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It's All About Content

32

Renoun ski-company founder Cyrus Schenck washed windows to keep his business afloat.

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Org charts matter: Tracy Young, CEO of PlanGrid, learned this lesson the hard way. See how on page 36.

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PHOTOGRAPH BY CODY PICKENS

How the media works

MOST PEOPLE haven't heard of a scrappy little ski company called Renoun, but we gave it a lot of space in this issue—a story about founder Cyrus Schenck on page 34, and a full-page photo of him on page 35. I bet you're wondering: How did Schenck pull that off?

I'm going to tell you.

Why? I owe it to you. Magazines like *Entrepreneur* are designed to help readers navigate their world, and we do that in journalistic ways—talking to experts, interviewing successful entrepreneurs, and so on. But we forget that to people in business, we are *also* a mystery in need of solving. How do editors think? How are decisions made? And so, each month, I'm going to explain our process on this page—the space where, in most magazines, the boss pens an advertisement for the issue you've already purchased. (Here's a trade secret: Many editors hate writing those letters. Some even outsource it to underlings.)

I hope my column can be more useful. So let's get back to Renoun. What is it doing in this issue?

The explanation begins with the word *package.* That's magazine-speak for a series of related stories, which run together across any number of pages. Magazines use packages to explore broad themes—"Let's do a package on..." is a common sentence in edit meetings—and they create openings for different stories. This can be good for companies seeking coverage: If I hear about something that doesn't work as a stand-alone profile (like a tiny ski company), it might fit into a package some months later. But this can also cause confusion. A publicist just emailed me, citing a story we did earlier this year about a company similar to her client's. Might that mean we're interested in her client's business, too? Sorry, no: That old story made sense for us only in the context of the package it ran in. The moment had passed.

We usually run one package an issue. Back in July—that's how far out monthly mags are planned—we decided that our November package would be about how founders rebounded from their first big mistake. Contributing editor Stephanie Schomer oversees these, and she emailed a lot of writers asking for ideas.

One of those writers was Clint Carter. He'd just gone to a Snowsports Industries of America event, scouting stories for *Men's Journal.* While there, he saw a guy cover his hand in pink goo, then lay it flat on a table and slam it with a mallet. The goo was a fast-hardening polymer, which protected his hand. Ta-da! And this seemingly crazy person, of course, was Cyrus Schenck. Intrigued, Clint introduced himself. The two later exchanged emails. Nothing came of it for *Men's Journal,* but when Clint got Stephanie's email, he wondered if Cyrus might have a compelling tale about his mistakes. So Clint met Cyrus for a beer, then relayed what he learned to Stephanie, who relayed it to me. I said yes because Cyrus was willing to be so open and vulnerable—and because his tale is worth learning from.

Not every entrepreneur can do this. One founder promised he would, so I assigned a story about him for this month's package. But during the interview, he kept steering the conversation toward his successes and away from his screwups. I understand the impulse—it takes guts to admit your failures. But we couldn't use his story. It isn't in this issue.

When entrepreneurs ask me for media advice, I tell them to embrace their full saga. Reporters don't just want to hear success stories; they want to hear *problem-solving* stories. The reason isn't because we thirst for drama; it's because "Here's how I did this" is way more interesting than "Here's why I'm awesome." Think about it: Which would *you* rather read? No matter the issue, that's the story you should tell.

Jason Feifer
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Photograph by David Rinella

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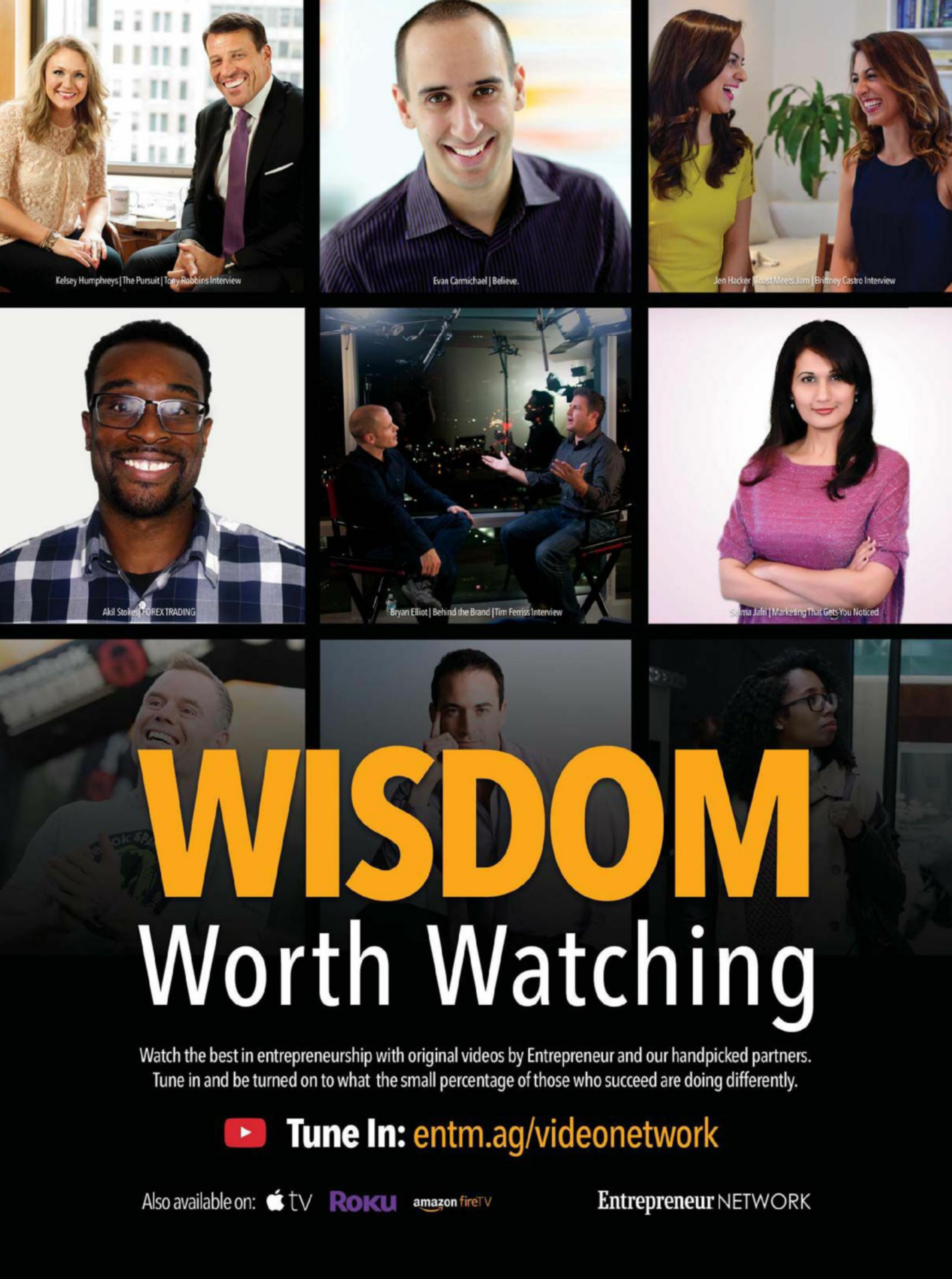
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etiquette guy

PICK UP THE DAMN PHONE

WE SEE YOU HIDING BEHIND TEXT AND EMAILS. YEAH, YOU. STOP IT. HERE'S WHY.

By Ross McCammon

Hey, wanna feel old? Great. Let me a get a startup exec on the phone. *[Ring, ring]* Hi there. I'm trying to reach Elena Gorman, product marketing lead at HipChat, the group-chat and file-sharing company. *[Waiting]* Elena, hello! Question for you: What do you think of when I say the word *telephone?*

"Working in Silicon Valley, I haven't had a desk with a phone on it since 2010."

You don't say?

"I can imagine a scenario where getting someone on the phone would be the quickest way to resolve a complex

Illustration by Paul Sahre

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issue. But even with that, we have video chat and group video chat in HipChat. The only reason to ever bring up my phone is if wi-fi is spotty. I think most young people probably associate telephone communications at work with interviews or more high-pressure situations. In Silicon Valley, we all work at computers, right? And most of our jobs are based around using the internet in some way. To use a phone takes me physically out of my workflow. Just the manual process of dialing with my fingers, looking up a number…"

Excellent. I'd like to spend the rest of this column unpacking pretty much everything she just said. Thanks, Elena. Elena?

(I think she hung up.)

Elena Gorman has hit on the ironic value of telephonic communication. It is fear-inducing (especially to a generation of texters) because it involves stakes. Getting on the phone with someone means a decision needs to be made. You don't go to all the trouble to press seven to 10 buttons, then listen to two or three buzzes, then (possibly) speak to someone you can't see and not be here to get something done.

But this is why it works. This is why it matters. This is why I'm here to endorse the telephone as the most valuable form of communication in business.

First, it's important to acknowledge the various ways in which the phone is god-awful. To begin with, it's not a sure thing. (Will the other person even pick up?) It can be really inefficient. (Phone tag.) It's strangely anxiety-producing. *(Ring. [pulse rate creeps up] Ring. [pulse rate creeps up])* There's the annoyance of cellphone lag. *(There's the annoyance of…Oh, sorry, you go ahead.)* And there's the thing where the other person is eating what has to be a salad with lots of blue cheese dressing and it just sounds gross.

"My students under no circumstances want to make a phone call to set an appointment," says Keri K. Stephens, associate professor of communication at the University of Texas, who is writing a book on communication in business. "I have an assignment in a class where they have to do that, and they will make up every excuse in the book—'Oh, I sent them an email! Oh, I sent them a text!' I tell them, 'No, you have to talk in real time to another human being.' And they don't want to do it."

But why? Stephens blames the fear of rejection: "Some people really don't want to bother other people. But part of the reason is they don't want to be told 'No.'"

And yet this is why the telephone is the best. It's better than texting. It's better than email. It's better than videoconferencing (which, OK, is like the phone, except with the added unnecessary worry about what you look like). It's the best form of communication in business precisely because it kind of blows. The telephone perfectly illustrates a key truth: If you go to a lot of trouble to get yourself in a situation that feels a little uncomfortable and half-baked and no one likes all that much, then you have no choice but to get yourself out of that situation. You're invested. You've made an effort. You've prepared. You've steeled yourself for the problems that come with talking on the phone. You're ready to deal with an awkward silence. You're ready to be on.

The telephone builds grit. And when the going gets tough, grit comes in handy.

The next time you're about to email or text someone, ask yourself this: Am I avoiding the phone because I don't want to be told "No"? Am I avoiding the phone because I don't want to feel rejection? Is this about trepidation?

And while we're at it, here are some more questions to consider: Am I avoiding the phone because I don't want to make the other person uncomfortable? Am I unsure of my own level of commitment to what I want to propose to the other party? Is it advantageous to have no written record of what we're about to discuss? Am I in my 20s and unclear about the nature of this strange piece of equipment on my desk that has numbers and lights on it and what looks to be a "cord" of some sort?

If you answered yes to any of those questions, then call. The telephone allows you to efficiently converse, unlike email or text. It allows you to roll your eyes, unlike videoconferencing.

Most important, it forces you to be slightly more committed to your cause. To be slightly more hopeful. Go ahead; pick up the phone. Say, "Hi there! I'm invested in this!"

Right?

Hello?

I think you have the wrong number.

Ugh. ◻

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

ask a pro

Be a Snoop

Q WHAT ARE THE BEST WAYS TO RESEARCH THE COMPETITION?

A When it's time to size up your opposition, consultant and author Becky Sheetz invokes the wisdom of ancient Chinese military strategist Sun Tzu: Know your enemy, and know yourself.

Cultivate spies. Hire your competition's top salespeople—or at least invite them for lunch, dinner, or cocktails. "It's a great conversational way to find out stuff you may not otherwise be able to," says Sheetz, author of *The Art of War for Small Business.*

Engage your prospects. When a potential customer declines your business, find out why—and how your offer stacked up. "It's more important to find out why you lost," Sheetz says, "than why you won."

Behold the secret shopper. Intelligence gathering typically involves strolling through competitors' aisles. No store? No problem. Hire consultants to make phone calls to your competitors, to learn how they operate. ◻

—Christopher Hann

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Taylor Bruce in a spot in Austin, Tex., no average tourist knows.

travel

Inspiration Anywhere!

Travel can spark unexpected businesses, and Taylor Bruce started his after hunting for stories in Key West.

As told to Ashlea Halpern

I WAS A WRITER and an editor for about eight years, at magazines like *Budget Travel* and *Southern Living*. Eventually I got bored; the people and places that fascinated me weren't the ones my bosses wanted to feature. In 2008, for example, I was reporting a story on Arcadia and passed a house in Montgomery, La., painted top to bottom with folk art. I pulled over, knocked on the door, and spent four hours hanging out with Juanita, who had lived in this small town her whole life. I would never forget her story, but it didn't fit into any magazine I knew of.

In 2010, I took a break to get my MFA at Brooklyn College; I wanted to write a novel. But a year later, while in the Florida Keys, new inspiration struck. My wife and I were trying to sleuth out the real Key West, reading on Wikipedia about how Ernest Hemingway's car broke down here in the 1930s. He was stuck for three weeks. Little stories like that make a place go from "tourist destination" to getting into your bones. I decided to put down my novel and make the kind of travel guidebooks I wish existed instead—with stories as the driving force. I wanted to help people feel a place. I called them Wildsam Field Guides.

For the first book, I picked a city I knew well: Nashville. I called two fiction-writer friends and asked for long-form writing that would never live in a travel magazine. Jay West wrote about his fear of snakes, and Tony Earley wrote about raising his two adopted daughters in East Nashville, weaving in the history of the neighborhood—from Jesse James to minor league baseball. I asked dozens of locals for recommendations of the best, most unique things to do. The reporting took three months. Then I had the book illustrated, which is cheaper to print than full-color photographs—but also classic and timeless.

A month before the Nashville guide went to print, I started full-time at a large New York branding agency. I'd been funding Wildsam out of personal savings, so I needed the money. I also wanted to learn how to build a brand.

When 2,000 copies of the Nashville guide arrived at my 500-square-foot New York City apartment in October 2012, distribution was my first big hurdle. I called Nashville stores I loved the most, and whose owners I knew: Imogene + Willie, Billy Reid, and Parnassus. They put the books in their stores, and others followed. I also put up a basic website for online sales. We sold out in four months. Locals were buying just as much as travelers—not something I expected. I repeated the process for books in Austin and San Francisco, working nights and weekends for nine months.

Then a cryptic email arrived from J. Crew: "We've seen your guides and would like to talk about a project." A month later, I was sitting with J. Crew's global marketing team, discussing a J. Crew x Wildsam neighborhood-guide series, pegged to the opening of their new London stores. They accepted my proposal, and I turned in my two-week notice. Wildsam was now a full-time job.

The J. Crew project gave me a year's runway, and a new model for funding. Since then, I've done collaborative projects for Helm Boots, Shinola, and Bonobos. We partnered with Lincoln Motor Company on a Detroit book, which sold out 3,000 copies in three months.

We now have eight city guides, which sell for $17.95 each; Los Angeles will be our ninth, plus two road-trip books—New England and the Desert Southwest. We sell in 150 stores and have had short runs in Urban Outfitters and Anthropologie. We've grown to a team of four people. In 2017, we're going to launch second editions of some of our books and explore running single-page illustrated ads.

Today, my biggest challenge is wanting to do too much—products, an event series, a promotional tour. The greatest lesson I learned at that branding agency was to focus. Create clarity. What makes us special is our time on the ground, having another conversation, and staying at the city archives just one hour longer. Sometimes you have to turn off the ideas faucet and dig into what really sets your brand apart. □

Photograph by Juliana Sohn

what's your problem?

Get Back, Chargeback!

Can a small-business owner ever win the battle against credit card companies?

By Joe Keohane

Q I run a paint-and-sip studio, where people can make art as they drink, and we have a strict cancellation policy: Cancel less than 24 hours before your class and you don't get your money back. On many occasions, after a person doesn't show up for class and loses their money, an infuriating thing happens: They call their credit card company and say they want the charge removed. The credit card company calls PayPal, which handles my transactions. I always provide ample evidence—a receipt, emails with the customer, and so on. But nearly every time, **PayPal tells me they ruled in the customer's favor.** The money gets taken out of my account, and I get hit with a $20 fee. Can I ever win? *—Scott, New York City*

A: Ah, the dreaded chargeback—bane of many a small-business person's existence. Chargebacks were devised decades ago to protect credit card users against fraudsters, but today, in one of the great unintended consequences of the e-commerce age, they've turned many of those users into fraudsters themselves. And Scott is a victim to a particularly infuriating category of chargebacks: The finance industry calls it "friendly fraud," because the finance industry operates from a very different definition of "friendly" than I do.

Here's what friendly fraud looks like: A customer purchases a product or service, then goes straight to their credit card company, claims to have been misled or cheated (or to have never received the product or service in the first place), and then tries to get the charge

Illustration by Yukai Du

knocked off. The card issuer examines the claim and renders a decision. If the complaint is found to have merit, the sum in question is withdrawn from the seller's account. Win or lose, the seller is charged a fee ranging from a few cents to $30.

Sounds reasonable, right? Or reasonable-ish? Except that there's a hole in the process that you could drive a truck full of alcohol and painting supplies through. The problem is that the credit card companies are disinclined to fight with their own customers, and will often just accept the chargeback regardless of merit. Buyers—from professional fraudsters to mere hobbyists—know this and have been busily exploiting it: According to a report published by Aite Group in August, at present, "60 to 70 percent of chargebacks are the result of fraud."

What's a guy like Scott to do? If the seller wishes to appeal—or "re-present," in the parlance—there's an additional fee, win or lose. This would be like if NBA teams had to surrender two points to get a ref to review a blown call. And consequences could be grave. If chargebacks exceed 1 percent of total monthly volume, sellers could lose their merchant account entirely.

"Most merchants hate chargebacks, because the deck is stacked against them," says Colin Rule, who used to head the resolution center at PayPal and eBay. Many sellers don't even bother re-presenting, Rule says: They don't want to pay the fee, and anyway, "they don't think they're going to win." When you're talking about a small sum—Scott charges only $50 for a two-hour class—the expense quickly becomes prohibitive.

But let's say that Scott, on principle, decided to fight every chargeback. He puts a tail on these scofflaws. He beats signed confessions out of them. Here's what would happen: He'd likely lose anyway. That's because he's a service provider, and credit card companies will really only accept evidence produced by sales of tangible goods. Meaning: third-party shipping information. Which Scott, who sells an experience and not ironic cat T-shirts, will not have.

It gets worse. Even if he wanted to go down swinging in these disputes, he can't. He uses Rezclick, a reservations service that works exclusively with PayPal. This means that when a customer books a class on Scott's site, the merchant of record isn't Scott. It's PayPal—because PayPal, not Scott, is technically the company that deals with the customer's credit card company. It also means that PayPal, not Scott, is the one who'd decide whether to re-present a chargeback to the customer's credit card issuer.

You see where this is going: PayPal isn't exactly jumping to re-present on Scott's behalf, which leaves him to lose the chargeback and pay the fee. PayPal does offer "seller protection" for chargebacks and the like, but, again, it benefits only sellers of tangible goods. According to a PayPal spokesperson, "We are interested in eventually trying to expand seller protection into the intangibles and services space in limited markets and countries." Sounds interesting, indeed, but of no help to Scott in his time of need.

But let's splash some light onto this dark, dark canvas. A growing number of solutions have sprung up to attempt to patch this chargeback hole. One of them is cocreated by Rule, the former PayPal and eBay guy. He's built a cloud-based platform called Modria, which, among other things, encourages buyers to bring disputes directly to the merchants—effectively cutting out the credit card companies so that disputes might be resolved to both parties' satisfaction, without getting sucked into the chargeback vortex. However, at $550 a month for 1,600 disputes, Modria is too big for Scott's studio. Other similar companies are also geared toward larger operations.

So what should Scott do? As it turns out, he already has the answer in his hand. Although he uses Rezclick for classes booked online, he uses a different service—Square—for payments taken in person. And Square covers $250 a month in chargebacks, even for folks who, like Scott, sell only intangible goods. Square also offers an online reservations system called Square Appointments. It can be embedded directly onto Scott's site, and it will handle cancellation fees automatically. Scott would be well advised to look into this solution, with the lone caveat that with less angst in his professional life, his art could potentially suffer. □

Have a business problem that needs solving? Email helpme@entrepreneur.com.

WHY DO WOMEN COMMIT MORE E-COMMERCE FRAUD THAN MEN?

CHARGEBACKS911, an aptly named company, spent 12 months analyzing data from its clients, and it discovered a startling fact: Women file 76 percent of all chargebacks for tangible goods.

Blame it on shopping styles, says COO Monica Eaton-Cardone. Women are more likely to buy an item in multiple sizes or colors and are also prone to buyer's remorse. "Then we get busy, we forget to return it, the bill comes, and chargebacks follow," she says. This is exclusive to online shopping. "Probably not a single woman who files a chargeback would consider walking into a Nordstrom and stealing a pair of shoes," she says.

After one chargeback, a pattern quickly forms. "Fifty percent of friendly-fraud chargebacks where a woman is not caught results in another happening in just 60 days," Eaton-Cardone says. "It may start as something totally innocent, but it becomes a learned behavior and a very bad habit."

What can companies do? Try to "humanize the transaction," says Eaton-Cardone. Cultivating a more intimate relationship with e-customers could help chargebacks feel less like a "faceless, guiltless crime." —*J.K.*

ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE NOUN PROJECT/GILAD FRIED (HANDS), CREATIVE STALL (KEYBOARD) second acts

The New-Owner Conundrum


Alexandra Wendkos, of Dino's.

When you buy a business, you inherit its customers—and their expectations. Here's how three entrepreneurs struck a balance between change and consistency. By Andrew Parks

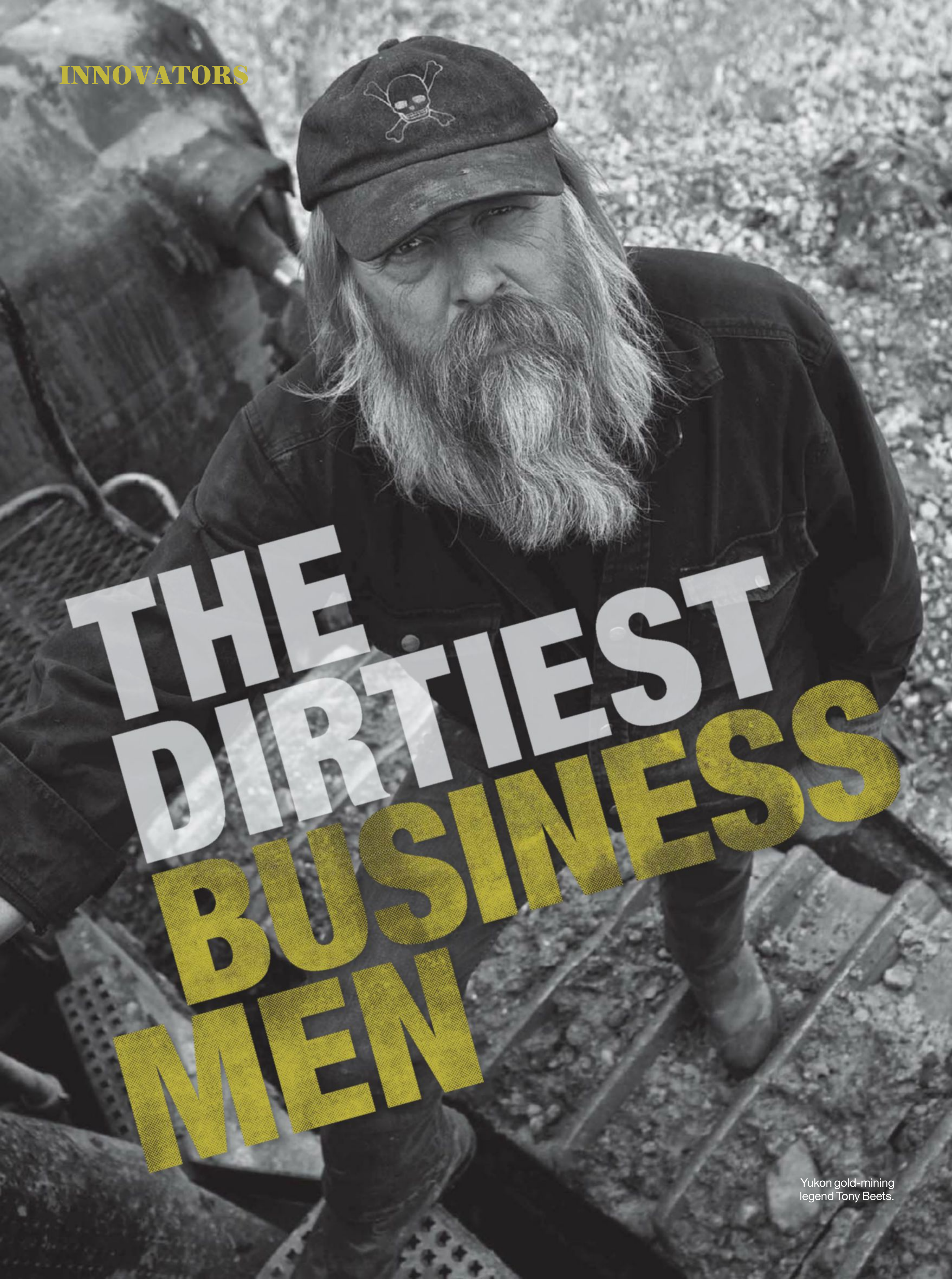
	DRIVE-IN	CONVENIENCE STORE	DIVE BAR
Case study	**Chris Baggott,** new owner of The Mug, Greenfield, Ind.	**Jeff Barney,** new chef/owner of Saxapahaw General Store, Saxapahaw, N.C.	**Alexandra Wendkos,** new co-owner of Dino's, Nashville
Why buy?	"We started Tyner Pond Farm [and were] selling out of pasture-raised pork chops, bacon, and steak—but were left with a surplus of lesser cuts such as ground beef. The idea with The Mug was to give us **an outlet for all that stockpiled hamburger."**	"The draw was doing great, no-frills food in an unassuming location—**a gas station!** [The original also served food.] It's in the midst of local farms, where we would get our meats and vegetables."	"I had been to Dino's before, but I never frequented it because of the smoke, rats, and characters that would hang around. However, all these things **created a reputation** and a name for Dino's."
What was your vision?	"It shifted from 'How do we move our surplus hamburger?' to a place where we captured the heritage of an Indiana drive-in, but with a **modern farm-to-curb spin** and recipes that are both familiar and special."	"A store like ours—convenience mixed with groceries—has a community responsibility. There's a school next door, and we serve lunch, **charging a minimal amount relative to the high quality of food**, because we believe food is essential to child development [and] that farmers are the backbone of our economy."	"Keep the cheeseburger, add a few more diner favorites, turn the lights down, and **keep prices the same.** After six to eight months, we added liquor. I was hesitant, because I didn't want it taking away from what Dino's had been—the oldest beer bar in East Nashville. Turns out, liquor was the best thing we could've done."
How'd you approach changes?	"People had so much nostalgia for the place, **we wanted to keep the drive-in vibe.** My mother-in-law and others volunteered to be carhops, like in the '50s! The old restaurant had a Facebook page, so we explained what we were doing and why. The respect from fans translated into engagement."	"Our change was incremental—first a formal breakfast, which grew into lunch, which grew into dinner. Then we started to make changes based on people's daily needs in our rural community. The fact that **we've kept gas and staples** as well as hot dogs, pizza, and barbecue sandwiches at great price points has been highly appreciated."	"The approach was slower in the beginning because **I was sensitive to the fact that people really cared** about this Nashville staple. Like them, I didn't want it becoming something it wasn't. With time, more people became comfortable. The bones were there; it just needed a little muscle and fat to get where it needed to go."
Can you please everyone?	"Many think 'local' or 'farm to table' is just for wealthy people. But because we're vertically integrated with our farm, **we're able to keep prices competitive.** Our signature quarter-pound burger is only $4.75, comparable to $9 from a traditional outlet. About 40 percent of our customers don't even live in Greenfield."	"At first, the convenience-store element took a little hit because we made it clear that racially disparaging remarks and jokes would not be welcomed here. We really wanted to be **an inclusive food experiment,** so we kept the convenience vibe while adding on good, whole-food choices. We more than made up for what we lost."	"People have appreciated the laid-back space we provide, and the $3 PBR tallboys! Entrepreneurs looking to relaunch a business should keep it simple. Embrace the history, take it slow, and be honest. **Don't try to prove too much too soon.** By being gracious and giving it time, the changes won't seem like changes at all." □

25%
more millennials self-identified as entrepreneurs compared with any other generation.

