands have nowadays is the ability to communicate who and what they are," says Marshal Cohen, a retail analyst with The NPD Group. "Customers today are not looking to be one of a million people—they're looking to be one in a million. They want to stand out."

Communicating that doesn't require big-budget money. Tracksmith, an upscale running apparel brand from Wellesley, Mass., doubled its social media reach in the past 10 months with less than $5,000 in ad spending, and has netted a $4.1 million investment from Pentland Group, which owns a stake in Speedo and licenses for Lacoste footwear and Ted Baker. Here's how: It saw that household names like Nike, Adidas, and Puma have conflated running with health and wellness in an effort to win the attention of gym rats—so Tracksmith, which launched in 2011, celebrated the tradition of running as a stand-alone sport. It chased the habitual runner, creating a visceral brand story with photography that portrays everyday runners training, sweating, and looking exhausted rather than triumphant.

"Running apparel originally lacked any sense of style or substance," says cofounder Matt Taylor, a former distance runner at Yale. "Brands lost touch with the sport and the core culture, and created a much broader message. That's fantastic and has gotten a lot of people off the couch, but it's also left this big void for people who have a deeper connection to running." To serve those people, Tracksmith created more classic designs that are simple and functional, the opposite of what Taylor calls "the Power Ranger look" of most running apparel.

Small brands are inherently closer to their

WHAT TREND DO YOU PREDICT FOR YOUR INDUSTRY IN 2017? "It's going to be a strong year for gin. From small-batch distilleries to global brands like Bombay Sapphire, more and more bar programs will focus on the exotic botanicals in these liquids." *—Justin Lavenue, co-owner of Roosevelt Room, Austin, Tex.*

Lively's Michelle Cordiero Grant.

Photograph by Pieter Henket; groomer, Alicia Campbell

PHOTOGRAPH BY YOON S. BYUN (MATT TAYLOR); PHOTOGRAPH BY PADEN AND MUNK (BENJI WAGNER) customers, and that can create all sorts of advantages. Sure, Nike can afford LeBron James as a spokesman, but smaller brands can simply recruit their own users for marketing. "Niche brands provide a forum for people to share in the story," says The NPD Group's Cohen. "It's that testimonial piece of the puzzle that comes from the user, not the brand itself. Customers don't want to hear you brag about your brand; they want people who've used your product to brag about the brand."

The lingerie company Lively, in fact, crafted its entire brand around its customers. Founder and CEO Michelle Cordiero Grant spent five years at Victoria's Secret, overseeing the underwear behemoth's digital merchandising strategy for its core lingerie lines. "At Victoria's Secret, everything feels very focused around how males are really viewing women," Grant says. "Lively is about creating something that's made by women for women, really thinking about how a woman is going to feel in it and what that product does for her mindset in terms of confidence and power and comfort."

After raising $1.5 million in funding ahead of Lively's April launch, Grant found more than 50 women—not supermodels—based on their passion and aesthetics as seen on their Instagram accounts and enlisted them as ambassadors of the brand's designs, which are a hybrid of activewear, swimwear, and traditional lingerie. A refer-a-friend email campaign could earn ambassadors purchasing credit if they mentioned the brand or linked to Lively's website. The email-collection campaign was so successful, it exceeded its three-week goal by more than 400 percent in just 48 hours and crashed Lively's site. The brand is now enjoying double-digit sales growth every month.

Some small brands, like Lively and Tracksmith, sell direct online. But when entrepreneurs take their wares out into stores, they're finding another benefit to being a counterweight to big brands: They get to say, "We're not just coming in and trying to take business away from another brand you already have." That's Wagner's pitch for Poler; he stresses that his brand will bring new people into a store because he's serving young people and millennials whom nobody else is. It's working: Poler is carried in Nordstrom, Urban Outfitters, and more than 500 other stores in 30 countries, selling right alongside the big brands he competes against.

FROM TOP: PHOTOGRAPH BY PHILIP GOOLKASIAN; PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF JUNE OVEN; PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF CATFI; PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF EMBER

5

"Smart" Objects Finally Get Smart

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We know, we know—plenty of "smart" objects out there are pretty dumb. (Parents don't need a sensor-laden diaper to know when their baby needs a change; a baby can sound that alarm on her own.) But the industry is evolving. "The problem isn't delivering solutions as much as discovering opportunities," says Nick Jones, an industry analyst at Gartner. Sensors, processors, and networking chips are now fairly cheap, and the opportunities for thoughtful entrepreneurs are countless. Says Jones: "This space is more limited by imagination than by technology." These four products hint at our smarter future.

EKO CORE DIGITAL STETHOSCOPE (1)
For centuries, doctors relied on hollow, sound-amplifying tubes in stethoscopes to hear a patient's heartbeat. The Eko Core Digital Stethoscope streams the sound waves to the cloud, where they become part of a larger database of medical records, helping doctors detect patterns and abnormalities.

JUNE INTELLIGENT OVEN (2)
The June Intelligent Oven looks like a high-tech Easy-Bake Oven, but it functions like a souped-up computer. The cavity contains a scale, a camera, and a smart thermometer. Pop a tray of cookie dough inside and the oven's bank of algorithms and preloaded recipes can decipher what it is and how to best cook it. Replacing home-cooked meals with home-programmed meals might sound like culinary sacrilege, but hey, it's still better than Seamless!

CATFI (3)
The CatFi cat feeder uses facial-recognition technology to identify your cat (versus your neighbor's pesky cat). The idea is still in beta testing, but a fully realized model would also include a scale to assess exactly how much food your cat needs, based on weight. "Complex and sophisticated pet feeders appeal to owners willing to spend a lot of money on their pets," says Jones, who is a fan of the smart feeders. "The Internet of Things is enabling all sorts of new gadgets that never existed before."

EMBER MUG (4)
It's a fact of life: Coffee gets cold—unless it's poured into an intelligent mug designed by a thermal engineer. Ember can keep coffee hot for two hours via a heating-and-cooling storage system hidden in the mug's walls, which communicates with temperature sensors and a microprocessor. At $150, it's a pricey way to drink coffee—but if it takes off and the tech becomes more accessible, expect future versions to cost less. *—M.W.*

WHAT TREND ARE YOU READY TO SEE END?

"Viewing *fusion* as the f-word. The debate between authenticity and fusion is no longer interesting. The most innovative chefs are artists who meld cultural influences and diverse cooking techniques to create unexpected new classics."

—Danielle Chang, founder of Asian food festival LuckyRice

"I'd like to see retail markups die. They don't add any value to product quality and don't benefit the customer."

—Jason Hairston, founder of hunting-apparel company Kuiu

"The faceless apparel brands that are making loads of money on sales of cheap clothing made from discounted fabric. It dilutes the market with so much noise that manufacturers making high-quality apparel don't have a shot."

—Bayard Winthrop, founder of apparel company American Giant

6

Many Chatbots Will Die. The Survivors Will Get Better

BE HONEST!
DO YOU KNOW WHAT A CHATBOT IS?

REMIND ME AGAIN...
A chatbot is a simple software program that can respond to consumer prompts (*What's my bank balance? What's the weather? Order me a taco!*) within messaging platforms or texts.

YES!

IS THERE A REAL PROBLEM YOUR CHATBOT CAN SOLVE?

DUDE, I'VE GOT PAIN POINTS FOR DAYS.

CAN'T I FIGURE THAT OUT LATER?
Only if you want to waste money and frustrate customers by building a sucky bot, says John Ounpuu, founder of digital strategy shop Modern Craft. "Startups are under a lot of pressure to keep up," he says. "But unless you spend the time to figure out how it's going to make the business better, you're just chasing marketing froth."

OK, LET'S TALK TIME AND $$$. HOW MUCH YOU GOT?

I'M SWIMMING IN RESOURCES.
To build a crazy-intuitive, humanlike bot, your dev team will spend months tweaking the AI, scripting responses, and testing. "Launch day isn't the finish line," says Ounpuu. You'll need to budget money to iron out bugs, respond to feedback, and upgrade.

MY DEV TEAM WON'T LET ME DOWN.
For inspiration, check out MyKai, a personal-banking bot that sounds smarter than some tellers. Or for tips on how to give your bot a brand persona, look to the group-messaging platform Blend, which is releasing hundreds of audience-tailored Genie bots—focused on everything from Kanye West memes to Instagram tips—over the next year.

I'VE GOT MORE $$ THAN TIME.
Hire a third-party pro, like Pandorabots, one of the largest chatbot-hosting services in the world.

I NEED QUICK, CHEAP, AND EASY.
Forget machine learning and humanlike language. Your chatbot should take a rules-based approach. (Think of it as a decision tree: Do you want to see shoes or handbags? Do you like red or blue?) Microsoft's Bot Framework and Facebook's Bots for Messenger both let you stitch together packets of AI around a customizable framework that's hard to screw up.

WANT A QUICK HIT OF INSPIRATION?

YES!
Use bots to browse clothing with Fify, order lunch from Burger King, read the news from the *Wall Street Journal,* and send your loved one roses from 1-800-Flowers.

NAH, I'M ALREADY PUMPED.
So, what are you waiting for? Have at it! *—K.R.*

7

Industry Norms Be Damned. New Motto: "Do What's Best for Your Brand"

BY STEPHANIE SCHOMER

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF TANYA TAYLOR

CONSUMERS HAVE MORE INFORMATION at their fingertips than ever. E-commerce has changed how people shop. And yet many industry traditions have remained—like, say, fashion's longstanding insistence that brands create four collections a year. But even the most deeply embedded rules are starting to crack. Tanya Taylor is one of the changemakers: She's a fashion designer who remade her schedule to focus on just two strong collections a year—which in turn will spend more time on the retail floor, rather than being relegated to the sale section to make room for an impending precollection. Taylor tells us how she bucked expectations—and why it worked out.

Tanya Taylor

You launched in 2012 with two collections a year and in 2015 expanded to four: resort and prefall in addition to spring and fall. But this year, you canceled resort. Why?
When we expanded, I immediately noticed the pressure the extra collections put on our very small team without ever really producing a valuable outcome. This summer, we were working on resort 2017, and I just didn't feel inspired. What if I could take my energy and put it toward something I really did care about? So I told our team we were canceling the collection—which is a weird conversation to have about something you're already working on! They thought something was wrong, but I was like, "No, this is a good thing." It was a great reset.

How did your retail partners react?
I was nervous that we would lose their trust, but overwhelmingly they came out for our spring/summer appointments with a fresh level of enthusiasm. Our precollections were never as strong in sell-throughs. So the extra time let us consider how to really strengthen our main collection.

WHAT TREND ARE YOU READY TO SEE END?

"The obsession with 'local everything' can come at the expense of progress. There are talented people and resources around the world, not just in the U.S. Innovation and progress benefit from all of us working together."

—Kelly Hwang, co-CEO of furniture-design company Capsule

What did you do differently with your main collection this past season?
We partnered with Saks Fifth Avenue; they came in early and saw sketches and fabrics of our spring/summer 2017 collection and purchased 15 styles in advance—which is larger than our entire resort order would have been. When we had our show for Fashion Week, those 15 styles went live on Saks' home page and were immediately available for purchase. Brands pay hundreds of thousands of dollars to be on the home page of Saks, but this partnership cost us nothing.

That "see now, buy now" trend is one that more designers are exploring, rather than asking customers to wait six months to buy them. How has the industry responded?
The industry is extremely supportive of disruption, especially by young designers finding what works for them. Earlier this year, the Council of Fashion Designers of America commissioned a study with the Boston Consulting Group examining the future of New York Fashion Week, and the finding was ultimately to do what's best for your brand! Our product, for example, is emotional, colorful, and print-based. Our customer buys if they think it's great—timing and the seasonal structure aren't as much of a factor for them.

You recently ditched runway shows in favor of presentations [where models stand stationary as editors and buyers move about the full collection]. What was behind that decision?
When we launched, we started with presentations. It felt really right for us. But there's a natural progression where you think runway is what you do when you grow—and so we did runway. And I missed being out on the floor, talking to editors and getting immediate feedback. Reverting to presentations, everyone kind of looks at you wondering why you would go back to where you started. But when we returned to presentations for 2016, our sales almost doubled. It's what made sense for us, and that's how we have to keep moving forward.

8

We're Finally Done Talking About Millennials (Because Here Comes GenZ)

The first members of Generation Z will be graduating from college in a few years, and market researchers and trend forecasters are clamoring to tap into their psyches. Will this latest crop of youngsters reshape how we do business tomorrow? We put two generational experts—Scott Hess, EVP of human intelligence at Spark, and Jake Katz, VP of audience insights and strategy at Revolt TV—in the hot seat.

Gen Z hasn't yet flooded the workforce. Isn't it a little early to start worrying about them?

Katz: I'd rather be early than late. Generations tend to be innovative as they're younger and then grow more similar as they get older. That's a mistake folks made when talking about millennials. Employers thought the world would change, but there are always more similarities between generations at the same age than there are differences. Once people apply a generational moniker, though, it's so common to treat millennials or Generation Z like a unique species.

Hess: When managers call millennials lazy and entitled, they're most likely referring to the life stage of teens and young adults. *Time* magazine ran a cover story about millennials called the "Me Me Me Generation." But 20 years before that, *Fortune* had a cover story about why boomers hate busters [what they were calling Gen Xers at the time]. Every 20 years, the generation with power and comfort hates the young generation.

Katz: Gen Z has been shaped by the recession. They watched their parents get screwed. Millennials love the gig economy, but our research shows Gen Z doesn't want any part of that. They want steady paychecks. They're thinking about college very early on in high school, and they're not viewing it as an experience but as an investment. Gen Z is much more pragmatic and a lot more prepared, and that worldview isn't something they're likely to outgrow as they start their careers.

Hess: They've also been shaped by the personalization of media—Gen Z can stream any song, watch any episode at any time. It's an expectation that travels with them outside of media. They expect to be more networked all the time, they expect to be able to customize things exactly to their preferences. That's intrinsic to Gen Z and will extend into the workplace.

Katz: When we asked Gen Z what makes their generation different, they said they were both more accepting and more rebellious. For millennials, rebellion was totally absent in their youth culture; they had a very shiny outlook. Gen Z is pissed about the system they're inheriting. Rebellion is back. *—K.R.*

9

The Beauty Industry Gets Better

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In the United States alone, consumers spend north of $62 billion on cosmetics, skincare, and haircare products each year. But younger women are increasingly venturing outside their Maybelline and Dior standbys, embracing smaller brands. As the crowded market grows more crowded (hello, Kylie Jenner Lip Kits), we talk to three startups that stand out.

The brainchild of beauty editor Emily Weiss, **GLOSSIER** (1) skincare and makeup launched in late 2014—arguably inspiring the rush of beauty brands hitting the market today—and quickly became a favorite of cool girls everywhere. "One of our points of distinction is that we're a very conversational brand that lives only digitally, but we're not speaking primarily through advertising," Weiss says. "Most of our growth has been through owned, earned, peer-to-peer traffic. We're serving the woman who wants to look like the best version of herself—not like somebody else."

Founded by Stella & Dot founder and CEO Jessica Herrin, **EVER** (2) skincare follows the social selling model of the popular jewelry company. Brand ambassadors, called specialists, host gatherings to educate friends about the brand's natural products and four-step regimen. "Skincare has primarily been dominated by the big guys," says Ani Hadjinian, general manager at Ever. "But the consumer isn't voting for those brands anymore, so the only growth within the market is in highly specialized and niche lines. There's a new distribution model with skincare, and I think we've truly modernized and used the social platform. It's highly disruptive and more sustainable."

FARMACY (3) skincare is what cofounder and chief creative officer Mark Veeder calls "farm to face." The avid gardener unwittingly discovered a new, ultrastrong form of immune-system-boosting echinacea and patented it for use in his new skincare line, sold at Sephora and on QVC. "We're farmer-cultivated but scientist-activated," Veeder says. "We did some lab tests with a third party, and the products increase your skin's hydration by as much as 50 percent! There are a lot of natural products on the market, and it's great to not pollute your skin, but they have to also have transformational qualities." *—S.S.*

FROM TOP: PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF GLOSSIER; PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF EVER SKINCARE; PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF FARMACY

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF KITE HILL

10

Food Science Creates Tasty Opportunities

AMERICANS HAVE LONG BEEN OBSESSED with all things eating, and now that means obsessing over how clean their diet is—vegan, gluten-free, organic, or additive-averse. To keep consumers happily fed, chefs and food manufacturers are figuring out how to maximize taste without any suspect ingredients.

"We've pushed the limits of how well a crop ships or how long it can sit on a shelf, but when you don't make flavor a priority, it gets lost," says Lane Selman, an agricultural researcher at Oregon State University and founder of the Culinary Breeding Network, which connects plant breeders with farmers and chefs to create better-tasting grains and vegetables. But it's the hearty dose of attention from venture capitalists and tech firms that has recently transformed the granola world of "clean eating" into a science-centric new frontier.

Case in point: The $100 million that investors—including Bill Gates and Google Ventures—sunk into Impossible Foods, a San Francisco–based food startup founded by a Stanford biochemist. When the company's juicy meatless burger debuted at David Chang's Momofuku Nishi this fall, the line of diners stretched down the New York sidewalk. And Impossible Foods is hardly alone in the race for beefy flavor without the butcher: Beyond Meat, which counts Twitter founders Biz Stone and Evan Williams as investors, has taken aim at the freezer aisle with faux meat crumbles and chicken nuggets. And for actual animal flesh minus the carbon footprint and livestock squeamishness, some startups are raising meat in labs, like Mosa Meat (Sergey Brin is an investor), which figured out how to grow a burger from bovine stem cells.

For vegan chef and Kite Hill cofounder Tal Ronnen, it was a moment of mortification that motivated him to double down on science: He was hired by casino magnate Steve Wynn to design menus for 12 restaurants, and while Ronnen was walking the team of chefs through alternatives to butter and cheese, one literally spit out a sample. Making a vegan cheese that wasn't nasty wouldn't just take years of tinkering in the kitchen—it involved partnering with a biochemist to develop proprietary enzymes that could make pure almond milk form curds like dairy.

Kite Hill now sells 17 unique SKUs, including ricotta, Brie, cheese-filled ravioli, and yogurt. Khosla Ventures was an early investor, and in May, CAVU Venture Partners and General Mills' VC arm led an $18 million investment in the alt-dairy powerhouse.

But to stretch beyond the 2 percent of consumers who consider themselves vegan, Kite Hill is taking a page from the milk aisle, where alternatives like soy milk and almond milk have shouldered nearly 20 percent market share without ever using the v-word. "We don't want to make products for only a captive vegan audience," says CEO Matt Sade. "For people to discover this brand, our products can't just taste incrementally better—we have to make products that are light-years tastier." Cheesy but true. *—K.R.*

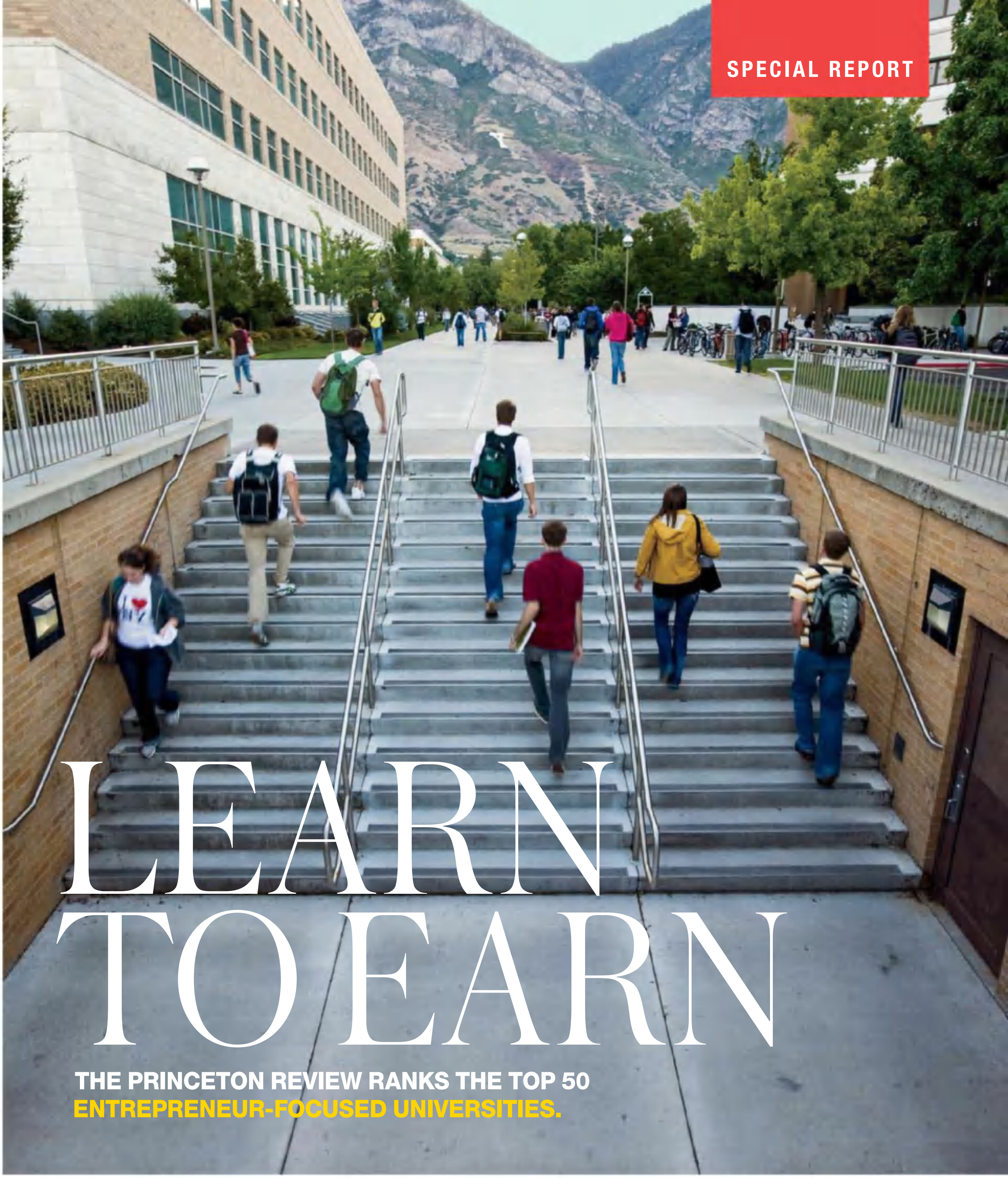
Menu Mavericks

Impossible burger: New York City's Momofuku Nishi debuted Impossible Foods' burger that "bleeds" though it's made from potato proteins, wheat proteins, and coconut oil. Owner David Chang has also used his R&D lab to experiment with fermenting chickpeas, which creates a sweet umami bomb that now replaces the traditional Pecorino Romano in the restaurant's version of cacio e pepe.

