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ditch the job for the dream



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a product

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resign from a job

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career path for yourself

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happiness

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COPY CHIEF Stephanie Makrias

RESEARCH Laura Bullard, Eric White

INTERN Renna Hidalgo

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR Liz Brody

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS John Brandon, Danny Cattan,
Matt Higgins, Irina Logra, Jason Minick,
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We Need Each Other

Who's on our cover? They're everyone—and they represent the greatest lesson of these times.



MUSTAFA NUUR WAS born in Somalia but fled after terrorists killed his entrepreneurial father. He eventually settled in Lancaster, Pa., where he launched a startup called Bridge. It hosts cross-cultural experiences—dinners, gatherings, and so on—so that immigrants, refugees, and locals can better understand each other. “There’s nothing that can replace sitting across from someone who’s different from you and hearing their story,” he tells me.

But something *would* have to replace it, of course. When COVID-19 swept through America, sitting across from someone wasn’t an option. Nuur was scared. Then he had an idea. The immigrants and refugees he works with could become essential workers, helping homebound residents. For example, he has a Syrian refugee family who, just days before the lockdown, hosted a dinner in their home. One attendee was an elderly woman who lives alone. When the lockdown began, the family began delivering this woman’s groceries, running her errands, and calling daily at 6 P.M. to check in.

“It really made me think about how life should be every day,” Nuur says. “We should be having these relationships.”

I agree. And I think we can get there.

I have the privilege of meeting many entrepreneurs, which means I also witness their great collective irony. Even during good times, entrepreneurship feels lonely. We have chosen a path of self-determination, which can be maddening and isolating. And yet, here’s the crazy thing: We all deal with *the same problems*. Everyone has impostor syndrome. Everyone wrestles with management, or finances, or plans gone awry. We are alone together.

Now our barriers are coming down. We are all, for the first time in our lives, openly wrestling with the same problems at the same time. Confidence isn’t expected; clarity is impossible. We felt isolation and then doubled down on connectivity. We came to share openly with others and rely more heavily on them, too.

That’s what we wanted to honor in this issue, which has been a long time in the making. To understand it, here’s the backstory.

In March, as lockdowns began, the team here was preparing for our June issue. (We work months in advance.) Then June was canceled, a victim of uncertain economics. Our next issue would be in July—a time that seemed impossibly far away, in a world we couldn’t envision. We didn’t know where to begin, so we started with a question: *Who should be on the cover?* In normal times, our covers feature a celebrity...but that seemed like the wrong tone. “Nobody wants to be the face of a pandemic,” someone on our team said.

What could we predict about the future? We agreed on this: Entrepreneurs would not give up. They’d join together and shift from panic to adaptation. By July, we figured, people would have plans. They’d find opportunity. They’d collectively carry the world forward.

So who should be on the cover? *Entrepreneurs* should be on the cover. “Let’s fit as many people as we can,” I said, which turned out to be 137. We wanted them to be a representative sample of entrepreneurial ingenuity—people who work at every scale, at every experience level, running solo businesses to international powerhouses. Our sole filter: They had to have done something adaptive during the pandemic, whether it was helping their team, their community, their customers, or others. We’d include everyone who was quoted in the magazine, as well as people we’d simply heard about and admired. One day, for example, I read a local news story about Maya Gilliam, who saw no future in the spa she’d run for years—so she transformed it into a boutique farm and upscale hemp dispensary called Hempres Farms. I loved that. On the cover!

Does this sound messy and haphazard to you? I agree—but what else is there, really? Entrepreneurship is also messy and haphazard, the product of envisioning a destination and then improvising your way there. We’d all prefer perfection, but we must settle for this instead: When we have an idea, and join with others to make it happen, we have a chance to create something meaningful. On any given day, that’s the best we can do.

The world we couldn’t imagine in March has now come into focus. New businesses are launching. Old ones pivoted. Just as we are sending this issue to the printer, many people are leaving their homes and joining a movement for racial equality—another seismic event that could pull us apart or create togetherness and hope for a better future.