Source: The Hartford

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREA BEHRENDS

THE DIRTIEST BUSINESS MEN



Yukon gold-mining legend Tony Beets.

Now in its seventh season, **Discovery Channel's *Gold Rush*** follows the dreamers trying to get filthy rich by pulling gold out of the ground. We went north (and then north some more) to find entrepreneurship in its most extreme, raw form. *By Dan Bova*

"THEY ARE JUST WAITING FOR SOME-thing to go wrong," 22-year-old miner Parker Schnabel tells me with an expression that is half smile, half sneer, and all exhaustion. We're standing on the grounds of Scribner Creek, which isn't a creek so much as a postapocalyptic-looking wasteland of turned-over earth. And "they" are the film crew of Discovery's *Gold Rush,* who have followed Schnabel's every shovelful of dirt since he became a mine boss at the ripe old age of 16.

"Last night I was digging a ditch," he continues. "And I knew that the only way this was going to make the show was if I did something wrong or if I got hurt or something broke. And you can tell the film crew wants one of those things to happen! But that's the nature of the show, they—"

As if on cue, a *Gold Rush* producer appears. "Sorry," he says, "I have to interrupt you. Something has gone wrong." So off we go to see what that "something" is, which is a big something: A boulder has smashed the holy crap out of a vital piece of Schnabel's machinery. The producers are surely happy. Schnabel is not: He's just an entrepreneur trying to make a living out here, surrounded by problems.

Welcome to working in the Yukon, a small, mountainous, and extraordinarily unwelcoming Canadian territory just east of Alaska. The town nearest the mines is called Dawson City, and its 13 bars have enough capacity for every resident to get drunk at the same time. The Downtown Hotel's signature offering, the Sourtoe Cocktail, is a shot of alcohol with a frostbitten, dehydrated human toe plopped into it. There's a $2,500 fine for actually swallowing the toe. That's the thing about this place: Even the drinks aren't easy.

Gold prospectors have come here since the late 1800s, when pickaxes and shovels were your most complicated machinery. Today the job requires towering equipment that can cost millions of dollars. Equipment breaks constantly. Workers fight. Mining goes on almost around the clock, and the overtired reality TV stars on the show have two careers to manage—as businesspeople breaking new ground in a high-stakes line of work and celebrities whose every move is captured on film.

Discovery's attraction to this scenario is obvious: the drama. That's what fuels today's ever-growing genre of workplace reality television—tales of high tension unfolding inside cupcake bakeries and motorcycle shops. But often, the actual conflict in these shows seems forced. Is that deadline really so pressing? Are those two employees really dysfunctional? Something about *Gold Rush* has always stood out to me, though: This is a job few people want, and that most people probably don't realize still exists. The people who do it have to be all-in. And the stakes are extreme versions of what every entrepreneur faces: There's a crushing up-front cost and

From left: Parker Schnabel; Beets' resurrected dredge, and his $370,000 gold haul.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JUSTIN KELLY, COURTESY OF DISCOVERY COMMUNICATIONS (LEFT); PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAN BOVA risk baked into every decision, and the final result is dependent upon a group of people you can't control...along with, you know, dumb luck. You might strike gold. Or not. Out here, it's no metaphor.

So that's why I traveled to the Yukon. I wanted to know how entrepreneurs like these think—how they handle the risk, the stress, the possibility that what they're doing is totally unreasonable. Are these extreme conditions fit for only extreme entrepreneurs? Extre-preneurs, so to speak? (Sorry.) And now here I am—just another spectator, along with the film crew, further raising the stakes by watching Schnabel handle his latest crisis. (Maybe you'll see it on TV: *Gold Rush*'s seventh season began October 14.)

Today's screwup is partially of Schnabel's own making. A very quick lesson in the basics of gold-digging technology, so you can understand what went wrong here: Schnabel operates a series of machines that tower many stories upward, looking like the mess of metal you'd find on a construction site. First, large sections of earth are fed into one machine. The earth passes through "grizzly bars," designed to block boulders from reaching the machine's more delicate sorting system, called a "washplant," which separates gold from dirt. But the grizzly bars stopped working recently, and Schnabel had to take a bet: Does he keep feeding in earth, hoping that it includes no boulders?

Gold-mining season is short (about six months, until winter freezes the ground), and minutes count. Schnabel's operation works to pull in an ounce of gold per hour, 20 hours a day. With current values of gold, that amounts to more than $24,000 worth of gold a day. To fix the grizzly bars, Schnabel would have had to stop operations and wait a week for the part to arrive from Oregon. "For me, production is number one," says Schnabel. "So a lot of times, we'll risk things and run equipment that we shouldn't be running just to keep everything in motion." This "keep going until you are forced to stop" theory has paid off for him in the past. Last season, he pulled 3,362 ounces from the ground, worth $3.7 million.

That's why, today, he kept going without the safety system. And wouldn't you know it: A boulder passed through and slammed into the belt that feeds the washplant. Problem compounded.

Entrepreneurs take risks. They don't always work out.

AND NOW, LIKE a good reality television show, we will leave the tension hanging in the air while we move along to another scene of impending chaos.

Drive 45 minutes away from Schnabel's Scribner Creek, down a winding dirt road that can turn into the world's biggest Slip 'N Slide after a good rain, and we reach the very improperly named Paradise Hill. I'm sitting on the steps of the main building here, and a pickup truck heads toward me—fast. Like, ramming speed. I sit there like an idiot, and the truck's brakes slam at what feels like the last minute, spraying dust and gravel on me. Tony Beets gets out. He's the gold miner in these parts.

"Most people get out of the fucking way when a truck is driving straight at them!" he says with a laugh.

"I guess I trusted you'd stop," I explain.

"Don't trust no fucking person with your life but yourself," he says.

Tony Beets, 59, looks exactly what you'd expect a Yukon gold miner to look like. He's bearded, his black clothes are covered in dirt, and he uses the f-word like Michelangelo used a chisel.

He's from Holland, where he made ends meet by milking cows and working on pipeline construction. But he wasn't content. That's why he and his wife, Minnie, shipped out to Dawson City in 1984—to take a big bet on a boom-or-bust industry. "There was no plan B," Minnie tells me. "But I wasn't worried. He always finds work. Best thing we ever did was move to Canada. Our kids should kiss our ass that we moved here!"

It's worked out pretty well indeed. He doesn't share how much he has in the bank, but at this point it's enough to drop $1 million on a lark: He

From left: Schnabel sifting for gold the old-fashioned way; the hottest hotel (and bar) near the mines.

bought a 78-year-old dredge—essentially a barge with a bucket line that methodically chews through flooded ground, the kind of technology commonly used to find gold in the first half of the 20th century. But when gold prices fell many decades ago, the dredges were considered too costly to operate. Beets is perhaps one of the first people to now question that logic, and brought one back to life. Experts thought the plan was nuts: Seventy-eight-year-old dredges don't come with owner's manuals or spare parts. As the owner of a Saab, the product of a virtually extinct company, I know how hard it is to find replacement floor mats. Now imagine replacing a three-ton gear that was made eight decades ago.

But Beets thought differently: He saw dredges as more efficient than today's popular machinery, which can require three or four times the number of crew to operate. "The dredge costs about $100 an hour to run: fuel and two people," he says. "So if I get only one ounce an hour, I'll still make a fucking lot of money." (One ounce of pure gold would equal about $1,325.) He heard people pooh-pooh this logic, but that didn't concern him. "When you do a big project like rebuilding our dredge, there are always a lot of 'experts' around. And most of them are always broke. So it doesn't bother me if they're saying whatever is wrong. You can think what you want; I'll just fucking go and do it while you're thinking."

After three decades of bets like this, Beets has become a man of hard-won wisdom like that. A further sampling:

On teamwork: "I always give people the chance to express their opinion. There's nothing wrong with a good short argument. If people feel better because their way is better, that's great. As long as I get to that

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAN BOVA

piece of bacon, I don't care."

On motivation: "Do yourself a fucking favor and get out of bed every morning and be very serious about what you do. We all have good days and bad days. At the end of the day, it's you that made it happen. Not your neighbor, not the banker. You!"

On perfectionism: "We could fix up the dredge better, could have more people running it, but let me put it to you this way: Right now, the damn thing is working, so don't fuck with it. The important thing is to keep it going."

Beets takes me on a stroll of his site. It's a stark contrast to Schnabel's, which at least has the appearance of order. Schnabel grew up around mining, and, at age 22, he's seen what works, and his instinct is to repeat it. But older, serial entrepreneurs—guys like Beets—know something that's learned only from experience: There are many ways to success, and sometimes the best thing you can do is leave something that works to find something that works better. Everywhere you look around Beets' place, there are machines big, small, and positively enormous in varying states of rust and readiness. He buys as many of the same old machines as he can—they're cheaper, his mechanic knows how to fix them, and he can cannibalize them for parts. This is what a diversified portfolio looks like in the Yukon: It's like if Mad Max owned an AutoZone.

"After I have my breakfast, I don't walk outside with coffee in my hand," he says, surveying his glorious junk. "I have both hands ready to fucking work."

In business, of course, there is no such thing as a winner that lasts. A startup could knock out an established rival, but another challenger will just come along. Apple walloped Microsoft. Now Samsung chases Apple. And so on. But for all the realism captured here in the Yukon, the show *Gold Rush* does layer on one slightly false note: At the end of the season, there is a big emphasis on who found the most gold. But the reality is, it isn't how much you got, but how much you spent to get it. These guys aren't true rivals. They don't work near one another; one team's success doesn't impact another's. This isn't part of the gold business. And yet: drama.

Cut back to Schnabel, and the case of the unwanted boulder. As we stand here in front of a broken machine, I wonder if he thinks about the other miners and how they'll trash-talk him when this episode airs. Because these guys *will* trash-talk each other; it's easy to get them going. But that's not where Schnabel's mind goes at a moment like this. Rather, he thinks about the stakes he's created for himself. "We're putting all the cash flow we have back into the ground," he says, "and that's the trouble with mining. A lot of guys end up with nothing because all the money they make goes into the next piece of ground, and as soon as one of those pieces doesn't work out, you're done."

The real winner, in real life, is anyone who spent their money right.

After an hour, master mechanic Mitch Blaschke shows up. He's a Yukon mix of the Maytag Man and MacGyver. Diagnosis: The damage is not as bad as feared. He can Band-Aid the plant back together and get it operational in a few hours. A brief relief (was that a smile?) flashes over Schnabel's face before stress starts creeping back in.

If you watch the show, you know that the financial strain can lead Schnabel to scream. At everyone. A lot. "Dealing with people is probably my biggest personal challenge. I'm pretty short-fused," he admits. One worker, who was doing a perfectly fine job, once walked off a job simply because he was terrified of getting yelled at. "I'm pretty lucky in that I have a great group of guys here now. Rick, our foreman, is a great guy, and he genuinely cares. And that's what I look for in a person. Do they care, or are they just here for a paycheck? I can't stand being around people like that."

So that's Schnabel's way of managing his temper: Hire people who keep him grounded. Today there is no screaming. There are only solutions.

Once Schnabel's plant is patched up, he seems to truly relax. He asks me what I want to do with my remaining time, and I have an obvious answer: Dig up some damn gold in one of those huge-ass machines. The on-site safety expert is not into this, so I settle for panning by hand in an area that Schnabel's guys have yet to tear into.

I grew up on Long Island, where the most notable concentration of gold is inside Flavor Flav's mouth, so I'm pretty excited to hunch in the muck. But what starts as a goof quickly turns serious: While loading up my pan, Schnabel plucks a small gold nugget, called a "picker," out of the gravel. That, apparently, never happens. The gold the miners catch in the big machines are tiny flakes and particles, called alluvial deposits, which are impossible to see before their journey through the washplant. After a few more minutes, another picker appears. Then another, then another. By the time the sediment washes out, my pan is bedazzled.

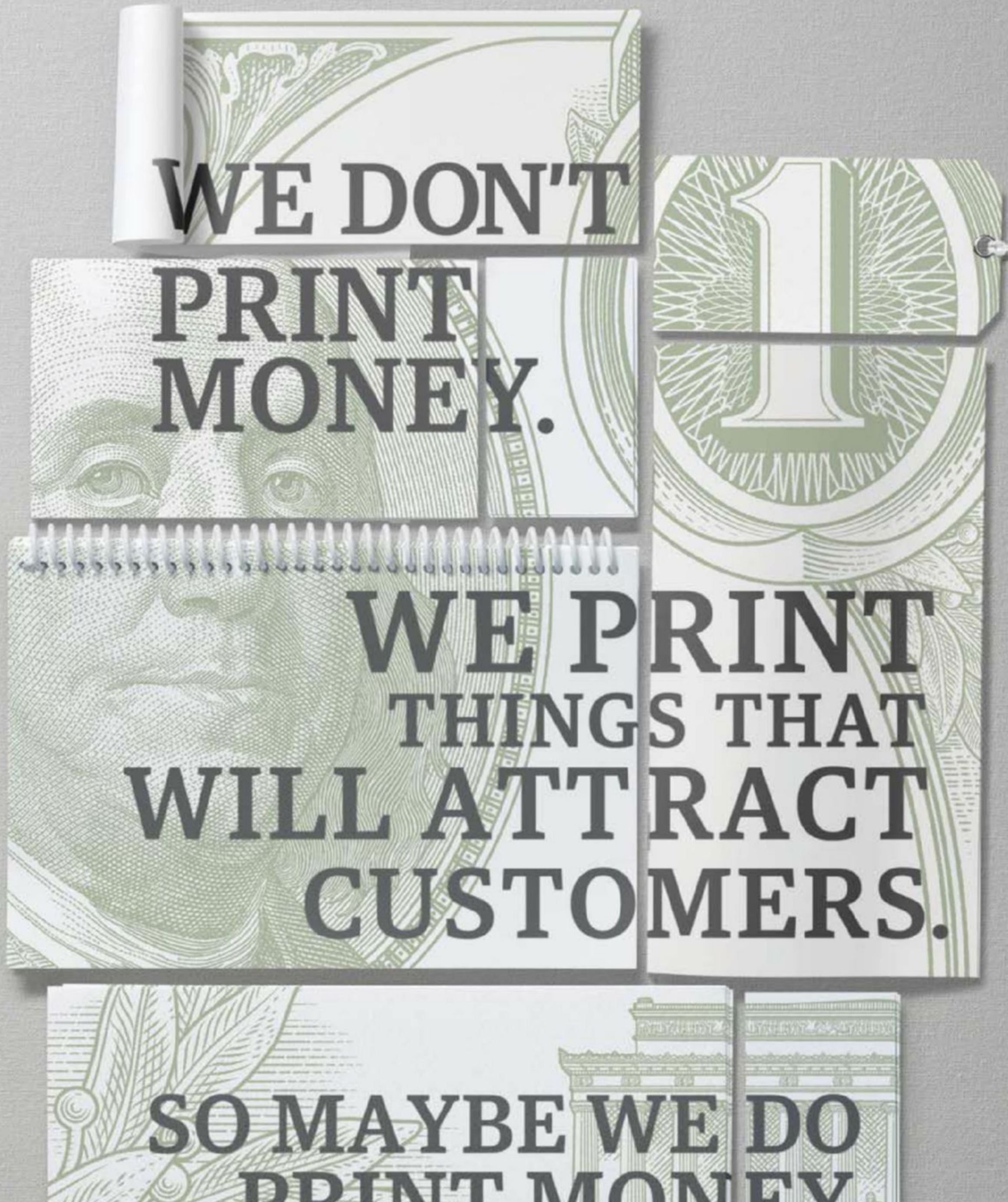
I think Schnabel is going to jump up and hug me. Hell, *I* want to jump up and hug me. But he doesn't. It turns out that when you do this for a living, finding gold is what's supposed to happen.

"When we have a good weigh-in, the camera guys will ask, 'Aren't you excited?'" he says. "And I'll be like, 'No, that's just what we found, and we spent a hell of a lot of money to get it.'" It's the entrepreneur's dilemma, no matter where the business is: Success may look like a miracle, but not to the people who made it happen. To them, it's just the result of a lot of hard work—and there's no stop to that. □

From left: Beets in beautiful Paradise Hill; one of the Yukon's finest nugget-hungry pooches.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAN BOVA

Dan Bova is the editorial director of Entrepreneur.com.



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IT'S BUSINESS — YOU'RE GOING TO SCREW UP! THE QUESTION IS:

EVERYONE HAS HAD THAT "OH, CRAP" MOMENT. HERE, NINE ENTREPRENEURS EXPLAIN HOW THEY BLEW IT—AND WHY IT MADE THEM STRONGER.

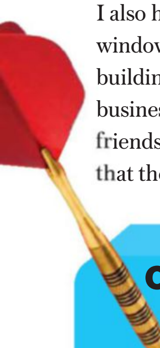

HOW
DO
YOU
RECOVER
?

"HOW I OVERCAME FIVE YEARS OF ERRORS"

CYRUS SCHENCK FOUNDED AN INNOVATIVE SKI COMPANY CALLED RENOUN IN 2011. AND AFTER SURVIVING MANY OBSTACLES, HE'S FINALLY POISED TO MAKE MONEY.

IN 2011, MY FIVE PALS AND I WERE driving home from one of our weekend ski trips in Vermont. We were engineering students at the time and used to throw out all kinds of ideas during those three-hour drives. On this one day, my friend Donny suggested building skis that were based on engineering principles and thus unequivocally better. We loved the challenge. Surely we could build a better ski.

During my material sciences class, I learned about a rare class of soft materials that harden the instant you apply force, which meant we could produce a ski that was soft in powder but stiff in icy conditions. We made a sample and ran some tests, and the numbers were astonishing: Because of the variability of their dampness (a ski's ability to adapt to conditions), our skis were 300 percent better than anything on the market. The other guys stayed in school, but I quit and took the lead on product development. I also had a side business washing residential windows, and every dime I earned went toward building Renoun. One of my clients had some business experience and was curious about my friends—what do they do, exactly? I explained that they'd launched the brand with me. "But what do they do now?" he asked.



The truth is, I was doing all the work. They were still in class while I was trying to get a product to market. It didn't bother me until I realized investors saw them as liabilities. That was the first really difficult decision. I called each guy individually and said I would quit Renoun if they didn't sign over their shares. Some guys were hurt—and understandably so. But in time, every one of them relented. It's a testament to how awesome they are. By handing over their stakes, they allowed me to keep going.

I set out on sales missions, but they were disastrous. I visited Japan, the second-biggest ski market in the world, and my translator never showed, so I tried, and failed, to sell skis with hand gestures. I flew out West to visit every ski shop I could, and left with nothing. Everything I'd learned about the industry started eating away at my confidence: The market was saturated, and to make a profit through retail stores, I'd need to sell about 20,000 skis. I'd sold zero.

If I was going to flame out, I thought, I'd flame out hard. I spent the last $300 in my bank account driving to Denver for a trade show. And on the way, a string of good news rolled in: An investor I'd been working with wired me money. Then test results on our latest skis came in: They showed the best dampness numbers yet. And then the ski industry's most prestigious show, called ISPO, gave Renoun a gold medal for innovation. I reached Denver on a high and hung a banner over our booth: ISPO GOLD MEDAL WINNER. We earned some publicity in a couple of ski publications, and *The New York Times* wrote about us. Even so, I received exactly zero orders at that trade show.

Soon after, I nearly lost the business because a design firm played me for a chump. I'd put a 75 percent deposit down on some graphic work for the skis, and I'm pretty sure they saw me as an easy paycheck and handed the work to an intern. After they failed a few revisions, I enlisted a second firm to advise me on how to handle the problem. I was throwing good money at bad, and I overshot my marketing budget by 300 percent—and the delays meant I didn't have skis ready for the start of ski season. I had to continue washing windows to keep the company afloat.

The 2015-2016 ski season was Renoun's first real one on the market. I landed in a couple of ski shops, which seemed great—but after visiting one undercover, I realized the sales reps had no clue how to explain our technology. So I decided to sell exclusively through our own website. That would change the economics entirely: With retail, I needed to sell 20,000 units just to break even. Now my margins would be much higher, and I didn't have to spend money educating in-store salespeople.

I'm discovering other perks to being small: I'm able to create buzz with limited-run products, like our "Feel the Bern" ski, which doubled Renoun's email list in 48 hours, even though everyone told me to steer clear of politics. I've decided that the key to success is following my gut. People say to sell through shops, and I say no. They say avoid controversy, but this year I'm selling a "Hillary versus Trump" ski. Our skis are expensive—$1,200 versus the industry average of $600—so we're not going to pinch pennies or take investments from people who want us to grow fast and sell out.

I expect 2016 to be Renoun's first profitable year. We have nobody on payroll—not even me, technically—but I have a dedicated group of designers and suppliers who work on contract to keep the brand going. I can't say for sure that the worst struggles are behind me, but I'm becoming less beholden to my window-washing gig. With any luck, I'll soon be able to hang up the squeegee. —*As told to Clint Carter*

OH, NO— WRONG HIRE! HOW A ROTTEN CORPORATE CULTURE WAS FIXED.

"CULTURE FIT" IS THE HOLY GRAIL OF HIRING, BUT WHEN TRACY LAWRENCE launched the catering startup Chewse, in 2011, she gave experience an inflated importance. "We're really into transparency and talking truth to power, but we didn't always have a way to vet it," she says. That led to a toxic hire: someone with crazy-impressive skills and market chops but a passive-aggressive streak. Fast-forward six months and the Chewse culture was marked by whispered unease and gossip. "We couldn't even pinpoint why everything felt so wrong at first, until another employee brought it to our attention," she says. Though parting ways with the bad hire was quick enough, righting the culture took more time. Now Lawrence makes sure that culture questions—*Tell me about a time you disagreed with your boss. What's the most difficult conversation you've had with your manager?*—are in every interview. "Even from the first hiring phone call, we're up front about our culture," she says. "If giving honest feedback or getting hugs doesn't work for you, you shouldn't work here." —*Kate Rockwood*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY GETTY IMAGES/JOHN KUCZALA (INTRO PAGE & DARTS)

Photograph by Bobby Fisher

Cyrus Schenck atop
Stowe Mountain Resort.