Chickpea pisco sour: The liquid in canned chickpeas—aka aquafaba—makes for a surprisingly good egg substitute. Los Angeles restaurants Gracias Madre and Birch both use whipped aquafaba as a vegan stand-in for egg foam on classic cocktails, like pisco sours.

Habanada sherbet: Michael Mazourek, a Cornell professor and one of the top plant breeders in the world, created the habanada pepper—all the floral notes of a habanero minus even a hint of heat. Nora Antene, former executive chef at Portland, Oreg.'s renowned Le Pigeon, made the new pepper a sherbet standout. So long, chocolate chip ice cream.

SPECIAL REPORT



LEARN TO EARN

THE PRINCETON REVIEW RANKS THE TOP 50 ENTREPRENEUR-FOCUSED UNIVERSITIES.

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK PHILBRICK/BYU PHOTO

SOME ENTREPRENEURS FOLLOW their gut. Others follow their education—and schools across the nation are increasingly catering to the ambitions of future business leaders. That's why we partner with The Princeton Review to publish an annual survey of more than 2,000 colleges and universities, determining which best serve the entrepreneurial spirit. On the following pages, we list the top 25 undergraduate entrepreneurship degree programs and top 25 graduate programs in the U.S. (and one in Mexico)—places determined to hone students' game-changing ideas, give them access to world-class mentors (i.e., professors and alumni), and perhaps provide classmates turned cofounders.

BYU, home to the #2 undergraduate and #7 graduate programs for entrepreneurs.

UNDERGRADUATE ENTREPRENEUR DEGREES

2016 RANK		NO. OF 'TREP-RELATED COURSES OFFERED	NO. OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP CLASSES	% OF FACULTY WITH ENTREPRENEURIAL EXPERIENCE	STARTUPS LAUNCHED BY GRADS IN PAST 5 YEARS	FUNDING RAISED BY GRADS IN PAST 5 YEARS	TUITION PER YEAR
1	**Babson College** Arthur M. Blank Center for Entrepreneurship *Babson Park, Mass.*	24	2,141	100	320	NR	$48,288
2	**Brigham Young University** Rollins Center for Entrepreneurship & Technology *Provo, Utah*	43	4,985	93	320	$431 million	$10,600 ($5,300 for LDS students)
3	**University of Michigan–Ann Arbor** Innovate Blue *Ann Arbor, Mich.*	54	5,080	58	310	$65 million	$14,729 (in-state), $45,002 (out-of-state)
4	**Northeastern University** Center for Entrepreneurship Education *Boston*	32	1,121	65	330	$146 million	$47,655
5	**Baylor University** Dept. of Entrepreneurship *Waco, Tex.*	31	2,060	100	280	$30 million	$42,006
6	**University of Houston** Cyvia and Melvyn Wolff Center for Entrepreneurship *Houston*	47	1,797	100	77	$10 million	$10,710 (in-state) $25,410 (out-of-state)
7	**Bernard Baruch College, The City University of New York** Lawrence N. Field Center for Entrepreneurship *New York City*	18	827	88	935	$33 million	$6,861 (in-state) $17,331 (out-of-state)
8	**Temple University** Innovation & Entrepreneurship Institute *Philadelphia*	56	2,706	92	236	$4 million	$16,274 (in-state) $27,266 (out-of-state)
9	**University of Maryland** Academy for Innovation and Entrepreneurship *College Park, Md.*	64	6,503	37	85	$19 million	$10,181 (in-state) $32,045 (out-of-state)
10	**Washington University** Skandalaris Center for Interdisciplinary Innovation and Entrepreneurship *St. Louis*	26	592	70	71	$64 million	$49,930

»

METHODOLOGY

Below are a few of the key metrics collected from these schools. For more information on the methodology and more details on each ranking, go to PrincetonReview.com/entrepreneur.

Academics & Requirements

Schools were asked if they offer a major, a minor, or a degree program in entrepreneurship; how many courses in entrepreneurship are offered in topics such as e-business, family businesses, franchising, and venture capital; the availability of internships, experiential learning, and opportunities to consult for small-business owners; and whether they provide cross-discipline opportunities to work with students in other majors (e.g., working with computer engineering students to develop a product).

Outside the Classroom

Schools provided information on whether they maintain partnerships with other schools that allow access to their entrepreneurship programs; the number of officially recognized clubs and organizations for entrepreneurship students; the number and size of scholarships available; and the number of outside mentors working with students. Annual business-plan or new-venture competitions, hackathons, and pitch-deck or startup weekends (along with prize money amounts), among other activities, were also considered.

Students & Faculty

This by-the-numbers survey asked for the total number of full- and part-time students enrolled in entrepreneurship courses in the 2015–2016 academic year and how many of them had developed an actionable business plan to launch a startup. They then asked how many companies were started by graduates within the past five to 10 years that are still in business, and how much money their entrepreneurship alumni had raised from investors to launch their companies.

The Princeton Review also tallied the number of faculty teaching courses on entrepreneurship during the year, and how many faculty members had started, bought, or run a business.

GO BIG OR GO HOME.

GO BLUE.

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

No. 3

UNDERGRADUATE RANKING

LARGEST JUMP IN RANKING FOR 2nd STRAIGHT YEAR

Proud to be one of the world class programs delivering entrepreneurial education at the University of Michigan.

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» UNDERGRADUATE ENTREPRENEUR DEGREES CONT'D

2016 RANK		NO. OF 'TREP-RELATED COURSES OFFERED	NO. OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP CLASSES	% OF FACULTY WITH ENTREPRENEURIAL EXPERIENCE	STARTUPS LAUNCHED BY GRADS IN PAST 5 YEARS	FUNDING RAISED BY GRADS IN PAST 5 YEARS	TUITION PER YEAR
11	**University of Washington** Buerk Center for Entrepreneurship at the Foster School of Business *Seattle*	14	856	80	165	$12 million	$11,839 (in-state) $34,143 (out-of-state)
12	**University of Oklahoma** Center for Entrepreneurship *Norman, Okla.*	21	228	67	47	$13 million	$10,181 (in-state) $25,203 (out-of-state)
13	**Syracuse University** Falcone Center for Entrepreneurship *Syracuse, N.Y.*	21	1,969	100	90	NR	$45,022
14	**University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill** Center for Entrepreneurial Studies *Chapel Hill, N.C.*	26	400	50	62	$43 million	$8,591 (in-state) $33,673 (out-of-state)
15	**The University of Dayton** L. William Crotty Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership *Dayton*	31	1,808	76	38	$2 million	$40,940
16	**Miami University** Institute for Entrepreneurship *Oxford, Ohio*	25	1,287	61	44	$5 million	$14,288 (in-state) $31,592 (out-of-state)
17	**Tecnológico of Monterrey** Institute for Entrepreneurship Eugenio Garza Lagüera *Monterrey, Mexico*	93	20,000	76	737	$21 million	NR
18	**University of Utah** Lassonde Entrepreneur Institute *Salt Lake City*	24	983	45	146	$6 million	$8,518 (in-state) $27,039 (out-of-state)
19	**The University of Iowa** John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center *Iowa City, Iowa*	25	2,105	81	273	NR	$8,518 (in-state) $28,413 (out-of-state)
20	**Texas A&M University** Center for New Ventures and Entrepreneurship *College Station, Tex.*	16	900	50	250	$4 million	$10,030 (in-state) $30,208 (out-of-state)
21	**Texas Christian University** Neeley Entrepreneurship Center *Fort Worth, Tex.*	84	3,501	45	46	$260,000	$42,670
22	**Clarkson University** Reh Center for Entrepreneurship *Potsdam, N.Y.*	31	905	50	134	$8 million	$46,132
23	**Belmont University** Center for Entrepreneurship *Nashville*	26	1,042	100	102	$800,000	$31,390
24	**Loyola Marymount University** Fred Kiesner *Los Angeles*	15	170	90	60	$25 million	$44,230
25	**DePaul University** Coleman Entrepreneurship Center *Chicago*	18	833	100	78	$2 million	$37,626

GRADUATE ENTREPRENEUR DEGREES

2016 RANK		NO. OF 'TREP-RELATED GRADUATE COURSES OFFERED	NO. OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP CLASSES	% OF FACULTY WITH ENTREPRENEURIAL EXPERIENCE	STARTUPS LAUNCHED BY GRADS IN PAST 5 YEARS	FUNDING RAISED BY GRADS IN PAST 5 YEARS	TUITION PER YEAR
1	**Harvard University** Arthur Rock Center for Entrepreneurship *Boston*	34	NR	98	114	$1.8 billion	$72,312
2	**Babson College** Arthur M. Blank Center for Entrepreneurship *Babson Park, Mass.*	22	1,344	100	753	NR	$65,278
3	**Rice University** Rice Alliance for Technology and Entrepreneurship *Houston*	30	319	100	112	$1.6 billion	$56,093
4	**Northwestern University** The Larry and Carol Levy Institute for Entrepreneurial Practice *Evanston, Ill.*	58	1,487	86	181	$79 million	$65,284
5	**The University of Chicago** Polsky Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation *Chicago*	28	1,769	46	234	$81 million	$59,753
6	**University of Michigan** Ross School of Business, Zell Lurie Institute, Center for Entrepreneurship, College of Engineering *Ann Arbor, Mich.*	56	3,359	41	169	$117 million	$54,788 (in-state) $59,788 (out-of-state)
7	**Brigham Young University** Rollins Center for Entrepreneurship & Technology *Provo, Utah*	29	274	93	102	$290 million	$24,620 $12,310 (LDS students)
8	**Bernard Baruch College, The City University of New York** Lawrence N. Field Center for Entrepreneurship *New York City*	21	459	91	453	$58 million	$15,039 (in-state) $27,064 (out-of-state)
9	**Temple University** Innovation and Entrepreneurship Institute *Philadelphia*	74	3,546	100	157	$2 million	$31,540 (in-state) $43,744 (out-of-state)
10	**The University of South Florida** The USF Center for Entrepreneurship *Tampa*	58	1,335	92	318	$15 million	$11,253 (in-state) $20,637 (out-of-state)
11	**University of Virginia** Batten Institute for Entrepreneurship and Innovation *Charlottesville, Va.*	27	792	100	111	$175 million	$58,150 (in-state) $60,468 (out-of-state)

»

SHOW THEM THE MONEY

The top school from our list, based on how much in prizes its students won from hackathons, startup competitions, and other contests last year.

UNDERGRAD
$805,000
University of Michigan

GRADUATE
$912,000
University of Michigan

ILLUSTRATION BY THE NOUN PROJECT/VECTORS MARKET

» GRADUATE ENTREPRENEUR DEGREES CONT'D

2016 RANK		NO. OF 'TREP-RELATED COURSES OFFERED	NO. OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP CLASSES	% OF FACULTY WITH ENTREPRENEURIAL EXPERIENCE	STARTUPS LAUNCHED BY GRADS IN PAST 5 YEARS	FUNDING RAISED BY GRADS IN PAST 5 YEARS	TUITION PER YEAR
12	**The University of Texas at Austin** Herb Kelleher Center for Entrepreneurship & Texas Venture Labs *Austin, Tex.*	33	402	92	95	NR	$33,298 (in-state) $48,832 (out-of-state)
13	**DePaul University** Coleman Entrepreneurship Center *Chicago*	27	1,101	100	109	$12 million	$1,020/credit hour
14	**University of Washington** Foster School of Business, Buerk Center for Entrepreneurship *Seattle*	28	918	60	177	$37 million	$31,200 (in-state) $45,410 (out-of-state)
15	**University of Utah** Lassonde Entrepreneur Institute *Salt Lake City*	18	486	31	78	$15 million	$26,933 (in-state) $49,366 (out-of-state)
16	**University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill** Center for Entrepreneurial Studies *Chapel Hill, N.C.*	31	NR	NR	45	$25 million	$40,096 (in-state) $57,494 (out-of-state)
17	**Syracuse University** Falcone Center for Entrepreneurship *Syracuse, N.Y.*	20	722	100	90	NR	$38,544
18	**Saint Louis University** Center for Entrepreneurship *St. Louis*	52	503	73	38	$16 million	$52,475

2016 RANK		NO. OF 'TREP-RELATED COURSES OFFERED	NO. OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP CLASSES	% OF FACULTY WITH ENTREPRENEURIAL EXPERIENCE	STARTUPS LAUNCHED BY GRADS IN PAST 5 YEARS	FUNDING RAISED BY GRADS IN PAST 5 YEARS	TUITION PER YEAR
19	**University of Oklahoma** Center for Entrepreneurship *Norman, Okla.*	9	74	80	18	$228 million	$16,229 (in-state) $33,804 (out-of-state)
20	**University of Maryland** Academy for Innovation and Entrepreneurship *College Park, Md.*	38	1,433	59	36	$466,000	$45,499 (in-state) $54,409 (out-of-state)
21	**Texas A&M University** Center for New Ventures and Entrepreneurship *College Station, Tex.*	16	480	33	250	NR	$22,213 (in-state) $34,849 (out-of-state)
22	**The University of Texas at Dallas** The Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship *Richardson, Tex.*	21	629	73	210	$1 million	$19,042 (in-state) $34,655 (out-of-state)
23	**University of Rochester** Ain Center for Entrepreneurship *Rochester, N.Y.*	23	180	77	81	$31 million	$54,276
24	**Washington University** Skandalaris Center for Interdisciplinary Innovation & Entrepreneurship *St. Louis*	21	401	76	49	$18 million	$52,273
25	**Northeastern University** Center for Entrepreneurship Education *Boston*	49	1,784	64	101	$7 million	$44,605


Entrepreneur

shiny object

GOOGLE'S GROUNDBREAKING GOGGLES

THE TECH GIANT'S NEW HEADSET TURNS YOUR PHONE INTO A HIGH-END VR MACHINE.

By Seth Porges

THE TERM *VIRTUAL REALITY* is bandied about a lot. But with the exception of a few bulky, expensive headsets, most VR devices just use your phone's screen and processor—and they don't let you do much more than passively watch 360-degree video. Google's Daydream View VR is different: It's the first phone-based headset to let you *do stuff.* The gadget wirelessly syncs with the new Google Pixel smartphone (the only compatible device for now) to a Wii-like controller to create a virtual extension of your hand. Use it to move through Google Street View, swing a simulated baseball bat, and interact with virtual worlds. It won't let you walk around a physical space and have your movements translated into VR—for that, you still need an expensive rig—but the Daydream will be of interest to folks like architects, 3-D designers, and advertising tech firms keen on immersive experiences. And its soft fabric shell and light weight (about a half pound) keeps you comfortable through long trips into the Matrix. *($79; vr.google.com)*

Photograph by Carlton Davis

the fix

Make **Online Shopping** *Simple*

HOW A GOURMET FOOD COMPANY OWNER SAVED HER BUSINESS WITH AN E-COMMERCE APP. *By David Port*

WHEN JANICE WHITING purchased Gourmet Dreams in 2004, the meal-delivery and catering business was still using a manual credit card swiper and a fax machine. And crazily enough—considering the business is located in Silicon Valley and Whiting has a high-tech marketing background—it stayed pretty much that way until 2014. She'd been focused on the culinary side and couldn't afford a major tech overhaul. But as her four-employee business got busier, ordering and accounting became time-consuming for Whiting—and a turnoff for her customers.

The Fix

Gourmet Dreams had been operating like it was 1999: Customers had to download an order form, print it out, and submit it via either fax or email. Then Whiting herself manually processed credit card orders and keyed data into QuickBooks accounting software. Eventually she decided to replace all this with 3DCart, e-commerce software she chose because it integrated simply with her company website and QuickBooks, and provided a simple online shopping cart to handle ordering, payment, and shipping.

The Results

If Whiting hadn't upgraded to 3DCart, Gourmet Dreams "wouldn't be in business" today, she says. The time she spends on orders, accounting, and invoicing each week has shrunk from a day and a half to just a few hours, allowing her to focus more on cooking food and building the company. Since the switch, revenues have gone up roughly 20 to 30 percent annually in the past couple of years. And 3DCart doesn't take much to run: She pays $36 a month (prices start as low as $20), and unlike some of its competitors, the platform doesn't charge transaction fees.

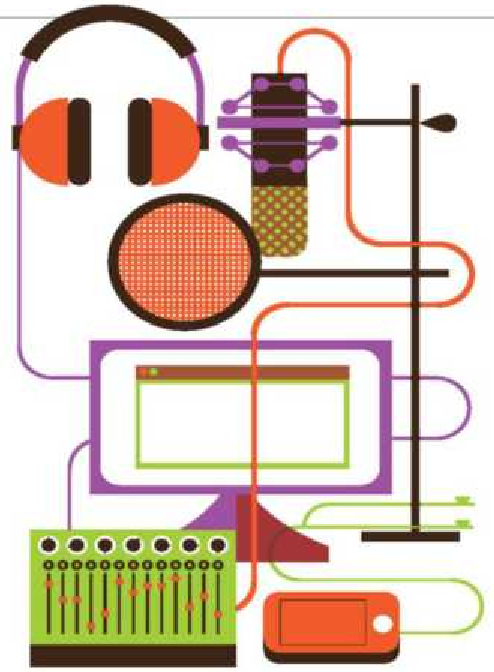
A Second Opinion

There are many e-commerce options for small businesses, including Shopify, Volusion, and BigCommerce. They can look similar, but they're not, says Dean Peckenpaugh, a Houston-based e-commerce consultant. "The big questions are: What other third-party systems [such as accounting software] can they plug into? And can the platform be implemented without a developer?" he says. Beyond that, look for—at minimum—a platform with integrated, streamlined shipping and payment tools, plus templates that allow you to customize the look and feel of a website's cart and individual product pages. □

Photograph by Chloe Aftel

ask a geek

Should My Business Start a Podcast?



YES, IF YOU HAVE A STRONG IDEA, A QUALITY HOST, AND A HIGH LEVEL OF COMMITMENT, SAYS JAY BAER, BEST-SELLING AUTHOR, MARKETING CONSULTANT, AND COHOST OF THE POPULAR *SOCIAL PROS* PODCAST.

Podcast listening in the U.S. shot up 23 percent last year, to 57 million people. That means more Americans now listen to podcasts than actively use Twitter—a huge potential audience to help market your business, says Baer. In fact, a recent survey found that nearly two-thirds of listeners are more willing to consider products and services after hearing about them on a podcast. *—Mikal E. Belicove*

• GAUGE YOUR AUDIENCE

A podcast isn't a great idea if yours is a purely local business. Your potential audience will be too small to be worth the time commitment. Also, podcast listeners are generally young (72 percent are ages 18 to 54), so if your customers are 55-plus, stick to what you know already works for that demo.