I do not know what comes next. But I sure know this: We won’t get there without each other. We were never alone, even when we felt we were. Now we know it.

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The Cover

These 137 people represent the wide range of entrepreneurs adapting to COVID-19. Those interviewed in this issue are noted by page number; others are explained here, with more on [Entrepreneur.com](https://www.entrepreneur.com) and [@Entrepreneur](https://www.instagram.com/entrepreneur) on Instagram.

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- 1/ MAGHAN MORIN** page 42
2/ JEANINE SUAH page 42
3/ ERIC YUAN, founder and CEO, Zoom
 The videoconference platform became a social lifeline during the crisis, and Yuan formed a new advisory council to improve security and privacy.
4/ TOM COLICCHIO, chef/owner, Crafted Hospitality The *Top Chef* judge and restaurateur helped found the Independent Restaurant Coalition to advocate for the industry.
5/ REBECCA MINKOFF, founder, Female Founder Collective The designer launched a virtual training program to help entrepreneurs prep to raise capital.
6/ SEAN "DIDDY" COMBS, founder, Our Fair Share The rapper created a platform to help minority entrepreneurs access relief capital during the pandemic.
7/ ADAM CONTOS page 78
8/ PIERRE LAGUERRE, founder and CEO, Fleeting Fleeting connects commercial drivers with on-demand jobs; once COVID-19 hit, it focused on getting supplies deployed, fast.
9/ DEEPTI SHARMA, founder and CEO, FoodtoEat The catering service helps minority-owned food vendors grow their businesses. Lately, Sharma's robust network has helped feed folks in need.
10/ VANESSA BRAXTON, CEO, Black Momma Brands Braxton shifted her vodka distillery to produce hand sanitizer.
11/ MATTHEW HERMAN page 23
12/ DAVID KIEN page 23
13/ AFTON VECHERY and 14/ CARLY LEAHY, cofounders, Modern Fertility
 The fertility startup collected and shared data on how the crisis is impacting women's plans to have children.
15/ SARA BLAKELY page 24

ROW B

- 1/ ROB PRICE** page 74
2/ CHRISTINA PERLA, cofounder and CEO, Makelab The 3D-printing company

pivoted from consumer products to face shields and custom-fit PPE.

- 3/ MICHAEL LASTORIA, cofounder and CEO, &Pizza** The brand donated "hero pies" to local hospital workers and partnered with Citi to expand the program.
4/ NATALIE MADEIRA COFIELD, founder and CEO, Walker's Legacy The entrepreneurship collective for women of color launched an emergency grant to help students displaced by the crisis.
5/ JAVIER GARCIA DEL MORAL and 6/ PACO VIQUE, cofounders, The Wild Detectives The Dallas bookstore said it was becoming a travel agency, but searches on its site for destinations returned related book suggestions. The prank saw sales jump 200 percent.
7/ RESHMA SHETTY, cofounder, Ginkgo Bioworks The biotech company offered \$25 million worth of no-cost work on its platform to projects fighting the virus.
8/ ANDY HUNTER page 51
9/ BEN PARSIA, CEO, Inside Weather
 The furniture company shifted to make face shields and masks, and made their designs open-source.
10/ MARIE KONDO page 36
11/ GUY FIERI, chef, Knuckle Sandwich
 Fieri raised more than \$20 million for the struggling restaurant industry.
12/ JASMINE CROWE, founder and CEO, Goodr The food-waste management company launched free grocery pop-ups in communities of need.
13/ KENT YOSHIMURA and 14/ RYAN CHEN, cofounders, Neuro The wellness-focused gum brand had relied on in-person fitness events to drum up business. To stay top of mind, the founders started creating at-home workouts to keep people healthy.
15/ TARAJI P. HENSON, founder, The Boris Lawrence Henson Foundation
 The actress launched a campaign to provide free tele-therapy to African American communities.