THE RIGHT WAY TO SAY YOU BLEW IT

It isn't easy, but it's necessary.

TRACY YOUNG AND HER COFOUNDERS KNEW THE CONSTRUCTION BUSINESS AND COMPUTER engineering, but they didn't know squat about organizational management. So when they launched their startup, PlanGrid, which digitizes blueprints, they "decided to run PlanGrid with no titles and a flat management structure. We were just going to build this business together," says Young. That worked fine for a while, but then…

one

Stop defending your stupidity.

"When we hit around 50 employees, someone came up to me and asked what her career path was. I looked at her and wanted to say, 'Don't you see we're all drowning in work? Why are you asking me about career paths? No one even likes career paths!' But these things matter. Basic business structures work, and career paths are there for a reason. Our biggest mistake was trying to be creative about how we ran the business instead of focusing all that creativity on our product."

Test the solution.

"We could have unveiled some grand vision all at once, but instead we broke off several departments and recruited leaders. It was sensitive, to recruit a sales leader and give that person an official title. But there wasn't pushback, because everyone was so hungry for structure. As we had gotten bigger, politics had crept in. People wanted to own things but didn't have real ownership—you can't just put a department on your LinkedIn profile, for instance. Seeing how staff reacted to the department structures was reassuring that we could make bigger changes."

2

3

Take your own medicine.

"My cofounders asked me to be CEO. I really didn't want to—my cofounders are all so much more educated and older than I am. But they believed in me and pushed me to do it. And it was the right decision. PlanGrid has grown a lot in the past few years."

Cement the change.

"We had a very serious all-hands meeting and unveiled a real org chart. I inverted the usual structure, because I think the most important people are the ones who write code and talk to users. So they're at the top, and leaders are at the bottom. I explained to everyone that all shit flows down. If there's an issue or a question, it has to flow down to the managers, the directors, eventually to me. We have 230 people now, and everyone knows where they fit on that chart." *—K.R.*

4

"MY FIRST BIG MISTAKE WAS…"

THREE ENTREPRENEURS LOOK BACK ON THE BLOOPER THEY FEARED MIGHT KILL THEIR COMPANY (BUT DIDN'T).

SANDY CHILEWICH
Founder and creative director, Chilewich

"BACK IN 2000, WHEN I WAS JUST STARTING, I emailed a buyer at Bloomingdale's, pitching my place mats. And I don't know if *placemats* just wasn't in my computer's dictionary, but each time I typed that, it changed to *placentas*. I didn't notice and sent it. So I wrote this buyer a lengthy email about how great my placentas were, and how many colors my placentas came in, and how durable my placentas are. I sounded like a madwoman. I never heard back from that buyer, but Bloomingdale's is now one of our biggest customers."

JASON HORVATH
Cofounder, Uhuru Design

"AFTER 10 YEARS OF GROWING SLOWLY AND deliberately, in 2013 we got a $500,000 investment in growth capital and did some marketing, and the following year we sold $10 million. Then we lost focus. We decided to launch an interior design department as well as a jewelry line—a total vanity project—and hired more than 50 additional employees. Sure, we had sold $10 million, but then we spent $10 million, and we entered the next year with very little cash. Growth flatlined—we lost $1.5 million in six months. We had to pull back, lay off some great employees, and shut down projects. But now we know what we're good at, and how to manage growth."

NATHAN BOND
Cofounder and CEO, Rifle Paper Co.

"MY WIFE, ANNA, AND I LAUNCHED OUR stationery company in 2009, just in time for the holidays. We had no background in this space and had never worked with a printer. We thought we could send them a file and the product would arrive in perfect shape. But what came back was totally unusable. Even after multiple production attempts, our cards came back with ink smears all over them. We had to make it work, though, so we erased the errors by hand for hours—sitting in a room, in a cloud of eraser shavings! We learned a lot, including how naïve we were."

Photograph by Cody Pickens

Tracy Young at PlanGrid's San Francisco headquarters.

THE BENEFITS OF ROLLING WITH IT

JON KING AND JIM STOTT FOUNDED STONEWALL KITCHEN, WHICH IS AN ALMOST $100 MILLION BUSINESS. BUT 25 YEARS AGO, THE BUSINESS (AND LIFE) PARTNERS BEGAN THEIR COMPANY WITH A SERIES OF HAPPY ACCIDENTS.

How'd you guys get started?
Jon King: For the holidays one year, Jim and I wanted to make homemade jam and sauces. I was working part-time at a greenhouse and brought our leftovers in. A woman suggested that I sell it at the local farmers' market. I had huge student debt, so a few extra hundred dollars on a Saturday? Totally game.

What was your approach at the market?
We never had a product line—we just made what we wanted! If we were making strawberry jam and it didn't set, we'd call it strawberry syrup.

That's similar to how you created one of your most popular products, Roasted Garlic Onion Jam, right?
We were making garlic relish for hot dogs and burgers, and it called for a certain amount of sugar, to sweeten it a bit. I added the sugar, but Jim didn't know, so he added the sugar, too. The batch just set—it was completely solid. But I was like, "We are not throwing this out; we made 120 jars!" So I called it jam and told everyone it was for bagels and cream cheese. And people loved it! So we just kept telling them it was a brand-new product for crackers and cheese.

What was your biggest lesson at the farmers' markets?
This woman came up to us—she later became our mentor—and asked if we were selling wholesale. And I said, "I don't even know what that means!" She bought everything in our van that day and sold it at this old family farm in New Hampshire. I drove over to see the display she had made, and she had doubled the price of everything. And I just thought, *Aha! This is the difference between retail and wholesale!* So the next week at the market, we upped our prices from $3 to $6. Our customers screamed at us, but they kept buying.

So how did you go from the market to retail?
Crate & Barrel was our first large national account. They called and ordered 2,000 jars of marmalade jam. We were still doing everything by hand, so we told them it would take three months, and they said they'd wait! We made the jam, and I sat there one night writing labels. I was like a machine—I could watch *Entertainment Tonight* and drink wine and just write as fast as I could. And I wrote "Orange Cranberry Mamalade" on all of them. I misspelled *marmalade*! When they called to tell me, I did some quick thinking and said, "We're from Maine; that's how we say it here!" They loved it. Thank God. —*Stephanie Schomer*

The Five Stages of Totally F'ing Up

Repeat after us: It'll be OK. It'll be OK...

MediaRadar had been growing at a steady clip and was about to launch a big new product. This was 2010, and the then-4-year-old company, which helps clients like *The New York Times* target advertisers, had created a tool to identify media buyers. "But instead of us taking a year to build it from scratch, we paid a third party that specializes in providing this exact data," says CEO Todd Krizelman. It seemed like the right move at the time. But then the bad news started rolling in…

STAGE 1: DENIAL
Almost immediately after MediaRadar announced the product, clients were queuing up to use it. But before the week was out, a handful had called to report major errors. "I thought maybe it was just a few bits of bad data," Krizelman says. "But as we signed up more clients, we were compounding the problem." Complaints trickled in.

STAGE 2: ANGER
Krizelman was furious at the third-party vendor, sure. But he was also mad at himself for how woefully unprepared his company was to deal with the crisis. "We hadn't thought through how to problem-solve a product that wasn't our own," he says. And after just a few phone calls, it was clear the vendor wasn't committed to cleaning up the mess itself.

STAGE 3: BARGAINING
Krizelman began frantically trying to figure out how to right the ship ASAP. "I flirted with the idea of hiring an army of temps that could work around the clock," he says. "I thought if we just rolled up our sleeves and worked hard, we'd find a way to rise above this."

STAGE 4: DEPRESSION
Within a few weeks, Krizelman realized that there was only one way to save his company's sinking reputation: Pull the plug on the failed product and refund everyone's money. The process made him physically sick. "It felt like we'd violated our core tenet as a service-oriented company—like one stupid mistake was going to unwind our client trust overnight."

STAGE 5: ACCEPTANCE
When it was all over, Krizelman m it clear that he was the one who had messed up by rushing the launch. He started over, giving his product team two full years to develop a similar tool from scratch. It work . Now the mistake is part of the company culture, and employees invoke the incident when they think a decision is being rushed. "I don't think the scab will ever fully heal," Krizelman says, "but we definitely got something valuable out of the experience." —*K.R.*

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF STONEWALL KITCHEN

ADVERTORIAL

FAILURE ISN'T AN OPTION. IT'S INEVITABLE.

5 Mantras for Moving Forward

BY JEREMY BLOOM • Olympic Skier, NFL Player, CEO, Philanthropist

*A **world-champion skier**, Jeremy Bloom missed his shot at Olympic gold. As an **All-American football player**, he saw his collegiate career put to a halt by the NCAA; then sidelined by injuries, he spent a frustrating period in the **NFL**. Bloom, now an **entrepreneur, CEO, and philanthropist**, shares the 5 personal mantras that have helped him transition from the top of the mountains, onto the gridiron, and into the boardroom.*

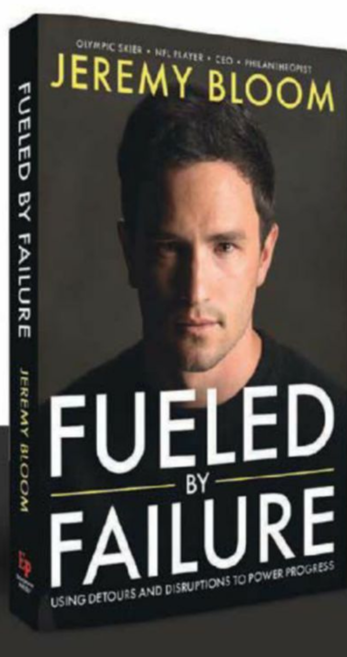
SET A DEADLINE. The most important step to overcoming adversity and negative feelings: Don't wallow. Instead, set a deadline for accepting what has happened, at least emotionally. This emotional acceptance is crucial—and so is the deadline. My deadline is 48 hours.

FOCUS ON YOUR SKILLS. Always come back to what you know and have the confidence to trust in your skills. In business, that could mean reminding yourself that your skills as a salesman will allow you to clinch a deal, or that your skills as a marketer will give you what you need to create a successful campaign, or that your financial acumen will allow you to budget just right every time.

ELIMINATE DISTRACTIONS. We all encounter distractions that we can't control, and many of them put enormous pressure on us—but only if we allow them to. There are strategic times when you need to close off all distractions and focus on one goal. The two most important actions you need to take in order to stay mentally focused are eliminating the outside noise and focusing on what you need to master.

LET GO OF THE NEED TO WIN. Sometimes we get stuck analyzing and thinking about what everyone else is doing and what we need to do in order to win. It's important to take a moment and focus on what really matters to you and what motivates you intrinsically. To become more intrinsically motivated, I stopped focusing on beating others, getting rich, and caring what everyone thought about me. I began to focus more on what I wanted to get out of life, the person that I ultimately wanted to become, and how I could get better at whatever I was doing. And ironically, I started winning much more often.

BE A LEADER—NOT A VICTIM. If you have not embraced failure in a positive manner, learned from it, and reprogrammed your ego to your own intrinsic motivation, it is much harder to become a successful leader. Taking ownership is the first step to not becoming a victim. Don't be afraid to say, "Yes, I screwed that one up ... my fault." Then, give yourself a deadline to accept what happened, look for other ways to succeed, and refocus your goals.



Jeremy Bloom is the co-founder and CEO of Integrate, a marketing software company that has raised over $45 million in venture capital. He is a member of the United States Skiing Hall of Fame, a two-time Olympic skier and World Cup gold medalist, as well as a former NFL player for the Philadelphia Eagles and the Pittsburgh Steelers. He is also the founder of the Wish of a Lifetime Foundation, an organization that grants lifelong wishes to senior citizens.

ENTREPRENEURS HAVE A HIGHER TOLERANCE FOR FAILURE THAN NON-ENTREPRENEURS

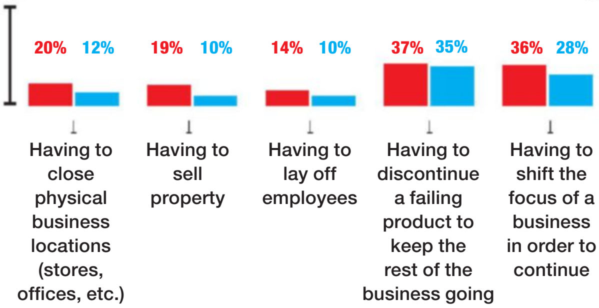
OUR EXCLUSIVE STUDY SHOWS THAT BUSINESSPEOPLE SEE THE WORLD DIFFERENTLY.

Entrepreneurs | Non-entrepreneurs

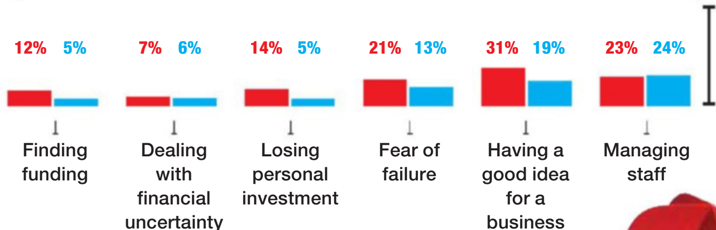
ENTREPRENEURS, PERHAPS MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE, LOVE TO talk about their mistakes. They've been conditioned to see failure as a learning experience—that, rather than being the end of something, a big flop is merely a very useful (though painful) data point along the way to success. And so we wondered: Just how different is an entrepreneur's perspective?

We partnered with the polling company Ipsos to find out. Ipsos reached out to 1,007 people in August, asked if they consider themselves entrepreneurs, and then had them react to a series of business challenges. The results: Entrepreneurs have statistically thicker skins. —*Jason Feifer*

NOT FEELING DOWN!
Here's who said no when we asked:
Is this a failure?



NOT SWEATING IT!
Here's who said no when we asked:
Is this a major challenge in starting a business?



DIAGNOSING AN ALMOST-IMPLODING STARTUP

A SILICON VALLEY DARLING MOVED TOO FAST.

When same-day flower delivery company BloomThat launched in San Francisco in 2013, it seemed on a fast track for success: The Y Combinator alum had $7.6 million in funding and a quickly growing customer base. But just two years later, the startup was racing toward bankruptcy. Cofounder and CEO David Bladow explains what went wrong, and the remedies that saved his now-thriving business.

THE ERROR: Overexpansion. "We were intoxicated by what was going on with Uber—on-demand everything, expand really fast, and off to the races. Once we had the mechanics of same-day delivery figured out in San Francisco, we expanded too quickly without realizing that we couldn't copy and paste the mechanics of what worked in San Francisco to Los Angeles and New York."

The fix: With the company burning nearly $500,000 per month, it decided to shutter same-day delivery in L.A. in August 2015. "We had stretched our footprint so wide, it spun our whole economic model sideways." The switch took their burn rate to just $15,000 a month, giving BloomThat time to retool for L.A. (It's now back, and profitable.)

THE ERROR: Moving too fast, literally. "We promised delivery within a one-hour window, and in San Francisco alone we had seven distribution points to make that happen. That's a lot of touchpoints—and every time someone touches the product, it's a cost."

The fix: *Do we really need to do this in an hour?* Bladow recalls thinking. *Or would two be efficient for our customers?* His company got rid of four distribution points and tested a two-hour delivery window instead. No customers complained; delivery costs dropped 25 percent.

THE ERROR: Competing with giants. "We're here in the Bay Area with Google, Facebook, and all these companies that provide, like, three meals a day to employees, and, oh, here's a masseuse! You're under all this pressure to take care of your team, which we want to do, but we set up a structure that didn't work for us economically."

The fix: BloomThat reeled in its perks—providing snacks all the time, but only lunch a few times a week. "We're taking care of our team, but we're not sending them to a spa. Though on Mother's Day and Valentine's Day, we bring in two people and have them do chair massages." —*S.S.* □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3
4
2
1

How to Grow a *Well-Rounded* Business

INTERVIEWS BY MATT McCUE • ILLUSTRATION BY STEWART BRADFORD

CONSIDER THE WORD *BUILD*. It's perhaps the most common verb in entrepreneurship—she built a business; he is building a business. But the word isn't fair. You know what gets built? A building. The foundation is laid, the first floor is constructed, and then the first floor is forevermore the first floor: always solid, never changing, the foundation upon which a second floor and more can rise. Built.

Nothing about a business is like this. "What successful companies—for example, Amazon—do is to constantly search for something better for customers," says Jeffrey A. Carr, a professor of marketing and entrepreneurship at New York University's Stern School of Business. "It's this never-ending betterment that has to happen." And that betterment can't happen all at once. A business is a collection of parts: revenue, marketing, sales, staffing, and so on. A founder may be better at some than others. Some are simply harder than others. But to be a well-rounded, 360-degree business, they all must thrive.

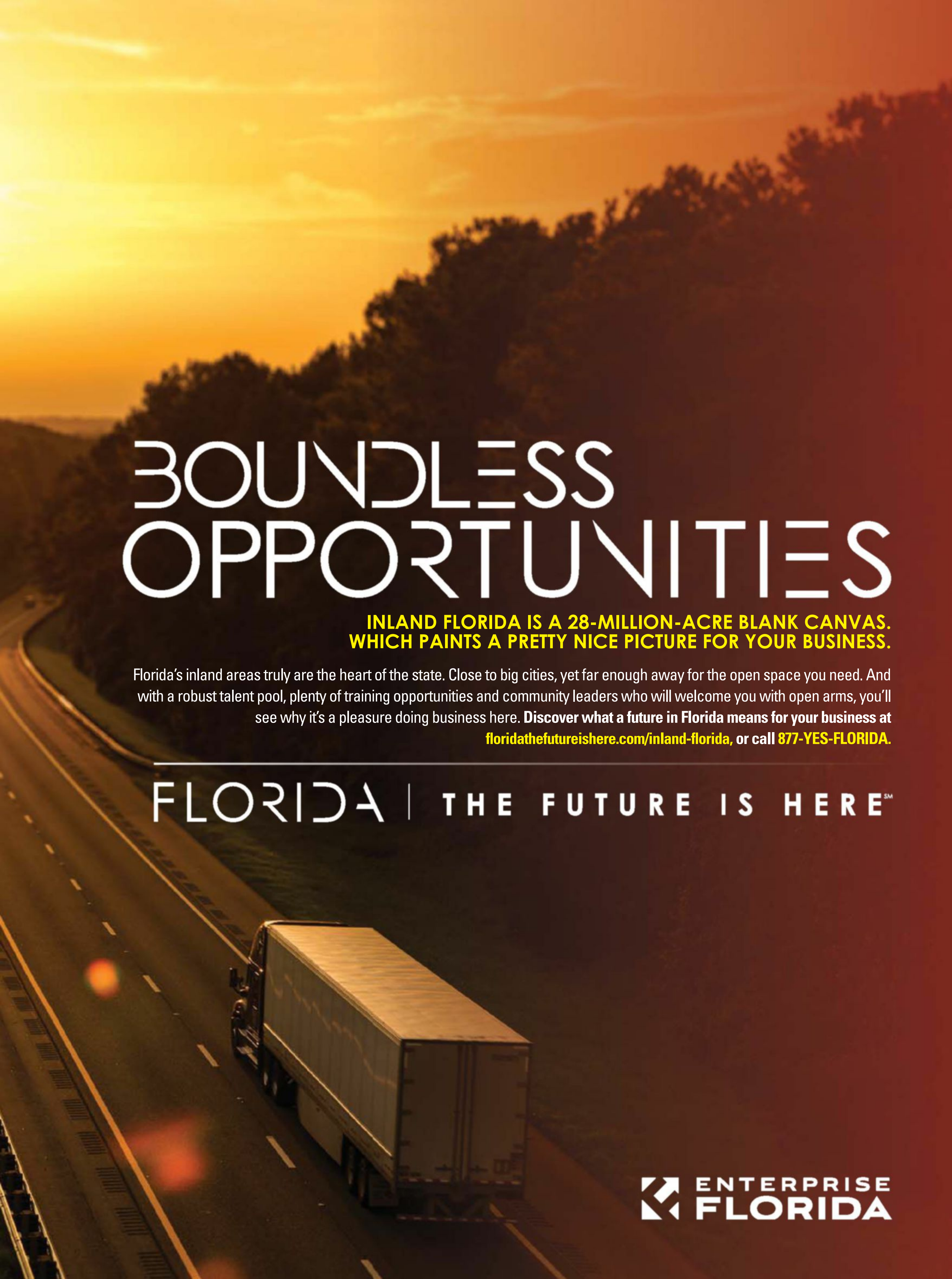
That means a business isn't built, layer by perfected layer. It is grown, like a body. Its parts will change with time, and need constant upkeep. "It's a continuous learning process," says Andrew Zacharakis, director of the Babson College Entrepreneurship Research Conference. "The entrepreneur who tries to roll out everything in one neat package is striving for the impossible."

We have this crazy idea at *Entrepreneur:* We want to identify 360 small businesses each year that are mastering that continuous process—that keep all their parts growing in harmony. To do this, we invited companies to apply and evaluated them based on four metrics: impact, innovation, growth, and leadership. The result is our Entrepreneur 360 list. You'll find the first 100 companies on the list in the following pages, as well as insights from five founders who exemplify our metrics. The full list is online at entm.ag/e360companies.

What should you take from this list? Inspiration, sure. But most important, it is a reminder that nobody is perfect, but any entrepreneur can thrive if they get the balance right. Now comes the hard part for these 360 companies: They have to maintain that balance. After all, they are not built. But they will continue to grow. And so will you.

OUR ANNUAL ENTREPRENEUR 360 LIST

1. **RETAILNEXT,** San Jose, Calif.
2. **AVANT,** Chicago
3. **CARVANA,** Phoenix
4. **SUJA JUICE,** San Diego
5. **CARDLYTICS,** Atlanta
6. **EOS PRODUCTS,** New York City
7. **TALKDESK,** San Francisco
8. **LIAISON,** Alpharetta, Ga.
9. **TASKUS,** Santa Monica, Calif.
10. **NORIBACHI,** Harbor City, Calif.
11. **ETAILZ,** Spokane, Wash.
12. **PETPLAN,** Newtown Square, Penn.
13. **UBERMEDIA,** Pasadena, Calif.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OPPORTUNITIES
INLAND FLORIDA IS A 28-MILLION-ACRE BLANK CANVAS.
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Florida's inland areas truly are the heart of the state. Close to big cities, yet far enough away for the open space you need. And with a robust talent pool, plenty of training opportunities and community leaders who will welcome you with open arms, you'll see why it's a pleasure doing business here. Discover what a future in Florida means for your business at floridathefutureishere.com/inland-florida, or call 877-YES-FLORIDA.
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ENTERPRISE FLORIDA

IMPACT

MARKET SHARE + COMPANY GROWTH

LUCY POSTINS, *cofounder and CEO*

Company: **The Honest Kitchen** makes dog and cat food with high-quality, human-food ingredients (like coconut, spinach, and quinoa).

Impact: In 14 years, the company has grown to 49 employees, and it's on track to double its revenue inside of two years, from $20 million in 2014 to a projected $40 million in 2016.

How did you decide there was a market for high-quality pet food?
My dog was suffering from chronic ear infections, and I was spending a fortune at the vet on steroids and antibiotics that never brought a true cure. So I researched and started making my own food for him. It cured his earaches—and made a huge mess in my kitchen. That led to the idea of dehydrated food, to still feed him healthy foods without the mess. I had a background in the conventional pet food industry, and I was aware of some of the unsavory things that go into good old-fashioned pet food, so I began to think about how to make my product different. Human-grade pet food was the most obvious way.

To clarify, "human grade" means food fit for human consumption and produced in a facility that makes human food?
Correct. The Honest Kitchen is the only nationally recognized kitchen allowed by the FDA to say "human grade" on the product label. We literally taste every single ingredient we use.

How's revenue growth?
We're growing, on average, 35 percent to 45 percent a year. Last year our revenue was $30 million, and this year our goal is $40 million.

Have you always been profitable?
My husband lent me $7,000 to get started, and we remortgaged our home several times to finance the company in the early years. That forced us to be profitable. When we got more formal banking relationships, they had covenants about being profitable. But then when we brought on investors in 2011, we were able to spend like drunken sailors—no, not really. That investment allowed us to focus on our top-line growth. Now we're starting to turn around toward profitability again.

How have you been able to achieve a 30 percent year-over-year revenue growth rate 14 years in?
We've hired a new chief marketing officer who came to us from a sports-and-outdoor-equipment background, and he helped elevate how we think about marketing. We put in a huge investment in our marketing campaigns, how they live both at the store level and have a social component. We recently did one that drove people to stores to take pictures with their pets in a photo booth and sample our products at the same time.

When you're already in about 4,500 retail stores, where do you go next?
There are between 10,000 and 12,000 pet food and pet supply stores in the U.S. and Canada that would be potential candidates for our product. Some of them are on the lower end of the spectrum—more grocery-level standard—so it will take them some time to catch up with what we are offering.

You've turned down the chance to be in PetSmart and Petco. Why?
Our product takes a bit of explaining, so we rely on the specialty pet store owner, manager, or well-trained employee to do it. I don't think the environment you find in a typical PetSmart or Petco store, which is generally staffed by teenage kids who don't care what you walk out with, is a good home for my brand.