• BUY THE BASICS

A decent podcasting setup ought to run you about $500. Invest in good microphones for each participant, as well as software to record conversations. (Apple's Garageband works great for in-person. Internet calls are far clearer than the phone, so Skype is standard—but Zencastr, which is in beta, is gaining popularity because it does calls in a web browser instead.) Then hire a good producer to clean up the audio. You'll also need a hosting platform, such as Libsyn or Podbean, which in turn feeds the podcast to player apps like iTunes, Stitcher, and Overcast.

• PICK A TOPIC

Stick with what you know, and make sure it's different enough from what else is out there to stand out. Generally speaking, a narrow topic is better than a broad one at attracting a dedicated listenership. And remember, a podcast should be a public service for your audience—not an infomercial for your business.

• PICK A HOST

Your host should be someone who has the gift of gab and has been around long enough to know the ins and outs of the business. They should also have relationships in the industry (which will help with securing guests), the time to do a show on a regular basis, and the skills to promote it on social media and elsewhere.

• MAKE IT REGULAR

Keep the episodes short—30 minutes each, tops—which increases the chance that people can listen in one sitting. The more frequent the show, the more consistent its schedule, the better you'll attract and keep listeners. If you can't do at least two episodes a month on a regular schedule, don't bother.

Pod-preneurs

Get inspiration from these four shows made by entrepreneurs, for entrepreneurs. *—M.B.*

Youpreneur

Host Chris Ducker, founder of VirtualStaffFinder.com, and guests share their wisdom as solo entrepreneurs. Start with episode 172, for personal branding advice from Peter Shankman. *chrisducker.com/podcast*

She Podcasts

This female-focused show, hosted by Podcasting School for Women cofounders Elsie Escobar and Jessica Kupferman, covers topics such as landing guests for your podcast, getting sponsors, and interview etiquette. *shepodcasts.com*

The Entrepreneurs Radio Show

Host Travis Lane Jenkins started four local businesses in Houston on shoestring budgets and built them into multimillion-dollar enterprises. He talks business with other successful entrepreneurs. *theentrepreneursradioshow.com*

Social Pros Podcast

Host Jay Baer (of Convince & Convert) and Adam Brown (of Salesforce) talk with folks who do groundbreaking work in social media. Check out the insightful episode with Coca-Cola's Doug Busk, discussing digital storytelling. *socialpros.podbean.com*

Illustration by Patrick Hruby

Bring Your Doggy to Work

Gear to make your office (or home) Fido-friendly.

By Seth Porges

HIP STARTUPS often have dogs roaming the office—and although it's become a cliché, these businesses could be onto something. "A dog's presence in the workplace reduces stress for owners and may increase their productivity and job satisfaction," says Dr. Randolph T. Barker (real name!), a professor emeritus of management at the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Business, who has studied the effects of canines on organizations and workplace stress. Here's how to make work more pet-friendly.

- The human-mattress darling Casper now brings us the **Casper Dog Mattress** (*$125 to $225; casper.com*), the product of nearly a year of dog sleep studies. Its microfiber cover is machine-washable and resistant to claws and teeth.

- When your four-legged office friend is done napping and wants to play, there's the **Nerf Dog Tennis Ball Blaster** (*$20; target.com*). With a single pump, it projects its orbs up to around 50 feet. Just try not to break anything too valuable.

- Keep tabs on your pal from across the office with **Petcube Play** (*$199; petcube .com*), which has a built-in camera and a speaker so you can say hi. But the real fun is its app-controlled laser toy, which shoots at different spots in the room. Fetch *that*!

- Can't bring your dog in? Let him know he's a good boy—*yes he is, yes he is!*—at home. The smartphone-controlled **Petzi Treat Cam** (*$170; petzi.com*) lets you remotely watch, talk via a built-in speaker, snap pet pics, and dispense a real treat.

THE STAT

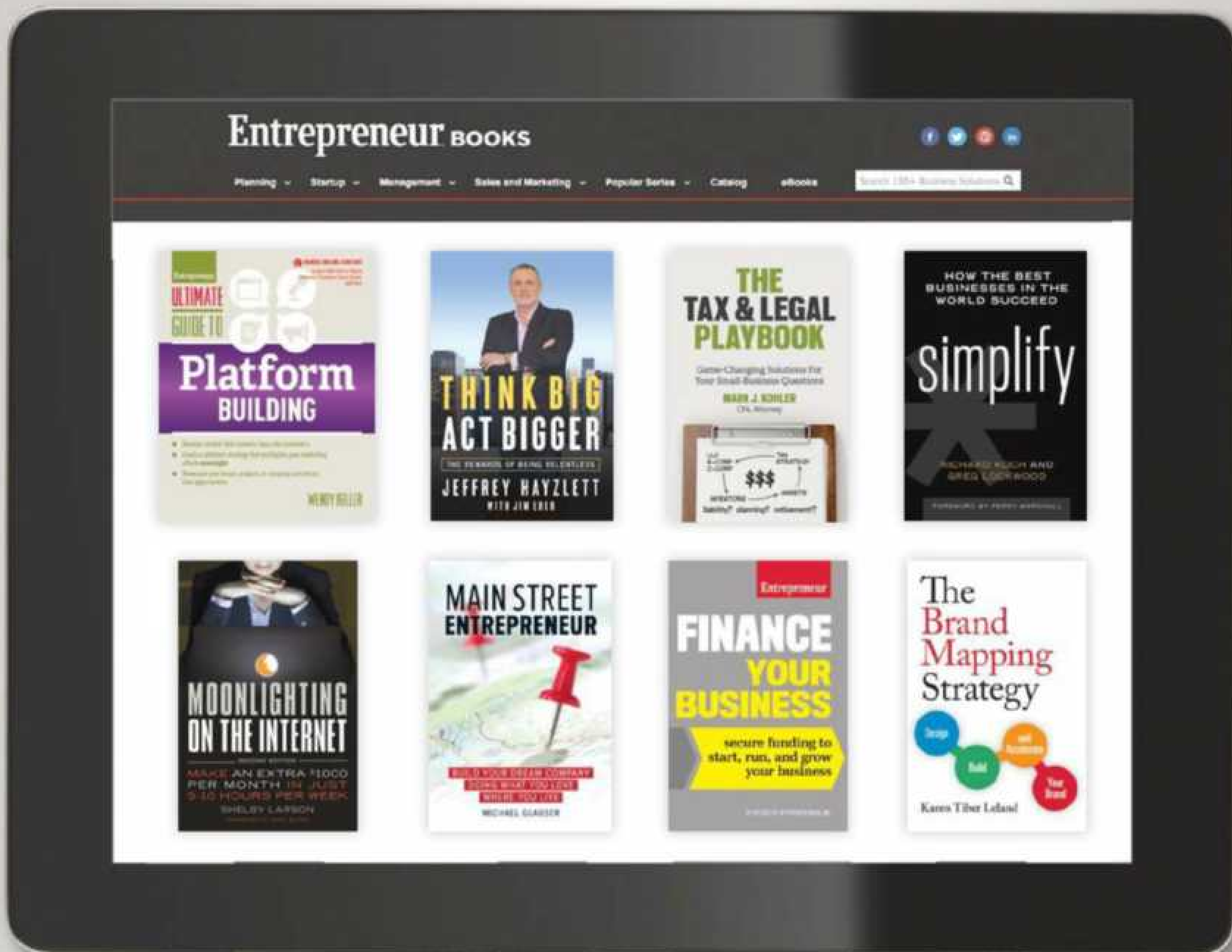
42%

Millennial small-business owners with a plan in place for responding to cyberattacks. That's compared with 17 percent for Gen Xers and 12 percent for baby boomers. Come on, people; it's almost 2017. ***Prepare yourselves!***

Nationwide's 2016 Small Business Indicator survey, conducted by Harris Poll.

Illustration by Andy Martin

HOW WILL YOU **START, GROW, OR CHANGE YOUR BUSINESS IN 2017?**



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SCAM-PROOF YOUR DOUGH

THE MORE YOU MAKE, THE MORE THIEVES TRY TO TAKE.

By Steph Wagner

When someone claiming to be with the IRS left a voicemail saying I was being sued, I freaked. I called back the number to see what was going on, and the second the self-appointed IRS agent answered, he demanded my Social Security number. That's when I knew it was a scam, and I hung up. The IRS never asks for your Social Security number over the phone. (I also know the IRS never answers the

Photograph by Dan Saelinger

phone that promptly!) If the agency has an issue with your tax returns, it will send a formal letter first.

I next called my CPA to make sure he hadn't received any dubious calls regarding my tax status. He told me that I was his fifth client harassed by a phony IRS agent that week. In fact, more than one million people in the U.S. are approached with similar scams every year, according to the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA). Scammers sound official by using bogus case numbers, and they demand that your unpaid taxes be paid via prepaid debit cards, money orders, wire transfers, and, believe it or not, iTunes gift cards. When you refuse to pay, they threaten to have you arrested, take away your passport, and even deport you. The fear tactics work: TIGTA claims that more than $29 million has been fraudulently collected from more than 5,500 victims in the past three years.

Don't be a victim. If you receive a call that sounds in the least bit suspicious, do this first:

HANG UP. We all receive unsolicited phone calls, and the best course of action isn't to press a button or answer any questions. If you give fraudsters any attention, they'll double their efforts to hook you.

GOOGLE IT. A scammer posing as a utility worker once called a friend of mine. He claimed that my friend hadn't paid her bill and threatened to shut off her electricity immediately. While on the phone, she googled the words *utility* and *scam* and realized within seconds that she was being conned. You can easily do the same.

CHECK YOUR CREDIT. Review your bank and credit card statements and balances online at least once a week; it's a sure way to catch a thief. But it's also worth signing up for a credit report monitor. For $19.99 a month, I use Experian, which alerts me by phone and text if a new charge or bank account is opened in my name, and when my credit score changes—even by as little as five points. □

Steph Wagner is a private equity investor and a financial strategist.

vc viewpoint

What I Learned By Selling My Startup

SURE, I MADE MONEY. BUT I WISH I'D DONE A COUPLE OF THINGS DIFFERENTLY.

By Sam Hogg

Five years ago, I sold my startup and started working in venture capital. And while that sale made me very happy, it didn't make me all that wealthy—especially not compared with the deals I see now, where big funding rounds and lucrative exits carry the day. So sometimes I wonder: What would I have done differently in my company if I could go back five years? Now that I'm working in VC, what bits of wisdom do I have now that I wish I had then?

Here's the first insight: Define "success" very early. Is it money? Changing the world? What do you want—and what, realistically, do you think is possible? I had built a company that sold gift cards over the internet; it was a fine idea, but not a world-changing one. It was never going to be the next Facebook. When I finally realized the limits of my company, the truth was hard to swallow. But it didn't need to be! I wish I had taken the time, at the very beginning, to put my actions in context. I had found a smart new way to sell an old product, and it was going to make me a few bucks. There's nothing wrong with that—unless you're not willing to accept it.

So let's say that, five years ago, I had defined my success. What should I have done next? This: Figure out what it would realistically take to get there. Again, I did this all wrong: Because I never defined success, I also never bothered to go out and beat my drum to find the appropriate financing to realize that success. It was a decision made out of fear; I didn't want to be held accountable by anyone else. But without outside money, I couldn't grow as big as I wanted. When an entrepreneur sets a goal, they need to be realistic: How much money will it take, and what percentage of your company and control are you willing to relinquish?

And here's my final piece of advice to my younger self: Keep everything in perspective. Some people are consumed by their companies; they are their work, and nothing else. For them, I suppose, nothing else matters. But for everyone else (including me), that separation should matter. There were times while running my company that I realized the business was actually running me. I'd make compromises that would affect my happiness, or the happiness of people around me. I'd forget that these people—and my relationships with them—would be around long after the business closed. More than anything, the past five years as a VC have taught me the value of relationships: The ones I formed as a startup founder were important. Take care of the people you work with, and they'll take care of you whether you succeed or fail.

I did OK. I certainly could have done better. But you, knowing all this, can now go out and do great. □

Sam Hogg is a partner at Open Prairie Ventures and Huron River Ventures.

ILLUSTRATION BY THE NOUN PROJECT/BRAVE BROS.

ask the money guy

WHAT'S THE RIGHT PRICE FOR MY PRODUCT?

BY JOE WORTH

After building your product, pricing it is the hardest puzzle you'll face. Get it right and making a profit is easy. Get it wrong and you may bankrupt your business fast. But it isn't a guessing game; there is a right price, and you can figure it out by answering these three questions.

1. What's your overall operating budget? Once you know what your monthly ongoing expenses are, you'll know how much income you need to break even. Just apply that number to your production run. For example, if you plan to produce 10,000 items in a year, you'll know how many you need to sell a year to break even.

With your budget in place, you can then test various pricing scenarios—charging more and selling fewer units, or cutting the price and going after volume. Whatever scenario you end up following, you know exactly how much you need to sell in order to keep the lights on. As for profit on each sale, decide what works for you: Some models work with razor-thin profits (like Amazon); others enjoy huge margins (like Apple). Both are legit.

2. What are your business goals? If you're trying to build market share quickly, then low prices may work. If profit per sale is more important, fewer sales may work. However, I caution you against starting with low, low prices (or free) in the name of grabbing market share. That makes it difficult to raise the price in the future, unless you add some sort of new or perceived value or benefit. (There are exceptions, as you'll see below.)

3. What do your customers want? You may think you know, but their reactions can surprise you. One of my clients invented a high-quality medical diagnostic instrument for a very specific, narrow use. When sales slowed after a couple of years, the company dropped prices to undercut its competition. Unfortunately, this made the product look "cheap" to purchasing doctors. I advised a $3,000 price increase, which was a 20 percent jump. The next year the company sold 50 percent more of these instruments. Like I said: Surprise!

Pricing can be a nerve-racking decision, but remember this: It isn't a final decision. Like my medical device client did, you can change your price later. But make sure your product brings a benefit to your customers. If people love it, they just might be willing to pay a little more for it. □

Joe Worth is a partner at B2B CFO.

Illustration by Edmon De Haro

Road Risks: What You Need to Know Before Your Business Gets Behind the Wheel

Don't let any of these all-too-common situations force your company off the road.

Picture this: You run a small business with 10 employees and have just ordered lunch. Someone in the office gets in his car to go pick up the order.

En route, your employee takes his eyes off the road and BAM—rear-ends the car in front of him.

Since it's a personal vehicle, you're in the clear, right? Wrong. You could be liable for the accident. And if it turns out your employee didn't have a valid driver's license or insurance, now your business could have a much larger problem on its hands.

That's just one of the many potential risks that Pete VanDyne, commercial auto safety consultant at Liberty Mutual Insurance, says exist for businesses. Having a safe-driving program can help keep your employees safe on the road while also ensuring that your business is covered in the case of an accident.

What goes into a safe-driving program?

Your policy should apply to all vehicles used for company business — including personal vehicles.
Share your policy with new employees and require all employees—even those with infrequent driving responsibilities —to periodically review it. Your independent insurance agent and insurer can help identify your specific business exposures so that your policy addresses key areas, such as:

Vetting new drivers.
Establish minimum driving standards before you let employees get behind the wheel. "Just because someone drives to work every day doesn't necessarily mean he or she has a license or a good driving record," VanDyne says.

Get permission to obtain the person's motor vehicle driving history to check for traffic violations, accidents, or DUI/DWI convictions. Also check licenses to confirm they are current. And if an employee is driving a personal vehicle, make sure he or she carries insurance with adequate policy limits.

Conducting regular maintenance.
Employees should be responsible for daily visual checks of the tires and bodies of company cars. Require employees to immediately report and turn in vehicles for maintenance or repairs if they find problems (i.e., worn tire treads, broken lights, bodily damage, etc.).

Also require employees to comply with manufacturer recommendations in regards to oil changes and maintenance.

Banning distracted driving.
Phone usage, including texting and checking email, should be disallowed. No employer should knowingly force their employees into contradicting policy.

"Management can create those situations by calling employees they know are driving," VanDyne says.

Documenting everything.
Right after a vehicle accident, an employee should call 911 (if not injured and able). The employee should also take photos of any damage to both vehicles and the surrounding area. It's important to document everything even when there seems to be a "gentleman's agreement" over the damage, or when the damage is nonexistent.

Something as small as skid marks captured on a phone camera could make the difference when it comes time to assess liability.

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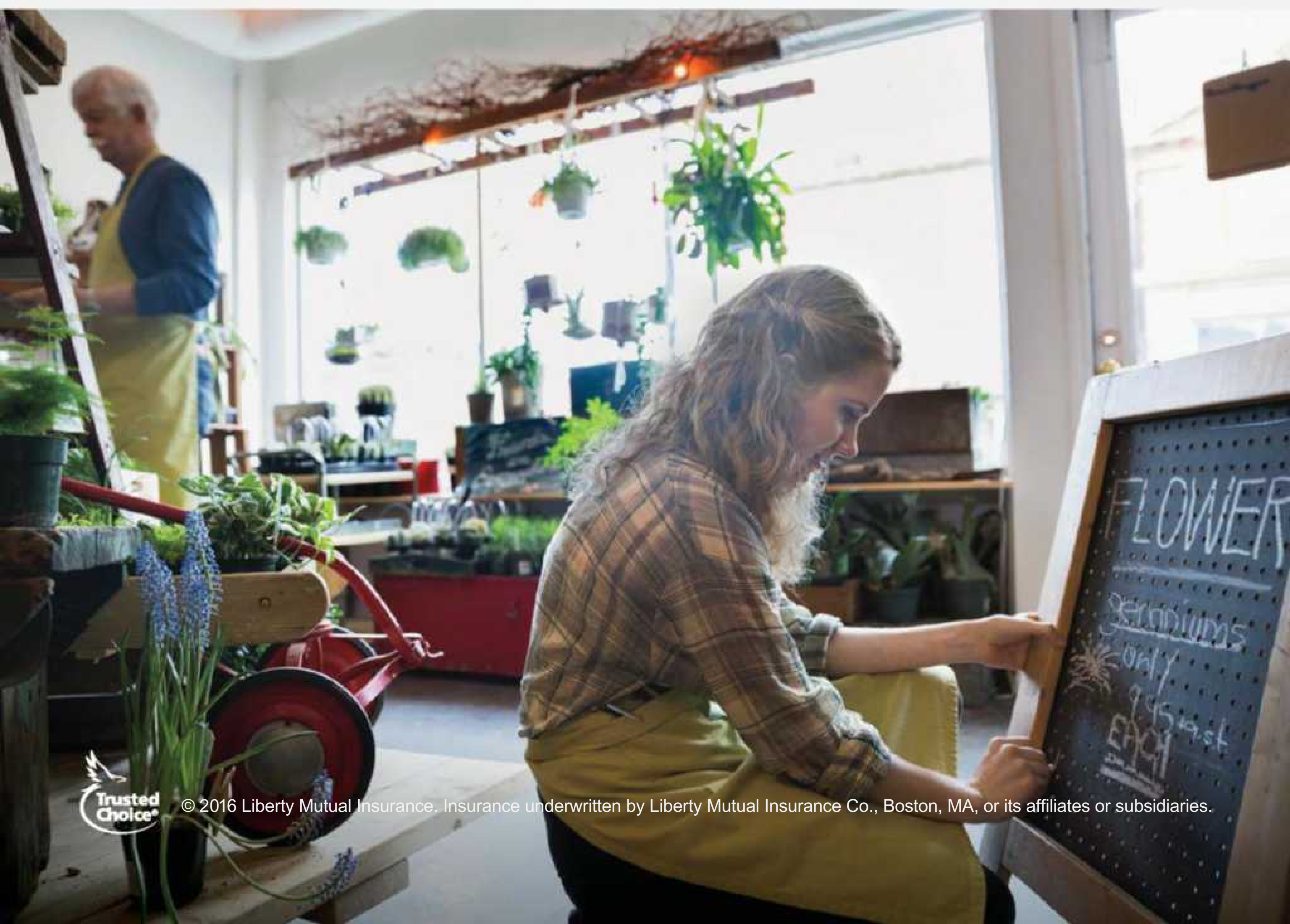

startup finance

"I KNOW PEOPLE"

TURN YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA FEEDS INTO FUNDING.

By Margaret Littman

JEREMY WEAVER NEEDED credit. He runs a Chattanooga-based startup, Wind River Tiny Homes, which builds small but elegantly crafted houses, and wanted to expand. In order to afford it, he needed lumberyards and other vendors to give him an advance. They'd provide him with materials, and he'd pay them back when a house was sold. He'd come to vendors prepared to talk numbers, but one time, a lumberyard owner took him by surprise: "My wife follows you on Facebook," the guy said, in part to explain why he was saying yes.