ROW C

- 1/ PAUL CARRICK BRUNSON, founder, Knowledge Share** The serial entrepre-

neur has attracted thousands of viewers to his twice-weekly livestreams about navigating business challenges.

- 2/ MARIAM NAFICY, founder and CEO, Minted** The stationery and wedding invitation company launched "Change the Date" products.
3/ ERIC YAVERBAUM page 34
4/ MAGIC JOHNSON, CEO, Magic Johnson Enterprises He provided \$100 million in loans to minority- and women-owned businesses.
5/ RICK STOLLMAYER, cofounder and CEO, Mindbody The management platform for fitness brands launched a free product to help clients easily shift to offer online classes.
6/ CHERYL LEUNG page 60
7/ ETHAN BECHTEL, CEO, OhMD The platform lets doctors send HIPAA-encrypted texts to patients, and it was made free during the crisis.
8/ ALEXANDRA FINE page 39
9/ GREGG RENFREW, founder and CEO, Beautycounter The business saw a threefold increase in new independent makeup consultants at the brand, helping laid-off industry workers find new income.
10/ PITBULL, rapper The Grammy-winning artist helped launch the Hispanic Small Business Center to provide support to Latino entrepreneurs.
11/ AVA DUVERNAY, founder, Array Alliance The filmmaker launched Array Grants to help crisis-impacted festivals and screening series that focus on narrative change by people of color and women.
12/ LEVI FRIED page 23
13/ HARMONY SAGE page 23
14/ RYAN ROSLANSKY, CEO, LinkedIn
 The social network made job postings free for hospitals, disaster relief nonprofits, and medical device companies.
15/ TODD HEISER page 38

ROW D

- 1/ ACHAL PATEL, cofounder and CEO, Cabinet** The medicine startup launched in March and quickly started offering a

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- 2/ SUDHEESH NAIR** page 40
14/ STAN KHLEVNER page 63
15/ CHRISTINA STEMBEL page 22

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- 1/ SHAAN SETHI and 2/ NEELA SETHI YOUNG, cofounders, Jaanuu** The medical apparel brand pledged to donate 200,000 masks to Baby2Baby, a nonprofit that helps children in poverty.
14/ MARY SPIO, founder and CEO, CEEK VR The virtual reality company is working with entertainers to create live-performance experiences.
15/ ROSS KRAMER page 29

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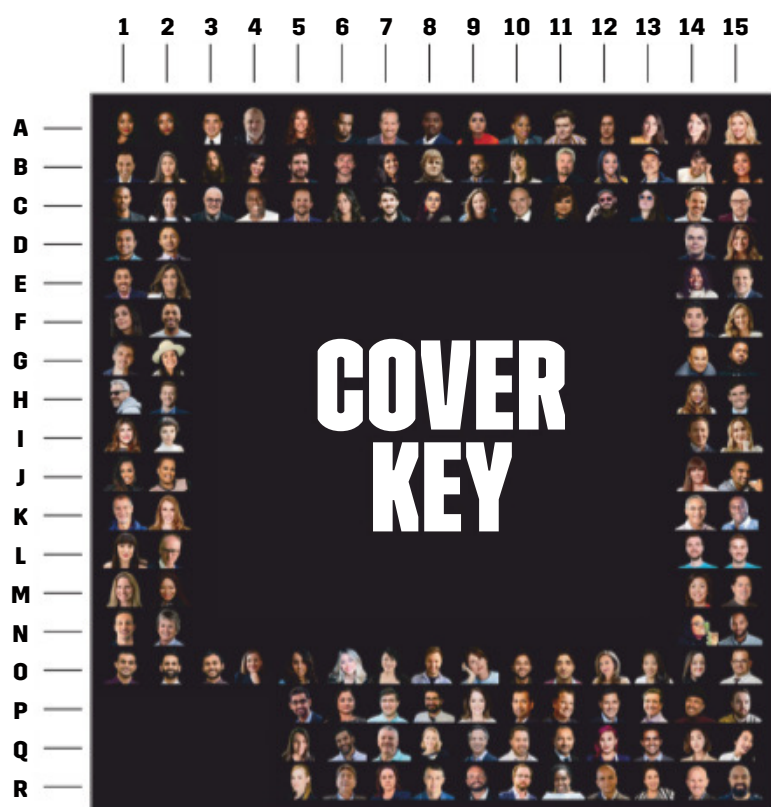
- 1/ ARIELA SAFIRA** page 49
2/ GARRY COOPER, CEO, Rheaply The asset-sharing platform provided its technology to help Illinois medical facilities share ventilators and supplies.
14/ FRANK YANG, founder and CEO, Simplehuman Sales soared for the brand's touch-free garbage cans and soap dispensers, and the company distributed free products to caregivers.
15/ ANNA WHITEMAN page 46