Illustrations by Brett Affrunti

14. **KARGO**, New York City
15. **VARSITY TUTORS**, St. Louis
16. **TELES PROPERTIES**, Los Angeles
17. **BAUBLEBAR**, New York City
18. **COMPANY.COM**, Atlanta
19. **NARRATIVE SCIENCE**, Chicago
20. **SPORTS 1 MARKETING**, Irvine, Calif.
21. **QSTREAM**, Burlington, Mass.
22. **NOVICA**, Santa Monica, Calif.
23. **DRAWBRIDGE**, San Mateo, Calif.
24. **AUGUST HOME**, San Francisco
25. **BONANZA.COM**, Seattle
26. **CLEARDATA**, Austin, Tex.
27. **FLEXPORT**, San Francisco
28. **BIZFI**, New York City
29. **GENEVA SUPPLY**, Delavan, Wis.
30. **INSUREON**, Chicago
31. **SEISMIC**, Solana Beach, Calif.
32. **JOTFORM**, San Francisco
33. **HIREOLOGY**, Chicago
34. **HEALTHIESTYOU**, Phoenix
35. **INSPIRA MARKETING**, Norwalk, Conn.
36. **CENTRIPETAL NETWORKS**, Herndon, Va.
37. **VINYL ME, PLEASE**, Boulder, Colo.

INNOVATION

NEW IDEAS + DISRUPTING INDUSTRY

FARZAD DIBACHI, *cofounder and CEO*

Company: **Noribachi** makes custom light systems for clients like the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum and Churchill Downs Racetrack.

Innovation: Dibachi launched in 2008, knowing how scant lighting industry innovation was in the past 100 years. "As a result, you had a very calcified business channel and a product area that was ripe for a technological shift." Today he has nearly 20,000 customers and ships an average of 2,500 LED lights and fixtures per week.

This is a second career for you, following a successful run in Silicon Valley. What's the most unexpected thing you've learned about the lighting business?
In Silicon Valley, the idea was always that if you make the pie a lot larger, everyone eats a lot more. In the lighting industry, everyone thinks the pie will stay the same—that it's a zero-sum game. So if you come into the industry and try to establish yourself, they all believe you're going to try to take market share from them. I think manufacturing suffers as a result.

The descriptions of your LED lights include words not normally associated with the product, like *data, sensory collector,* and *the cloud.* How are your lights different from the norm?
In commercial use, a lightbulb that is 750 watts literally runs at 700 degrees Fahrenheit. But by us changing the lightbulb to a semiconductor device, an LED, the light is not exactly hot anymore. We can also connect sensors to the lights, and you can do interesting things with them, like embed a security camera. Or the lights in a parking lot don't have to all be on. Twenty-five percent of them can be on, and when you show up, the sensors recognize you and all the lights turn on.

We are talking about the technology component, but you could also talk about the lighting itself. Whereas the lighting today is direct, meaning that there is a lightbulb in your face, we think lighting of the future will be indirect—you won't actually see the lightbulb.

Tell us about your R&D lab.
The typical lighting company in the U.S. has its products manufactured in China. We manufacture everything in the U.S. We link three areas of manufacturing as one group—manufacturing, mechanical engineering, and electrical engineering—and we add in a software engineer, so now we have an interdisciplinary engineering group within a company manufacturing lights. More than 20 percent of our company is engineers, including some of the people in the sales department. That goes back to the DNA of our place, when the original product builders were engineers, not manufacturers.

We know the economic downside of manufacturing in the U.S. What's the upside for you?
People told us that if you manufacture in China, you can't bespoke-manufacture anything. With a very fast process, you'd have an eight-week turnaround time—whereas we can do that in one to two weeks. The other thing is that you can make a lot of money on manufacturing in China, until the one time a manufacturing mistake is made and that one mistake can essentially wipe out your order and your profits from the past few months.

Will you continue to produce customized lights, or will you make mass-market lights sold via retail one day?
We want to make our company worth a billion dollars, so that question comes up all the time. As of now, and for the near future, we think bespoke is certainly the only way to go.

38. **LOOT CRATE,** Los Angeles
39. **ABSTRAKT MARKETING GROUP,** St. Louis
40. **THE BOUQS COMPANY,** Venice, Calif.
41. **MAZ,** New York City
42. **NEXTIVA,** Scottsdale, Ariz.
43. **COSMO DENICOLA COMPANIES,** Philadelphia
44. **IMAGINOVATION,** Raleigh, N.C.
45. **LOVE WITH FOOD,** San Mateo, Calif.
46. **CHAMELEON COLD-BREW,** Austin, Tex.
47. **THE HONEST KITCHEN,** San Diego
48. **STUDENT LOAN HERO,** Austin, Tex.
49. **CHARGEBEE,** Los Angeles
50. **CLUTCH HOLDINGS,** Ambler, Pa.
51. **JANE.COM,** Lehi, Utah
52. **UNIDINE,** Boston
53. **BERKONE,** Bethlehem, Pa.
54. **SEMIHANDMADE,** Duarte, Calif.
55. **PORTFOLIO CREATIVE,** Columbus, Ohio
56. **FRACTL,** Delray Beach, Fla.
57. **HOTJAR,** Malta
58. **UPCOUNSEL,** San Francisco
59. **RPM FREIGHT SYSTEMS,** Royal Oak, Mich.

GROWTH

FUNDING + COMPANY SIZE

AMY JAIN + DANIELLA YACOBOVSKY,

cofounders and co-CEOs

Company: **BaubleBar** is a rapid-response jewelry team that identifies fashion trends and puts out new pieces in weeks, rather than seasonally.

Growth: Since launching in 2011, BaubleBar now ships 1,500 orders a day, selling in Nordstrom, Bloomingdale's, and Anthropologie. It has landed $35 million in funding.

You were originally friends and now run a business. What's your strategy for working together?

Yacobovsky: Amy oversees the merchandising, product development, and sourcing teams, while I focus on the technology and marketing teams, overseeing all of BaubleBar's creative.

Jain: Each of us needs to know what's going on on the other's team, so we have two people looking at everything holistically. We don't have a siloed organization where I handle this and she handles that.

Yacobovsky: We also sit next to each other. They've tried to separate us before—that could never happen.

BaubleBar came of age as an e-commerce site but recently experimented with a physical store in a Long Island mall. What did you learn?

Yacobovsky: We were used to testing and iterating visual merchandising online. For example, when we test a Facebook ad, we put up four or five different creative treatments and then see which performs the best, and tweak our plans accordingly. [At the mall,] we tested different approaches to the store window. Our delicate layering pieces sold very well in-store, so we wanted to merchandise our windows with that product. However, from far away those pieces can look like fine jewelry, which retails for several hundred dollars and up. By comparison, our average price point is around $50. So an important lesson for us was how to communicate price point through our window displays, so people would be excited to come in and check out the product, and know what to expect.

You've received roughly $35 million in funding, including a $20 million Series C round earlier this year. How will you use the most recent investment?

Jain: We will continue to hire in key departments, including design, product development, merchandising, and data. We will also continue to invest in channels that help us grow our audience and tell our story. We have seen success in advertising on Instagram and will continue to spend money here. Because we sell products across a number of different distribution channels, it is very important that we have strong back-end capabilities, including inventory management and warehouse-management systems. We will continue to bolster our capabilities here to ensure our back-end systems can scale with the business.

How else do you envision BaubleBar growing?

Jain: We've built a valuable platform in terms of data-driven design, which is based on the data we glean from BaubleBar shoppers. We're able to see what styles our shoppers are interested in but not buying—that is, they click through but don't buy, or they add to cart but don't check out—along with what styles they buy in every color, what colors are selling out across the board, etc., and then apply those insights in our design and development process. When our partners see the value of the data we have and how we use a lot of data from our customers in decisions about what we sell and don't sell, maybe there is a way to take a step back to see if there is a way we can power the jewelry industry.

60 **CYNET SYSTEMS,** Ashburn, Va.

61. **BAMBOOHR,** Lindon, Utah

62. **PNEUMATICOAT TECHNOLOGIES,** Broomfield, Colo.

63. **BIZCLIK MEDIA,** Carlsbad, Calif.

64. **FORCE MARKETING,** Atlanta

65. **ARTECH INFORMATION SYSTEMS,** Morristown, N.J.

66. **COMPANYBOOK,** Rochester, N.Y.

67. **FAULKNER MEDIA GROUP,** San Diego

68. **BRILLIANT,** Chicago

69. **MAKO INVENT,** Austin, Tex.

70 **QASYMPHONY,** Atlanta

71. **FATTMERCHANT,** Orlando, Fla.

72. **AGUA INC.,** Boulder, Colo.

73. **TRELORA,** Denver

74. **LOTUS BUSINESS SOLUTIONS, INC.,** Englewood, Colo.

75. **DNA,** Brookline, Mass.

76. **M CORP,** Sacramento, Calif.

77. **US TECH SOLUTIONS,** Jersey City, N.J.

78. **GUIDANT FINANCIAL,** Bellevue, Wash.

79. **CALIBER TRUCK CO,** Santa Cruz, Calif.

80 **STITCH LABS,** San Francisco

LEADERSHIP

MANAGEMENT + CULTURE

AYTEKIN TANK, *founder and CEO*

Company: **JotForm** creates online forms for use on websites—no coding skills required. It has helped magicians book events, bakeries accept custom orders, and even Facebook collect questions to ask President Obama during a Town Hall event.

Leadership: Tank has guided the 10-year-old company through rocky waters (i.e. a Secret Service shutdown). Now at two million users, including Uber and Harvard University, annual revenue has grown 50 percent yearly over the past five years.

What do you spend the most of your workday doing?
Fifty percent of my day is devoted to the hiring process. When I interview someone, I take them to lunch to make sure they are the right personal and cultural fit for our company. I also ask myself, *Do I want to work with this person for the next two years?*

New employees are expensive. What's your strategy for growing your staff?
Since I was such a bootstrapper from the start of my company, I was always making sure that when I hired someone, I had money to pay them for a year. I still do this today. This also prevented me from making the mistake of hiring too many people at once.

You have a nontraditional staff structure: Most employees are grouped in four- or five-person pods. Why do this?
These different, cross-functional teams each focus on one thing—like user growth, for example. A team has a marketing person, designer, and developer, so they can all work on a solution together and execute it at the same time. This allows our teams to work faster, learn faster, and come up with solutions quickly. Small teams communicate much easier than large teams. The teams sit together and go out to a company-paid lunch every week, so they have a strong rapport.

In 2012, the Secret Service shut down JotForm. How did you respond?
A user with bad intentions began using JotForm to make phishing forms, asking for people's passwords and banking information. Because one of the Secret Service's jobs is to protect currency, they shut us down for a few days, and some of our users began to have problems. We were very quick to react—we sent an email to all users within hours, explaining what happened and how to keep their forms online. We were transparent. And the openness resulted in an incredible outpouring of support—first in our blog, then in the tech media that covered the news, and in comments on social news sites. That convinced the Secret Service that they did something wrong, and they asked GoDaddy to enable our domain.

From software engineer to CEO, how did you develop your leadership style?
I learned from making mistakes. The biggest one new CEOs make is to talk about the specific tasks at hand instead of the overall goals and mission. Since I came from engineering, I loved the technical details and solving problems. So I made the mistake of not letting go. Even worse, I tried to solve the hard problems for people. Those were the fun part, and I was stealing the opportunity from them. I also didn't want to upset people, so I sugarcoated my feedback. This resulted in them continuing to make the same mistakes.

You don't need to be an asshole to give honest feedback. When your doctor tells you not to smoke, he is doing his job. If you want people to take your feedback to heart, you need to get them to trust you. To accomplish that, you need to do some groundwork. Show them how much you care about your product or service. I learned to not beat around the bush and give my feedback straight and clearly. This way they don't get confused or miss it. □

81. **TECHNOLOGY SERVICE PROFESSIONALS,** Dallas
82. **ADVANCED FRAUD SOLUTIONS,** Kernersville, N.C.
83. **CLICK RAIN,** Sioux Falls, S.D.
84. **CLOUDONE,** Fishers, Ind.
85. **SNIPS MEDIA,** Chicago
86. **CAMPUS ADVANTAGE,** Austin, Tex.
87. **ASSEMBLE SYSTEMS,** Houston
88. **TELARUS,** Sandy, Utah
89. **ARCADIA LOUVERED ROOFS,** Dahlonega, Ga.
90 **COOLBLUEWEB,** Seattle
91. **NETLINE CORPORATION,** Los Gatos, Calif.
92. **OMNI CHEMICALS,** Madison, Wis.
93. **DALTON AGENCY,** Jacksonville, Fla.
94. **GRAND TRUNK,** Skokie, Ill.
95. **LORI'S ORIGINAL LEMONADE,** Ventura, Calif.
96. **E TAILORED,** Fort Lauderdale, Fla.
97. **CULTUREIQ,** Short Hills, N.J.
98. **ACCESS MARKETING COMPANY,** Centennial, Colo.
99. **SALEMOVE,** New York City
100 **QUEST CE,** Milwaukee

STARTUPS TO WATCH

10 innovators making more happen

As dedicated advocates of small-business innovators, Staples and Entrepreneur are proud to present these up-and-coming startups. Discovered by mining the 2016 Entrepreneur 360™ list, these companies are reinventing how consumers and businesses perform everyday tasks.

TOP HONORS

Staples will present these three companies with gift cards, marketing services and mentoring from some of the brightest minds in business.

THE TOWN KITCHEN

$15,000 Staples Gift Card

Founded 2015 • Oakland, Calif.
Sabrina Mutukisna, Tara Mutukisna, Jefferson Sevilla
thetownkitchen.com

The Town Kitchen prepares and delivers locally sourced, chef-prepared lunches. The company hires, trains and mentors under-served youth, who learn career skills with chefs and entrepreneurs.

bitsbox

$10,000 Staples Gift Card

Founded 2014 • Boulder, Colo.
Scott Lininger
Aidan Chopra
bitsbox.com

Started by two ex-Google employees and dads, Bitsbox is a monthly subscription box and website that teaches kids about computer programming.

leesa

$5,000 Staples Gift Card

Founded 2014 • Virginia Beach, Va.
David Wolfe
Jamie Diamonstein
leesa.com

This fast-growing online company sells mattresses to customers in the U.S. and U.K., and is trying to take on big competitors.

$1,000 STAPLES GIFT CARD HONOREES

MIRACULUM
miraculumfire.com
The company has developed a clean-tech, eco-friendly retardant that puts out fires while protecting materials that are often destroyed by most current fire retardant products.

ROCANA
rocana.com
It has developed a way for IT departments in companies to collect, manage and analyze data that they can then translate into metrics that help streamline and improve their IT.

SILVERNEST
silvernest.com
Founded in 2015, Silvernest is a roommate-matching service for boomers and empty nesters looking to share their extra space.

EVOLUTION LABS, INC.
evpco.com
Evolution Labs provides schools with a software engagement platform that helps them recruit, enroll and retain students.

BLUECART
bluecart.com
Launched in 2014, BlueCart uses web and mobile apps to digitally connect restaurants and their vendors.

HIREKEEP
hirekeep.com
HireKeep's job-matching algorithm analyzes things like skill-set, culture, vision, values and compensation to help companies hire tech talent to grow their businesses.

SPLT
splt.io
With a presence in several cities, SPLT is a carpooling platform to provide transportation to under-served markets so that anyone who needs transportation can find it.

PRESENTED BY STAPLES POWERED BY Entrepreneur

The Right

Tools

shiny object

HEAR ONLY WHAT YOU WANT

BLOCK OUT THE OFFICE, EXCEPT FOR THE SOUNDS YOU CAN'T MISS.

By Seth Porges

OPEN OFFICES CAN be hotbeds of creativity and collaboration, as well as noisy distractions. Spotify-blasting headphones can block it all out but will also make you deaf to stuff you still need to know. The Doppler Labs Here One earbuds fix all that: They stream music via Bluetooth while acting like a literal filter for wanted and unwanted noise—blocking out bad sounds (the copy machine, Frank in accounting's personal calls) and letting through the necessary ones (your business partner talking directly to you). Here's how: Built-in microphones take in all the sounds around you, which are processed by an internal computer, and then only the noises you select via an app are actually played into your ears. The app also features a volume control, so you can jack up specific sounds or frequencies (such as those associated with the human voice). You can even take phone calls using the device—but keep your voice down, out of respect for all your poor earbud-less coworkers. *($299 via preorder; hereplus.me)*

Photograph by Dwight Eschlinman

ask a geek

I Have Too Many Communication Tools!

So you've adopted Slack, Flowdock, HipChat, or some of the myriad other collaboration apps. Plus you've still got email. **Now how do you make them work for your team?**

IT'S A SCENE happening in offices around the world: The boss installs a tool like Slack and asks all employees to use it. Some do. Some resist. Email threads and chat-room conversations happen concurrently. Confusion reigns. And eventually everyone asks: *When am I supposed to use this stuff?* Steve Goldsmith, GM of Austin-based HipChat, has an answer: You need to identify how each tool can make your team efficient and then get everyone onboard. *—Mikal E. Belicove*

When to Use Email
Internal email remains best for messages that don't require an employee to respond—for example, notifications of workplace policy updates, leadership changes, and major business shifts. Also use email when you need to BCC someone or when required by law, as is the case with announcements about open-enrollment periods for health insurance.

When to Use Team Messaging
Cloud-based collaboration tools are ideal for high-speed, in-the-moment collaboration among your team members, like sharing files that need to be updated in real time. Use team messaging when soliciting feedback from the entire distribution chain or asking a question whose answer would benefit everyone in the company.

Dealing with Holdouts
What about a stuck-in-their-ways employee who insists on using email for rapid decision-making? When that happens, create a new chat room and invite every colleague on the email thread into the room. This move ought to show the email sender that questions get answered and issues resolved more quickly on collaboration platforms.

Managing Chatty Cathies
If your team messages become so filled with office jokes and GIFs that it's difficult to see actual work-related conversation, set up separate chat rooms where employees can share industry news, update local commuting conditions, learn about social events, and just chew the fat. Meanwhile, don't hesitate to make project-oriented chat rooms available only to team members who need to be there. □

SMARTS ON A STICK

HARNESS ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE WITH THIS HUMBLE-LOOKING GIZMO.

By Marty Jerome

IT LOOKS LIKE an ordinary USB stick. But plug it into any device's USB port and it instantly makes your software smarter—as if you plugged in another brain.

The **Fathom Neural Compute Stick,** made by the semiconductor company Movidius, powers "deep learning"—the ability to see and analyze images, and learn from what it observes, much like a human. We're talking office security cameras that can distinguish a burglar from a janitor, or self-driving cars capable of finding legal, nonmetered parking. The business possibilities are endless.

Tech like this "will replace experts in fields where we simply needed a 'pair of eyes' on the job," says Movidius CEO Remi El-Ouazzane. "We've built machines that can now detect and perceive visual data better than humans."

You'll need some programming chops to take advantage of its abilities. All its computing power comes from inside that little stick, rather than by connecting to the cloud. That cuts down on lag time, which is important for, say, the collision-avoidance system in your drone. Movidius' stick will be out by the end of the year. It will be cheap (less than $100) and energy-efficient. □

Illustration by Paul Wearing

the fix

The Freight Fight Is Over

HOW AN UNDERWEAR E-COMMERCE SITE SOLVED ITS SHIPPING WOES.

By David Port

The faster the Los Angeles–based online underwear retailer MeUndies grew, the more frustrated its COO, Terry Lee, became. The problem was shipping: The now 5-year-old company was manufacturing in Asia and using a freight forwarder to manage the logistical tangle of international shipping to get the product to the States. "We were paying a lot of money but getting zero transparency around pricing and the bare minimum in terms of service and flexibility," Lee says. So he set out to find a better fit for his shipping needs.

The Fix

The freight-forwarding industry is made up of thousands of old-guard companies (one of which MeUndies was using) content to work by telephone. But a few startups have entered the space. In the summer of 2015, Lee picked one of the new guys: Flexport, based in San Francisco. Traditional freight forwarders are often criticized for their lack of clarity around pricing and shipment status, as well as their inability to react quickly to new needs. Flexport aims to remedy that, says founder and CEO Ryan Petersen, with a cloud-based software platform that lets customers track their shipments in real time, see itemized pricing, access customs documents, and change shipping schedules on the fly.

The Results

The app's dashboard makes tracking shipments and viewing itemized costs "incredibly easy and transparent," Lee says. Its prices are comparable to other freight-forwarding services and lack the industry's all-too-common hidden fees. Then there's the human element. With an account exec running point, a Flexport team manages the entire process from pickup at factories in Asia to delivery to a MeUndies U.S. distribution center. (With traditional freight forwarders, Lee says, it's not always clear who's running the show.) "If we need to do something like hold a shipment at port for an extra day, they'll make it happen," Lee says. With his old freight forwarder, he adds, "that kind of service is unheard of."

A Second Opinion

This match makes sense, says John Haber, founder and CEO of the supply-chain-management firm Spend Management Experts. That's because MeUndies, like many young retailers, will experience short-term fluctuations in demand—and that can quickly impact how it handles its shipments. "A bad supply chain can kill a business," Haber says. "So having a single IT solution that provides the visibility to track and trace where that shipment is, in real time, is incredibly valuable." But depending on the needs of your business, you may be better off with a different service—say, an app that handles only a narrower area, such as managing customs. □

Photograph by Brian Higbee

IS PUBLIC WI-FI SAFE?

The short answer: Hell, no. But if you must use the free wireless at your hotel or the satellite office (i.e., Starbucks), here are some precautions you should take.

By Courtney Rubin

Keep it impersonal. Never online-bank via public wi-fi. Obvious, right? But you shouldn't even check email—that can give hackers access to a trove of personal info. This applies even to secure websites, those with *https* (hypertext transfer protocol secure) in the URL. "Public hotspots are susceptible to man-in-the-middle attacks"—where the hacker intercepts communications—"which will strip out the 'secure' part of https," warns David Lee, a product manager for mobile at security software company Norton.

Beware fake networks. Check the network name with the staff of wherever you're working. "You might see 'Free-Starbucks-wifi,' but this could easily be a fake," says Jérôme Segura, a lead malware intelligence analyst at internet security software maker Malwarebytes. You'd be able to get online like everything was normal, except all your traffic would be visible to prying eyes.

Turn off sharing. Your device's sharing function is designed to be used in a collaborative work environment, making it easy to let other computers on the same network access your files—something you definitely do not want on public wi-fi. When you disable sharing, it makes your phone or laptop invisible to others, and thus a less likely target.

Get your own network. Install virtual personal network (VPN) software, which establishes an encrypted tunnel for your internet traffic. But VPNs aren't invulnerable, so you should stick to using https websites (which, *sigh,* still won't guarantee safety). Also, look for a VPN that offers an anti-malware scanner and a mobile app.

Use your phone. You can use your smartphone as a hotspot for your laptop (it's called tethering), which offers a secure connection. It does have a couple of downsides, though: First, you're at the mercy of your carrier's performance and data rates. Second, the websites you're looking at know who you are and what device you're using, whereas a VPN will make you completely anonymous. □

Your Own Private Cloud

THIS EASY-TO-INSTALL "CLOUD IN A BOX" PUTS COMPUTING UNDER YOUR CONTROL.

By Seth Porges

Every headline-grabbing hack is a stark reminder that your data isn't always safe in other companies' hands—or clouds. One solution: Create, and manage, your own cloud using the **ZeroStack Z-Block.**

Step 1: Plug it in. The ZeroStack system is a box (yes, like on *Silicon Valley*) that can quickly plug into a company's network, transforming the system into a web-accessible cloud computer. "Customers can deploy a cloud in less than an hour, instead of days or weeks," says Ajay Gulati, cofounder and CEO of ZeroStack. The price starts at $5,000 per month.

Step 2: Control your data. Your cloud can be accessed from any web browser. Because ZeroStack uses your company's own server, you can keep a watchful eye on your data instead of trusting your valuable information to somebody else's server farm. And while this doesn't make you hackerproof (it's not magic), you won't be suffering collateral damage when some bigtime hack hits a tech giant.

Step 3: Say, "Bye, IT guy." Keeping a fully private cloud afloat typically requires specially trained IT teams. Not this one. "Our management software monitors the cloud for problems and fixes them automatically," Gulati says. And should you need help, service and support from ZeroStack are included. □

THE STAT

66%

Consumers who prefer digital rewards systems to old-fashioned paper punch cards. And you'd better believe that number will only rise.

Source: 2016 Cox Consumer Pulse on Small Businesses

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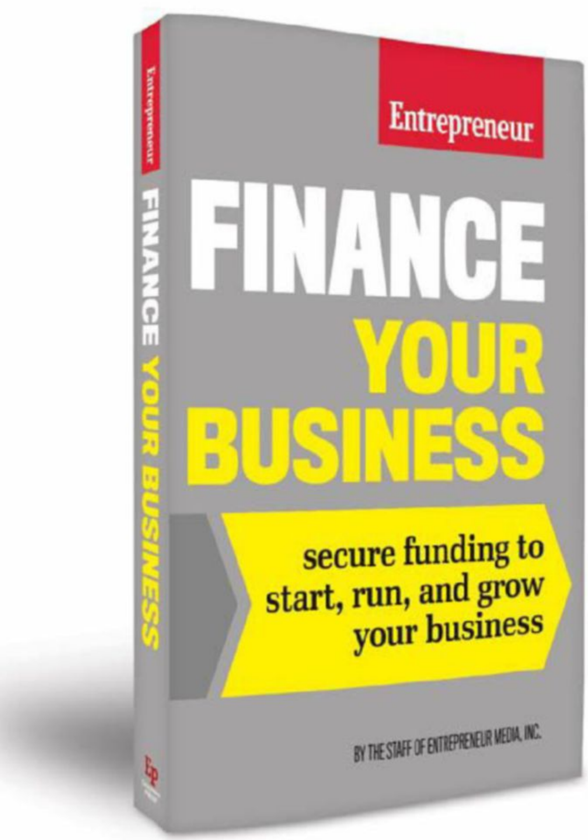
5 TIPS TO DELIVER A PITCH INVESTORS CAN'T TURN DOWN



1 KEEP IT SHORT.

A brilliant idea means nothing unless you can distill down to a few moments of sheer power. The more concise you can be, the more effective you will be. If the investors are interested, they'll ask questions. If they're not, then you will have saved them (and yourself) some time.