Weaver had stumbled onto something called social finance (or, groan, *so-fi* for short). Some lenders, in evaluating whether a person is a good loan candidate, would scour their social media networks. The more upstanding people were in there—family, gainfully employed friends, and so on—the more a lender felt at ease. And that philosophy is now expanding to small businesses—a big deal for startups whose lack of credit or business history keeps them locked out of traditional loans.

How can it work for you? We spoke to lenders and small-business owners about how four networks might matter to lenders.

Yelp: It's the land of angry reviews and bad writing, but it's also one of the places where Headway Capital, an online lender that specializes in small-business loans up to $35,000, assesses entrepreneurs' experience. There's a section on Yelp for business owners to enter their personal history and describe their company's mission and value proposition (it's called "From the business"), and that "gives us more information about the person and the kind of partners they work with," says Haijian Hu, of Headway. "If you don't have an up-to-date LinkedIn profile, this section of Yelp is even more helpful."

Facebook: The network of friending is also the network of business relationships—and whom you know is on display. That was a good thing for Olivia Colt, owner of Salt and Honey Catering in Berkeley, Calif., who had poor personal credit because of medical expenses. Her banker introduced her to nonprofit lender Opportunity Fund, which uses social media as one of its methods for evaluating companies. On Colt's Facebook pages, they could see that she'd built relationships with some of the Bay Area's biggest event planners—people who throw parties for the likes of Google and others. And Colt's catering enterprise got its financing.

Instagram: If you've launched a crowdfunding campaign or otherwise have an enthusiastic group of early customers, followers, and fans, make sure that activity is posted and well-documented on Instagram, says Min Fang, cofounder of Harper Partners, a lender with an emphasis on digital media and technology startups. "That shows us how active and engaged people are in an early-stage business," he says. And to him, it's also an indication of a company doing well enough to bet on.

LinkedIn: For B2B firms that don't have a large public following on Facebook or Instagram, LinkedIn can be a useful gauge of creditworthiness, Fang says. The network can verify a founder's story, show that a startup is hiring, and point to breadth and depth in a founder's personal network. Even if you think all your random LinkedIn recommendations are nonsense, don't delete them, says Fang. As online reputation guru Jerome Knyszewski points out, LinkedIn's ProFinder tool ranks you based on the number of recommendations you have.

Regardless of the social media platform, consistency is key, Hu says. The very basics, such as having the same business phone number and address across all your social media outlets, are crucial; it's the first thing many lenders will check. Finally, adds Jim Salters, president of The Business Backer, a Cincinnati firm that helps small businesses find capital, social media is not where a lender wants to be surprised. "If your restaurant has applied for a loan," Salters says, "your banker doesn't want to learn that your star chef is leaving via SnapChat." □

Upstanding Facebook followers improved the creditworthiness of Jeremy Weaver's and Olivia Colt's ventures.

PHOTOGRAPH BY DILLAN FORSAY FOR WIND RIVER TINY HOMES; PHOTOGRAPH BY BETSY HALEY (OLIVIA COLT)


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EXPAND YOUR BUSINESS WITH OUR SUPPORT.
Make H&R Block your business partner to expand and strengthen your tax business and enjoy the benefits of:
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• Local marketing programs supported by national advertising designed to help build your business in your community
• Dedicated year-round support that includes comprehensive training, technical and management support

success

BUILDING A BETTER POPCORN BUCKET

HOW AN OBSESSIVE MOVIEGOER REINVENTED THE THEATER'S FAVORITE FOOD.

By Gloria Dawson

BRIC SIMPSON WAS a genuine movie buff: He hit the theater about five times a month. That also made him attuned to the finer points of snacking, and he had some problems. "You pay a premium price for popcorn, but they only butter the top layer. An inch down, you've got almost a whole bucket of popcorn that tastes like cardboard," he says. In 2009, Simpson and his wife were shaking a popcorn bucket to distribute the butter when she said, "You know what we need? A lid."

Today, Simpson has made that lid—along with a company, Kernel King, that sells about 100,000 of them a month nationwide. But the process wasn't easy. He had to juggle his business while working full-time for the Army National Guard, and he needed to figure out how to break into the largely change-averse theater industry. But now that he has, Simpson's next goal is a big one: He wants his lid to be as ubiquitous as movie popcorn itself.

Photographs by Michael Friberg

Simpson had always loved the idea of running his own business. His wife's lid suggestion seemed like the perfect opportunity—but rather than spending time on a design or a manufacturing plan, one of his first moves was contacting a patent lawyer. "We were worried that somebody would see the idea and say, 'Hey, this is something we should do,'" says Simpson. The patent lawyer couldn't find any competing patents, and he told Simpson that with a unique enough lid, he shouldn't have any trouble patenting it.

In late 2011, Simpson began sketching lids and creating prototypes with a local machine shop. He added vents so hot popcorn doesn't get soggy. He tested variously sized domes for optimal butter distribution. ("We decided on our current height based on best shakability,"

he says.) Width had to be perfect, to snap onto the most popular manufacturers' buckets. And he added a handle—making it easy for employees to lift the lids out of display cases, and enabling customers to hold the lid upside down like a bowl and pass it to their friends.

Once he had a design and a patent pending, it was sales time. He booked a meeting at Water Gardens, a local Utah theater chain he frequented. He'd never sold a product before but relied on his military experience: He recruits for the National Guard and knows how to be convincing. "I'm a fix-it-myself kind of guy," he says. The theater manager saw an unexpected benefit: The lid could prevent popcorn spills and help keep the theater cleaner. So in the summer of 2012, Water Gardens ordered 50,000 lids.

Simpson also found early success at Bow Tie Cinemas, a chain with 50 locations, mostly on the East Coast. "Everybody is always trying to pitch the next best thing in concessions, and it very rarely happens," says Dan Herrle, Bow Tie's director of concessions. But Simpson was in luck. Herrle had been watching theatergoers go to ridiculous lengths to distribute butter, including shoving straws into the popcorn and drizzling the liquid through them. Often, customers would then take cardboard drink trays—which cost the theater 50 cents apiece—so they could share popcorn on them. The Kernel King solved all these problems—and, although Simpson won't reveal his price, he says the lids are far cheaper than drink trays.

Bow Tie Cinemas debuted the lids in 2014. Like many theaters, it sold them separately for $1. But it also added them to its standard popcorn-and-soda-combo deal. Once the theater threw in a lid for free, combo sales jumped 50 percent—a huge boost in an industry that makes most of its money on concessions. (To help sales along, Simpson also hired a production company to make a commercial for Kernel King lids; many theaters now play it for free before movies.) "There was one point in time that our distributor ran out during the Christmas season, and people were just furious," says Herrle. "Now it's like an item you have to have."

Despite this success, getting into larger chains proved a longer and more complicated process. Simpson began hitting industry trade shows in 2012. Interest came slowly. "It's a long sales cycle, and that was something we weren't really used to," says Simpson. Still, he says, the shows were worth it: They allowed him to meet face-to-face with theater managers, rather than just cold-calling them. Finally, those relationships paid off. This year, Simpson's lids have entered theaters across the country. He recently started selling lids to National Amusements, the 10th-largest chain in the business, and Regal Entertainment Group, the largest chain, sold his lids at a trial run over the summer at its Regal Cinemas in California.

Kernel King is now in 160 locations, and Simpson expects to be in more than 300 in the next year. "We don't want to stop until every single popcorn bucket has a Kernel King lid on it," says Simpson. "Just like customers expect a lid and a straw with their fountain drink, they will also come to expect a Kernel King lid with their popcorn." ◻

If I Knew Then...

As the year draws to a close, four established entrepreneurs look back on their early days and tell us what they would have done differently.
—*Nina Zipkin*

"I was constantly studying and reading business books and chasing after the right answers for everything so I wouldn't look so clueless in front of my team. Instead of looking for the right answers to tell, I wish I had spent more time seeking out the right questions to ask."
—***Ben Chestnut, CEO and cofounder, MailChimp***

"I would have trusted myself more. There were a lot of moments where I hesitated. Looking back, because the space was new, I really couldn't get anything wrong. Every time I got it wrong, I was learning. I didn't fully appreciate that when I was in it."
—***Stephanie Horbaczewski, CEO, StyleHaul***

"I would have read more business biographies. The most successful entrepreneurs who write them are transparent about the mistakes they have made and what you can learn from them."
—***Blake Mycoskie, founder and chief shoe giver, TOMS***

"I truly believe that we learn from our mistakes—as long as we're open to learning. With every failure I experienced, there was an opportunity to come out even stronger. So that being said, I'm glad I didn't deny my past self the experience of all those failures."
—***Daniel Weinand, cofounder and chief design officer, Shopify***

For more reflections from successful entrepreneurs, visit entm.ag/ifiknewthen.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE NOUN PROJECT/STEFANO VETERE (CALENDAR); YAZMIN ALANIS (CONFETTI)

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Construction Clean-Up
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FRANCHISE EXPO SOUTH

expert advice

So, you want to open a **coffee shop?**

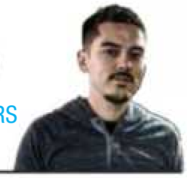
The retail value of the U.S. coffee market is alluring—around $48 billion. But at $3 a cup, cashing in on our collective caffeine addiction isn't always a given. *By Ashlea Halpern*

BEN LEHMAN
CO-OWNER
CREMA
NASHVILLE

“Don't forget the internet! There are many tools that can be easily used to capture additional revenue by offering your most unique products online.”

What can a coffee retailer do online? Plenty! Lehman's site, Crema-coffee.com, sells bags of beans, gift certificates, coffee subscriptions, **home-brew necessities** from respected brands, and even books and travel guides—because coffee can be a lifestyle as much as it is a drink.

PHIL GOODLAXSON
OWNER
CORVUS COFFEE ROASTERS
DENVER



“Define your identity, but adapt. When we started, we only did pour-over. Morning customers asked for a quicker option, so now we brew by the batch, too.”

COFFEE SHOP MATH
To start, Goodlaxson estimates:

$40,000
in equipment

$10,000
in marketing

30% to 35%
of monthly revenue should go to monthly operating expenses once you're established

When considering a location, Goodlaxson uses this metric: Within one or two years after your shop opens, sales should be 10 times your rent—so, if your rent is $4,000 a month, you should be selling $40,000. Can't do it? Consider a different spot.

JESS STEFFY
CO-OWNER
SQUARE ONE COFFEE
PHILADELPHIA AND LANCASTER, PA.

“Empower some of your key people with the education needed to keep your staff's skill level high and your drink quality consistent.”

Training Checklist

- Partner with a roaster that provides a comprehensive barista course with a **Coffee Quality Institute**–certified instructor.
- Enroll in the **Barista Guild of America's Level 1 Certificate** program to learn milk texturing, brewing and extraction principles, cupping, and more.
- Pick up extra skills with a **SCAA Coffee Taster's Certificate.** Learn about farming, processing, and green coffee grading.

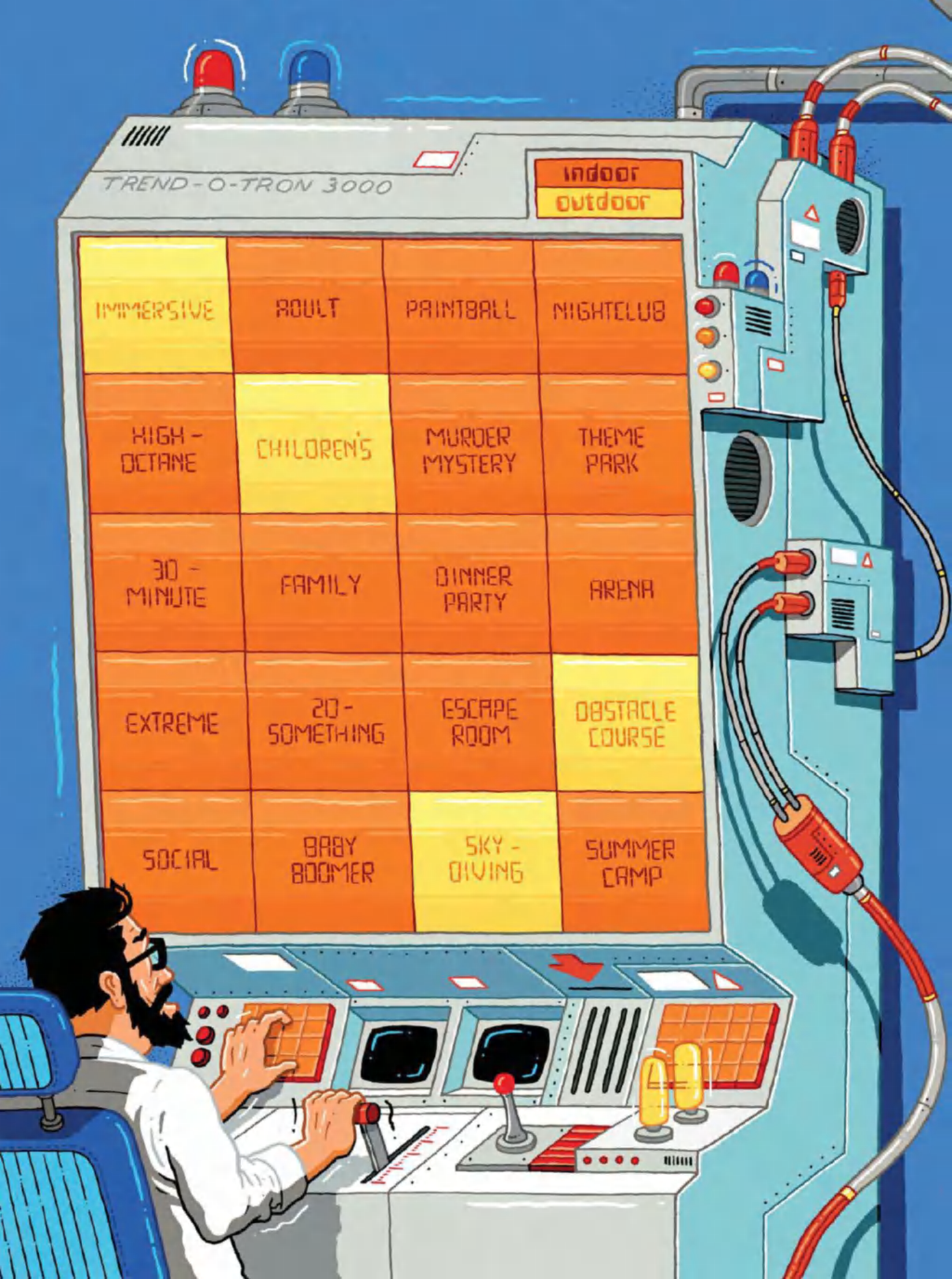
Should you roast your own?

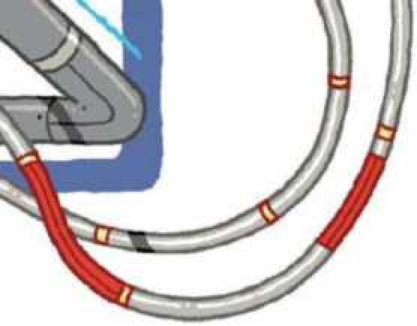
It's the question many coffee shop owners will eventually contemplate.

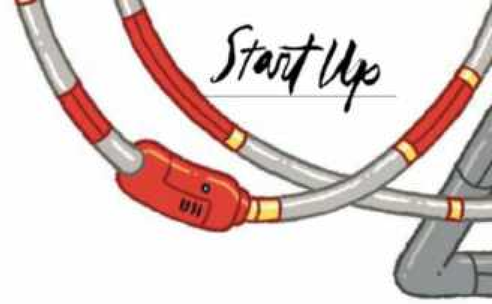
YES, DO IT!
Roasting your own beans gives you more control over cup quality and can ultimately lead to wider margins. All three of our featured experts roast their own. Lehman's primary reason: He's able to source coffee from producers he trusts. “There are many business benefits to this as well, like brand building,” he says.

NAH, NO NEED.
If you don't have buckets of startup capital or prior experience with sourcing and roasting, you're better off working with a trusted local or regional roastery—at least to start. “Roasting requires an entirely different skill set than running a shop and preparing drinks,” says Steffy. “Don't put yourself in a position where your roasting learning curve is up against your shop's opening deadline.”

FROM TOP LEFT: PHOTOGRAPHS BY GETTY IMAGES/LUMINA IMAGES (COFFEE CUP), WESTEND61 (ESPRESSO GRINDER);PHOTOGRAPH BY RACHEL STAUFFER (JESS STEFFY); PHOTOGRAPH BY DANIEL MENDOZA/CORVUS COFFEE HEAD ROASTER; PHOTOGRAPH BY AUSTIN LORD (BEN LEHMAN); PHOTOGRAPHS BY GETTY IMAGES/LUCIANO BIBULICH (COFFEE BEANS); ILLUSTRATION BY GETTY IMAGES/COLONEL


TREND-O-TRON 3000
indoor
outdoor
IMMERSIVE
ADULT
PAINTBALL
NIGHTCLUB
HIGH-OCTANE
CHILDREN'S
MURDER MYSTERY
THEME PARK
30-MINUTE
FAMILY
DINNER PARTY
ARENA
EXTREME
20-SOMETHING
ESCAPE ROOM
OBSTACLE COURSE
SOCIAL
BABY BOOMER
SKY-DIVING
SUMMER CAMP





THE BUZZIEST BUSINESSES

FOLLOWING A TREND IS EASY: JUST ASK ANYONE WHO OPENED A PAINTBALL ARENA, A ZUMBA STUDIO, OR A BEER TROLLEY. BUT IT TAKES A **MAGICAL MIX** OF TIMING, STRATEGY, AND CONVICTION TO MAKE THESE KINDS OF VENTURES LAST.

By Ashlea Halpern ▫ Illustrations by Jasper Rietman

NATE MARTIN'S

timing was perfect. ¶ "Escape rooms" were having an international moment—starting with one business in Kyoto, Japan, in 2007, and then rapidly expanding across Asia and Europe. They're like an interactive puzzle: People pay to be locked inside a room and work together to complete a series of tasks in order to "escape." In August 2013, just as the concept was expanding in the U.S., Martin invested $7,000 to build one called Puzzle Break in Seattle, and he made his money back by the end of the year. He then franchised in Long Island and struck a deal with Royal Caribbean to install escape rooms on cruise ships—grossing $660,000 in 2015, and putting him on track to more than double his revenue in 2016.

Despite his success, he cautions entrepreneurs against following his lead. "There are now more than a thousand escape rooms, each competing with exponentially larger budgets," he says. "The barrier to entry is rising so fast, no one could get away with what we did."

Hear that? Martin is saying he bought into a trend—just like those who opened drive-in movie theaters, oxygen bars, and Jazzercise studios. And trends tend to follow a particular trajectory: up up up, and then *dowwwwwn*. In 2012, the Latin-inspired aerobic dance Zumba appeared on the American College of Sports Medicine's list of Top 20 Fitness Trends; two years later, it was off the list. A thousand cupcake bakeries opened a few years ago, and then a thousand ovens clicked off. This is how it goes.

And yet these novelty businesses are understandably tempting: They can be highly profitable. They're designed to meet demand, hooking in new customers with very little marketing. And when run well, they can last for many years—surviving long after they stop being cool. That all leaves entrepreneurs asking some very important questions, like: *When's the right time to jump into a trend? And how, once in it, can I survive?*

The answers involve the same big subjects that every business has to consider: timing, location, and, perhaps most critically of all, how well a business owner can read and react to their customers' changing needs.

"The waning is coming," warns Richard Laermer, author of several books about business and trendspotting. "There were so many video store owners who did not see the streaming light, and many laser-tag shops hoping upon hope for a resurgence." But smart entrepreneurs aren't afraid to be told they're stale, says Laermer, nor are they afraid to change as a result. "It's a good thing to know—and could save you a fortune."

For those who chase what's hot, here's how to roll with it.

THERE'S A COMMON wisdom in trends: If you're late, you're out—and it's easy to be late. "Once the mainstream media talks about it, it has likely reached its peak, or nearly," says Tim Delaney, a professor of sociology at the State University of New York, Oswego. But according to the 17 entrepreneurs interviewed for this story, trendy businesses are a little more complex than that. That's because every market operates on its own timing. So even if something is blowing up on social media, and everyone in New York is sick of hearing about it, there are still places where a business can be right on time.

That's what Ralph Walters and Jaime Rauch bet on. They played an escape room in Denver—technically, ahem, it was a *zombie apocalypse room*—and wanted to build one of their own. So they began plotting to open one called Big Sky Breakout in Missoula, Mont., pop. 70,000. The city permitting office was confused. "They thought we were nuts," recalls Rauch. "They said, 'You want to lock people in a room? And ask them to pay you for it?'" But that was heartening: It meant nobody else had tried to open a business like it. Big Sky Breakout opened in April, and the duo expect to be profitable by May next year—despite two competitors recently joining the market.