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- 1/ PASHA CHIKOSH** page 49
2/ MIKI AGRAWAL page 50
14/ JON TAFFER page 20
15/ TOMMEY WALKER, founder, Detroit VS Everybody Walker launched "EVERYBODY VS COVID-19" T-shirts; proceeds benefited Detroit businesses.

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- 1/ BRIAN SMITH** page 51
2/ NATE CHECKETTS page 42
14/ LILLIAN CHAN page 42
15/ MIKE WHATLEY page 63



ROW I

1/ KATIE STURINO, founder, Megababe Demand for the brand's hand sanitizer soared; the company prioritized donations to those most in need.

2/ IRINA LOGRA page 48

14/ JOHN FOLEY, founder and CEO, Peloton Sales spiked when people panic-bought at-home bikes, and Peloton shifted production to its instructors' homes.

15/ JAMIE SCHMIDT, cofounder, Schmidt's Naturals Schmidt launched The Entrepreneurial Dream Project, a grant and mentorship program for new businesses building during the crisis.

ROW J

1/ JAQI WRIGHT page 28

2/ NIKKI HOWARD page 28

14/ MICHELLE KENNEDY, cofounder and CEO, Peanut The social app for women launched new features to help users with pandemic fatigue and anxiety avoid COVID-19 conversations.

15/ RAJ KAPOOR, chief strategy officer, Lyft After recovering from COVID-19, Kapoor helped launch WorldWithoutCovid.org to connect interested citizens to clinical trials for vaccine discovery.

ROW K

1/ KEN GIDDON page 29

2/ LESLIE VOORHEES MEANS page 51

14/ YANCEY SPRUILL, CEO, DigitalOcean The cloud provider

launched the Hub for Good to help developers share tools and build projects to aid the crisis.

15/ TROY PARKER, CEO, Innovative Labor and Cleaning Services

Some people with criminal records, including Parker, are ineligible for relief loans. Now he's working with senators to advocate to the SBA.

ROW L

1/ JACQUELYN DE JESU CENTER, founder and CEO, Shhowercap The founder donated the brand's water-proof, washable, antibacterial shower caps to labor and delivery units as PPE.

2/ MATT RIDLEY page 63

14/ MUHSSIN EL-YACOUBI page 76

15/ BARY EL-YACOUBI page 76

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1/ JENNIFER PERKINS page 68

2/ TEMIE GIWA-TUBOSUN, founder and CEO, LifeBank The medical-delivery company launched drive-through mobile COVID-19 testing centers in Nigeria.

14/ MICHELLE NG, founder, Vancouver Foodie Tours Ng pivoted to create a platform to help small businesses sell their products online, building a digital destination for artisanal goods.

15/ RANDY DEWITT, founder, Front Burner Restaurants DeWitt created Furlough Kitchen to distribute free meals out of his shut-down restaurants, and shared branding and operations info to encourage other restaurateurs to do the same.

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1/ DAVE HUNT page 51

2/ PATTY CLISHAM page 70

14/ LISA PRICE page 29

15/ MUSTAFA NUUR, founder, Bridge Bridge helps refugees and immigrants connect with local communities. During the crisis, they're helping care for local senior citizens.