2 TURN YOUR PITCH INTO A STORY.

Storytelling is a scientifically-proven way to capture a listener's attention and hold it. Investors are bored with spreadsheets, valuations and numbers. If they want that information, they can get it. Instead, offer the story and pathos behind your startup. Everyone loves a good story, even the most data-driven investor.

3 EXPLAIN YOUR REVENUE MODEL.

Great products don't sell themselves. You sell the product. Investors have to see an airtight strategy for getting the product to market. Most venture capitalists are well aware of the advantages of digital marketing and won't take a second glance at a product that isn't backed by a tactical plan.

4 MARKET IT.

It's essential that you spread the word about your company. You can create a brand identity and develop a marketing campaign that works—without spending a fortune. However, an investment of your time is required.

5 SHOW THEM THE EXIT.

Here's the clincher on a killer pitch: an exit strategy. Starstruck start-ups usually overlook this critical component when they're pitching. They're so sold on their product that they can't conceive that there will ever be an exit.

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<u>ask the money guy</u>

CAN I GET PAID FASTER?

By Joe Worth

FIRST STEP: Set better terms. Otherwise, you're at someone else's mercy.

At one of my companies, we sold six-figure packages of services to Fortune 500 companies. We assumed that getting a signature on a purchase order meant we'd be paid. That turned out not to be true, because our customers' accounts payable departments often had very different ideas. So once we wised up, we made sure someone in their accounts payable signed off on our payment terms *before* we provided the services—and we made sure to find out exactly who would be handling our invoice and payment.

Speaking of invoices: The more thorough they are, the faster you get paid. They

Photograph by Dan Saelinger

need to describe everything ordered and/or services provided. They need purchase order numbers. (A copy of the actual document doesn't hurt.) You want to provide them with absolutely everything you can to prevent them from delaying payment because, as we've probably all heard before, they "don't have enough information." Also be sure to provide clear and complete payment instructions, including prominent display of the date by which they've agreed to pay.

If your client is late on payments, don't include a line at the bottom of invoices or statements that shows how far behind they are. It may feel satisfying, but I've found that it has an unintended consequence: It gives payers the unspoken permission to pay the *oldest* amount due, rather than the entire amount due.

For substantial invoices, consider contacting your customer's accounts payable department 10 days before the payment's due date. Say you want to make sure they have everything they need. Tone is everything here: Don't demand a prompt on-time payment. Instead, ask if you can help them. I call this "training the customer to pay."

So now that you've done everything you can to get paid, you can speed up the process even more by how you accept payment. Here's a rough breakdown.

SPEED	TYPE	FUNDS AVAILABLE	FEES
FASTEST	**Wire transfers.** Save for big-ticket foreign transactions.	Same business day	$15–$20/ transfer
	Credit/debit card payments. You'll need a merchant account set up with a credit card company to process payments.	Two to three business days	5% of total amount
	ACH (automated clearinghouse). The customer authorizes you to directly debit their bank account. Payments can be set up for one-time use or recurring.	Three to five business days	$0–$10/ transfer
	PayPal or Google Checkout. If your customers pay through their own PayPal or Google Checkout account, processing time will be greatly reduced.	Three to 21 business days	2.2%–2.9% of amount + $0.30/ payment
SLOWEST	**Paper checks sent by mail.**	Two to five business days *after* you deposit the check	Does the time spent preparing the check count as a fee?

Joe Worth is a partner at B2B CFO.

vc viewpoint

IS YOUR COMPANY "DEFAULT DEAD"?

Find out fast. And then do something about it.

By Sam Hogg

PAUL GRAHAM, FOUNDER of the accelerator Y-Combinator, coined a term every startup should know: *default dead.* It is a pretty simple concept. Assume that your expenses and revenue growth remain constant, and now

Illustration by Isabel Espanol

Angel Investing 101

BEFORE YOU INVEST IN OTHER ENTREPRENEURS, KNOW THIS. *By Steph Wagner*

A FEW MONTHS AGO, in May, the government finally allowed the average person to become an angel investor. This change was known as Title IV of the JOBS Act. Technically speaking, it allowed "unaccredited investors"—that is, individuals who have less than $1 million in assets, earn no more than $200,000 a year, and are not professional investors—to participate in crowdfunding campaigns in exchange for equity in a company. Maybe you've already done this, or at least have thought about doing it.

Is it a good move? That depends. You *might* be able to put money into the next Facebook…but the chances are low. My fear is that inexperienced investors will more likely bet the farm and lose everything. Now, hey, I know how entrepreneurs think: The greater the risk, the more potential for enormous returns. A lot of VCs think that way, too. But there's a smart way to go about it. Before you jump into an investment, consider a few methods used by the private equity world to increase your odds.

Limit the size of your investment.

Many big institutional investors allocate no more than 10 percent of their assets to VC funds. Do the same with your personal "angel fund." The other 90 percent? Keep that in a well-diversified and appropriately allocated portfolio of stocks, bonds, and cash.

Vet everything.

Many private equity funds will look at more than 1,000 investment opportunities in a year but give money to only five of them. Proper vetting is critical and takes time. So whether you're investing $5,000 or $5 million, don't jump at the first deal you see. Do your homework, and be ready to say no.

Hedge your bet.

Private equity funds will invest in, say, 30 companies, knowing most won't pay out—but betting one or two will hit big. You should play the odds as well, even if all you have is $25,000 to invest. Build a portfolio of at least five investments, and count on losing your money on one or more of them.

If you lose, claim it.

If you're looking to win big by gambling on a few early-stage deals, your odds are worse than the ones you'll find in Vegas. (I'm not kidding.) But high risks aside, there is one silver lining to losing money on these investments: Those losses may become an ordinary income deduction on next year's taxes. That's not the ideal outcome, but this is one place where our tax code can help mitigate the pain. □

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

fast-forward into the future: Will you run out of money before you turn a profit? That means you're default dead. (And if you will escape the red before running out of cash, congrats: You're default alive!)

This isn't just an academic exercise. Go ahead and graph your monthly expenses and revenue over time, and find the point where they (hopefully) intersect and you become cash-flow positive. The amount of money needed to get there—between now and profitability—is the amount you need to secure from investors or other funding sources. And until you can get that funding, you'll need to concentrate on growing revenue and keeping your operation running on the cheap. By carefully monitoring this graph, a default dead company can track its performance on a month-to-month basis and react to negative changes, such as the breakeven date suddenly moving from one year to two years.

The VC firm I work for has invested in two Y-Combinator companies, and I noticed that these startups evaluate this metric constantly to help them prioritize their time and brainpower. After all, few can rely on a bottomless cash hoard like Uber does with its $8.71 billion raised. The rest have to take their short-term future seriously. I've been particularly impressed by how these Y-Combinator companies know their respective default dead status and its fluidity. This keeps their teams aware that, unless important changes are made, their operations right now aren't sustainable. They may even need to chuck their original business model and go in a new direction. They understand, better than most startups I've seen, that revenue forecasts five to 10 years in the future are great to drool over, but they mean nothing if the money runs out in the next two years.

So when you find yourself starting a company where expenses exceed revenues—which is pretty much every startup in history—make sure you evaluate and pay attention to this important status. If you realize you're going to be default dead for years and years (or decades, in the case of Amazon), your daily priority should be running a lean operation and soliciting more investment. Don't bother deciding how much to spend on the company holiday party. Save that decision for the year you become default alive. □

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

ADVERTISEMENT

Why You Need an Insurance 'Checkup' More Often Than You Think

Don't buy it and forget it. Here's how to review your insurance coverage -- and when.

Running a business takes skilled multi-tasking and flexibility. You complete some tasks quickly and move on without looking back. Other things require more time and should not be just checked off and forgotten– including how you insure your business.

It's important to reassess your insurance coverage as your business expands, sells new products, moves to a new location, makes staffing changes, and does everything else that goes along with growth.

"A data breach or car accident doesn't wait, and these things can really damage a small commercial enterprise," says Benedikt Sander, senior vice president and product manager at Liberty Mutual Insurance.

Rather than hope for the best, schedule yearly insurance "checkups," keep in touch with your agent, and be aware of how changes in your business could affect the risks you face.

What you can do.

It's good practice to have a yearly insurance checkup, but you also should do one whenever there's a significant change in your operations. Say, for example, you own a thriving restaurant and decide to add delivery and hire a driver who uses his personal car. One night on the job, he gets a text on his phone, takes his eyes off the road, and rear-ends the car in front of him.

Since he was driving for your business, you could be held liable for damages. Yet, you aren't covered because when you first met with your agent, your business had a few employees and a single location and certainly no drivers.

"If you're unsure of how a certain change may affect your insurance coverage, then call your agent," says Sander. By working with an independent insurance agent, you can make sure your insurance coverage accounts for every aspect of your operation.

Be thorough.

Here are some questions you can ask yourself as you review your operations:

What changes have I made to my business operations in the last year?

- Have I purchased any new equipment or technology?
- Am I offering a new service?
- Did my business have a significant increase in revenue?
- Am I conducting business internationally?

What has changed with my staff?

- Have I hired more employees?
- Have any employees' roles changed?
- Am I hiring temporary workers?

What has changed with my vehicles or drivers?

- Did I purchase new vehicles or remove vehicles from my fleet?
- Do I have any new drivers?
- Do my drivers use rented or personal vehicles?

Based on your answers, your agent may recommend higher or lower policy limits, adding new coverage, or removing coverage you no longer need. "Insurance is a small part of overall business expenses. It's not the added cost that keeps someone from updating his or her business's coverage. It's more about the business owner not being aware of the risks he or she might be taking," Sander says. "Having an annual insurance checkup helps ensure you have the right type and amount of coverage to protect your business."

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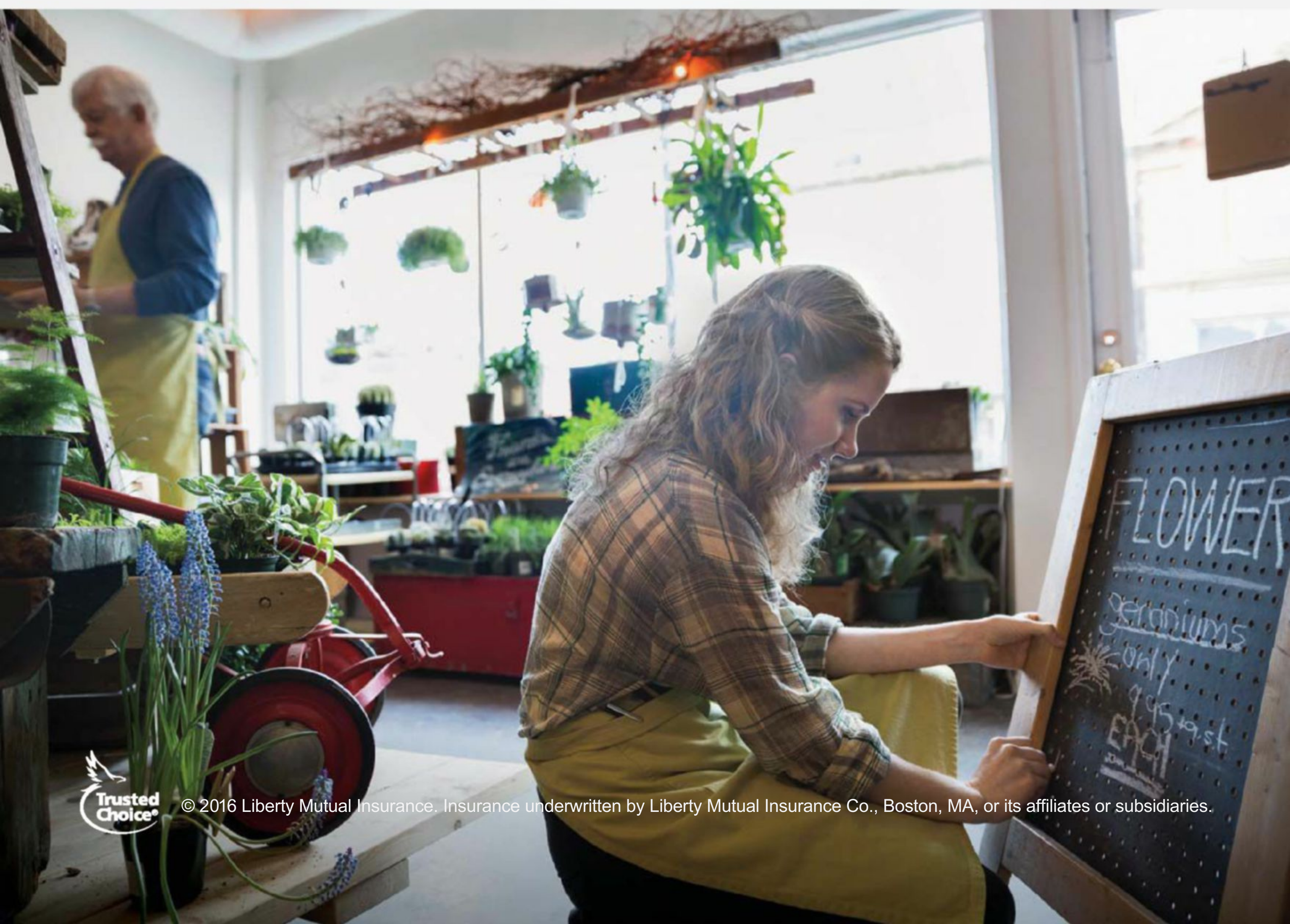
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Growing Up

HAVE MORE DEMAND THAN YOU CAN AFFORD TO FILL? THIS NEW SPIN ON FINANCING MIGHT HELP.

By Michelle Goodman

THE $510,000 Crista Freeman had raised from angel investors served her well: The money helped her Phin & Phebes artisanal ice cream reach stores around New York City. After four years, she was ready to expand—but could barely afford to do it. Once she buys ingredients, it can take up to six months for her customers to finally pay her. "When the product gets manufactured," she says, "I'm burning through cash."

Sure, she could have applied for a loan from a traditional online lender, but those credit lines average less than $250,000. She needed more. And she didn't have time to deal with securing a bank loan.

That's where P2Binvestor helped. It's an online lender that puts a modern twist on "factoring," which we'll get into later. In this case, P2Binvestor gave Freeman a $500,000 credit line. With that money, heading into the spring, she could aggressively grow her business and not worry about cash flow. Here's the scoop on this service.

Who it's for

P2Binvestor offers a $250,000 to $10 million revolving line of credit to food manufacturers, wholesalers, fashion retailers, subscription software companies, and other U.S. business-to-business startups. To be eligible, startups must be at least a year old and have at least $500,000 in annual revenue or $50,000 in monthly revenue. P2Binvestor will then look at collateral—such as inventory, receivables, and ongoing customer contracts—to determine the size of the loan.

The idea is to make "getting $1 million as easy as getting $50,000," says Krista Morgan, P2Binvestor's cofounder and CEO. Since launching in 2014, the Denver-based lender has extended $300 million in credit to 82 companies. The average loan is $750,000.

How it works

A quick lesson on factoring, which has a history going back centuries. Traditionally, factoring isn't technically a loan; rather, a company in need of money (say, one that makes ice cream) sells its customers' orders (from the people who want ice cream) to a financial institution at a discount (say, 90 cents for every $1 worth of orders). That way, the ice cream company has the money to fulfill the orders, and the finance company is responsible for actually collecting on the invoices.

P2Binvestor works in a similar way, in that it evaluates a company's invoices. But rather than buy up the orders, it extends lines of credit. P2Binvestor's annualized rates range from 12 to 18 percent, decreasing as a company becomes a safer credit risk. Borrowers sign a one-year agreement on the credit line, with no penalty for early repayment if the borrower opens a new credit line with a bank.

How it makes scale happen

Besides covering operating costs and payroll in a pinch, the credit line will help Phin & Phebes sell a projected $2 million worth of ice cream this year to more than 2,000 stores in the U.S.—including Whole Foods, Safeway, and Walmart. "We've been able to grow revenue this year by around 170 percent," Freeman says. Now, that's cool. □

How I Saved $205,200

Rachel Stelter, brand director, Winc, Los Angeles

"Wine-bottle necks are often covered in a wrap; the industry calls it a capsule. Capsules are made of polyethylene and aluminum, which is hard to recycle. They are also unnecessary for table wines that will be consumed relatively soon. So, starting in June this year, we got rid of those capsules on 90 percent of our wines, saving us $.04 to $.06 off the cost of each bottle." —*As told to Margaret Littman*

Photograph by Chris DeLorenzo

8 EASY WAYS TO START BUILDING YOUR PLATFORM TODAY

BY WENDY KELLER

START A WEEKLY BLOG

Blogging is a great way to start learning what appeals to your audience. It is a relatively slow but inexpensive method of aggregating analytic data. Start by listing topics to write about, write consistently, and share those blogs on your business Facebook and Twitter pages.

SELL YOUR PRODUCT FOR FREE

Give your target audience a freemium with the highest possible perceived value, but that costs you little or nothing to produce. These "lead magnets" positively attract prospects that will ultimately buy from you.

WRITE A BOOK

Putting your knowledge in written format will can give your business credibility and help position you as an industry thought leader.

CREATE WEBINARS, VIDEOS AND PODCASTS

These formats can help you story sell your products, establish yourself as an industry expert, and reach new audiences.

CREATE CONTESTS, RAFFLES, AND GIVEAWAYS

The more people who know about your contest, the more people who know about your business. A percentage of those who find out about your business in this way will be interested in finding out more, even if they didn't win a prize.

SET UP WORKSHOPS AND SEMINARS

If you have even an ounce of "teacher" or a dash of "performer energy" in your blood, you may enjoy using live events as a way to build your platform. This can be a fun, relatively easy way to get a lot of new business fast.

GIVE SPEECHES ON YOUR EXPERTISE

Of the billion dollars dedicated to hiring speakers, 85 percent is paid to those whose content is valuable and relevant. So make sure your topic is right for the audience before you pitch event managers.

ASK PEOPLE TO SAY NICE THINGS ABOUT YOU

Testimonials, endorsements, reviews, and referrals help more people trust in your product or service. There's nothing better than to share what your happy customers are saying about you.

TURN YOUR PLATFORM INTO PROFITS

Learn how to pick the right promotion strategies for your business, market your products and services, develop an enthusiastic customer base, and ultimately create a strong platform that distinguishes your business from the rest—all without spending a fortune.

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profile

RETAIL ROOMIES

LOCATION CAN MAKE OR BREAK A BUSINESS. BUT NOT EVERYONE CAN FIND OR AFFORD DESIRABLE COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE. FOR SOME, THE ANSWER IS BUNKING UP WITH A FELLOW ENTREPRENEUR.

By Kate Rockwood

Kate Jotzat (*left*) of Chroma K8 and Jenny Duranski of Noktivo are big fans of co-retailing.

Photograph by Jesse Chehak

JENNY DURANSKI WAS EIGHT months pregnant, on her hands and knees, cleaning up a flood in her eco-friendly nail salon, Noktivo. She'd signed a lease for the Chicago retail spot just nine months earlier, but as her belly grew, so did issues with the shop: Plumbing leaked after every rain, and this latest flood—caused by a burst pipe—would shutter her business for weeks. "It was an old building, and the landlord never fixed anything," she says. She had to move, but her savings were depleted. When another entrepreneur, Kate Jotzat, offered to let her rent out a room in a hair salon, Chroma K8, Duranski jumped. "I was certain it would be temporary," she says. "I planned to stay just long enough for me to find a location on my own."

Instead, Noktivo found a long-term home. For the past year and a half, the two companies have shared one retail space—with separate logos out front plus distinct hours and personnel. Duranski still pays the neighborhood average for commercial retail rent ($50 per square foot), but now it covers utilities, wi-fi, and common cleaning. "I don't have separate bills to worry about," she says. "And I've maintained the same amount of sales. Because it's a smaller space, I'm making more—I've gone from $100 to $600 [in earnings] per square foot."

Duranski had stumbled into the entrepreneur's version of sharing an apartment: co-retailing. As the cost of retail spaces continues to rise, particularly in major cities, business owners large and small are increasingly discovering the benefits of sharing: There are financial incentives, of course, but bunking up can also help companies reach new clients and even offer opportunities to collaborate. And there's no end to the possible combinations.

The arrangement isn't entirely new: The in-store café has been around for years, perhaps most famously with Starbucks providing a reading space for Barnes & Noble shoppers. But the in-store café, too, can take many forms.

When Shinola, the Detroit-based retailer of watches and high-end leather goods, wanted to open a New York store with a coffee shop, it approached Manhattan café The Smile. The café's owner, Matt Kliegman, was skeptical. "You see a lot of coffee shops buried in the back, like a retailer didn't have use for some corner of the store and convinced some hardworking entrepreneur to try to sell from there," he says. "Those never work." But in 2013, Shinola offered prime, front window space for a grab-and-go café Kliegman dubbed Smile Newsstand. He now has access to a much larger customer base. And while café foot traffic doesn't always translate to watch purchases, it does bring fresh awareness to Shinola. "Fast-forward three years, and there are customers just for them, just for us, and those who overlap," says Shinola CMO Bridget Russo.

That's a common experience at co-retailing spaces: The businesses really do run separately, though there's a naturally shared interest. Noktivo and Chroma K8 even offer cross-promotions ranging from booking integrations (make a hair appointment online and a pop-up suggests a manicure) to seasonal deals (a head-to-toe summer makeover).

And yet, future co-retailers beware: Unless two companies merge into one, they'll always be just dating, not married. Sharing space doesn't mean sharing goals or growth. It's important to be prepared for solo futures and to make sure that customers are never confused about the arrangement. And, where possible, co-retailers should build escape hatches into their leases. Less than two years later, in fact, the beauty parlor pair are already on divergent paths: Noktivo wants to open a second location, but Chroma K8 doesn't. Noktivo is now seeking another partner for its new location.

Jasmin Cromwell faced a deeper challenge when her roommate's plans changed. She owns Bodhi Seed Yoga & Wellness Studio in Mount Clemens, Mich., which shared 4,000 square feet with a bookstore for years. When she first signed on, she negotiated terms with her landlord: If the bookstore closed and she couldn't find a new "roommate" within a year, her landlord could find one, but she retained the option to vacate within six months if the new roomie didn't work out.

Recently, the bookstore did close. She fretted about potential new space-mates. "We have to be sensitive to sounds and smells, or the integrity of my business is at risk," she says. "Having an auto-supply store next door to a yoga studio might be hard, but when you're sharing a space, it's impossible."

She lucked out: The Loft Fine Art opened on the other side of her space this summer. "The owner used to come to yoga all the time," she says, pleased about her new neighbor. "I think art and yoga do have something in common." And now the entrepreneurs have something in common, too: an address. □

How to Survive the Holidays

The most wonderful time of the year is often the most headache-inducing time for entrepreneurs. Four business owners reveal their hard-learned tricks for making it to the New Year.

Know your limits

"My photography business is just me. It's great to have the option to stay up till 3 A.M. designing Christmas cards, but I also need to know when to pass on jobs. If someone calls on December 8 and wants a family session, holiday cards made, and a big canvas print for Grandma, I have to say no."

—Mary Hanson, Mary Hanson Photography, Minneapolis

Set staffing expectations

"I run a day spa and boutique. People come in as late as Christmas Eve getting services done to look good for the holidays! We have about 12 employees and try to limit any kind of vacation after October 31. There can be exceptions, but our staff want to be here for their clients."

—Lisa Mergel, Kanvas Beauty, Tallahassee

Prepare early

"The first year we opened our pie shop, we had 88 orders for Thanksgiving, and we lost our minds. Now it's a smooth operation—last year we shipped 1,500 pies. In October, we build boxes, start prepping our crust, and make sure we've budgeted for our produce and dairy orders, which go through the roof."

—Valeri Lucks, Honeypie Cafe, Milwaukee

Pick your battles

"Our gift-shop return policy is that we do only exchanges or store credit. Sometimes customers—*never* a regular—will demand a refund. If they're going to make a scene or write a really negative Yelp review, it's easier to do the refund and move on. Having someone write about a bad experience, you can't win that back."

—Brandy Deieso, The Little Apple, Philadelphia

FREAKY FRESH CATERING

12 OR 24 PACKS OF HALF SANDWICHES – MINI JIMMYS

CORPORATE BOX LUNCHES

"OLD SCHOOL" PARTY PLATTERS

expert advice

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

Americans drank 913 million gallons of wine last year. But selling that vino isn't always easy. *By Ashlea Halpern*

CERI SMITH
OWNER
BIONDIVINO
SAN FRANCISCO

"In my 'free time,' I am at wineries, meeting producers, tasting, and committing it all to memory. Translating that into recommendations for customers is an art."