There's no guarantee for how long it takes for a trend to go from big markets to small ones, but anecdotally, at least, small-city entrepreneurs have plenty of lead time. Food trucks make a great case study: The latest boom traces its roots back to Los Angeles

in about 2008. By 2010 food trucks were a regular part of life in major coastal cities—but that year, industry research found that only 26 percent of Americans had eaten from one. Everyone else was likely curious, which is why new food trucks are still rolling into smaller cities for the first time today.

But even a saturated market can be full of opportunity, if an entrepreneur is clever enough. That's because when many trendy businesses serve customers in roughly the same way, they leave themselves wide open to disruption.

Sean McGrail and Dan Hermann are perfect examples of trend disruptors. In 2012, the alcohol-fueled painting-party market already boasted several large franchises, including Painting With a Twist and Pinot's Palette. But the guys saw a way to tweak the concept: Their competitors all paid for costly studio spaces, so they launched Paint Nite, which instead hosts classes at local bars. "Our business model was asset-light and cash-flow-positive," says Hermann. The pair's initial investment was $7,000. Paint Nite began in Somerville, Mass., was profitable within three months, and has gone international; annual revenues reached—brace yourself—$55 million in 2015.

"Entrepreneurship is about betting on yourself and your business," says Hermann. "You have to believe you are seeing a truth that no one else sees. I thought critically about our concept and why the world today was right for it. I never saw it as a fad, but rather as an opportunity."

SUCCESSFUL TREND entrepreneurs say there are a few rules every similar business should follow—familiar ones to anyone in almost any industry. To wit: Know your market, keep a lean staff, sign short leases, network like crazy, and always be ready to pivot.

"Anything with a two-year ROI or less makes financial sense," says Shawn Verbrugghe. The way he sees it, a business doesn't need to last forever to be successful—which is why he gets into many at once. He runs three spots in Asheville, N.C.: an escape room (of course), an adult summer camp (a newly booming trendlet), and something called the Amazing Pubcycle, which is a pedal-powered, BYO-booze trolley. A fourth business, a restaurant in which people eat in the pitch-black, is in the works.

This is Verbrugghe's vision of diversification: When one trend dies down, he already has his hands in newly raging ones. It's working for him, but it isn't the only way to stay alive. Other trend-based entrepreneurs prefer staying within their niche—thinking about how to serve the same kind of customer with new ideas.

What does that look like? Well, let's go back to escape rooms: "The mania might not be long-lived," says Martin, who opened that business in Seattle. "That said, there's infinite room for growth in the 'doing-cool-stuff-with-your-brain' industry, which I expect to thrive for the next several thousand years."

The Provo, Utah–based CircusTrix asks a

similar question of itself: *What fun, physical experience will people want next?*

The company operates trampoline parks across the country, including Gravady Extreme Air Sports, a trampoline megapark located 20 minutes north of the Las Vegas Strip. That city launched the trampoline park trend in 2004, and the International Association of Trampoline Parks (a real thing!) says there are currently more than 345 parks in the U.S. CircusTrix founder and CEO Case Lawrence knows that young things in glow necklaces may soon get bored. That's why he's approaching his 11 new leases for 2017 as an experiment. "With every new park, we have a clean slate," he says. "We can try out a supertram from Cirque du Soleil, a free-running parkour stunt lab, or a rock-climbing element. Trampolines are just the start."

DRIVE ALONG U.S. Route 62 into Grove City, Ohio, and you'll come across something from another time: paintball. And not just a little paintball, either: This is LVL UP Sports, which provides a full 36.5 acres of space for armed warriors to shoot each other with exploding goop—just like they used to a decade ago, when paintball peaked at 5.5 million participants.

But here's the thing: Paintball turns out to still be popular. LVL UP did $11,000 in sales on opening day this summer and expects to pull $400,000 in sales in 2017, with margins over 40 percent. Its owner, Dave Pando, is confident he'll hit the million-dollar mark by 2019.

So let's go back to timing. Yes, trends are all about timing, and yes, timing depends on location. But there's a third twist in there: Even though a trend's time may seem to have passed, that doesn't mean it's actually *over*. Many companies have a moment as the hot new thing, and then settle into the less-glamorous but perfectly satisfying business of serving a dedicated customer base. There are still bowling alleys, kitschy miniature-golf courses, and roller-skating rinks doing well—and new ones continue to join the fray.

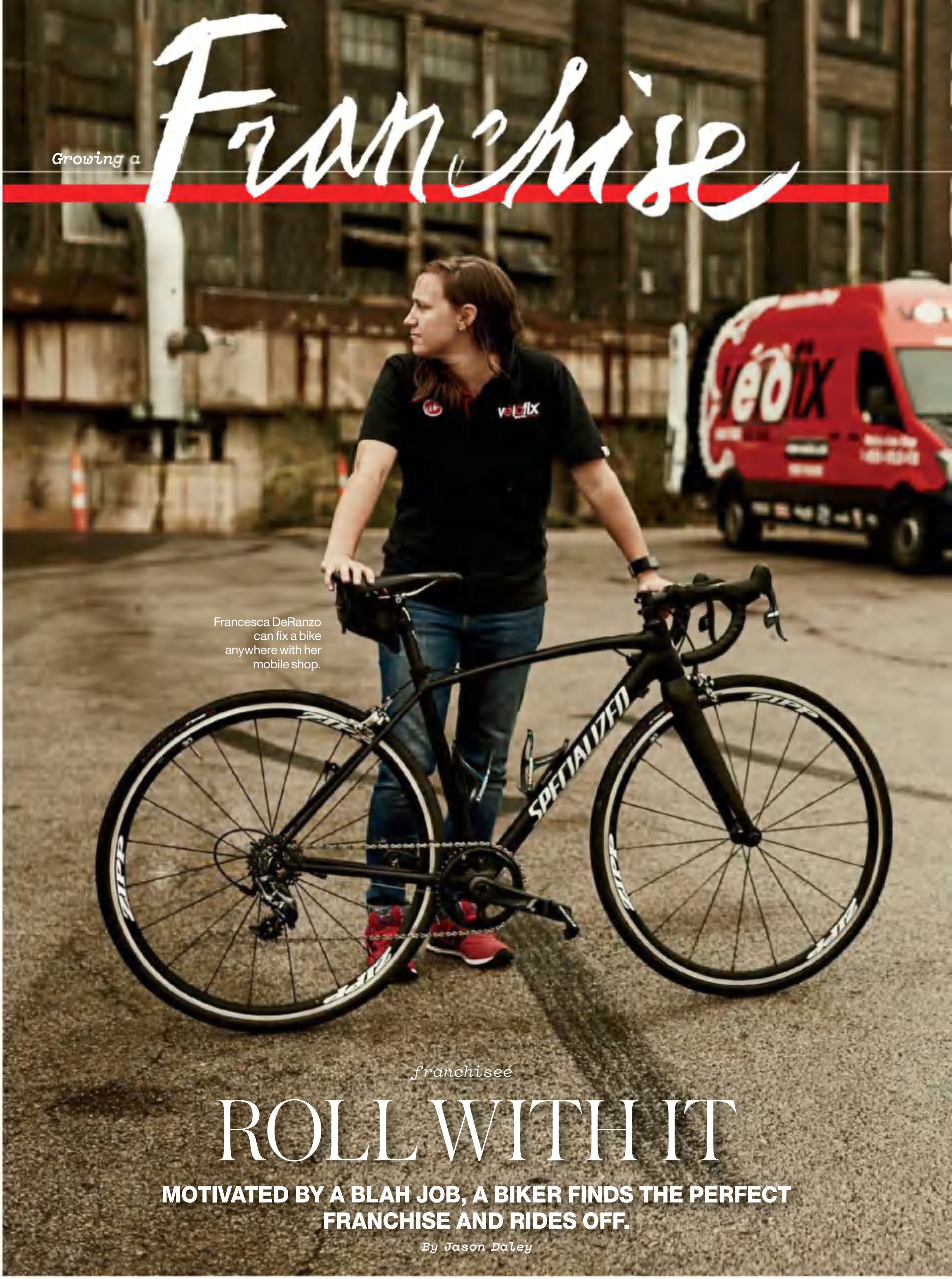
In fact, there are still even murder mystery dinners—a concept that peaked in the '80s. Scott and Kelly O'Brien decided to revitalize the genre by founding The Dinner Detective in 2004, but relied on their background in scripted TV drama to do it better. "No period noir settings, play money, obvious actors, hokey scripts, stilted dialogue, bad food, or poor service," says Scott. It took off: Now The Dinner Detective has franchises in 30 markets and a projected revenue of $6 million to $7 million for 2016.

But of course, even in the business of long-surviving trends, it can't hurt to be flexible. LVL UP, you might notice, doesn't have the word *paintball* in its name. Pando's long-term plan is to introduce go-karts, batting cages, and CrossFit games to his operation. "By not committing to being a paintball-only facility," says Pando, "we can expand into new trends as they pop up."

And they *will* pop up. ❑

Growing a

Franchise



Francesca DeRanzo can fix a bike anywhere with her mobile shop.

franchisee

ROLL WITH IT

MOTIVATED BY A BLAH JOB, A BIKER FINDS THE PERFECT FRANCHISE AND RIDES OFF.

By Jason Daley

Photographs by Chris DeLorenzo

DeRanzo's custom van is open when bike shops are not.

Bikes are Francesca DeRanzo's world. For 10 years, she worked at bike shops or companies, including a brief but happy stint as an East Coast sales rep for the high-end bike manufacturer Specialized. In that time she also cycled across the U.S., exploring thousands of miles of trails and country roads. But then she tried separating her work from her passion, selling traffic signs for a Wichita-based company. It didn't go well: She was miserable, and her coworkers didn't get her obsession with two wheels. "I thought about how we spend most of our time working and sleeping, and the only thing we can change is where we work," DeRanzo says. She considered opening a bike shop but found a bricks-and-mortar loan daunting. That's when she came across Velofix, a Vancouver-based mobile bike-repair franchise that lets her operate out of a custom van and work right in her customers' driveways. Paying off a van seemed doable, so DeRanzo launched her Velofix venture in St. Louis in February.

Why St. Louis?

I used to pass through here while working for Specialized and was drawn to it. The cycling is fun, and winter is about 80 percent rideable—on the flat Mississippi River Trail for hundreds of miles, or drive 30 minutes and mountain bike in super-gnarly hills.

Why would someone choose Velofix over a normal bike shop?

No one is excited to put their bike on their car and take it to a shop. And bike shops can be booked up weeks out, so people miss a lot of time with their bikes. I'm open when the shops are not. People don't have to change their schedule. There are many people who ride their bike to work and have me fix it at the office. I've also had people just give me their garage code and leave a check for me. When people need something last-minute, I can help them. Our motto is "Save time, ride more."

Are the local shops mad that you're poaching customers?

I'm not out to take over people's customers. I'm out to create new cyclists, put people back on bikes, and inspire people to ride with their kids. I want them to call me to get the bikes in their garage in shape.

You own one of those old-timey bikes with the giant front wheel. What's the deal with that?

I always wanted a high-wheeler bike, so I found an original from the late 1880s from the Western Toy Company out of Chicago. It's the scariest, most fun thing to do! It's like sitting on a friend's shoulders and having them run around. I'm about 50/50 at getting on it. You have to push yourself off and do a one-legged squat thing, then jump. It's pretty sketchy.

You know your business. And we know ours.

Every year small business owners leave millions in tax breaks on the table. They don't plan, and they shy away from complicated tax rules. The pros at Liberty Tax Service know the tax code. We help business owners get the tax deductions they deserve.

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  Plan ahead and reap the benefits you have earned come tax time.
- **MOBILE BOOKKEEPING TOOLS**
  Keep track of income and expenses at work or on the go.
- **PROFESSIONAL TAX PREPARATION**
  Relax, Liberty provides exceptional service that business owners trust.

Bring your business taxes to Liberty Tax.
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franchisor

Wash & Shine

How installing holiday lights helped a window-washing business grow.

By Jason Daley

Chris Fisher was a recent college grad with a pregnant wife and was considering taking a steady sales job. But he kept thinking about what his grandfather, a WWII POW, told him: *Even if you're not making a lot of money, be your own boss in America.* "He came to the U.S. from the Netherlands with nothing and started farming, then bought some apartments," says Fisher. So Fisher turned down the job, and in 1998 he opened his own thing: Golden Eagle Window Cleaning.

The business always suffered at the end of each year, so in 2006 he added holiday-lights installation—and it provided such a boost that by 2011, he was ready to franchise. He rebranded as Shine Window Care and Holiday Lighting, and two of his longtime employees became his first franchisees. Then his wife was diagnosed with breast cancer; she recovered, but it convinced the couple to hit pause. They handed the business to friends, went to do missionary work in Uganda for two and a half years, then returned to the U.S. (and the business) in 2014. Today Shine has 21 units open and plans to add five to 10 new ones yearly for the next five years.

PHOTOGRAPH BY LISA KAE RUFF OF LISA KAE PHOTOGRAPHY; PHOTOGRAPH BY LINDSEY DEYOUNG/DIMPLE DOT LLC (CHRIS FISHER)

Wait—you started a franchise then went to *Uganda* for its first three years?
Yes. I put my friend Matthew DeYoung in charge of growing the franchise. We met because we had both adopted a child from Ethiopia. Later I heard that one of his kids got leukemia. We both had faced adversity and shared the same faith and culture. The most important thing in our business was carrying on that culture of service. I know it sounds crazy, but he wanted to be a part of that culture. We had a mini ceremony where I handed over the keys to him.

That does sound a little crazy. What makes your culture so special?
It's about caring about others. We want our customers to be happy with everything we do. It's like that for our employees, too. We treat each other like family. Is washing windows and putting up lights people's favorite thing? No. But helping and serving people? Yes. Most of our staff are in their 20s and 30s, and the idea is for them to someday own a franchise.

So how does the Christmas-lights business work?
We want putting up lights to be stress-free and hassle-free, we want it to be safe, and we want to give customers more time to spend with their families during the holidays. Our packages start at $500, and we provide everything—the setup, the all-new LED lights. If there is an issue, we fix it. Then we take them down and store the lights in a tub till the next year. Our designs tend to be more classic Christmas versus the Griswolds. But if you want purple lights or team colors, we can accommodate that, too.

Any advice for DIYers?
Make sure to check the circuit. You don't want all your Christmas lights to be on the same fuse as the hair dryer. □

TO FRANCHISE, OR

**THE FRANCHISOR:
STEVE SCHULZE,
NEKTER JUICE BAR**

For many brands hoping to expand, franchising is a great model. But it's not the only (or always the best) option. Here, we follow two similar entrepreneurs as they choose different paths to growth—one going into franchising and the other licensing his brand to dealers.

By Jason Daley
Photographs by John Clark

NOT TO FRANCHISE?

THE LICENSOR: DON DiCOSTANZO, PEDEGO ELECTRIC BIKES

THE FRANCHISOR:
STEVE SCHULZE, NEKTER JUICE BAR
A marketing exec, Schulze founded Nekter in 2010 with his wife, Alexis, a teacher. The idea was to meet the need for an affordable and pure juice brand with no additives. Nekter now has 62 units (20 franchises, 42 company stores) and aspires to be "the Starbucks of juice."

THE LICENSOR:
DON DiCOSTANZO, PEDEGO ELECTRIC BIKES
A longtime auto parts executive, DiCostanzo built his own electronic bikes and created a store to sell them. He briefly toyed with franchising the stores, then decided that wasn't a good fit. Today Pedego sells at 87 licensed dealerships across the U.S., Canada, Mexico, and Europe.

STEP 1: FINDING THE RIGHT WAY TO EXPAND.

Upgrading from a small business to a chain is a big leap. So before choosing how a company will grow, owners should figure out their management style and ultimate goals. "We tell our clients, 'You really don't want to make a decision to franchise. You want to make a decision about how to run your business,'" says Mark Siebert, CEO of the iFranchise Group, a consulting firm that helps small businesses take that leap. "From a business perspective, there is very little difference between establishing a good franchise program and establishing a good dealer program. The tools and the strategies are largely the same."

THE FRANCHISOR:

Steve and Alexis Schulze of Newport Beach, Calif., were hard-core home juicers. They didn't like the processed ingredients, additives, and sweeteners they found at health food stores and juice chains. Their personal experiments led to coconut-water-based drinks they deemed tasty enough to share with the masses, and they launched Nekter Juice Bar in Costa Mesa in October 2010. They figured affordable, locally sourced juices, smoothies, and bowls with no preservatives or refined sugars would do fairly well, and thought they might even be able to open a handful of Nekters in Southern California. The demand exceeded their expectations. "We've seen a seismic shift nationwide in the care people take with their mind and their body and what they put in it," says Steve.

Soon they were expanding to Texas, Arizona, Nevada, and Colorado, all by opening company-owned units. That meant Nekter footed all the costs of building and operating a store and paying its general manager. Brands that follow this model, like Starbucks or Chipotle, are potentially more profitable down the road, but they're expensive to get off the ground, often necessitating taking on debt or bringing in outside investors. In 2012, the Schulzes started seriously considering another growth model: franchising. They'd be on the hook to provide operating instructions, trademarks, and ongoing support for individual entrepreneurs building and running one of their stores, but they wouldn't have to invest any cash. In return they'd receive a monthly royalty.

THE LICENSOR:

Biking to the beach wasn't a problem for Orange County entrepreneur Don DiCostanzo—but getting back home, at the top of a steep hill, was way too tough. So he bought an electric bike. It was a revelation; pedaling it still gave him plenty of exercise, and the motor helped "flatten" the hills. Enthused, he opened an electric bike shop. But then his enthusiasm also flattened: He just didn't love any of the bikes on the market.

To build something better, in 2008, he enlisted his friend and amateur bike-tinkerer Terry Sherry. The result was Pedego Electric Bikes, a stylish line ranging from classic commuters and mountain bikes to cargo and tandem rides, retailing between $2,000 and $3,000. He found traditional shops to carry them, but the product just didn't sell. "It turned out bicycle shops were a terrible place to offer our products because they didn't believe in electric bikes," says DiCostanzo.

The business partners knew there had to be another way to reach critical mass. That's why they created Pedego-branded stores. They chose to license so they could focus solely on manufacturing and selling rather than having to expend energy supporting and growing a franchise. Their first dealership was in Huntington Beach, Calif., in 2011. Every licensing deal differs slightly. In their version, an independent dealer with $75,000 in available cash to invest in setting up a store receives the rights to use Pedego's name and agrees to exclusively sell the e-bikes. The founders make money by selling wholesale. Though some licensors charge an annual licensing fee, Pedego does not. The model worked. After four years, Pedego had dealers selling and renting

bikes from California beach towns to Colorado ski towns to the East Coast—each store run by individuals who had researched the local market to appeal to specific communities, something a chain or a franchisee would struggle with.

STEP 2: PICKING A PATH, THEN ADJUSTING.

"Whenever you allow a third party to use your brand, you need to exercise some control over how that brand is represented to the public," says Siebert. "Any increase in control always carries costs for the franchisor or the licensor."

THE FRANCHISOR:

In 2012, Nekter began to franchise—but tentatively. It awarded six stores and wanted to wait two years before deciding whether to open more. In six months, however, the stores were thriving, and the Schulzes say they had "an avalanche" of inquiries from other interested candidates. So they sold additional stores to a few of the original six but stuck to their plan not to take on any new franchisees—yet. They had heard an off-putting number of stories of franchise brands that grew too fast, then crashed and burned. To avoid meeting a similar fate, Nekter spent 2015 working with franchise experts to strengthen their materials, update legally required disclosure documents, and research which markets to expand to with franchisees and which to fill with corporate stores. Now they're accepting applications for new franchisees. Over the next three to five years, Nekter hopes to add 100 company-owned units and 200 franchised units to its 62 existing stores.

THE LICENSOR:

Pedego was growing quickly, but industry advisers felt money was potentially being left on the table. In licensing, money is made only by selling bikes. The more the dealer sells, the more they order, and the more Pedego makes. But if Pedego switched to a franchise model, there would be additional revenue sources not available to licensors, including a franchise fee and steady monthly sales royalties. This, compared with a check only when a dealer buys new product seasonally, was tempting. So DiCostanzo hired iFranchise Group to help prepare to franchise. After months of work, DiCostanzo and Sherry took part in a two-day training seminar, where they learned the number one requirement of franchisees was that they follow orders and do exactly what they're told. Sherry pulled aside DiCostanzo to say that this wouldn't really work with their current dealers, who had the freedom to hold sales and promotions, decide on store locations, and even set their store hours as they saw fit. Requiring dealers to follow an operations manual or corporate-mandated store hours would hurt these relationships, so DiCostanzo and Sherry gave up on franchising entirely.