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2/ NISHANT PATEL page 70

3/ SAHIL PATEL page 70

4/ LORI COULTER and 5/ RESHMA CHAMBERLIN, cofounders, Summersalt The swimwear brand launched Joycast, a text hotline that sends heartwarming videos or funny memes to people.

6/ HEATHER HOPKINS page 49

7/ SHAN-LYN MA, founder and CEO, Zola The wedding-planning site

helped users navigate postponements with guidance, expert advice, and support initiatives.

8/ ANDREY LUNEV page 48

9/ EMILY L'AMI page 52

10/ DEEPAK RAO page 49

11/ SIDDHARTH BATRA page 49

12/ ROMY NEWMAN and

13/ GEORGENE HUANG, cofounders, Fairygodboss The online career

community for women offered free résumé reviews during the crisis.

14/ JENNIFER MAZZANTI page 29

15/ CARL MAZZANTI page 29

ROW P

5/ SUNDAR PICHAI, CEO, Google

Google launched features to help small businesses easily communicate new hours and preferred delivery partners, and promote gift card sales.

6/ MEGHANA PATEL page 72

7/ JERRY ORANS, founder, Hack the Pandemic The 16-year-old created a network of makers to 3D-print face shields for hospitals.

8/ HAMZA MUDASSIR page 56

9/ KELLY McCULLOCH, chief people officer, Taco Bell The brand committed to hiring 30,000 new team members during the summer months.

10/ MAHI de SILVA, cofounder and CEO, Amplify.ai The AI chatbot was deployed pro bono to government health organizations to help them share vital information.

11/ MATT HIGGINS page 62

12/ DANIEL LUBETZKY, founder, KIND The snack-bar brand has committed \$1 million and helped launch the Frontline Impact Project

to donate food to frontline workers.

13/ LARRY CONNOR page 42

14/ KEBA KONTE, founder, Red Bay Coffee When the coffee roaster closed its stores, its mobile coffee van grabbed attention—and helped boost e-com sales 350 percent.

15/ FRANCIS DAVIDSON page 23

ROW Q

5/ PINA CIOTOLI and 6/ ADRIANO CIOTOLI, co-owners, WindsorEats

The events business pivoted to create specialty deliveries (like boxes of local beer and wine) that support community businesses.

7/ MIKE ZIEGENBALG page 72

8/ ALINA MIKHALEVA page 49

9/ PETER DEMARZO page 49

10/ ALEX HOWLAND page 48

11/ AZIZ HASHIM page 80

12/ KAREN AKUNOWICZ page 23

13/ KULVEER TAGGAR, CEO, Zeus

The company previously arranged long-term housing for business travelers; it pivoted to help displaced college students find housing.

14/ CHRISSELLE LIM and 15/ JOAN NGUYEN, cofounders, Būmo The

education-based childcare center found a long-term opportunity as it shifted to digital amid the crisis. The interactive preschool now has a 2,000-person waitlist.

ROW R

5/ ASHLEY HUFFMAN page 48

6/ SALOMON MISHAAN page 76

7/ LAURA SPAULDING page 78

8/ DANNY CATTAN page 66

9/ JAMES VITRANO page 66

10/ ALEXANDRE LAZAROW page 58

11/ MAYA GILLIAM, founder, Hempress Farms When her

spa had to close, Gilliam pivoted and rebranded to become a hemp dispensary and remain open for business.