REGINA GAINES
CO-OWNER
HOUSE OF PURE VIN
DETROIT

"We carry a little of everything and not a whole lot of a few things. Better to reorder a great-selling product than have 12 bottles sitting on your shelf with no movement."

HYUN YOUNG JUNG
CO-OWNER
THE WINEY NEIGHBOR
BROOKLYN

"To always pay our invoices on time, we played it safe to start—ordering very minimally and relying on our customers to give us feedback on which wines to carry."

No one likes generic wine descriptions, "and they certainly don't want to be talked down to by a know-it-all employee," says Smith. That's why she writes clever hangtags that liken wines to noises (treble, bass, etc.) or people (like the real example above).

900
The number of brands Gaines has in stock at House of Pure Vin.

35%–45%
The typical margin on a bottle of wine.

$20,000
How much a wine shop should aim to make in sales per week.

$37,000
Estimated monthly operating expenses for a specialty wine shop, including inventory purchases, rent, and loan payments.

WORDS OF ADVICE

HOLD THE RENOVATION

In some states, a retailer must sign a lease before applying for a liquor license—and then pay rent while waiting. Jung has seen fledgling businesses get killed by this. To hedge her bets, she held off on renovations until she was certain she'd get her license.

The Holy Trinity of Wine Retail

Three of the most important relationships to cultivate.

SHOPPERS
Your best customers aren't necessarily the biggest spenders; they're the ones who come back a lot. "I like to think that our $15 to $20 bottles drink better than most $30 to $50 'branded' bottles," says Smith. "It isn't about the price; it's about developing a relationship with your customer."

NEIGHBORS
In some states, a would-be wine shop must notify residents within a certain radius. Don't underestimate the power of the local community board, or even one prickly neighbor, to contest your plans. Courting the locals early and respectfully could save you a bundle in the long run.

WINE REPS
"Treat your wine reps like human beings," says Smith. Don't make them wait to see you or attend cattle-call buying sessions. Learn their product and be up front.

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

PHOTOGRAPHS & ILLUSTRATION BY GETTY IMAGES/PETER DAZELEY (CORKSCREW), ADRIAN ASSALVE (WINE STAINS), CSA-ARCHIVE (PAINTBRUSH)


"The military prepared me for a career where I'm the boss."
~ OMAR ZAKI
Allstate Agency Owner since 2007
Omar Zaki had a successful career in the military, then worked his way up in the corporate world. But for Omar, something was still missing. A lifelong dream of owning his own business. He decided to chase after that dream and became an Allstate Agency Owner.
Today he has six employees and two locations. Omar attributes his success to the self-confidence and work ethic he developed while in the military.
Omar went after what he wanted and became his own boss. If you're interested in making a career change and becoming an Allstate Agency Owner call an executive recruiter today at 877-875-3466.
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FIRST COMES LOVE, THEN COMES LAUNCHING A BUSINESS

COFOUNDERS OFTEN JOKE THAT THEIR RELATIONSHIP IS AS COMPLICATED AS A MARRIAGE. THREE COPING TECHNIQUES FOR WHEN YOUR COFOUNDER IS YOUR BETTER HALF. *By Kate Rockwood / Illustration by SHOUT*

Heather and Allan Staker used to have date nights. Then the married couple launched a startup together. "Friday date night would turn into eating Indian food in front of our laptops," Heather says. "I was starting to feel overwhelmed—we were always together, but we were always working. I went to see a life coach, who told me, 'You've got to stay in love with each other, apart from your business.'" ¶ So they came up with a rule: No computers on date nights. It wasn't easy, but they stuck to it. And with technology banished, their special dinners became a time to connect and talk as spouses rather than as cofounders. Their online educational program, Brain Chase, could wait.

The benefits of starting a business with a loved one seem obvious: You're working with a person you trust, and whom you already know you enjoy spending time with. There are plenty of high-profile success stories—Cisco, Eventbrite, Popsugar, ModCloth, and SlideShare were all started by couples—to serve as inspiration for marrying business and love. But even the best partnerships can be strained by the stresses of running a business. Finding dedicated time for a relationship when there are shared work responsibilities to be delegated, staff to be managed, and conflicts to be resolved is no joke. And that's why when things go wrong, perhaps nobody has it worse than partners who are both in love and in business: The stakes can be so much higher.

"It's not utopia for everybody," says Glenn Muske, a professor at North Dakota State University who has tracked the same group of 200 partnered cofounders (or "co-preneurs") since 1997. "We find that co-preneurs feel they're more successful, both in business and in their personal lives. But you have to go into it with your eyes wide open."

1 START WITH A PLAN

For many couples, starting a business together feels natural: The idea likely came out of their own relationship. In the Stakers' case, Brain Chase began as the duo brainstormed ways to keep their five kids engaged over an upcoming school break. Heather had worked in education and knew that most children regress as much as two months during summer vacation. She suggested creating a Google doc of the best online activities and challenging their kids to complete them. Allan started riffing: What if the Google doc was an app that could stitch together different programs? From there, the ideas flowed: A prize at the end! Get the neighborhood kids involved!

For Father's Day, Heather gifted Allan three nights of solitude in a hotel room to hammer out the business plan while she took care of the kids. Just after, Brain Chase secured its first investor. The couple raised $500,000 and took the company live in 2014, and has since had more than 6,000 kids sign up to learn.

But while they shared jointly in the idea, they were aware that they couldn't share every duty. "From the start, we knew we wanted a division of labor," says Allan. Heather handled the high-level work and educational goals of the company, and Allan took on the day-to-day operations.

Daniel Van Der Vliet, executive director at the Smith Family Business Initiative at Cornell University, says this is a critical first step—and not just because it makes the couple more efficient. "Someone has to take the leader role," he says. "That doesn't mean they're more valuable than the other person, but it creates a sense of order and responsibility." And divvied domains also make it harder to get played against one another. "Employees will quickly figure out who the pushover is and approach that person," says Muske. "But you should divide the areas of expertise and then avoid stepping into the other person's side."

Mariah and Sam Calagione did just that when they launched Dogfish Head Brewings & Eats in Rehobeth Beach, Del., back in 1995: Sam focused 100 percent on getting the brewery off the ground, while Mariah helped run the dining room. They also proceeded within their own comfort zones, which allowed each of them to work on Dogfish Head without regrets. "I'm more risk-averse than Sam, who always wants to go gangbusters," says Mariah. "For the first two years, I had a job with a steady paycheck and insurance, and I worked at the restaurant on nights and weekends."

When Mariah finally joined the brewery business full-time, she stepped into marketing with Sam—but the business couldn't afford a full-time HR or payroll person, so those duties fell to her as well. "She did 10 points better on her math SAT than I did, so her job was accounting," Sam says. (That's a joke.) As the company grew, they discovered that sharply defined roles were even more important—not just for their marriage but for their employees as well.

"We didn't want to create a scenario where none of the employees understand the difference between the two of us," says Mariah. "Or if they don't like what Mom has to say, they'll go ask Dad."

2 KEEP IT PROFESSIONAL

Unlike the Brain Chase and Dogfish Head founders, Heidi Zak and Dave Spector both decided to go all in when they set out to launch the San Francisco–based bra and underwear company


YogaFit®
COME IN ONE WEEK FREE
Snap FITNESS 24-7

Mariah and Sam Calagione of Dogfish Head.

“WE DIDN’T WANT A SCENARIO WHERE IF EMPLOYEES DON’T LIKE WHAT MOM HAS TO SAY, THEY’LL GO ASK DAD.” —*MARIAH CALAGIONE*

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF DOGFISH HEAD BREWERY

ThirdLove in 2014. “We both had busy jobs before,” says Zak, who left her post at Google to start the company. “ThirdLove wasn’t a weekend project. We gave up some security by both joining full-time, but we wanted to be equally committed and equally in the crazy.”

That commitment meant constant closeness. Keeping in-office interactions more professional than personal isn’t a challenge for Zak and Spector—they’re not the type of schmoopy couple to call each other “babe”—but they’re still mindful of how they communicate at work. “You talk and joke and argue with your significant other a certain way, because you’re so familiar,” says Zak. “We both have strong opinions, and only one person can win each point when debating. As we’ve grown, we’ve focused more on making sure it stays elevated and professional—in word choice and in tone.”

Because while evidence of marital intimacy might not seem like a big deal, “it can be hard to tell how your romance affects employees or customers or vendors,” says Kathy Marshack, Ph.D., a psychologist and the author of *Entrepreneurial Couples*. “It’s so much easier to be discreet than to deal with someone who’s offended.” Setting up your environment so it feels more professional—like having a work wardrobe or a coworking space rather than just your couch—can naturally curb some of that cutesy behavior, she says.

Still, Zak and Spector never shy away from drawing attention to their marriage when talking with investors. Recent successes have warmed VCs to the idea of cofounders who balance business and a relationship—some investors even say married cofounders can actually snag more love from venture capitalists. That certainly seems to be true in the case of ThirdLove, which uses advanced image-recognition technology to help women find their ideal undergarments. It launched with $5.6 million in seed funding and closed an $8 million Series A round in February. Pretty great for an app that matches women with the perfect bra in the perfect size—just take a picture of your torso.

3 SET EXPECTATIONS EARLY

Before pouring all your coupled energy into a budding business, it's important to set parameters of where work ends and where life begins. For the Stakers, the no-laptops-on-date-night rule was a romance (and sanity) saver, and it inspired additional at-home rules. "We usually start fighting if we talk about *anything* related to work or money after 9 P.M.," Heather says. "So we try to shut down the conversation by then and just pick it up again in the morning."

For others, the marriage becomes all about the work—and that can be OK, too. An added benefit of married business partners is not being nagged on the weekend or on vacation to unplug, as spouses often do. A cofounder gets how impossible that is—and they're right there next to you, clicking through emails.

"It's ridiculous to try to keep your business and your personal life separate," says Marshack. "And the truth is, if you don't focus all your energy on your company when you're starting out, it runs more risk of failing." But that doesn't mean a free pass to shelve your personal time, she points out. Go ahead and work together, commute together, take work calls on vacation. But also make plans to do things other than work. Tack a day of vacation onto that conference; schedule an outing. Says Marshack, "Work will come up, but don't view it as bad."

And don't neglect big-picture planning. Van Der Vliet urges coworking couples to imagine where their business—and their relationship—could go in the future. "As difficult as it is, sit down and talk through: What if one of you doesn't want to do this at some point? What if you make millions and want to sell? What if you don't? What if one of you dies? What if you run out of money?" he says. "Putting these things in place doesn't mean it's going to constrain you. These are situations every business might face sooner or later, whether it's hypersuccessful or a terrible failure."

Either way, your co-preneur's got your back. □

Humberto Gomez, a Marine Reservist, found a new challenge.

franchisee

THE LURE OF THE ROAD

WHY HUMBERTO GOMEZ TRADED IN A SUCCESSFUL DESK JOB FOR A MORE MOBILE GIG.

by Jason Daley

Photographs by Juliana Sohn

Humberto Gomez had a good thing going. For 11 years he ran a Farmers Insurance Agency so successfully that he was able to buy a piece of land and build his own office, complete with a private shower he used after daytime runs. Still, he grew restless. As a Marine Reservist who once worked for the Arlington, Tex., police department, he's always on the lookout for new challenges. He found one after insuring several franchisees of Dental Fix Rx, a mobile company that fixes equipment on-site in dentists' offices. "Out of all the people I insured, every time I talked to those guys, they sounded positive and excited," says Gomez. "They were always adding another vehicle or more employees." So late last year, he handed the reins of his insurance company to his wife and bought a Dental Fix Rx unit. He rolled out onto the streets of Arlington in January, bringing in $10,000 in revenue his first month alone. By the summer, he'd already hired a second technician.

"Presentation is important," says Gomez. He carries extra shirts in his van.

You basically went from a white-collar job to a blue-collar job. Do people think you're nuts?
A lot of people did think I was crazy. They said, "You're a CEO of an agency, and you're taking off the suit to get dirty and greasy?" I grew up working in the fields, and I'm used to hard work. I was getting tired of sitting in a chair all day. I'm very active and have to do things with my hands. It makes me feel good about myself. This was a perfect fit. My goal is to build this business up and get off the van and become a manager.

What do you actually do?
Anything a dentist touches, we fix that. The heart of a dentist's office has three components—a compressor; the vacuum pump, which runs the tools with compressed air; and the sterilizer. If any of those is broken, the office has to close. We can fix about 80 to 85 percent of problems on-site. Some things I need to take back to my office, and [others] need to be replaced.

Are there enough dentists to support a repair business?
For sure. There are a lot of successful franchisees with 80 to 100 customers. In my territory, we have 420 dentists. I want to concentrate on capturing about 100 of those before I grow.

What have you learned from the military that influenced you the most?
Presentation is important. When I hire staff, I put on a class about how to dress. I've had dentists and their staff say they like how professional and squared away we look. The Marines also gave me the discipline and mental strength to deal with all the stuff business ownership throws at you.

So you must carry a lot of extra shirts.
Ha! I was just telling my new partner that I recommend keeping an extra set of shirt and pants in the van. Sometimes we do get a little dirty. □

franchisor

Overstock for All

How MODE, a growing new franchise, was inspired by an unexpected delivery.

By Jason Daley

CIARA STOCKELAND started her retail career with a little maternity boutique in her hometown of Fargo, N.D. In 2006, about a year after she opened, a trucking company reached out for help: It had accrued a couple of semitrailers full of overstocked merchandise and needed to offload it. "I rarely say no to an opportunity," says Stockeland, who promptly set up a pop-up shop next to her fancier store to sell this random assortment of goods: shoes, clothing, accessories, and household items. She put it all out in cardboard boxes on folding tables. And then an unexpected thing happened: People ransacked the bins. "Consumers loved getting these outlet deals. I took a step back and said, 'This works and makes money—it's probably a smarter way to go,'" she says. So she ditched her boutique and, because pulling random goods off semitrucks isn't a solid business model for anyone, began purchasing extras directly from designers and manufacturers. Her new concept, which she called MODE, offered 70 to 75 percent off designer retail. It resonated with customers, and by 2010, she began franchising. Now MODE has 10 stores in the upper Midwest and one in South Carolina, with plans to reach 75 units by 2024.

MODE is reminiscent of an outlet mall. What's different?

Consumers are really disappointed with outlet malls; they're not what they used to be. Companies are manufacturing cheaper products just for the outlets. Our consumers are getting real designer products—the same denim jeans designed for the high-end shelf that were supposed to be $180 but are $40 at our store.

So, is this returned merchandise? Or last year's styles?

No; everything we have is brand-new. There are several ways we find inventory. Retailers buy their clothes months ahead and project what they need, but sometimes they have a slower season than anticipated and cancel shipments, which we buy from the manufacturers. Sometimes there are overruns from brands that did well last year but aren't as big a deal this year. There are also designers that go out of business or rebrand and need to sell off inventory. I'm adding to the list of designers and manufacturers we work with weekly.

Who are your primary customers?

We're targeting the people along the I-29 corridor from Fargo down to Texas. We feel our concept really fits the Midwest consumer. These are people who want to be stylish but are very thrifty or economically savvy. I think we'll find MODE shoppers everywhere—consumers who can afford $180 jeans but are very practical people and conservative spenders.

Jeans, jeans, jeans. What's with the denim obsession?

I wanted to develop something that set the brand apart. And I knew we were going to have a lot of denim at a price point no one else did, so I trademarked the phrase "Home of the $40 designer jean." Denim shopping is like swimsuit shopping; women hate it. Unlike boutiques, which carry only small sizes, we have sizes 0 to 22. We always have 300 pairs on the floor at every store—in Fargo, we have 500. I like to think of it as our $5 footlong; everyone knows we have it, even if they decide to buy something else. □

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF MODE

Veteran **Angela Cody-Rouget** relied on many vet-specific programs to help her rebrand and expand her franchise, Major Organizers.

★ NOW ★ RECRUITING: VETREPRENEURS

A surge of new programs is helping veterans transition into civilian entrepreneurship—and especially franchising.

By Jason Daley ★ Photograph by Pieter Henket

AIR FORCE MAJOR ANGELA CODY-ROUGET was once responsible for America's nuclear arsenal. She was a missile launch officer, stationed inside an underground control center. The job required a mastery of endless systems and protocols, and she felt she'd gotten a lesson in "organized chaos." So when it was time for her to transition into civilian life about a decade ago, she decided to play to her strengths: She'd build a business around being organized.

"When I got out of the military," she says, "I just walked away." She had her eye on private industry and figured the government would be of no help. In 2006, she launched a company called Major Mom. It began as a fleet of professional organizers across Colorado and Arizona, who go into homes and "liberate" them from their mess. As her company grew, she wanted guidance on how to expand it into a national franchise—and that's when she discovered that her initial assumption was wrong. The government, in fact, *was* trying to help its veterans set up businesses. And so were many other organizations.

In the past decade, a wide-ranging network of services has developed to assist people exactly like Cody-Rouget—educating, funding, and mentoring vets turned entrepreneurs to help them succeed in businesses, and franchising in particular. The federal Small Business Administration (SBA) has a robust program; its two-day Boots to Business basics course is offered on military bases and has been attended by 20,000 troops transitioning out since 2013. Overall, there are now more than 14,000 organizations, universities, private philanthropies, and nonprofits helping veteran entrepreneurs in the United States.

The momentum can be felt even in typically slow-moving corners of government: In 1999, Congress passed the Veterans Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Act and rolled out 13 regional Veterans Business Outreach Centers (VBOC) across the U.S. These spaces offer training as well as connections to mentors and financing. In the coming year, six more centers are expected to open—a 46 percent increase.

"I didn't know the SBA and other groups had veterans programs," says Cody-Rouget. But once she discovered them, she quickly enrolled in multiple classes and began growing Major Mom into something even bigger.

AS A GROUP, VETERANS HAVE long been known for their entrepreneurialism. There's good reason: Vets are disciplined problem solvers and have learned to thrive within rigid systems. According to one study, 49.7 percent of World War II veterans started their own small businesses, 40 percent of Korean War veterans became entrepreneurs, and 33 percent of Vietnam vets have owned or operated a business. But until recently, veterans had to use civilian business resources.

Today's generation of vets is entering a different world. Misty Stutsman, director of the Center of Excellence for Veteran Entrepreneurship at Syracuse University's Institute for Veterans and Military Families, says the current abundance of vet-specific resources has created a golden age for what the industry calls "vetrepreneurs." (Yes, for

Mike Francomb, senior VP of development at RecruitMilitary, connects vets with franchise brands.

PHOTOGRAPH BY MIKE BUCKMAN

real.) There was no one trigger for this but, rather, a confluence of cultural events: We're living in a startup-friendly culture and seeing a surge in outreach programs focused on post-9/11 veterans. "These two worlds have collided, and you see more and more support structures popping up," says Stutsman.

Approximately 200,000 people now rotate out of the U.S. military every year—which translates to a lot of qualified job seekers. Many decide to create their own jobs. The SBA says about one in 10 small businesses today in the U.S. is launched by a veteran.

A lot of vets enter franchising. The franchise world has embraced vets' "intangible attributes that help in business," says Mike Francomb, a West Point graduate who served as a field artillery officer in Operation Desert Shield/Storm. He's now senior VP of development for RecruitMilitary, a company that connects vets with franchise brands and job opportunities. Another helpful organization is VetFran, an initiative of the International Franchising Association, which offers reductions in fees and discounts on equipment, and even helps secure financing at more than 650 franchises. (Opportunities vary by individual franchise but can be valuable. Among them: Little Caesars pizza waives its $20,000 franchise fee for disabled vets and offers a $10,000 equipment credit, and JDog Junk Removal hires only veteran franchisees.)

Many programs also focus on education, providing the necessary skills to run a business while helping vets navigate the gray areas of the business world after living in a black-and-white military system.

"We work with them on pivoting. We teach them to know when they are failing, to fail fast, and then to make a pivot," says Alexces Bartley, outreach program manager for the Riata Center for Entrepreneurship at Oklahoma State. Its 12-month boot camp, which includes an online component and weeklong residency, helps vets in matters big and small—from developing business concepts to feeling at ease with civilian chitchat. "They need to be self-aware enough to know what isn't working and what the next option is."

Often, vets in these programs discover lessons they didn't even realize they had to learn. "I thought I'd just jump into business," says Jeff Gural, a former Marine, longtime member of the National Guard, and police officer. He finally left the military this year, three years after he'd started his path to entrepreneurship. He began by enrolling in a three-month Veterans Launching Ventures course at Fairleigh Dickinson University, in Teaneck, N.J. "It taught me that a business plan is the crux of an entire business. It helped decide what kind of company I wanted to start and exactly what I needed to do." With that information in hand, he bought a Signal 88

RESOURCES FOR VETERAN ENTREPRENEURS

To find free resources and educational programs, loans, grants, business plan competitions, and mentors, vets can begin by calling their regional VBOC.

SBA VETERANS BUSINESS OUTREACH CENTERS
SBA.GOV

VETFRAN
VETFRAN.COM

INSTITUTE FOR VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILIES
VETS.SYR.EDU/EDUCATION

NATIONAL VETERANS ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAM
RIATA.OKSTATE.EDU/VETERANS

BUNKER LABS
BUNKERLABS.ORG

RECRUITMILITARY
RECRUITMILITARY.COM

Security franchise in Camden, N.J., which provides security personnel for events, private companies, and facilities. It's a business that suits his blend of his military and police experience and newly acquired business skills.

WITH SO MANY RESOURCES available, veterans are faced with a new dilemma: Which program to choose?

"There are so many high-quality, free small-business training resources available to service members, veterans, and their families," says Meghan Conroy Florkowski, a former Army engineer and director of entrepreneurship programs at the Institute for Veterans and Military Families program at Syracuse. The key is finding them, which is why her colleague Stutsman is currently compiling every program into one resource, so veterans can find the ones that are right for them.

Cody-Rouget, of Major Mom, enrolled in several programs—all of them free. She won a business-plan competition sponsored by the Women Veteran Entrepreneur Corps, an initiative started by Nell Merlino, the founder of Take Your Daughter to Work Day. She took Vet to CEO's online course, which helps design or refine business plans, and SBA's eight-month classroom-based leadership course.

"All the programs I've done offer these nuggets of wisdom that I didn't know before going through them," Cody-Rouget says. But she credits V-Wise (Veteran Women Igniting the Spirit of Entrepreneurship, at Syracuse) with being the most influential of them all. It offered an online course on the basics of entrepreneurship, along with a conference full of training modules and presentations by female CEOs. The experience stuck with her; she and her fellow participants stay in touch, giving each other advice as they build their businesses. "I didn't know I needed it till I had it," she says. "V-Wise was the first place someone told me I had a billion-dollar idea. No one had ever said anything like that to me."

As a result of all this assistance, Cody-Rouget began franchising last year, and this year she gave Major Mom a major rebrand, becoming Major Organizers. Her first franchise owner is (of course) a fellow veteran in Ohio. Now she hopes to expand across the country. "I think I've gotten my payback," she says. "I'm glad I served my country." □

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BE A SMALL-BUSINESS HERO
IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Thanks to invaluable experience, training and discipline from the military, veterans have the foundation for becoming successful small-business owners. Explore new ways to make entrepreneurship your next mission with the franchises featured in this section, many of which offer special incentives and opportunities for veterans to join their teams.

iLoveKickboxing.com | *Fitness*

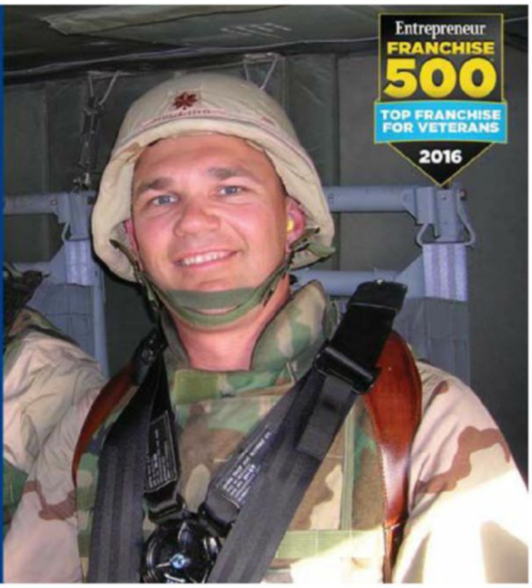
Pillar To Post | *Home Inspection*

Miracle Method | *Surface Refinishing*

Jani-King | *Commercial Cleaning*

Pirtek | *Hydraulic Hose Services*

20%
Veterans discount



DECORATED AIR FORCE VETERAN FOLLOWS DREAM WITH HELP FROM PILLAR TO POST HOME INSPECTORS®

Founded in 1994, Pillar To Post Home Inspectors is the largest home inspection company in North America with over 530 franchisees, located in 49 states and eight Canadian provinces. Long-term plans include adding 500-600 new franchisees over the next five years.

Pillar To Post Home Inspectors is ranked the No. 1 home inspection franchise in North America by Entrepreneur Magazine and of course they are looking for more franchisees such as Mike Mullins.

During a 20-year military career, Lt. Colonel Mike Mullins, USAF (Ret.) served his country with the utmost honor. So it was only fitting that the Pillar To Post franchise owner was recognized by Maria Contreras-Sweet, Administrator of the Small Business Administration, in her address to the International Franchise Association convention in San Antonio in February.