Sure, they thought, the downsides of licensing would always be with them. If DiCostanzo ever wants to sell the company, for example, it would be worth less than a franchise with a recurring revenue stream. And he knew that, as opposed to franchising, licensing would always leave him in the dark about his company's health: He can't look at his licensees' books for financial trouble. But there were also positives. Licensing involves less expensive legal paperwork (both here and overseas), and it avoids any complications or animosity created by disputes over discrepancies with royalties, which are quite common in franchising. "We didn't want to create that antagonistic relationship," says DiCostanzo.

STEP 3: NOW IT'S ALL ABOUT GROWING BIGGER.

Once a franchisor or licensor (or any entrepreneur) is committed to a direction, success hinges on the same basic things. "One of the biggest roles a franchisor must have is to create a corporate culture by whom they hire, the priorities they set, and the actions they take," says Siebert.

THE FRANCHISOR:

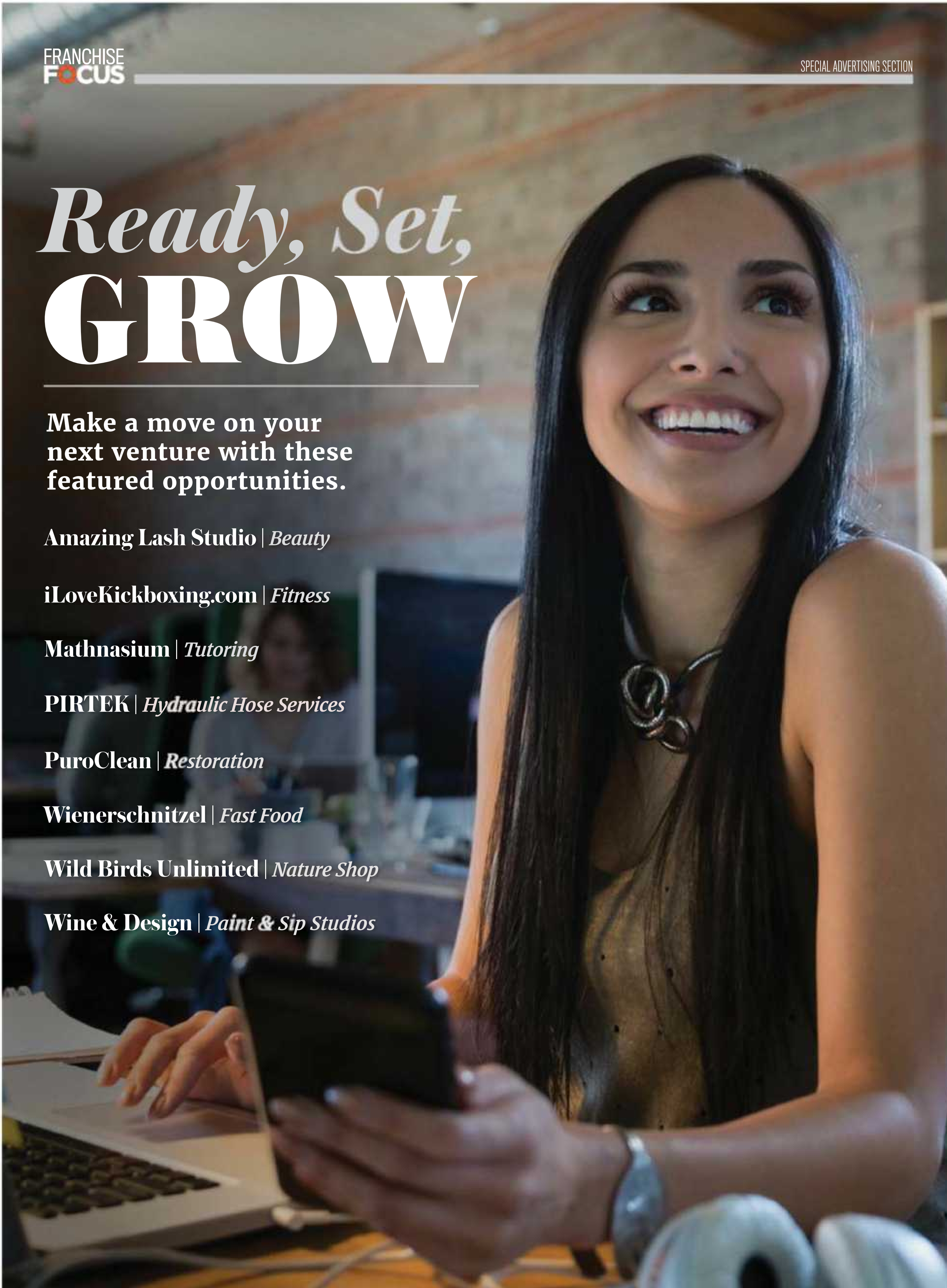
Once the Schulzes got past their fear of growing too fast, they took on another concern: As they added more franchises, would they dilute the spirit of their company? A franchisee who didn't buy into their culture or values could, it seemed, short-circuit everything. So the couple developed a program to keep all their units humming the same tune. The Schulzes put themselves forward as brand ambassadors wherever they went, emphasizing their company values with every franchisee and customer they met. They created a hiring program that focused on finding people passionate about health, and they began offering yoga and Pilates classes for corporate staff, to keep everyone focused.

So far, the Schulzes feel this approach is working. As they prepare to bring a whole new generation of franchise owners into Nekter, they've moved their corporate headquarters into a 15,000-square-foot facility and added a layer of in-house support staff—including accountants, supply-chain managers, and coaches—to help franchisees keep their costs in line, their profit margins high, and their enthusiasm for the brand up.

THE LICENSOR:

DiCostanzo's flirtation with franchising helped him see just how closely Pedego's success is linked to his specific dealers. And the more he thought about it, the more he felt he'd found a business model that attracted the right people. Many franchisees are, after all, basically interested in opening any kind of business. But because licensees have to do a lot more of the work themselves, the ones Pedego found are total e-bike enthusiasts.

As Pedego has grown, DiCostanzo even discovered a benefit he didn't expect: He's never had to advertise to actively seek new dealers, because most of them started out as customers. "We went from one store to 87 locations in about four years, and we think next year we'll add another 50. And it's all 100 percent organic," he says. He encourages his dealers to connect with customers over their mutual passion. "Sharing their life experience is part of the model," says DiCostanzo. "That enthusiasm and entrepreneurial spirit is what drives us beyond any of our competitors." □



Ready, Set, GROW

Make a move on your next venture with these featured opportunities.

Amazing Lash Studio | *Beauty*

iLoveKickboxing.com | *Fitness*

Mathnasium | *Tutoring*

PIRTEK | *Hydraulic Hose Services*

PuroClean | *Restoration*

Wienerschnitzel | *Fast Food*

Wild Birds Unlimited | *Nature Shop*

Wine & Design | *Paint & Sip Studios*

Wild Birds Unlimited® Nature Shop

ABOUT WILD BIRDS UNLIMITED

With over 300 operational stores, Wild Birds Unlimited is the largest franchise system of backyard bird feeding retail stores in North America. With a full offering of private label and proprietary products, we are dedicated to helping our customers attract and enjoy birds and nature in their own backyards.

WBU FAST FACTS

- $6.9 Billion per year industry – Bird feeding and Wildlife watching
- Ranked #1 in Franchisee Satisfaction – 2014, 2015, 2016
- Under $200K investment
  $25K Franchise Fee - 4% Royalty, 0.5% National Ad Fund
- 2014 Average Owner's Discretionary Cash Flow $84,809*
- 2015 Average Gross Sales $534,140*

*Per 2016 FDD Item on file at Wild Birds Unlimited, Inc. company headquarters

WILD BIRDS UNLIMITED: BRINGING PEOPLE AND NATURE TOGETHER WITH EXCELLENCE

Who are our owners?

Wild Birds Unlimited franchise store owners are enthusiastic about the hobby of bird feeding and about helping their community enjoy birds and nature in their own backyards. They're also passionate about self-employment and building a business enterprise that will be a joy to operate.

WBU owners love their business!

Wild Birds Unlimited has been ranked #1 in Owner Satisfaction in the Retail category by Franchise Business Review for the past three years. This is not by chance. Our staff at the WBU Franchise Support Center provides dedicated, personalized coaching to train and equip our owners to execute a system of proven Best Practices. Helping our franchisees reach their business goals is our top priority.

What our owners are saying:

At the start of my day, I am happy to go to work and at the end of my day, I get to go home just as happy. This business is one that's full of joy! I get to serve happy customers who are so thankful that we are here for them. I get to be a productive member of my community and help educate the community on the benefits of engaging with nature. And, I've built a strong business enterprise to leave to my kids.

Dan Sweigard, Lexington, KY- Florence, KY and Cincinnati, OH

You must embrace being a part of the franchise, follow the proven system, and use the resources that are available. Being part of a strong franchise is great, but you also have to remember that it is your business and you are responsible for getting the results you want.

Ed Valentine, Lancaster, PA

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Chief Development Officer

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ILOVEKICKBOXING: THE "SECRET" FASTEST-GROWING FITNESS FRANCHISE

They don't buy up big ad space. They've had minimal publicity. Yet iLoveKickboxing, a boutique fitness kickboxing concept, is currently the fastest-growing fitness franchise in the nation, selling about **643** units in the past **24** months with no signs of slowing down. This number can change on a weekly basis. How is this possible? What about this franchise is so appealing to entrepreneurs nationwide - including those who never even considered a fitness franchise prior to iLoveKickboxing?

"The answer to that is two-folds I think," stated founder and CEO, Michael Parrella. "In short: We researched what entrepreneurs really want in a franchise, and we created it.

"That led to a few key points. The first: great unit economics with a low initial investment. You don't need to buy treadmills or any expensive machinery like that. Kickboxing is simple: mats on the floor and heavy bags are the only 'equipment' you need. Next, we solved the biggest problem businesses face: getting new customers.

"We pioneered a multi-layered online and offline marketing funnel that drives memberships right to our locations' doors, and they never have to lift a finger. You don't have to suddenly become a marketing expert to own our franchise as you do with many others. We handle about 95% of all marketing for every franchise, so they can focus on having fun.

"And finally, we have systems in place for semi-absentee and absentee ownership. That way, if you so desire, your franchise can run itself without you ever needing to be there. That's why no fitness experience is required."

Another factor contributing to the growth is current owner validations. When prospective franchise candidates do their due diligence and call around, they hear nothing but glowing praise for the concept. The individuals making these validation calls are attorneys, CPAs, and corporate executives with backgrounds in research as well. Yet despite their more-than-thorough efforts, they just can't seem to "poke holes" in iLoveKickboxing.

"We researched many other franchises, and every third or fourth call you'd make, you'd get someone who regretted purchasing that franchise. With iLoveKickboxing, we never ran into that. Not a single person said they regretted it. They said they wished they'd found it sooner," stated one franchisee.

"Territories are disappearing every day," stated Director of Franchise Development, Scott Ferrari. "Now is the time to reach out and get on board while they're still available."

iLoveKickboxing.com

ABOUT ILOVEKICKBOXING

ILKB is a boutique fitness concept that takes the bag-hitting, calorie-busting workouts of pro fighters & makes them fun & accessible to anyone.

ILOVEKICKBOXING FAST FACTS

- Fastest growing fitness franchise in the USA (500+ licenses awarded)
- No unit closures. Not a single iLoveKickboxing has ever closed to date
- Current owners love us. Call as many as you'd like to validate.
- $50k liquidity minimum & amazing unit economics

FOR MORE INFORMATION

iLoveKickboxing.com

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WIENERSCHITZEL: ICONIC BRAND WITH AN IMPRESSIVE ROAD AHEAD

For over 125 years, the hot dog has been a staple in our culture with as much as 20 billion (yes, billion) hot dogs consumed in the U.S. every year. That's roughly 70 hot dogs per person via retail, ball games, and restaurants too. That is a lot of dogs!

In a typically crowded QSR space, Wienerschnitzel stands out as a unique and compelling business opportunity vs. the vast landscape of burgers, pizza and south-of-the-border concepts. Add new markets for real estate, world-class training and support plus a new visionary marketing team drawing waves of loyal new customers and you have the recipe for success.

Wienerschnitzel's road map is impressive. High quality food at a value price, excellent guest experience and the all-new cost-efficient "Heritage" building are just part of the successful journey ahead. As the ageless consumer demand of the hot dog continues to grow, so does our drive to cultivate as an industry leader.

Everyone knows Wienerschnitzel has the best Chili Cheese Dogs, Chili Cheese Fries and Corn Dogs, specializing in products that guests seek out to satisfy their cravings. It's a simple menu consisting of incredible tasting, unique items that you can only get at Wienerschnitzel. With the addition of Tastee Freez and a complete line of dessert items, our franchise partners benefit from additional sales and profit opportunities.

"I've been a franchisee with Wienerschnitzel since 2000, developing new stores as an optimal business partner. This is an easy concept to own and operate with little competition in this category. With a low cost of build-out and solid ROI, this business model is a winner."

Tahir Salim, ***13-stores CA & TX***

Wienerschnitzel

ABOUT WIENERSCHNITZEL

Starting as a single hot dog stand in 1961, Wienerschnitzel's simple and delicious Americana food soon drove growth throughout the Southwest to national presence. Today, the new Heritage restaurant pays tribute to its successful roots with its small footprint, efficient operation and low cost of entry – all designed for speed and profits.

WIENERSCHNITZEL FAST FACTS

- World's largest Hot Dog franchise with little competition
- Easy operation and industry low food costs
- Six consecutive years, same-store sales increase*
- $1,067,512 top 25% system average**
- New *Area Representative* franchise model, awarding market exclusivity

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Wienerschnitzel

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*Same store sales reflective of unaudited information shared by Full and Limited franchisees in continuous operation between January 1, 2011 to November 30, 2016 (5 years, 11 months actual) in year-after-year performance. **This is an average of unaudited gross sales shared by top 25% of 320 open Wienerschnitzel restaurants between January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2015. Actual sales and performance will vary, and in no way are guaranteed to gross any such profits. This information is not an offer to sell a franchise. We will not offer you a franchise until such time we have complied with FTC disclosure requirements, and you have met our application and pre-approval process.

JOIN THE PARTY WITH WINE & DESIGN!

Own a Business That Brings the Party
Do you want to own your own business while creating a fun environment where customers can relax and let their creative juices – and wine – flow? Each Wine & Design class is like a happy hour with music and a party atmosphere where customers can enjoy an evening out and leave with a beautiful painting. Each franchise offers classes taught by local artists who guide customers through the process of creating their masterpiece while setting the tone in a welcoming environment.

Unmatched Franchisee Support
Wine & Design provides support throughout the process, from location brokerage through opening your franchise and beyond. We offer regular training programs through webinars, live events and one-on-one coaching. We provide formulas to take the guesswork out of ordering supplies and marketing support to help attract customers. We also offer discounts for military veterans and franchisees in new state territories.

Five Divisions, Five Revenue Streams
Wine & Design features five distinct divisions to allow franchisees to get the most out of their business. In addition to our regular classes, which can also be tailored for special occasions such as bachelorette parties and mommies & mocktails nights for expecting mothers, we offer:

- **Paint it Forward** provides a great way to raise money and bring awareness to causes in your community. Work with local or national organizations to host a class and donate a portion of the proceeds to the organization's mission. It's a great way to bring people together for a fun, social event in support of a great cause.
- **Wine & Design On Wheels** takes the party on the road and brings the fun directly to customers. Partner with local businesses to host a class at their facility or with customers to offer a paint & sip class in their home. Wine & Design takes care of all the details, from supplies and set to artist instruction, cleanup and, of course, the fun!
- **Art Buzz Kids** events spark children's creativity and imagination in a fun, interactive, kid-friendly setting. Inspire children to express themselves creatively and take home a masterpiece they take pride in.
- **Team Building** combines teamwork and artistic creativity. Companies bring their employees together to collaborate and create a masterpiece in an energetic environment. The program offers a social, relaxed setting for team building and productivity exercises tailored for their needs. These classes can take place at the business or at Wine & Design.
- **Do It Yourself** takes Wine & Design-ing to the next level by providing projects for crafty customers. Whether you're looking to create a fun home decor piece, create a one-of-a-kind gift for someone, or just try your hand at crafting something chic, Wine & Design's DIY division has many projects to choose from.

WINE&DESIGN

ABOUT WINE & DESIGN

With over 70 studio locations, Wine & Design offers fun painting classes for all ages and experience levels. Local artists will guide you through the process of creating your very own masterpiece while you enjoy your favorite bottle of wine. If you're looking for a fun and creative way to spend a few hours, sign up, show up, sip up, and paint!

WINE & DESIGN FAST FACTS

- Multiple revenue streams through our 5 divisions
- Over 70 studios in 15 states
- Under $100k investment ($25,000 franchise fee - 6% royalty, 2% marketing fund)
- Financing options available
- No art experience required

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Wine & Design
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PIRTEK KEEPS STADIUM RENOVATION MOVING DOWNFIELD

PIRTEK was on hand recently to make sure there was no delay of game for the Miami Dolphins.

Months before the season began, a fleet of cranes was busy hoisting heavy equipment into place for the new audio, video, open-air canopy and other stadium improvements. But cranes depend on hydraulic power, and that means when a hose fails, the work stops.

That happened recently while the crews were readying for the NFL team's home opener in Miami Gardens, FL – so they called PIRTEK.

PIRTEK enters the game

"One of the cranes had two hoses that needed some attention before it could do any more work on the stadium," said Carlos Shortt, owner of PIRTEK Doral in the Miami metro area. "We sent a Mobile Service Vehicle out to the site right away to take care of it."

The only franchise of its kind in the United States, PIRTEK provides hydraulic and industrial hose replacement sales and services. There are 58 PIRTEK Service & Supply Centers and a fleet of Mobile Service Vehicles throughout the United States. Globally, PIRTEK has more than 400 locations and 2,000 Mobile Service Vehicles in 23 countries around the world. After examining the hydraulic hoses, the technician performed all the necessary custom fittings inside the vehicle. But the work didn't stop there.

Proactive hose work

To make sure the work on Sun Life Stadium – recently renamed Hard Rock Stadium – would proceed on schedule, the technician did a thorough check of the other crane hoses and found some future problems waiting to happen. Three hoses were on the verge of needing servicing, so the company had PIRTEK come back to the site to perform the preventative maintenance.

"They really didn't want to wait until the hoses blew, so they called us to replace those, too," Shortt said.

He added that the technician's proactive hose inspection was all part of his business focus on long-term service of the client. "We want to build relationships with the customer, so it's more than just doing one job for them," he said. "We want to tell them, 'We'll be here for you, you can count on us.' They can be confident that we'll do all the work in the long term, not just in the moment."

PIRTEK's Tier 2 program

Open since October 2015, PIRTEK Doral has four Mobile Service Vehicles and a staff of seven at its Service & Supply Center. Shortt's franchise in Doral, FL, operates under PIRTEK's standard Tier 1 program.

In recent months, PIRTEK has rolled out a new Tier 2 program that makes owning a PIRTEK franchise easier than ever. It provides a more accessible point of entry for individuals who may have not met all the resource requirements for a standard franchise.

Under the Tier 2 program, a franchisee may start up a PIRTEK without a staffed Service & Supply Center – a mobile-only option. With a place to park two vehicles and store the inventory, the Tier 2 franchise is then on track to grow into a Tier 1 franchise in three years.

To learn more about the new PIRTEK franchise program, visit www.pirtekusa.com/franchising-opportunities, call 1-888-774-7835 or email kferretti@PirtekUSA.com.

PIRTEK fluid transfer solutions

ABOUT PIRTEK USA

PIRTEK is the leader in fluid transfer solutions in sales and service, the only brand of its kind in franchising in the United States.

PIRTEK USA FAST FACTS

- More than 400 locations in 23 countries
- B2B franchise
- Turnkey with exclusive territories
- Service & Supply Centers with Mobile Service Vehicles
- Franchise fee for Service & Supply Centers with Mobile Service Vehicles (Tier 1) - $50,000
- Franchise fee for mobile-only startup (Tier 2) - $20,000

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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CHANGE YOUR LIFE

Tim Walsh, who was a sales leader in IT for 20 years, decided to change careers. The Woodstock, MD businessman knew entrepreneurship was the way to go, and chose to own a PuroClean franchise because of the business model. The restoration industry is virtually recession-proof and the vast majority of the payments for services are from third parties such as insurance companies. Tim says, “In addition, I get a lot of satisfaction out of actually being able to help people during a stressful time of need. This is the most meaningful thing I’ve ever done.”