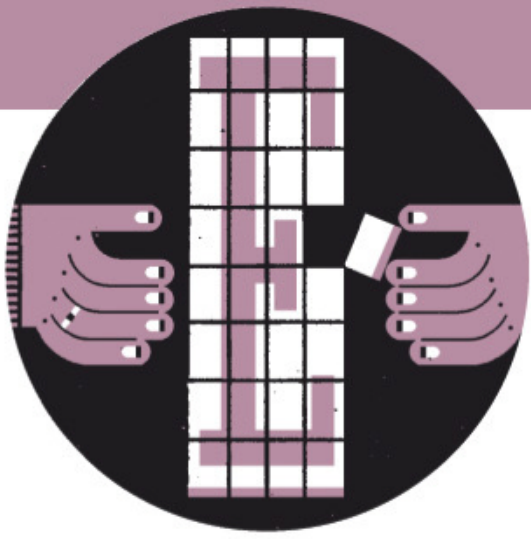
12/ TARIQ FARID, founder and CEO, Edible Arrangements The company

started offering fresh produce deliveries in addition to their signature bouquets and saw sales soar.

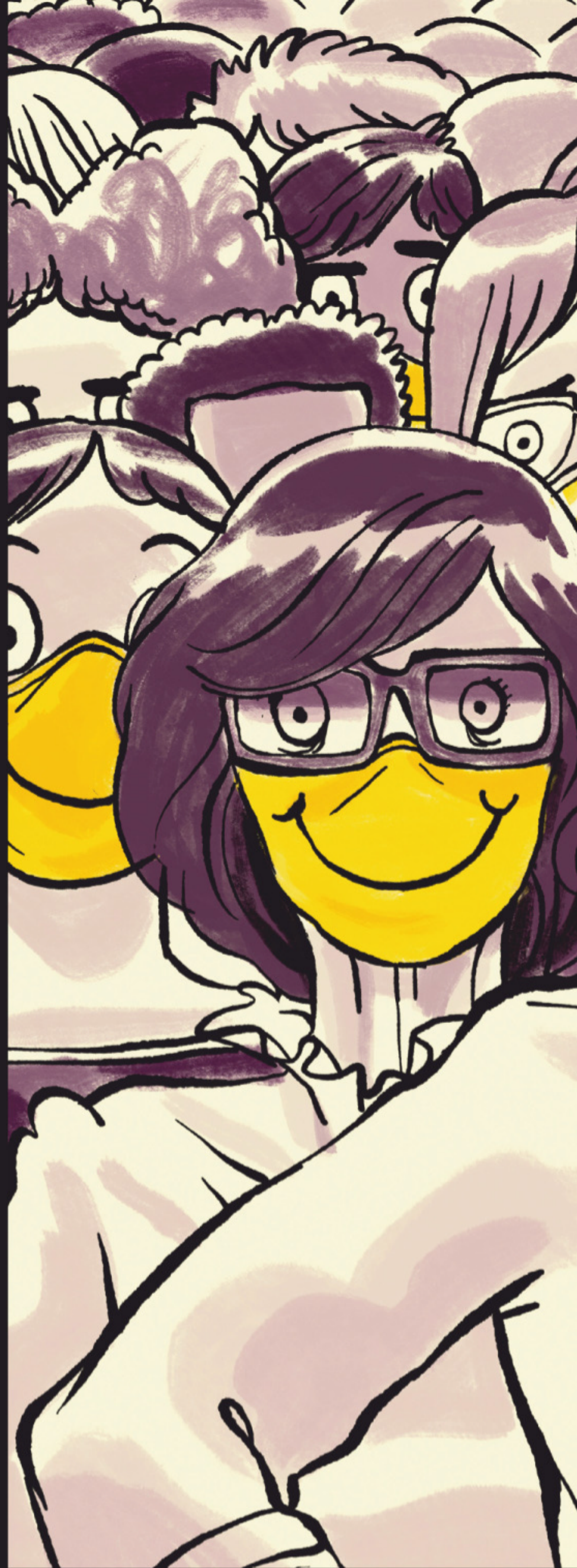
13/ MEENA HARRIS page 42

14/ PAUL WOLFE page 32

15/ ALFONSO OLVERA, cofounder, Aries The organization helped redesign an anti-aerosol box to keep doctors safe from contaminated air during intubations.