The 47-year-old Mullins retired from the Air Force in 2011 and in September 2015 became a franchisee of Pillar To Post, the largest home inspection company in North America. Serving San Antonio and surrounding areas, Pillar To Post is the leader in home inspections in the U.S. and Canada, giving homebuyers or sellers a clear, unbiased evaluation of a home's condition and answering any questions they might have to help ensure peace of mind.

Mullins retired from the military as a decorated veteran, earning a Bronze Star for heroic service in a combat zone in Iraq. He led the honor guard teams that memorialized their sacrifices and ensured their remains were safely delivered home to their loved ones.

Contreras-Sweet not only recognized Mullins because of his outstanding service to his country, but because he was able to take advantage of the services of the Small Business Administration when he sought to become a franchisee of Pillar To Post, which offered him a discounted franchise fee, low-rate financing and world-class technical and marketing support.

Only seven months after becoming a franchisee with Pillar To Post, Mullins is now a preferred vendor for a major San Antonio real estate firm and he's almost halfway to 200 inspections, at which time he plans to make up to five additional hires.

"I discovered Pillar To Post Home Inspectors while researching franchises." Mullins said. "I was interested in construction, but as delved further into my research I realized how ideal this opportunity was for me. Pillar To Post Home Inspectors ranked very high among franchisors in all kinds of publications and rankings, especially as a vet-friendly franchise. Then, once I met the people behind it, the deal was sealed. Culturally it was just the best fit on earth for me."

PILLARTOPOST
HOME INSPECTORS

ABOUT PILLAR TO POST

Pillar To Post Home Inspectors is the largest home inspection company in North America with over 530 franchisees, located in 49 states and eight Canadian provinces.

PILLAR TO POST FAST FACTS

- "Pillar To Post Home Inspectors ranked very high among franchisors in all kinds of publications and rankings, especially as a vet-friendly franchise. Then, once I met the people behind it, the deal was sealed." **- Lt. Colonel Mike Mullins,** *Franchise Partner, San Antonio*
- 20% Veterans Discount
- More than 25% of our new 2016 Franchise Partners are Veterans

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Jeff Powell
Pillar To Post Home Inspectors

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E: **franchise@pillartopost.com**

W: **pillartopostfranchise.com/veterans**

NOT JUST ANOTHER BATH & KITCHEN FRANCHISE – #1 IN THE REFINISHING INDUSTRY!

#1 in Surface Refinishing – the largest footprint in North America!
When buying any franchise, it's smart to join the leader in their respective industry. It's also smart to be sure it's an industry with surging customer demand. Miracle Method is in a unique position to offer both of these scenarios to you.

No other surface refinisher can match our size, expertise or capabilities. Only Miracle Method is positioned to take advantage of the skyrocketing demand for surface refinishing.

Want proof of the demand? Ask your friends!
Ask 10 of your friends if they would be interested in learning about a fast & affordable solution to making their ugly countertops, bathtubs and showers beautiful again. You'll quickly realize how much demand there is for refinishing. Plus, think of the nearly unlimited growth opportunity… every home and business in your market is a potential customer!

People like saving money, especially when upgrading their kitchens and bathrooms. Since 1979, over 1,000,000 homeowners and business have chosen Miracle Method for our money-saving, time-saving alternative to the mess and hassle of replacing their old bathtubs, countertops, and showers. The proof is in our numbers: we continue to set sales records, including a 70% increase in sales in the last 8 years.

A diverse revenue stream
We have a strong and diverse revenue model. Our primary focus is repairing & refinishing bathtubs, showers, tile and countertops. In addition, we have developed a complete Bathing Safety program that resonates with the elderly and caregivers alike. On the commercial side, we have seen a huge increase in the demand for our products from hospitals, universities, hotels, assisted living facilities and airports.

Value, potential and scalability
Within the Miracle Method network, we have several franchisees exceeding $1 million in annual sales, and some surpassing $2 million – and they all started with our comparatively small investment of $85-$125K. These leading franchisees started with two technicians, followed the Miracle Method systems & processes, and continually reinvested in their business.

Training and ongoing support
For the past 37 years, Miracle Method has been continually developing and improving our systems & processes for profitably growing a refinishing business. We provide the highest level of training in the surface refinishing industry, we call this "immersion training".

We don't expect you to personally refinish bathtubs and countertops, we expect you to manage and develop your business. While you will learn and understand the process of refinishing, you will spend most of your time selling and managing, rather than doing the actual work.

Highly motivated and driven to succeed? Let's talk!
We are selective in who we choose as our franchisees. Our ideal candidates are motivated, are able to follow processes & procedures, and can manage & grow a business. When strong, like-minded franchisees make up the Miracle Method network, the entire company wins.

Contact Miracle Method today to learn more about our unique business opportunity.

Miracle Method®
SURFACE REFINISHING
Beautiful Bathtubs, Tile & Countertops

ABOUT MIRACLE METHOD®

Miracle Method's unique and affordable refinishing process makes ugly bathtubs, countertops, and tile beautiful again – without replacing!

MIRACLE METHOD® FAST FACTS

- Broad residential & commercial demand
- 37-year proven track record
- Comprehensive training with ongoing education
- No industry experience required – just the drive to succeed
- 130+ franchises in the US and Canada
- Exclusive territories available, call today!

FOR MORE INFORMATION

John Tubiolo

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E: sales@miraclemethod.com

W: MiracleMethod.com/franchise

OWN YOUR CITY OR STATE WITH JANI-KING

Why own just one store when you can own rights to the entire city or even your state? With Jani-King's master franchise program you are granted an exclusive, defined territory that includes multiple counties or the entire state. This incredible, proven franchise business opportunity gives the master franchisee the ability to establish a regional office that sells individual Jani-King unit franchises, provides training and support to unit franchises, and secures cleaning contracts.

Why invest in the commercial cleaning industry? This is a service industry proven to generate recurring revenue and which offers unlimited opportunity to grow. Every city contains some, if not all of the following buildings that demand regular cleaning services;

- Individual office buildings and office parks
- Hospitals and medical facilities
- Hotels and resorts
- Schools and universities
- Stadiums and event facilities
- Retail centers and restaurants
- Auto dealerships
- Manufacturing facilities and more

As a Jani-King master franchise owner, your professional support office provides training, sales, operations support and administrative assistance to unit franchisees whose business it is to oversee the cleaning of the buildings. From your office, you can grow your territory and help franchisees build their businesses. This is not only an opportunity for you to build a successful business, but it's an opportunity to help other entrepreneurs achieve their goals, a truly rewarding experience. In fact, Jani-King's master franchise program is so popular that over 40% of current master franchise owners have invested in multiple territories.

Master Franchise Owner Debbie Sinopoli is just one shining example of success in the Jani-King system. Ms. Sinopoli purchased her first of five master franchise territories in 2003. At the time, the single territory was generating $2.2M in annual revenue. Now, her five territories combined consist of 150 unit franchisees cleaning 1,300 customer locations. Her total annual revenue in 2015 was over $20 million.

In 2015, Mike Biggs and Gil Sanchez, along with their wives, purchased the rights to Des Moines, IA, a brand new territory. After getting Des Moines up and running, they have since added to their portfolio this year by purchasing the rights to Colorado.

Several other master franchisees from around the world have purchased rights to entire countries. In Canada, Murray Oxford's path with Jani-King took him from a unit franchise owner to a master franchise owner to eventually purchasing the rights to all of Canada (minus Toronto).

Don't miss out on this exclusive opportunity to purchase the rights to some of the last remaining U.S. territories for sale. Currently, Jani-King has regional support offices in 87 U.S. markets and the list continues to grow. New and existing corporate-owned territories are for sale now; contact Jani-King today to see if you qualify to be selected as our next Master Franchise Owner.

Jani King
The King of Clean®

JANI-KING FAST FACTS

- Over 40% of Jani-King Master Franchisees own multiple territories
- Initial investment for a Master Franchise territory can start as low as $175,000
- 120 Regional support offices in 10 countries
- Global network of over 8,000 unit franchisees

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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NEW PIRTEK FRANCHISE PROGRAM OFFERS FRESH OPPORTUNITIES TO ENTREPRENEURS

Owning a PIRTEK franchise is now easier than ever.

The world's leading fluid transfer solutions company has recently rolled out its Tier 2 program to help more entrepreneurs start franchises. The unique program provides a more accessible entry for individuals who may have not met all the resource requirements for a standard franchise, which includes a Service & Supply Center and multiple Mobile Service Vehicles. Under the Tier 2 program, PIRTEK is now offering a mobile-only option to start. The Tier 2 franchise is then on track to grow into a standard, Tier 1 franchise in three years.

Reduced Start-up Costs

Previously, there existed only one set of requirements for PIRTEK franchise ownership, including a $50,000 franchise fee for three Mobile Service Vehicles and a fully staffed Service & Supply Center. But the new program enables entrepreneurs to access one of the country's top B2B franchises at a much lower point of entry – a franchise fee of only $20,000. Instead of setting up a service center, a franchisee can get started with just two vehicles and a place to store inventory.

Another benefit of Tier 2 is that it accepts franchisees with a net worth of $250,000, much less than the Tier 1 requirement.

"This new program supports our standard franchise offering by providing current franchisees a new avenue for growth and expansion," said Glenn Duncan, executive director of PIRTEK International. "In addition, it opens the door to business ownership for a wider group of new entrepreneurs."

The standard, Tier 1 model will continue to exist alongside the new program. Franchisees under the Tier 2 plan will have full access to the training and administrative support from corporate headquarters – the same that all other PIRTEK owners currently enjoy.

Spreading out the Cost

The goal for each Tier 2 franchisee is to acquire a third vehicle after the first year, along with a fully staffed and outfitted Service & Supply Center at the end of three years. The franchisee's exclusive territory will expand with the acquisition of each Mobile Service Vehicle.

"This is the equivalent of spreading out the full entry cost over a three-year period, rather than investing it all up front," Duncan said. "An aspiring franchisee is now able to build up a customer base and get a better idea of where to locate the service center later on. The Tier 2 program provides entrepreneurs with a lot of advantages."

The company is offering U.S. veterans a $5,000 discount off of the initial franchise fee if they participate in the Tier 2 program.

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.

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
- 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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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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E: FranchiseInfo@iLoveKickboxing.com

W: www.myilovekickboxing.com

the list

TO SERVE YOUR COUNTRY

The top 100 franchise opportunities for veterans.

By Tracy Stapp Herold

PHOTOGRAPH BY GETTY IMAGES/FUSE

IN 1991, DON DWYER SR., founder of The Dwyer Group franchise system, wanted to honor military members returning from the first Gulf War and assist them with the transition to civilian life. His answer was VetFran, a program designed to offer discounts, mentorship, and training to veterans seeking to become franchise owners.

To date, Dwyer's creation, which is now run by the International Franchise Association, has helped more than 6,500 veterans to become franchisees. And the 650-plus franchisors who participate in VetFran have found that veterans, with their leadership skills and disciplined training, make ideal additions to a franchise system. Case in point: the Ambrozewskis, owners of an Anytime Fitness gym, profiled on page 100.

As VetFran celebrates its 25th anniversary, we present our list of the top 100 franchises offering incentives for veterans, listed in order of their ranking in *Entrepreneur*'s 2016 Franchise 500. Keep in mind, though, that this list is not intended as a recommendation of any particular franchise or veterans program. No matter what incentives to ownership are being offered, always do your homework before investing: Read the company's legal documents, consult with an attorney and an accountant, and talk to existing and former franchisees to find out whether the opportunity is right for you.

1 **Supercuts**
Hair salons
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #3
Startup cost: $144.4K–$293.8K
Franchise fee: $29.5K
Total franchises/co.-owned: 1,607/1,049
Incentive: $2,500 rebate on first-store franchise fee

2 **Subway**
Subs, salads
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #5
Startup cost: $116.6K–$263.2K
Franchise fee: $15K
Total franchises/co.-owned: 44,702/0
Incentives: Franchise fee waived if opening on a military/government location; 50 percent off franchise fee if opening on nongovernment location but receiving government financing

3 **7-Eleven**
Convenience stores
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #7
Startup cost: $37.2K–$1.6M
Franchise fee: $10K–$1M
Total franchises/co.-owned: 59,004/505
Incentives: 10 to 20 percent off franchise fee; special financing

4 **Dunkin' Donuts**
Coffee, doughnuts, baked goods
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #8
Startup cost: $228.6K–$1.7M
Franchise fee: $40K–$90K
Total franchises/co.-owned: 11,941/0
Incentive: 20 percent off franchise fee for first five traditional restaurants

5 **Anytime Fitness**
Fitness centers
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #10
Startup cost: $80K–$490.1K
Franchise fee: $19K–$37.5K
Total franchises/co.-owned: 3,226/38
Incentive: 20 percent off franchise fee

6 **Hardee's**
Burgers, chicken, biscuits
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #12
Startup cost: $1.4M–$1.9M
Franchise fee: $25K–$35K
Total franchises/co.-owned: 2,028/118
Incentive: 50 percent off franchise fee

7 **GNC Franchising**
Vitamins and nutrition products
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #15
Startup cost: $192.1K–$354.2K
Franchise fee: $40K
Total franchises/co.-owned: 3,238/3,506
Incentive: 50 percent off first-store franchise fee

8 **Sport Clips**
Men's sports-themed hair salons
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #16
Startup cost: $183.3K–$351.5K
Franchise fee: $25K–$59.5K
Total franchises/co.-owned: 1,528/32
Incentive: 20 percent off franchise fee

9 **The UPS Store**
Postal, business, printing, and communications services
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #17
Startup cost: $159.2K–$434.5K
Franchise fee: $29.95K
Total franchises/co.-owned: 4,910/0
Incentives: $10,000 off franchise fee; 50 percent off initial application fee

10 **Papa Murphy's**
Take-and-bake pizza
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #19
Startup cost: $279.5K–$492.9K
Franchise fee: $25K
Total franchises/co.-owned: 1,414/160
Incentive: Discounted royalty fee

The Perfect Fit

ANYTIME FITNESS AWARDS A MILITARY COUPLE WITH THEIR OWN GYM.

By Tracy Stapp Herold

Tristan and Hannah Ambrozewski met and married while in the Army. When it was time to figure out what came next after seven years in the military, they knew fitness was going to be part of it. "We're both big into working out—it was instilled into us in the military," says Hannah, who retired from the Army in 2012.

After trying out a Fit4Mom franchise, they realized they wanted to own and run something bigger. The problem was they didn't have the funds to pursue their dream business, an Anytime Fitness gym. But then they heard about Operation Heartfirst, an annual $125,000 grant for a veteran to open an Anytime Fitness franchise, funded by Anytime Fitness cofounders Chuck Runyon and Dave Mortensen, several hundred Anytime Fitness franchisees, and the nonprofit Tee It Up for the Troops.

After submitting essays and going through a series of interviews, the couple were notified in June 2015 that they were the winners. In addition to the grant, the Ambrozewskis received an additional $125,000 loan. The company also waived its franchise, enrollment, royalty, marketing, and advertising fees.

With the money, the Ambrozewskis opened their gym in Fort Bragg, N.C., on April 5 this year. Six months later, they enrolled their 900th member. Hooah!

What was your initial interest in Anytime Fitness?

Tristan: Working now as a Department of Defense contractor, I travel a lot, so I've tried out gyms all over the country. I loved the Anytime Fitness concept. Some of the big-box gyms can be very intimidating for some people, but Anytime works for everyone.

What else have you learned from your gym tryouts?

Tristan: The gyms that are extremely successful are the cleanest and friendliest. Pursuing both has been key for us. Every part of the gym needs to be perfect.

Hannah: To do that, Tristan comes in around 4 A.M. every day and cleans the gym before heading to work. Then I'm there the rest of the day with our staff. We strive to make members and guests feel welcome by knowing their names and their stories.

How has your military training helped with running the business?

Hannah: In the military, things happen at the drop of a dime. So we've been trained to react quickly and change focus. Those are good skills in business when things go wrong, like when we have no internet, but we still have to sign up members. We figure it out. □

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF ANYTIME FITNESS

HONOR. PRIDE. RESPECT.
JOIN FORCES WITH THE BEST.

SNAP-ON OWN IT FRANCHISE

A Snap-on franchise is a mobile tool store you own, selling the #1 tool brand in the world directly to professionals. It's a proven business model we've honed for over 95 years and we are looking for people as good as our tools.

- Leadership
- Teamwork
- Integrity
- Mission Focused
- Self Discipline
- Adaptability

VET★FRAN
Veterans Transition Franchise Initiative

Entrepreneur FRANCHISE 500 RANKED #1 IN CATEGORY 2015

Entrepreneur FRANCHISE 500 RANKED #1 IN CATEGORY 2016

Entrepreneur FRANCHISE 500 TOP HOME-BASED FRANCHISE 2016

Top 100 Franchise
2016 Veterans & Franchising
FranchiseBusinessREVIEW

Snap-on®

SNAPONFRANCHISE.com

In 2013, Sport Clips (#8) teamed up with the VFW to create the Help a Hero Scholarship program, which has provided more than **$2.4 million in education scholarships** to active-duty service members and veterans.

11 Snap-on Tools
Professional tools and equipment
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #22
Startup cost: $166.8K–$319.5K
Franchise fee: $7.5K–$15K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 4,666/174
Incentive: $20,000 off startup inventory

12 Jiffy Lube International
Oil changes, light repairs
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #23
Startup cost: $219K–$400K
Franchise fee: to $35K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 2,081/0
Incentive: Franchise fee waived

13 Jan-Pro Franchising International
Commercial cleaning
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #24
Startup cost: $3.99K–$51.6K
Franchise fee: $2.5K–$44K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 8,224/0
Incentive: Up to 20 percent off franchise fee

14 Cruise Planners
Travel agencies
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #25
Startup cost: $2.1K–$22.9K
Franchise fee: $495–$10.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 2,364/1
Incentives: $1,000 off franchise fee; $500 marketing credit; three months of free technology access; $60 creative design credit; first year's errors and omissions insurance and software license; marketing/promotional items (magazines, branded clothing, car magnets, laptop bag, business cards)

15 Vanguard Cleaning Systems
Commercial cleaning
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #26
Startup cost: $10.9K–$39.4K
Franchise fee: $9.6K–$35.7K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 3,167/0
Incentive: 10 percent off franchise fee

16 Great Clips
Hair salons
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #28
Startup cost: $132.3K–$253.1K
Franchise fee: $20K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 3,868/0
Incentive: $5,000 rebate on first-store franchise fee

17 Papa John's International
Pizza
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #30
Startup cost: $129.9K–$844.2K
Franchise fee: to $25K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 4,208/734
Incentives: Franchise fee waived; free set of ovens; reduced royalty fee for four years; $3,000 food-purchase credit

18 Auntie Anne's Hand-Rolled Soft Pretzels
Soft pretzels
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #31
Startup cost: $199.5K–$380.1K
Franchise fee: $30K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 1,676/13
Incentive: $10,000 off franchise fee

19 ServiceMaster Clean
Commercial/ residential cleaning, disaster restoration
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #33
Startup cost: $56.2K–$265.7K
Franchise fee: $20K–$61.9K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 5,007/10
Incentive: 15 percent off franchise fee

20 Edible Arrangements International
Sculpted fresh-fruit bouquets
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #35
Startup cost: $196.6K–$327.8K
Franchise fee: $30K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 1,245/8
Incentive: $10,000 off first-store franchise fee

21 Circle K
Convenience stores
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #36
Startup cost: $211.5K–$1.6M
Franchise fee: $25K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 1,967/4,722
Incentive: 10 percent off franchise fee

22 Matco Tools
Mechanics' tools and equipment
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #37
Startup cost: $89.2K–$267.8K
Franchise fee: $6K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 1,729/1
Incentive: $10,000 in inventory

23 Anago Cleaning Systems
Commercial cleaning
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #39
Startup cost: $10.5K–$65.6K
Franchise fee: $4.6K–$32.3K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 1,411/0
Incentive: 10 percent off franchise fee

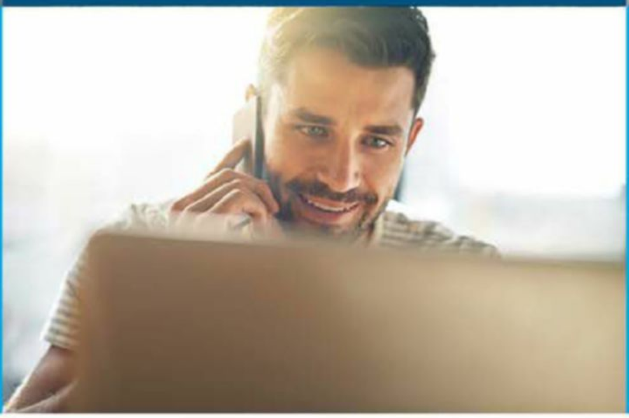
24 Chem-Dry Carpet & Upholstery Cleaning
Carpet and upholstery cleaning, tile and stone care, granite renewal
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #42
Startup cost: $31.8K–$155.5K
Franchise fee: $21.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 3,498/0
Incentive: 10 percent off franchise fee

25 Massage Envy
Therapeutic massage and facial services
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #43
Startup cost: $411.7K–$942.9K
Franchise fee: $45K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 1,151/0
Incentive: $5,000 off franchise fee

26 Miracle-Ear
Hearing instruments
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #44
Startup cost: $119K–$287.5K
Franchise fee: $30K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 1,331/32
Incentive: 10 percent off franchise fee

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF SPORT CLIPS


Get serious
about your future.
BEST FOR VETS
2016
MILITARY TIMES
FRANCHISES
EXPLORE
YOUR DREAMS OF
BUSINESS
OWNERSHIP



27 Liberty Tax Service
Tax preparation, electronic filing
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #45
Startup cost: $58.7K–$71.9K
Franchise fee: $40K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 3,753/351
Incentives: 20 percent off franchise fee; special financing

28 The Maids
Residential cleaning
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #46
Startup cost: $81.7K–$197.3K
Franchise fee: $12.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 1,189/63
Incentive: $4,000 off franchise fee

29 Budget Blinds
Window coverings, window film, rugs, accessories
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #47
Startup cost: $99.2K–$202.1K
Franchise fee: $19.95K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 1,046/0
Incentive: $15,000 off franchise and territory fees

30 Merry Maids
Residential cleaning
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #48
Startup cost: $56.5K–$180.4K
Franchise fee: $36.5K–$50.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 1,672/14
Incentive: 15 percent off franchise fee

31 CleanNet USA
Commercial cleaning
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #49
Startup cost: $17.98K–$46.5K
Franchise fee: $9.4K–$30K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 2,547/9
Incentive: 5 to 10 percent off franchise fee

32 Meineke Car Care Centers
Auto repair and maintenance
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #50
Startup cost: $129.6K–$576.7K
Franchise fee: $32.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 969/0
Incentive: 50 percent off royalty fee for first six months

33 CruiseOne/ Dream Vacations
Travel agencies
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #51
Startup cost: $3.2K–$21.9K
Franchise fee: $495-$9.8K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 1,078/0
Incentives: 20 to 40 percent off franchise fee; training fee waived for first veteran/military spouse associate, reduced by 50 percent for additional veteran/ military spouse associates

34 Midas International
Auto repair and maintenance
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #53
Startup cost: $184.1K–$433.1K
Franchise fee: $30K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 2,221/13
Incentive: Franchise fee waived

35 Carl's Jr. Restaurants
Burgers
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #54
Startup cost: $1.4M-$1.95M
Franchise fee: $25K–$35K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 1,415/122
Incentive: 50 percent off franchise fee

36 Cinnabon
Cinnamon rolls, baked goods, coffee
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #55
Startup cost: $181.1K–$387.5K
Franchise fee: $30K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 1,349/2
Incentive: $5,000 off franchise fee

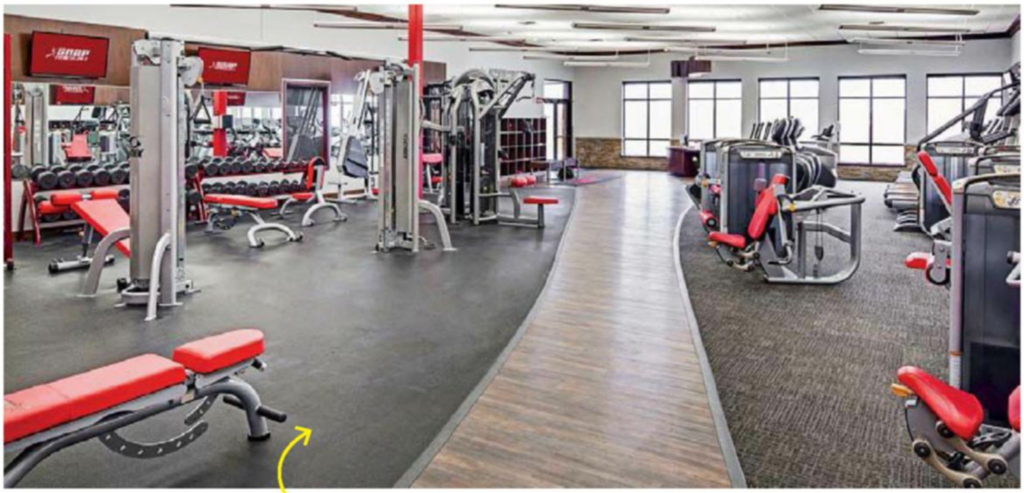
37 Cold Stone Creamery
Ice cream, sorbet
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #57
Startup cost: $261.1K–$404.5K
Franchise fee: $27K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 1,253/10
Incentive: 20 percent off franchise fee

38 Snap Fitness
24-hour fitness centers
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #61
Startup cost: $118.8K–$294.6K
Franchise fee: $29.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 1,358/78
Incentive: $5,000 off franchise fee

39 **Firehouse Subs**
Subs
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #62
Startup cost: $128.8K–$1.3M
Franchise fee: $20K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 974/32
Incentive: $2,000 off first-store franchise fee

40 **Fantastic Sams Hair Salons**
Family hair salons
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #65
Startup cost: $150.4K-$283K
Franchise fee: $30K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 1,084/2
Incentive: 25 percent off multi-unit franchise fee

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF SNAP FITNESS



Snap Fitness (#38) recently cohosted a boot camp with country music artist Thomas Rhett in Minneapolis, **raising more than $10,000** for Folds of Honor, a nonprofit that provides scholarships for the families of wounded or fallen veterans.