After successful careers in retail management with CATO and Target, in 2006, Jeff Hennings of Pineville, NC decided it was time to focus on his family and found that the restoration industry, more specifically, becoming a PuroClean franchise owner, would allow him to do so. It was a big decision to enter into a new industry, but credits his success as a PuroClean franchise owner to the thorough training he received when he purchased his franchise including: industry certifications, operations, sales and marketing, as well as the support he continues to receive from the PuroClean Support Center and the family of franchise owners within the PuroClean network. Jeff says, “The other PuroClean franchise owners are like our brothers and sisters, and they are great with sharing ideas. That’s so important!” The majority of PuroClean franchise owners have chosen to change industries and successfully became entrepreneurs in the rewarding restoration industry. With a PuroClean franchise, they had the advantage to learn and grow quickly and successfully.

They changed their careers and their lives. Imagine how much your life will change when you purchase a PuroClean franchise with operational flexibility.

The restoration industry is highly fragmented. It is a $188-billion-dollar industry with no one brand servicing more than two percent of the industry. The insurance industry that PuroClean serves desires consistent performance and the strength of a national brand like PuroClean. With PuroClean, franchise owners receive state-of-the-art initial classroom and field training, the strength of a national brand with a large North American footprint, and ongoing support for the lifetime of each franchise.

PuroClean™
The Paramedics of Property Damage

ABOUT PUROCLEAN

When property damage occurs, PuroClean is driven to provide an unmatched restoration service experience quickly, professionally, ethically, and compassionately.

PUROCLEAN FAST FACTS

- **Initial 4-week training, ongoing field training and 24/7 technical support**
- **Network of 230+ locations with national brand identity and recognition**
- **Operational flexibility allowing you to start from home**
- **Start-up costs range from $45,650 to $182,780**

- $188 billion dollar, recession-proof industry
- 1 in 55 insured homes have a property damage claim caused by water damage
- 1 in 250 insured homes have a property damage claim caused by fire damage
- 50,000 water damage losses per day in the United States
- $21.6 million in fire damage losses per day in the United States

PuroClean offers a low-risk/high-reward franchise opportunity with an incredible level of personal satisfaction to qualified candidates. Contact us to find out how your life will change when you buy a PuroClean franchise.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

PuroClean

P: (855) 978-1776

E: Info@PuroClean.com

W: PuroCleanOpportunity.com

AMAZING lash STUDIO

ABOUT AMAZING LASH STUDIO

Amazing Lash Studio provides an on-trend offering in a thriving market. Whether the goal is to open one or more studios, we have developed the systems to run a successful business.

AMAZING LASH STUDIO FAST FACTS

- Startup Costs: $276K - $597K
- 54% of Amazing Lash Studio franchisees own multiple locations
- No. of National/Global Franchise Units: 240
- $55 billion beauty industry
- Market leader

THE BEAUTY OF FRANCHISING

By Jill Schildhouse

Lash Extension Company Growth is Eye Opening

“Nothing is better than being part of a brand that’s first to market with a new concept,” says Teri O’Donnell, who’s done just that — twice. Prior to becoming a regional developer for Amazing Lash Studio in 2015, she found her franchise footing as owner of a Chicago-area Massage Envy location. “I already knew the value of being part of a group of like-minded entrepreneurs, so when I stumbled upon Amazing Lash Studio in 2014 it was a no-brainer.”

O’Donnell isn’t alone in building upon her previous franchise success by seeking out the next hot business opportunity. In fact, 42% of Amazing Lash Studio’s franchisees own at least one additional brand.

“We intend to build out three studios in the next year and are intending on doing more in the future,” says Jon Brovitz, who also owns 13 Massage Envy locations in Arizona. “Our first studio is doing great. The customers love the service and the stylists and front desk associates are great to work with.”

Amazing Lash Studio is a proven recurring revenue business model thanks to its membership program populated by loyal brand advocates who rave about the patented eyelash extension application technique they receive in state-of-the art studios. Fr anchise owners find themselves at the forefront of an emerging industry complete with first-class franchise support — start-up assistance, training, automated business systems, operations support, relationships with vendors, and assistance with local marketing and advertising.

“I wasn’t looking for anything else to add to my portfolio, but when the Amazing Lash Studio opportunity came to me I just couldn’t pass it up,” says Dani Snyder, who has owned nine Massage Envy locations and three European Wax Center locations in San Diego. “With both of the other brands I found one of the things that made me successful was that I joined them in the beginning and they were each the leader in their respective industry. I knew I would be able to successfully build the Amazing Lash Studio brand and I love being the leader in the industry.”

One of the fastest-growing franchises of this decade — 100 locations have opened since 2013, with another 120 scheduled to open in the coming year — Amazing Lash Studio just celebrated another milestone: 50,000 members. And that’s just the beginning.

“I see huge potential with the brand,” says Snyder. “I see Amazing Lash Studio being the leader not only here in the States, but also outside of the U.S.”

If you’re a motivated entrepreneur who has a passion for helping others look and feel amazing, provides great customer service, and has solid management skills, then you have what it takes to become an Amazing Lash Studio franchisee. Visit amazinglashstudiofranchise.com today, or call (480) 400-8516 for more information today.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Amazing Lash Studio

P: **(408) 400-8516**

W: **amazinglashstudio.com**

MATHNASIUM: OWN A BUSINESS AND CHANGE THE WORLD!

Love What You Do

Mathnasium is a one-of-a-kind opportunity to make a living by making a difference. With more than 700 centers—and more opening each week—Mathnasium is growing rapidly. That's because we're passionate about what we do.

It's also because our franchise opportunities combine all of the factors experts agree are critical to maximize your probability of success: Exceptional market demand and a superior product. The right people to teach you the business and support your efforts. A proven track record of success. Reasonable startup investment requirements. And a painless process which allows you to learn more—and take easy steps to becoming a franchisee.

In 2002, we had just one Mathnasium center. Today we are teaching children in communities across America and in countries around the world—providing neighborhood environments where humanity combines with math expertise.

The Mathnasium Method™

The Mathnasium Method™ is a proven approach to helping kids understand math, yielding results that have been the catalyst for incredible franchise growth over the last 10+ years.

We're Taking The Market By Storm

Mathnasium's rapid growth across North America in the child tutoring industry has surpassed expectation. We did this with a unique focus on math education. Our success is the result of doing one thing and doing it the right way.

And we have barely begun. We're committed to helping as many children as possible. That's because what we do is necessary and important. And because so many children need our help.

Learn all about us on our website:
www.mathnasium.com/franchise
Give us a call and let's talk franchising
888-763-2604
Email us for more information:
FranchiseAd@Mathnasium.com

MATHNASIUM
The Math Learning Center

ABOUT MATHNASIUM

Mathnasium is your neighborhood math-only learning and enrichment center that teaches kids math in a way that makes sense to them. Created by a team of industry leaders dedicated to meeting a real need in education, Mathnasium provides a unique teaching method that helps kids catch up and get ahead in math, while making the subject fun and engaging. We use a unique combination of mental, verbal, visual, tactile, and written techniques to teach math to kids the way that makes sense to them.

Mathnasium's *proprietary curriculum* focuses on helping kids build their number sense so they truly understand math.

A Mathnasium franchise is an excellent business opportunity in an important field with high demand. With a modest investment, our franchisees have an opportunity to seize a significant share of a billion- dollar industry.

MATHNASIUM FAST FACTS

- Ranked #25 in Top Fastest Growing Franchises by *Entrepreneur Magazine*
- $40K franchise fee and simple start-up
- Proprietary curriculum, extensive training, and ongoing support
- An exclusive, protected territory for each Mathnasium Learning Center
- 700+ franchise units and growing!

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Mathnasium

P: (888) 763-2604

E: FranchiseAd@Mathnasium.com

W: MathnasiumFranchise.com

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the list

FIRE BRANDS

Behold, the 10 hottest business categories in the land.

By Tracy Stapp Herold

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2017, our picks for the most exciting franchise categories of the year include several that are going strong and show no signs of slowing, and a few that are beginning to ramp up to their true potential. You'll find up-and-coming business opportunities such as computer coding for kids, trampoline parks, and fusion hot dogs, as well as the tried-and-true: fitness studios, pet care, and disaster restoration. What do they all have in common? A still unquenched capacity for growth.

As you page through, bear in mind that this list is not intended as an endorsement of any particular franchise. Even the hottest concept can grow cold in the wrong hands, so always take your time to do your due diligence before you invest. Review all legal documents, consult with an attorney and an accountant, and talk to as many current and former franchisees as you can. >

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CHILDREN'S ENRICHMENT

Kids have become some of the franchise world's favorite customers, with parents willing to shell out to help their little ones thrive. In this category, franchisees are drawn to opportunities that are often low-cost, flexible, and able to be run from home.

Abrakadoodle
Art-education programs
Startup cost: $37.8K–$80.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 220/2

Amazing Athletes
Educational sports programs
Startup cost: $39.4K–$52.9K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 95/0

Bach to Rock
Music schools
Startup cost: $360K–$505K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 10/6

Bricks 4 Kidz
Lego-engineering classes, camps, parties
Startup cost: $34.5K–$52.8K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 659/2

Bricks Bots & Beakers
Science, technology, engineering, and math camps, classes, parties
Startup cost: $17.6K–$27.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 12/2

British Swim School USA
Swimming lessons for ages 3 months and older
Startup cost: $82.2K–$127.7K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 45/1

Chef It Up!/ Chef It Up 2 Go!
Cooking classes and parties for children and adults
Startup cost: $16.4K–$61K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 11/2

the Coder School
Coding classes for ages 8 to 18
Startup cost: $77.3K–$139.1K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 0/3

CompuChild
Science, technology, engineering, art, and math classes
Startup cost: $18.3K–$33K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 42/1

D-BAT Academies
Indoor baseball and softball training, batting cages, merchandise
Startup cost: $315.2K–$611.6K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 31/1

Drama Kids International
After-school drama classes and summer camps
Startup cost: $28.6K–$48.2K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 216/0

Engineering for Kids
Math, science, technology, and engineering activities
Startup cost: $27.2K–$93.6K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 152/1

Goldfish Swim School Franchising
Infant and child swimming lessons
Startup cost: $1.4M–$2.2M
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 34/1

HappyFeet Legends International
Soccer programs for ages 2 to 18
Startup cost: $22.5K–$29.4K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 165/3

High Touch-High Tech
Science activities for schools/parties
Startup cost: $61.3K–$66K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 163/28

Ho Math Chess Tutoring Center
After-school math, chess, and puzzle-learning programs
Startup cost: $31.6K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 11/1

Hobby Quest
Enrichment programs, camps, workshops, parties
Startup cost: $38.9K–$53.2K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 6/3

i9 Sports
Youth sports leagues, camps, and clinics
Startup cost: $50.9K–$76.9K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 128/16

iCode School
Computer programming, robotics, and creative arts training for ages 7 to 17
Startup cost: $231K–$321K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 0/1

IslandTime Treasures
Art-based science, engineering, and math classes
Startup cost: $13K–$25.9K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 13/1

JumpBunch
Mobile children's sports and fitness programs
Startup cost: $40.3K–$73.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 57/0

Kidokinetics
Mobile children's fitness programs
Startup cost: $42.9K–$57K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 5/10

Kids In Sports Franchising
Children's sports classes, camps, parties
Startup cost: $202.8K–$331.3K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 3/1

Kidz On The Go
Mobile children's fitness programs
Startup cost: $100K–$125K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 2/2

KidzArt
Art-education programs, products, and services
Startup cost: $36.4K–$44K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 65/0

Kinderdance International
Movement/ educational programs
Startup cost: $17.95K–$46.1K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 136/2

LearningRx
Learning enhancement, cognitive training, reading training
Startup cost: $85K–$198K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 78/1

THE CODER SCHOOL

Hansel Lynn was surprised when he couldn't find an after-school coding program for his kids (in Silicon Valley, no less!), so he used his experience as a School of Rock franchisee to create the Coder School with buddy Wayne Teng. While the Coder School offers curriculum-based classes, its primary focus is individualized coaching that allows kids to work on whatever interests them most. "We see coding as an 'art' that has no ending, as opposed to an academic subject you graduate from," says Lynn, who also founded the International Alliance of Youth Coding Educators.

The Coder School founders Wayne Teng (*left*) and Hansel Lynn.

PHOTOGRAPH BY WINNIE CHENG; ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE NOUN PROJECT/LLOYD HUMPHREYS (FIRE ICON)

The Little Gym
Development/ fitness programs
Startup cost: $157.8K–$377K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 323/0

Little Medical School
Healthcare-themed after-school and summer-camp programs
Startup cost: $27.4K–$45.8K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 19/3

Mad Science Group
Science education and entertainment programs
Startup cost: $70.3K–$104.96K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 147/0

My Gym Children's Fitness Center
Early-learning/ fitness programs
Startup cost: $36.8K–$249.7K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 425/0

No Limits Martial Arts
Martial arts classes
Startup cost: $139.8K–$331.95K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 0/2

Nutty Scientists
Science education and entertainment programs
Startup cost: $52.7K–$265.1K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 240/3

One Sports Nation
Youth sports leagues
Startup cost: $32.99K–$138.8K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 14/1

Parisi Speed School
Youth sports performance training
Startup cost: $86.2K–$187.9K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 95/0

Parker-Anderson Enrichment
Enrichment programs
Startup cost: $37.4K–$109.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 5/1

Professor Egghead
Science and engineering classes, camps, and parties for ages 4 to 10
Startup cost: $27.3K–$39K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 8/0

RedLine Athletics
Youth athletic training centers
Startup cost: $188.3K–$270.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 9/1

Romp n' Roll
Recreational and enrichment classes, camps, parties
Startup cost: $199.6K–$286.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 90/3

SafeSplash Swim School
Child and adult swimming lessons, parties, summer camps
Startup cost: $44K–$1.3M
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 97/24

School of Rock
Music education
Startup cost: $113.1K–$343.6K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 167/16

Skyhawks Franchise Group
Sports camps and programs
Startup cost: $22.8K–$59.8K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 60/42

Snapology
Building, robotics, and animation programs
Startup cost: $35K–$175K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 14/1

Soccer Shots Franchising
Soccer programs for ages 2 to 8
Startup cost: $31.8K–$39K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 172/9

STEM For Kids
Engineering, computer programming, and robotics programs for ages 4 to 14
Startup cost: $36K–$82.6K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 5/5

Taste Buds Kitchen
Cooking events for children and adults
Startup cost: $190.1K–$306.9K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 3/1

TGA Premier Junior Golf
Youth golf programs
Startup cost: $19.3K–$72.4K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 50/2

TGA Premier Youth Tennis
Youth tennis programs
Startup cost: $19.3K–$72.4K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 34/1

Tippi Toes
Children's dance classes
Startup cost: $52K–$62.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 27/0

Young Rembrandts Franchise
Drawing classes for ages 3 to 12
Startup cost: $41.3K–$48.1K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 103/0

Zaniac
Science, technology, engineering, and math after-school programs and camps
Startup cost: $219.5K–$378K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 8/2

ELECTRONICS

It's no surprise that with smartphones and laptops in almost everyone's hands, a booming franchise industry has sprung up around selling and servicing them—with repair businesses meant to get this tech back in action fast proving particularly popular.

Cellairis Franchise
Cellphone and wireless-device accessories and repairs
Startup cost: $52.4K–$330K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 567/3

CPR-Cell Phone Repair
Electronics repairs and sales
Startup cost: $24.6K–$173.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 254/4

Device Pitstop
Electronics resales and repairs
Startup cost: $171K–$249K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 11/1

Digital Doc
Electronics repairs, sales, and accessories
Startup cost: $73.3K–$151.1K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 28/13

Experimac
Electronics resales and repairs
Startup cost: $136.8K–$275.1K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 38/2

iCare Repair
Electronics repairs, resales, and accessories
Startup cost: $55.9K–$120.99K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 4/6

Simple Computer Repair
Electronics repairs
Startup cost: $109.9K–$189K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 5/2

Staymobile Franchising
Electronics repairs and accessories
Startup cost: $72.5K–$169K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 14/21

TechVoo
Computer sales and service
Startup cost: $81.5K–$150.7K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 0/3

uBreakiFix
Electronics repairs
Startup cost: $84.6K–$197.95K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 205/21

Wireless Zone
Wireless-communications stores
Startup cost: $128K–$393.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 360/37

ENTERTAINMENT/ RECREATION

Consumers in search of new and creative leisure activities have spawned a slew of new franchises focused on fun. From video game theaters to trampoline parks to paint-and-sip studios, there's something for every age and interest.

Adventure Kids Playcare
Childcare/entertainment centers
Startup cost: $326.3K–$565K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 9/4

American Poolplayers Association
Recreational billiard leagues
Startup cost: $16.7K–$19.9K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 326/5

Bottle & Bottega
Paint-and-sip studios
Startup cost: $96.8K–$158.3K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 18/2

ClimbZone Franchising
Climbing-wall family entertainment centers
Startup cost: $1.9M–$2.98M
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 0/1

Color Me Mine Enterprises
Paint-your-own-ceramics studios
Startup cost: $134.3K–$174.8K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 132/8

the Coop Franchise Group
Play and party spaces
Startup cost: $130.5K–$283.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 2/1

CruiseOne/Dream Vacations
Travel agencies
Startup cost: $3.2K–$21.9K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 1,075/0

Cruise Planners
Travel agencies
Startup cost: $2.1K–$22.9K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 2,364/1

EagleRider Motorcycle Rental
Motorcycle, scooter, and ATV rentals and tours
Startup cost: $68.4K–$216.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 72/5

The Escape Zone
Group escape-room-adventure activities
Startup cost: $54.7K–$105.4K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 0/1

Expedia CruiseShipCenters
Travel agencies
Startup cost: $99.4K–$183.9K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 202/1

Freedom Boat Club
Membership boat clubs
Startup cost: $144.2K–$178.7K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 95/17

PHOTOGRAPH BY DANA OLIVER

ADVENTURE KIDS PLAYCARE

Adventure Kids Playcare aims to make children look forward to date night as much as mom and dad do. Rather than scrambling to find a sitter, parents can drop off children who are six weeks to 12 years old at Adventure Kids' secure facilities, where they're entertained with play spaces, crafts, dance competitions, dress-up, video games, Lego, and more. Weekends feature theme nights (this year's most popular theme: Pokémon), pizza parties, and ice cream sundaes.

Funtopia
Indoor playgrounds
Startup cost: $494.3K–$1.9M
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 2/6

GameTruck Licensing
Mobile video-game theaters
Startup cost: $147.6K–$312.6K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 72/0

JungleQuest
Indoor ziplines, rope courses, and rock climbing for ages 5 to 13
Startup cost: $311.5K–$492.6K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 0/1

Kampgrounds of America
Campgrounds and RV parks
Startup cost: $225.95K–$4.5M
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 459/28

Launch Trampoline Park
Trampoline parks/ entertainment centers
Startup cost: $1.1M–$1.9M
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 8/2

Masterpiece Mixers Paint & Party Studios
Paint-and-sip studios
Startup cost: $27.6K–$65.3K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 11/4

Monkey Bizness Franchising
Indoor play and party centers
Startup cost: $328K–$668.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 3/2

Monkey Joe's Parties & Play
Family entertainment centers
Startup cost: $458.4K–$755.6K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 51/0

Painting with a Twist
Paint-and-sip studios
Startup cost: $89.3K–$143.3K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 310/0

Partyflix
Inflatable movie screen rentals
Startup cost: $22K–$41K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 1/4

Pinot's Palette
Paint-and-sip studios
Startup cost: $76.6K–$196.6K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 176/4

Rockin' Jump
Indoor trampoline arenas and party spaces
Startup cost: $1.1M–$2.5M
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 23/3

SailTime Group
Membership boat clubs
Startup cost: $70.7K–$151.95K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 27/1

Scooter's Jungle
Children's entertainment centers
Startup cost: $591.95K–$871.4K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 4/1

Sky Zone Indoor Trampoline Park
Trampoline playing courts
Startup cost: $1.2M–$2.97M
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 149/0

Sugar Plum Parties
Birthday party venues
Startup cost: $94.3K–$149.1K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 0/1

Travel Leaders
Travel agencies
Startup cost: $2.3K–$16.9K
Total franchises/ co-owned: 353/14

Wine & Design
Paint-and-sip studios
Startup cost: $46.2K–$95K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 64/1

Yogi Bear's Jellystone Park Camp-Resorts
Family camping resorts
Startup cost: $52K–$3M
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 84/1

FITNESS

Year after year, fitness franchises continue to pack a powerful punch. Big, traditional brands have proven their staying power, but it's the boutique concepts—focused on everything from barre to boxing to basketball—that are really shaping the industry today.