LET'S BUILD A BETTER FOR NORMAL





Did someone say no to you before? They might say yes now. Were they afraid of your idea before? Maybe not anymore. And what about you, personally? Did you think something was once impossible, or that you'd reached your limit? Now you might discover otherwise. The COVID-19 crisis has caused great harm and forced entrepreneurs to make excruciating decisions, but it has also produced real and valuable change. People and companies and even industries are rapidly shedding what used to seem like dogma. In its place is a kind of freedom—the ability to navigate a shaken-up world, to provide solutions to people newly in need, and to forget whatever negativity we carried over from the old world. We are, in short, collectively building a new normal. *A better normal.*

What comes next? On the following pages, we harness the spirit and wisdom of entrepreneurs to explore that question—looking at how we'll adapt, connect, build, thrive, and franchise. This is a moment of great opportunity. Let's get to it.



HOW WE'LL ADAPT

There is a playbook for solving problems, and it goes like this: *Change*. Great entrepreneurs understand that the world isn't controllable, and that strong ideas will run their course and must be replaced with even stronger ideas. So, consider it. What is a pandemic—what are we all facing—if not a very large problem? It isn't otherworldly; it isn't an alien invasion. It's a problem. That means we were already armed with the solution: We adapt. Here's how.



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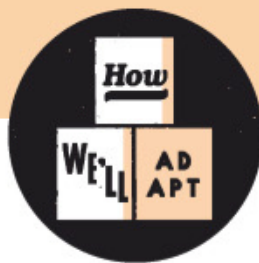




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Solve Tomorrow's Problems Today

We can still build sustainable businesses. But it'll require thinking far ahead—and acting now.

by JON TAFFER



When there's a problem, entrepreneurs fix it. But it's not enough to just solve today's problems anymore. That's reactive and short-sighted. We have a massive opportunity to thrive after this pandemic, but it'll only happen if we spend today solving *tomorrow's* problems. Look out into the future, and create the solutions that will resonate in the months and years to come.

You don't need to be a fortune-teller to do this. I'll give you an example.

Let's say a guy named Joe has a favorite burger place. They make a *great* burger, and he can't wait to eat there again. But when his local lockdown is finally lifted, that favorite burger place seems messy and disorganized. Meanwhile, there's a second-best burger place down the street—and that place is spotless. So where will Joe eat? I bet he'll pick the second-best burger.

What can we learn from that story? Here's what I see:

1/ The importance of trust.

Every business must distinguish itself, and that has always happened in many ways—with factors like quality, price, and convenience. But when Joe chose the second-best burger place, he pushed all those old qualities aside, and trust bubbled up to the top instead. That's a massive shift. Before the pandemic, trust was barely spoken about. No longer.

This means entrepreneurs can stand out from competitors in new ways. You can meet people's new expectations by focusing on different elements of your business. For example, your customer may have never cared about your operations before, but now they will. How can you innovate there? And how can you be transparent, so people trust those new operations? At my new restaurant, Taffer's Tavern, for example, I've put internet-connected cameras in the kitchen. I want the world to see my kitchen—and to trust what comes out of it.

2/ The importance of changing minds.

It's time to ask yourself some simple, difficult questions. Start with these: Am I selling a product that solves a problem that's unique to today? Do people value me more or less today?

Your customers are asking similar questions. They're wondering, *Who understands my needs now? Who can be there for me?* And frankly, they may

not know what to think about you. They may have loved you before, but all bets are off now.

You want those customers to come back, and you can't do that just by asking. You need to change how they *think* about you—and to do that, you first need to understand how they think, and then react to it.

3/ The importance of openness.

In the past, entrepreneurs hid their financial troubles. If customers knew we were struggling, we feared they might not come back. But COVID-19 has flipped that around, because we're all in this together. If you're a valuable business, nobody wants you to disappear. They want to support you.

It's time to market from a position of weakness, and let that become your strength. Share your challenges, and then show how they led you to great new solutions. Let your best team members step up. This is a time when greatness will be made—when great marketers and operators and promoters will find their voice and power. It's a time when small companies can become big, and big companies can really blow it.