41 **Minuteman Press International**
Printing, graphics, and mailing centers
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #67
Startup cost: $62.2K–$161.9K
Franchise fee: $21K–$45.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 956/0
Incentives: $10,000 off franchise fee for a new location; $5,000 off for an existing location

42 **Home Instead Senior Care**
Nonmedical senior care
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #68
Startup cost: $115K–$125K
Franchise fee: $55K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 1,072/5
Incentive: 10 percent off franchise fee

43 **Comfort Keepers**
Home care
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #69
Startup cost: $86.3K–$136.3K
Franchise fee: $45K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 736/31
Incentive: 10 percent off franchise fee

44 **Express Employment Professionals**
Staffing, HR solutions
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #70
Startup cost: $120K–$196K
Franchise fee: $35K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 749/0
Incentive: 50 percent off franchise fee

45 **Wingstop Restaurants**
Chicken wings
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #71
Startup cost: $238.4K-$922.9K
Franchise fee: $20K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 894/20
Incentive: $15,000 off first-store franchise fee

46 **Mac Tools**
Automotive tools and equipment
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #72
Startup cost: $103.2K-$255.3K
Franchise fee: $3K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 883/37
Incentive: $10,000 off startup inventory

47 **Proforma**
Printing and promotional products
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #74
Startup cost: $4.7K–$50.2K
Franchise fee: to $29.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 675/0
Incentives: Franchise fee waived; customized marketing kit

48 **Batteries Plus Bulbs**
Batteries, lightbulbs, related products
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #75
Startup cost: $211.6K–$406.8K
Franchise fee: $37.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 638/48
Incentive: $10,000 off franchise fee

49 **Signarama**
Signs
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #76
Startup cost: $94.3K–$272.3K
Franchise fee: $49.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 961/0
Incentive: 10 to 50 percent off franchise fee

50 **Kona Ice**
Shaved-ice truck
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #77
Startup cost: $117.1K–$135.9K
Franchise fee: $15K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 789/9
Incentive: 10 percent off franchise fee

51 **Rent-A-Center**
Rent-to-own furniture, electronics, computers, appliances
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #78
Startup cost: $355.4K–$582.2K
Franchise fee: $35K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 154/2,755
Incentive: $5,000 off franchise fee

52 **Bricks 4 Kidz**
Lego-engineering classes, camps, parties
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #79
Startup cost: $33.8K–$51.1K
Franchise fee: $25.9K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 659/2
Incentive: 10 percent off franchise fee

53 **Marco's Pizza**
Pizza, subs, wings, cheese bread
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #81
Startup cost: $224.1K–$549.1K
Franchise fee: $25K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 731/0
Incentive: $5,000 off franchise fee

54 **Moe's Southwest Grill**
Southwestern food
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #83
Startup cost: $368.9K-$915.7K
Franchise fee: $30K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 634/5
Incentive: $10,000 off franchise fee

55 **Eye Level Learning Centers**
Supplemental education
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #84
Startup cost: $76.1K-$140.1K
Franchise fee: $20K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 573/741
Incentive: 50 percent off franchise fee

Marco's Pizza (#53) has appointed franchisee and 20-year Army veteran Scott Quagliata VP of their Veterans' Program and recruitment. One of his tasks is to put together an **apprenticeship program** to create paths to ownership for veterans.

56 **Weed Man**
Lawn care
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #86
Startup cost: $68.5K–$85.5K
Franchise fee: $20K–$33.8K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 594/0
Incentive: 25 percent off franchise fee

57 **FastSigns International**
Signs, graphics
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #87
Startup cost: $151.1K–$293.5K
Franchise fee: $44.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 621/0
Incentive: 50 percent off franchise fee

58 **Hungry Howie's Pizza & Subs**
Pizza, subs, bread, wings, salads
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #88
Startup cost: $253.1K–$453.9K
Franchise fee: $25K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 517/29
Incentive: 50 percent off franchise fee

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF MARCO'S PIZZA

59 Culver Franchising System
Frozen custard, specialty burgers
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #89
Startup cost: $1.8M-$4.2M
Franchise fee: $55K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 566/8
Incentive: $10,000 off franchise fee

60 HomeVestors of America
Home buying, repair, and selling
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #91
Startup cost: $44K–$347.3K
Franchise fee: $18K–$55K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 724/0
Incentive: 10 percent off franchise fee

61 Smoothie King
Smoothies, health products
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #92
Startup cost: $188.2K–$414.1K
Franchise fee: $30K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 781/26
Incentive: 20 percent off franchise fee

62 Rita's Italian Ice
Italian ice, frozen custard
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #94
Startup cost: $150.5K–$438.9K
Franchise fee: $30K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 621/0
Incentive: 50 percent off franchise fee

63 Molly Maid
Residential cleaning
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #97
Startup cost: $89.2K–$137.2K
Franchise fee: $14.9K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 647/0
Incentive: 15 percent off franchise and territory fees

64 Pop-A-Lock Franchise System
Mobile locksmith and security services
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #98
Startup cost: $99.7K-$134.3K
Franchise fee: $15.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 531/3
Incentives: 10 percent off franchise fee; special training program

65 Dickey's Barbecue Pit
Barbecue
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #101
Startup cost: $235.8K-$526.8K
Franchise fee: $15K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 533/7
Incentive: 33 percent off franchise fee

66 Pillar To Post Home Inspectors
Home inspections
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #102
Startup cost: $33.9K–$42.3K
Franchise fee: $18.9K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 522/0
Incentive: 20 percent off franchise fee

67 Maaco Franchising
Auto painting and collision repair
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #106
Startup cost: $375.1K–$487.1K
Franchise fee: $35K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 470/0
Incentive: 25 percent off franchise fee

68 CertaPro Painters Ltd.
Residential and commercial painting
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #107
Startup cost: $134.8K–$169.5K
Franchise fee: $57.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 472/0
Incentives: 10 percent off franchise fee; preferred in-house financing

69 ampm
Convenience stores and gas stations
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #108
Startup cost: $1.8M–$7.8M
Franchise fee: $35K–$70K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 966/17
Incentive: 50 percent off franchise fee

70 Goddard Systems
Preschool/educational childcare
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #109
Startup cost: $610.1K–$729.3K
Franchise fee: $135K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 450/0
Incentive: $20,000 off franchise fee

Rita's Italian Ice **(#62)** has **doubled its number of veteran franchisees** over the past three years.

71 Home Helpers/ Direct Link
Medical/nonmedical personal care, monitoring products and services
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #112
Startup cost: $70.9K–$117.6K
Franchise fee: $44.9K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 636/0
Incentive: $5,000 off franchise fee

72 Pita Pit
Pita sandwiches
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #113
Startup cost: $211.4K–$366.5K
Franchise fee: $25K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 591/22
Incentive: 20 percent off franchise fee

73 Right at Home
Home care, medical staffing
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #116
Startup cost: $78.2K–$133.4K
Franchise fee: $48.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 525/1
Incentive: 10 percent off franchise fee

74 N-Hance
Wood floor and cabinet refinishing
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #117
Startup cost: $24.3K–$147.3K
Franchise fee: $15K–$40K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 425/0
Incentive: 10 percent off franchise-fee down payment

75 Cost Cutters Family Hair Care
Family hair salons
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #121
Startup cost: $139.6K–$287.1K
Franchise fee: $29.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 397/259
Incentive: $2,500 rebate on first-store franchise fee

76 Carvel
Ice cream, ice-cream cakes
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #122
Startup cost: $250.3K–$383.1K
Franchise fee: $30K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 417/0
Incentive: $10,000 off franchise fee

77 Gold's Gym
Health and fitness centers
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #123
Startup cost: $2.2M-$5M
Franchise fee: $40K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 599/150
Incentive: 20 percent off franchise fee

78 Orange Leaf Frozen Yogurt
Frozen yogurt
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #125
Startup cost: $223K–$427.5K
Franchise fee: $15K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 310/0
Incentive: 10 percent off franchise fee

79 American Leak Detection
Concealed water, gas, and sewer leak-detection
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #127
Startup cost: $76.8K–$259.6K
Franchise fee: $29.5K–$120K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 369/50
Incentive: $5,000 off franchise fee

80 Great American Cookies
Cookies
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #128
Startup cost: $202.9K–$362.7K
Franchise fee: $15K–$35K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 360/0
Incentive: 25 percent off first-store franchise fee

81 EmbroidMe
Embroidery, screen printing, promotional products
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #130
Startup cost: $89.4K–$213.99K
Franchise fee: $49.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 420/0
Incentive: 10 percent off franchise fee

82 Rainbow International Restoration & Cleaning
Indoor cleaning and restoration
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #134
Startup cost: $171.7K–$278.1K
Franchise fee: $35K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 337/0
Incentive: 15 percent off franchise fee

83 Primrose School Franchising
Educational childcare
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #135
Startup cost: $677.2K–$5.8M
Franchise fee: $70K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 324/1
Incentive: $20,000 off franchise fee

84 Club Z! In-Home Tutoring Services
In-home tutoring
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #140
Startup cost: $33.6K–$57.6K
Franchise fee: $19.8K–$39.8K
Total franchises/co.-owned: 388/0
Incentive: 10 percent off franchise fee

85 Wienerschnitzel
Hot dogs, ice cream
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #142
Startup cost: $303.6K–$1.3M
Franchise fee: $10K–$32K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 322/0
Incentive: 25 percent off franchise fee

86 AAMCO Transmissions and Total Car Care
Transmission repair and car care
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #143
Startup cost: $227.4K–$333K
Franchise fee: $39.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 651/0
Incentive: $8,000 off franchise fee

87 Wild Birds Unlimited
Bird-feeding supplies and nature gift items
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #144
Startup cost: $125.98K–$199.2K
Franchise fee: $25K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 303/0
Incentive: 15 percent off franchise fee

88 The Honey-Baked Ham Company & Cafe
Specialty ham and turkey store/café
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #145
Startup cost: $291.8K–$449.1K
Franchise fee: $30K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 201/189
Incentive: $10,000 off franchise fee

89 McAlister's Deli
Sandwiches, salads, baked potatoes
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #146
Startup cost: $579K–$1.5M
Franchise fee: $35K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 318/43
Incentive: $5,000 off franchise fee

90 Fish Window Cleaning Services
Window cleaning
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #147
Startup cost: $83.2K–$146.2K
Franchise fee: $34.9K–$59.9K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 264/1
Incentive: 10 percent off franchise fee

91 Real Property Management
Property management
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #148
Startup cost: $79.9K–$103.9K
Franchise fee: $40K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 275/2
Incentive: 10 percent off franchise fee

92 Synergy HomeCare
Nonmedical home care
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #150
Startup cost: $35.4K–$149.4K
Franchise fee: $24.8K–$49.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 338/0
Incentive: $2,000 off franchise fee

93 Schlotzsky's
Sandwiches, pizza, salads
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #151
Startup cost: $503.8K–$786.98K
Franchise fee: $30K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 323/38
Incentive: $10,000 off franchise fee

94 Maid Brigade
Residential cleaning
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #152
Startup cost: $85K–$124K
Franchise fee: $25K–$40K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 474/0
Incentive: 10 percent off franchise fee

95 Postal Annex+
Packing, shipping, postal, and business services
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #153
Startup cost: $151.5K–$224.5K
Franchise fee: $29.95K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 308/0
Incentive: 20 percent off franchise fee

96 Paul Davis Restoration
Insurance restoration
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #155
Startup cost: $188.2K–$391.1K
Franchise fee: $75K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 244/6
Incentive: $10,000 off franchise fee

97 Cellairis Franchise
Cellphone and wireless-device accessories and repairs
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #156
Startup cost: $52.4K–$330K
Franchise fee: $7.5K–$30K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 567/3
Incentive: 20 percent off franchise fee

98 Tutor Doctor
Tutoring
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #157
Startup cost: $68.5K–$141.4K
Franchise fee: $44.7K–$59.7K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 475/1
Incentive: $5,000 off regional territory franchise fee ($49,700)

99 Coffee News
Weekly newspapers distributed at restaurants
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #158
Startup cost: $9.8K–$10.8K
Franchise fee: $8.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 834/5
Incentive: Three-year 0 percent financing for second through fifth units

100 U.S. Lawns
Commercial grounds care
2016 Franchise 500 rank: #159
Startup cost: $32.8K–$79.3K
Franchise fee: $22K–$32K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 267/0
Incentive: $5,000 off franchise fee

We Salute You

While they didn't rank high enough in *Entrepreneur*'s 2016 Franchise 500 to make our ranking, these companies deserve acknowledgment for their generous incentives for veterans:

Big O Tires
Tires, tire services, auto products
Startup cost: $259.2K–$1.2M
Franchise fee: $30K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 387/2
Incentive: Franchise fee waived

Checkers and Rally's Restaurants
Burgers, fries
Startup cost: $165.8K–$1.3M
Franchise fee: $30K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 519/315
Incentive: Franchise fee waived

Flippin' Pizza
Pizza, salads
Startup cost: $221.3K–$398.3K
Franchise fee: $25K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 20/0
Incentive: First-store franchise fee waived

Jet-Black Franchise Group
Asphalt maintenance
Startup cost: $36.5K–$100.2K
Franchise fee: $7.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 88/10
Incentive: Franchise fee waived

KidzArt
Art-education programs, products, and services
Startup cost: $36.4K–$44K
Franchise fee: $29.9K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 65/0
Incentives: Franchise fee waived for first 10 veterans to join system; 10 percent off franchise fee thereafter

Valpak Direct Marketing Systems
Direct-mail and digital advertising
Startup cost: $82.2K–$200.8K
Franchise fee: $15K–$17.5K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 135/14
Incentives: Franchise and training fees waived; territory fee waived for dormant territories

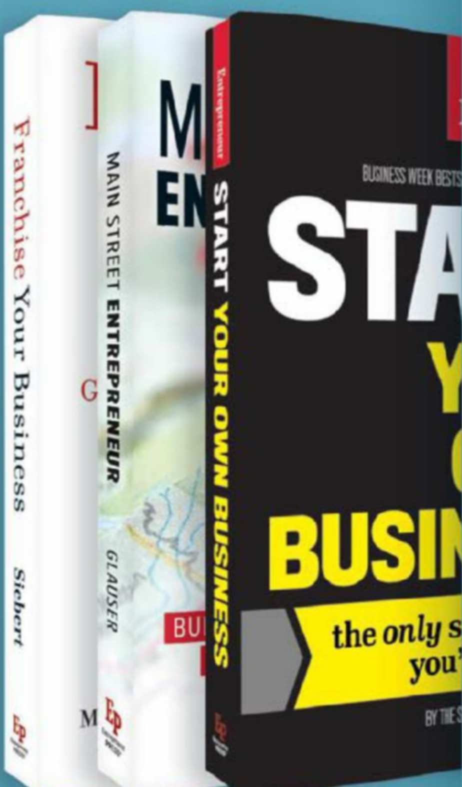
Ziebart
Auto appearance and protection services
Startup cost: $227K–$450K
Franchise fee: $30K
Total franchises/ co.-owned: 363/12
Incentive: Franchise fee waived

OPPORTUNITY SPOTLIGHT

One of these opportunities could mark the turning point to owning a business of your own, realizing your personal dreams and securing true financial independence. So go ahead, make your first move by considering all that they have to offer in this Opportunity Spotlight. Then make your first call.

STARTING A BUSINESS

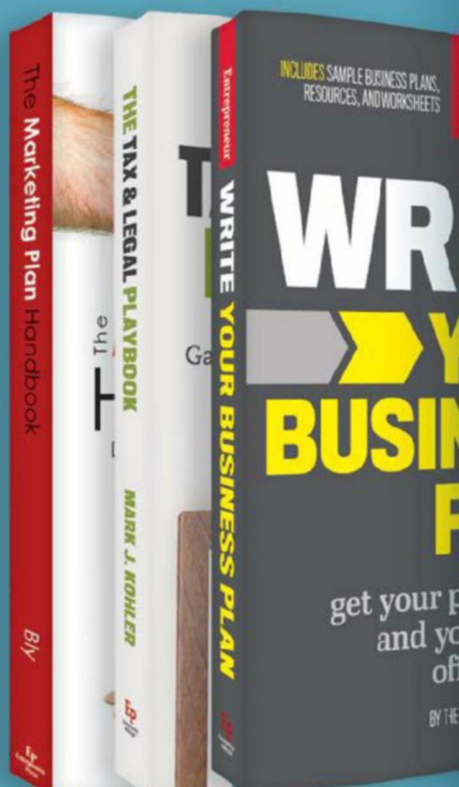
You've got the idea and the passion; now learn what you need to know to hit the ground running



- Franchise Your Business
- Main Street Entrepreneur
- Start Your Own Business

PLANNING

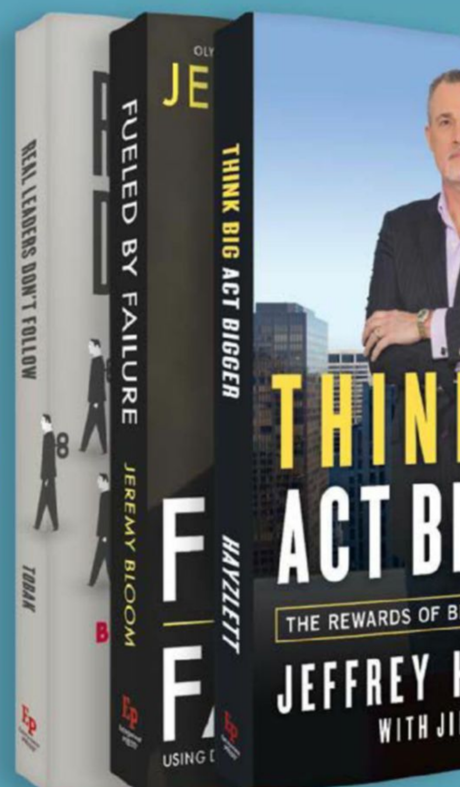
Preparation is key to your success—uncover valuable tools to establish and grow your business



- The Marketing Plan Handbook
- The Tax & Legal Playbook
- Write Your Business Plan

LEADERSHIP

Your success is driven by your ability to lead—discover strategies and techniques to improve your leadership skills



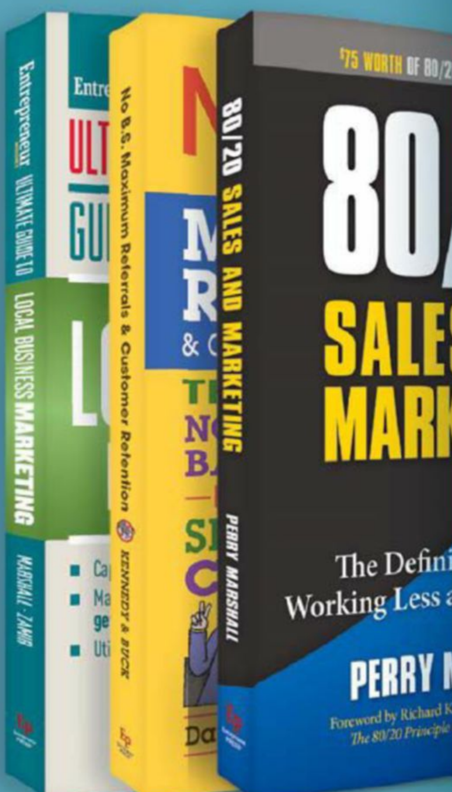
- Real Leaders Don't Follow
- Fueled By Failure
- Think Big Act Bigger

shelve under

Whether establishing your operations or spreading the word, no matter what stage

SALES & MARKETING

Communicating with potential clients and customers is a must—learn how to position yourself, attract new customers and keep them coming back



- Ultimate Guide to Local Business Marketing
- No B.S. Maximum Referrals And Customer Retention
- 80/20 Sales And Marketing

ONLINE MARKETING

Reach millions—discover how to gain visibility and close deals in the world's largest marketplace

- Ultimate Guide To Pay-Per-Click Advertising
- Ultimate Guide To Google AdWords
- Success Secrets Of The Online Marketing Superstars

SOCIAL MEDIA

Interact with clients and customers to keep them coming back—learn how to take your customer relationships to a whole new, more profitable level

- Ultimate Guide To Facebook Advertising
- Tweet Naked
- No B.S. Social Media Marketing

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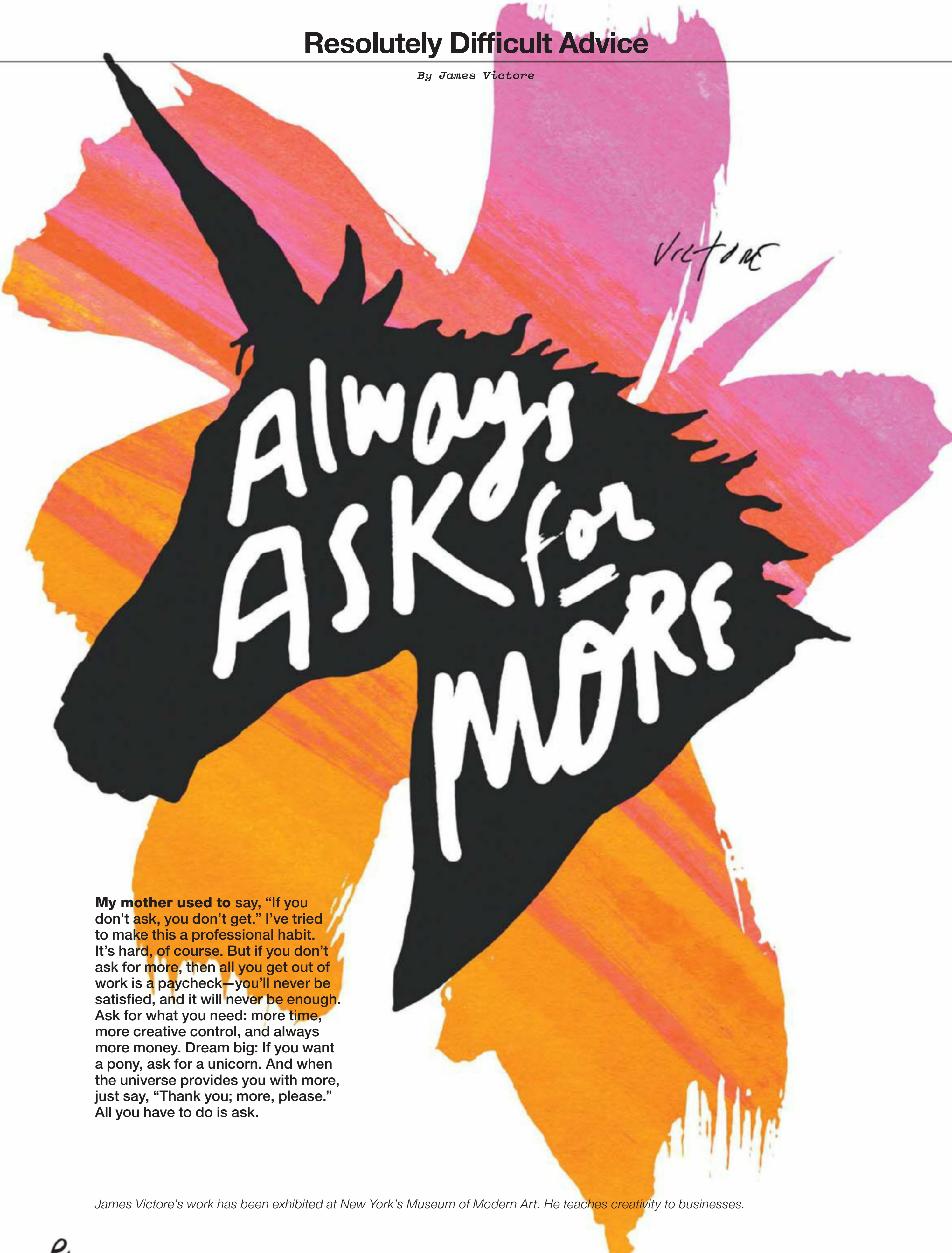
Resolutely Difficult Advice

By James Victore



My mother used to say, "If you don't ask, you don't get." I've tried to make this a professional habit. It's hard, of course. But if you don't ask for more, then all you get out of work is a paycheck—you'll never be satisfied, and it will never be enough. Ask for what you need: more time, more creative control, and always more money. Dream big: If you want a pony, ask for a unicorn. And when the universe provides you with more, just say, "Thank you; more, please." All you have to do is ask.

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