Alkalign Studios
Group fitness classes, streaming fitness classes, nutrition coaching
Startup cost: $168.3K–$491K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 1/2

Anytime Fitness
Fitness centers
Startup cost: $80K–$490.1K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 3,226/38

Baby Boot Camp
Prenatal and postpartum fitness
Startup cost: $4.6K–$10.8K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 105/1

Blink Fitness
Health and fitness centers
Startup cost: $642.8K–$2.1M
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 0/46

Bodytek Fitness
Gyms
Startup cost: $295.7K–$554.7K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 0/3

Burn Boot Camp
Women's fitness centers
Startup cost: $62.9K–$106.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 28/5

CKO Kickboxing
Kickboxing fitness classes
Startup cost: $108.3K–$363.9K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 64/2

Club Pilates
Pilates classes
Startup cost: $158.3K–$224.7K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 56/4

Crunch Franchise
Fitness centers
Startup cost: $304.5K–$2.1M
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 115/10

CycleBar
Indoor cycling classes
Startup cost: $378.4K–$893.6K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 30/3

Epic Hybrid Training
Fitness centers
Startup cost: $62.6K–$139.8K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 2/2

Fit4Mom
Prenatal and postpartum fitness and wellness programs
Startup cost: $6.2K–$23.7K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 256/1

Fitwall
Group and semi-private training
Startup cost: $310.6K–$626.2K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 4/2

4U-Fitness
Personal training using electric muscle stimulation
Startup cost: $121.5K–$323K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 0/2

Get In Shape For Women
Small-group personal training for women
Startup cost: $57.4K–$190.1K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 73/1

Gold's Gym
Health and fitness centers
Startup cost: $2.2M–$5M
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 573/150

GymGuyz
Mobile personal training
Startup cost: $72.7K–$102.4K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 62/4

Hard Exercise Works
Fitness programs
Startup cost: $102.2K–$403.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 16/1

High Altitude Personal Training
Personal training
Startup cost: $261.3K–$365.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 0/1

iLoveKickboxing.com
Kickboxing fitness classes
Startup cost: $120.8K–$312.2K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 139/8

Impact Strong Kickboxing/Fitness
Kickboxing and fitness gyms
Startup cost: $61.2K-$87.3K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 5/1

Iron Tribe Fitness
Group personal-training gyms
Startup cost: $300K–$433.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 33/8

Jazzercise
Group fitness classes, conventions, apparel, and accessories
Startup cost: $3.5K–$12.9K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 8,826/2

Just You Fitness
Personal training
Startup cost: $28K–$42.4K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 1/0

Kaia FIT
Women's fitness
Startup cost: $34K–$99.8K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 56/0

Koko FitClub
Fitness clubs
Startup cost: $185.3K–$396.3K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 89/3

Legacy Fit
Twenty-four-hour fitness centers
Startup cost: $207.7K–$381.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 1/1

Live 2 B Healthy Senior Fitness
Exercise programs for seniors
Startup cost: $37.7K–$48.1K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 35/0

The Max Challenge
Ten-week fitness and nutrition programs
Startup cost: $89.9K–$190K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 43/1

Miami Yoga
Yoga studios
Startup cost: $99.1K–$199K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 0/1

9Round-30 min Kickbox Fitness
Kickboxing circuit-training programs
Startup cost: $66.6K–$102.7K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 376/4

Orangetheory Fitness
Group personal training
Startup cost: $424.5K–$980.8K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 452/12

PickUp USA Fitness
Basketball-focused fitness clubs
Startup cost: $407.3K–$575.1K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 0/1

Planet Fitness
Fitness clubs
Startup cost: $853.4K–$3.7M
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 1,066/58

Polestar Pilates
Pilates studios
Startup cost: $121.8K–$196.95K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 1/1

Pro Martial Arts Franchise
Martial arts instruction, fitness
Startup cost: $142.8K–$199.6K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 51/1

Pure Barre
Barre fitness classes and apparel
Startup cost: $154.5K–$282K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 391/14

Retro Fitness
Health clubs
Startup cost: $941.4K–$1.6M
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 148/0

Rock Climbing Franchising
Indoor rock-climbing gyms
Startup cost: $874.1K–$1.7M
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 2/2

4U-FITNESS

Instead of wearing sweats or spandex, clients at 4U-Fitness don a full-body suit filled with electrodes. The suit sends currents that cause muscle contractions, resulting in a more intense workout. It may sound like science fiction, but it's already popular with top athletes like Usain Bolt, and 4U-Fitness founder Daniel Nyiri thinks it will appeal to the casual fitness fan, too, since it requires only two 20-minute workouts a week.

PHOTOGRAPH BY LEANDRO GONGORA

Snap Fitness
Twenty-four-hour fitness centers
Startup cost: $118.8K–$294.6K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 1,358/78

Tapout Fitness
Fitness and martial arts
Startup cost: $83.6K–$597.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 4/0

Tiger-Rock Martial Arts
Martial arts and fitness programs
Startup cost: $89.9K–$197.6K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 133/0

Title Boxing Club
Boxing and kickboxing fitness classes, personal training, apparel
Startup cost: $143.3K–$394.2K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 152/3

UFC Gym
Fitness, boxing, kickboxing, and MMA classes
Startup cost: $706.1K–$1.5M
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 118/12

Workout Anytime 24/7
Twenty-four-hour health clubs
Startup cost: $351.3K–$836.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 108/0

Xtend Barre
Fitness studios
Startup cost: $162.8K–$516.9K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 59/2

HOT DOGS
When Burger King added them to its menu earlier this year, we knew the humble dogs' time had come. But these aren't necessarily classic dogs of yore. New, daring concepts are elevating the old-fashioned frankfurter with gourmet and unexpected ingredients sure to appeal to the foodie crowd. >


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Dave's the Doghouse
Hot dogs
Startup cost: $25K–$245.7K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 4/1

Dog Haus International
Hot dogs, sausages, hamburgers
Startup cost: $362.1K–$849.4K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 17/2

Hot Dog on a Stick
Corn dogs, lemonade, fries, funnel cakes
Startup cost: $338.2K–$561K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 19/69

Umai Savory Hot Dogs
Gourmet fusion hot dogs
Startup cost: $118.2K–$226.8K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 2/1

Wienerschnitzel
Hot dogs, ice cream
Startup cost: $303.6K–$1.3M
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 322/0

PEST CONTROL

Outdoor-pest-control companies have been growing steadily for several years. Now, with the growing concerns about the spread of the Zika virus—not to mention other mosquito- and tick-borne illnesses—their services are going to be even more in demand.

Black Diamond Pest Control
Termite, bedbug, and other pest control
Startup cost: $96.9K–$183K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 1/2

Critter Control
Wildlife management, pest control
Startup cost: $23.7K–$94.6K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 100/5

Mosquito Joe
Outdoor pest control
Startup cost: $69.6K–$122.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 167/2

Mosquito Shield
Outdoor pest control
Startup cost: $73.1K–$106.8K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 37/2

Mosquito Squad
Outdoor pest control
Startup cost: $29.6K–$69.6K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 201/0

Superior Mosquito Defense
Outdoor pest control
Startup cost: $16.3K–$27.7K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 8/1

PETS

People love their pets. For proof, check out how much they spend on them. The American Pet Products Association estimates that 2016 spending on Fido and Fluffy will total $62.75 billion. So it's no wonder numerous franchises are finding success serving the four-pawed and furry.

Aussie Pet Mobile
Mobile pet grooming
Startup cost: $136.8K–$145.8K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 230/0

Barkefellers, The Place for Dogs
Upscale pet hotels
Startup cost: $1M–$5M
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 0/3

Ben's Barketplace
Pet-health-food stores
Startup cost: $189.8K–$352.1K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 0/1

Camp Bow Wow
Dog daycare, boarding, training, grooming, in-home pet care
Startup cost: $409.7K–$1.1M
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 127/8

Camp Run-A-Mutt
Dog daycare and boarding
Startup cost: $187.9K–$467.1K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 8/1

Central Bark Doggy Day Care
Dog daycare
Startup cost: $255.1K–$389K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 24/1

D.O.G.
Dog daycare, boarding, grooming
Startup cost: $429K–$548.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 1/2

Dee-O-Gee
Pet supplies and services
Startup cost: $161.5K–$387.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 0/2

The Dog Stop
Dog daycare, boarding, walking, grooming, training, products
Startup cost: $181.5K–$399.7K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 5/4

The Dog Wizard
Dog training
Startup cost: $47.4K–$59.9K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 17/0

Doggies Gone Wild
Dog daycare and grooming services
Startup cost: $375.6K–$618.8K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 0/2

Dogtopia
Dog daycare, boarding, training, spa services
Startup cost: $454.4K–$735.3K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 40/4

EarthWise Pet Supply
Pet food and supplies, grooming and self-wash services
Startup cost: $211K–$476K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 38/0

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF BEN'S BARKETPLACE

BEN'S BARKETPLACE

Ben's Barketplace is the brainchild of former California state trooper and K-9 handler Brad Romero and his wife, Sally. Romero recognized the importance of nutrition in keeping his partners at their peak, so the store, named for his first drug-detection K-9, Ben, focuses on offering healthy options for dogs and cats, including raw diets and high-quality dry and canned foods. Pet-nutrition experts consult with customers to find the best choices for their individual animals based on breed, age, weight, activity level, and special needs.

Fetch! Pet Care
Pet-sitting, dog-walking
Startup cost: $37K–$44.3K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 96/6

Husse
Pet-product delivery
Startup cost: $27.1K–$88.7K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 509/0

In Home Pet Services
Pet-sitting, dog-walking
Startup cost: $9.2K–$35.1K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 12/1

Just 4 Paws Pet Spa
Pet grooming
Startup cost: $74.1K–$138.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 0/1

K-9 Resorts
Luxury dog daycare and boarding
Startup cost: $915.7K–$1.3M
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 5/1

Pet Butler
Pet-waste cleanup and removal
Startup cost: $30K–$42K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 130/0

Pet Supplies Plus
Retail pet supplies and services
Startup cost: $550.4K–$1.3M
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 170/183

Pet Wants
Pet-food stores/delivery
Startup cost: $50.2K–$176.9K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 42/0

Petland
Pets, pet supplies, boarding, daycare, grooming
Startup cost: $273.5K–$1M
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 142/13

Pets Are Inn
Pet care in private homes
Startup cost: $59.95K–$85.2K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 15/0

Preppy Pet
Pet daycare, boarding, grooming
Startup cost: $96.95K–$259K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 13/1

Sit Means Sit Dog Training
Dog training
Startup cost: $50.7K–$123.9K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 120/1

According to the American Pet Products Association, there are more than **300 million pets in the U.S.** (That's almost as many pets as humans!)

Sitter4Paws
Pet-sitting, dog-walking
Startup cost: $21.3K–$46.8K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 5/1

Splash and Dash for Dogs
Pet products and grooming
Startup cost: $89.9K–$159K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 11/0

Sydnee's Pet Grooming
Pet grooming
Startup cost: $156.9K–$244.99K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 4/2

Wag N' Wash Natural Food & Bakery
Pet food and supplies, grooming
Startup cost: $445.2K–$635.2K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 6/5

Wild Birds Unlimited
Bird-feeding supplies and nature gift items
Startup cost: $125.98K–$199.2K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 303/0

Zoom Room
Indoor dog training and socialization, pet products
Startup cost: $132.8K–$308.7K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 13/3

RESALE/ CONSIGNMENT/ ESTATE SALES

Everything old is new again, now that buying used has become trendy. It's not just for clothes, either; you'll find resale franchises selling toys, books, and even gift cards. And for the true treasure-seekers, there are consignment-event and estate-sale franchises as well.

Blue Moon Estate Sales USA
Estate sales
Startup cost: $40.9K–$82.8K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 15/1

Bricks & Minifigs
Lego resale stores
Startup cost: $104.1K–$227.2K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 15/2

Caring Transitions
Sales of estates and household goods
Startup cost: $58.1K–$85.8K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 177/0

Children's Orchard
New and used children's clothing, equipment, accessories
Startup cost: $181K–$292K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 27/1

Clothes Mentor
Women's clothing and accessories resale stores
Startup cost: $198K–$297K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 137/1

Consignment King
Consignment and fund-raising events
Startup cost: $37.9K–$48.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 2/0

Gift Card Monkey
Gift-card buying and reselling
Startup cost: $10.95K–$27.6K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 4/1

Grasons Co. Estate Sale Services
Estate sales, online auctions, staging
Startup cost: $68.6K–$131K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 15/0

iSold It
Online consignment and overstock sales
Startup cost: $46K–$223.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 8/0

Just Between Friends Franchise Systems
Children's and maternity consignment events
Startup cost: $32.8K–$45.4K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 148/0

Kid to Kid
New and used children's and maternity clothing and products
Startup cost: $259.9K–$419.4K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 119/1

Music Go Round
New and used musical instruments and sound equipment
Startup cost: $261.5K–$334.8K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 33/0

New Uses
Home-furnishing and accessories resale stores
Startup cost: $187.5K–$286.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 10/1

NTY Clothing Exchange
Teen-clothing and accessories resale stores
Startup cost: $181K–$292K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 1/1

Once Upon A Child
New and used children's clothing, equipment, furniture, toys
Startup cost: $254.5K–$392.2K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 339/0

Plato's Closet
Teen- and young-adult-clothing resale stores
Startup cost: $238.1K–$398.3K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 464/0

Rhea Lana's Franchise Systems
Children's consignment events
Startup cost: $18.1K–$36.1K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 74/3

Style Encore
Women's clothing and accessories resale stores
Startup cost: $256.5K–$390.7K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 48/0

Uptown Cheapskate
Young-adult-clothing resale stores
Startup cost: $234.5K–$394K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 48/3

Walls of Books
New and used books
Startup cost: $77.9K–$170.7K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 8/4

RESTORATION
Restoration may not be the most glamorous industry, but it is one of the most indispensable. No matter the time or place—or economic climate—there will always be disasters, and there will always be a need for someone to clean up after them.

Certified Restoration DryCleaning Network
Restoration of textiles and electronics
Startup cost: $45.6K–$235.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 156/0

Delta Disaster Services
Insurance/disaster restoration
Startup cost: $162.8K–$332.2K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 7/1

DKI
Property restoration
Startup cost: $22.1K–$94.8K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 346/0

Duraclean
Carpet and upholstery cleaning, disaster restoration, mold remediation
Startup cost: $64.6K–$115.9K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 274/9

1-800-Packouts
Building contents packing, cleaning, storage, and restoration
Startup cost: $109.2K–$440K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 21/1

1-800-Water Damage
Restoration
Startup cost: $79K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 37/1

Paul Davis Emergency Services
Emergency restoration
Startup cost: $64.5K–$188.8K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 94/2

Paul Davis Restoration
Insurance restoration
Startup cost: $188.2K–$391.1K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 244/6

PuroClean
Property damage restoration and remediation
Startup cost: $160.8K–$182.8K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 228/0

Rainbow International Restoration & Cleaning
Indoor cleaning and restoration
Startup cost: $171.7K–$278.1K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 337/0

Restoration 1
Water, fire, smoke, and mold remediation
Startup cost: $77.95K–$175.1K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 81/0

Service Team of Professionals
Water/fire restoration, mold remediation
Startup cost: $78.6K–$138.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 32/0

Servpro
Insurance/disaster restoration and cleaning
Startup cost: $156.1K–$209.95K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 1,715/0

Steamatic
Insurance/disaster restoration, cleaning, mold remediation
Startup cost: $129.8K–$173.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 176/0

1-800-PACKOUTS

1-800-Packouts is coming at the disaster restoration industry from a different angle, by focusing on restoring a building's contents rather than the building itself. After a fire or a flood, the company packs up furniture, files, clothing, electronics, dishes, paintings, and other belongings, cleans them by hand or in ultrasonic cleaning stations, and houses them in a climate-controlled storage facility until the home or business is repaired and ready for their return.

Storm Guard Restoration
Exterior restoration
Startup cost: $148.4K–$292.1K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 41/4

STAFFING/ RECRUITING
As the job market continues to improve, staffing and recruiting franchises are flourishing. Agencies offering everything from temporary staffing to executive recruitment all benefit from having two sets of clients—both the companies looking for workers and people looking for work.

AtWork Group
Temporary, temp-to-hire, and direct-hire staffing
Startup cost: $99.5K–$174.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 62/28

Express Employment Professionals
Staffing, HR solutions
Startup cost: $120K–$196K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 749/0

F-o-r-t-u-n-e Personnel Consultants
Executive recruiting
Startup cost: $91.2K–$135K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 64/1

Jomsom Staffing Services
Temporary and permanent staffing, employment services
Startup cost: $82.6K–$133.3K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 4/1

Labor Finders
Industrial staffing
Startup cost: $122.99K–$210.9K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 162/24

Link Staffing Services
Staffing, HR solutions
Startup cost: $99.5K–$174K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 33/7

MRINetwork
Executive and professional staffing
Startup cost: $66.6K–$99.8K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 555/0

Patrice & Associates
Hospitality recruiting
Startup cost: $84.95K–$93.9K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 55/1

PrideStaff
Staffing
Startup cost: $141.3K–$217.7K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 66/3

Redwood Healthcare Staffing
Healthcare staffing
Startup cost: $136.7K–$179.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 2/1

Remedy Intelligent Staffing
Staffing
Startup cost: $151.8K–$258.3K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 133/0

Sanford Rose Associates International
Executive search and recruiting
Startup cost: $108.3K–$143.6K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 72/0

Spherion Staffing
Staffing, recruiting
Startup cost: $100.4K–$167.8K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 184/0

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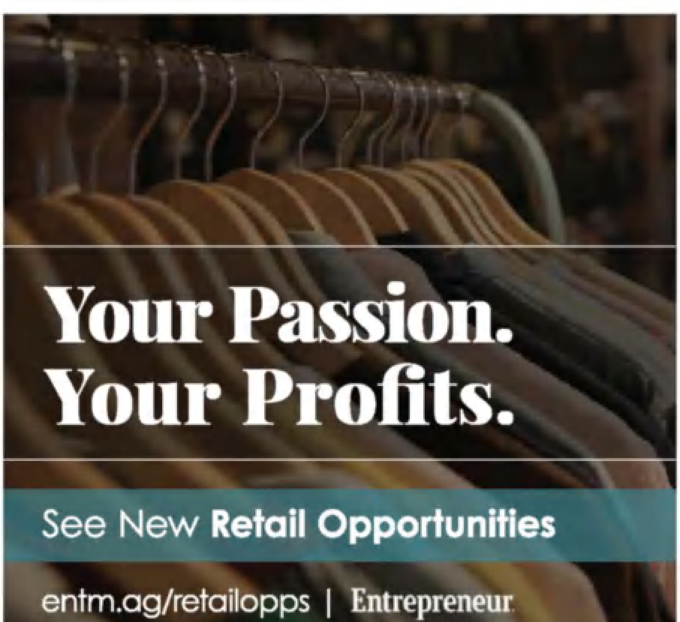

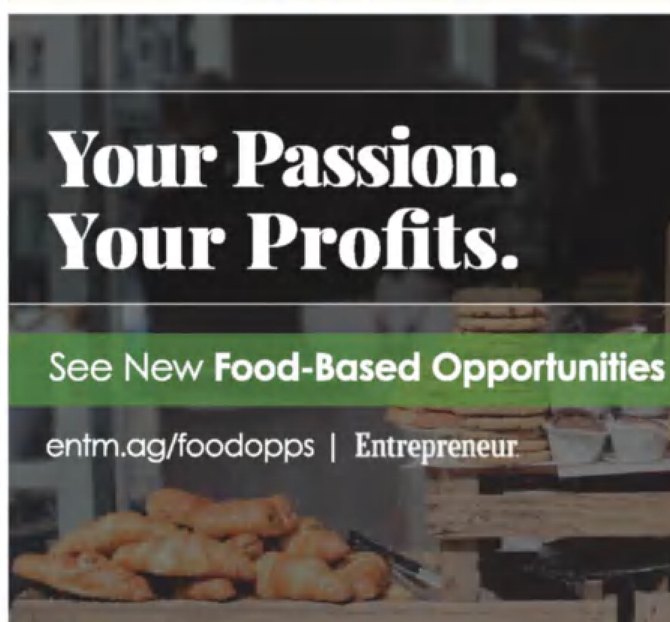

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Resolutely Difficult Advice

By James Victore

I'm a leader. Wanna know why? Because I say so. I believe it and feel it and act on it. I'm "the guy" because I choose to be. Becoming a leader is not about waiting for someone to see your potential. It's about stepping up, stepping in, and consciously deciding to be the one who brings it—the energy, the charisma, the excitement, the guts.

A leader chooses to be the positive force needed in the world. You can't be a leader unless you're convinced you are one. You have to feel it in your bones and every molecule of your body. It takes confidence, self-trust, and a little blind faith, but the result is expansion into your full potential. And when you take responsibility for your leadership, those around you will feel the gravitational pull of your confidence and purpose. They will want to rise up and meet you where you are. But you have to stand up first and declare yourself.

James Victore's work has been exhibited at New York's Museum of Modern Art. He teaches creativity to businesses.


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