The value equation has changed. So to thrive, we can't just say we've changed. We need to step up—and really change.

Jon Taffer is host of the television show Bar Rescue.



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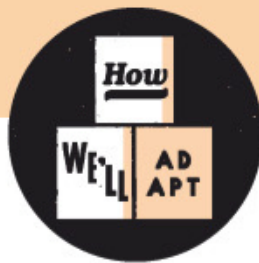
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Pivot Now, Thrive Later

Few things will look the same on the other side of this crisis, so don't hang on to yesterday's ideas. Here's how five businesses ditched their original concepts and discovered even greater opportunities.

reporting by **KENNY HERZOG** and **STEPHANIE SCHOMER**

CHRISTINA STEMBEL, founder / Farmgirl Flowers

OLD IDEA: Carefully curated products

NEW IDEA: More options at lower cost

WHEN THE PANDEMIC forced Christina Stembel to change her business, she was horrified. Then she was relieved. And now she has a stronger business as a result.

Stembel is the founder of Farmgirl Flowers, a San Francisco-based floral arrangements company. She started it in 2010, when she saw a way to stand out in a crowded market. The internet is full of floral companies, but most of them outsource fulfillment, surrendering control of the quality and design of their bouquets as a way to boost margins. Stembel did the opposite. Her arrangements had a point of view, she offered a small variety of them, and everything would be created in-house—ensuring high quality.

Flower lovers took notice, and a decade later, the bootstrapped operation has grown into a national brand with \$32 million in sales and nearly 200 employees. Stembel has seen competitors come and go, but she cherished the control her team had of their product, costly as it may be.

But underneath it all, there's been a problem. "Last year, we made under 1 percent net margins," she admits. "To sell \$32 million, to work that hard, and not make any profits?" But she hadn't been willing to give up the thing she thought made Farmgirl Flowers so special.

When the pandemic hit, however, her equation changed. San Francisco didn't consider her an essential business, which meant that her local flower production had to shut down. Meanwhile, her outsourcing competitors were able to keep going. "I set my company up in a way that I was so proud of, and I shouldn't have been. Because it left us with vulnerabilities."

Stembel crunched the numbers and figured out that her business could survive for eight weeks. It wasn't enough. She needed to shift. So she hustled to open four new distribution centers, expanding a partnership with suppliers in Ecuador and setting up operations with three partner farms in California. It was enough to keep the business alive in the near term, and she started to see an opportunity to build a smarter operation for the long term.



"What we've come up with is a hybridized model," she says. Farmgirl will still operate its own distribution center to maintain creative control of signature designs but will also lean on outside fulfillment centers for simpler bouquets. And by diversifying product offerings to include easy items like peony bunches, Stembel is hoping to bring in additional revenue.

"I'm drained," Stembel says. "But I also see a light at the end of the tunnel." The changes made to her model will eventually add at least 10 percent net to her company's bottom line, a business-saving shift. "We can make it now. And we can be a stronger, more resilient, less vulnerable company in the future."

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF FARMGIRL FLOWERS



MATTHEW HERMAN and DAVID KIEN, founders / Boy Smells

OLD IDEA: Sell to stores

NEW IDEA: D2C all the way!

MATTHEW HERMAN and David Kien (*pictured, from left*) went to Paris in February to pitch their fast-growing candle line, Boy Smells, to retailers. Once they landed, concerns over the coronavirus went from a whisper to a roar, and almost all their meetings were canceled. They returned to Los Angeles to shelter at home—and they had an idea.

Since launching in 2016, Boy Smells built an omnichannel strategy: Wholesale accounts made up 75 percent of its business; 25 was from D2C sales. But now, as retailers were canceling orders and closing doors, the founders told their team to focus on D2C. “We saw website traffic spike,” Herman says.

Herman and Kien (who are also partners in life) started pouring 1,000 candles a week in their home, and recruited friends to build and sticker boxes. Now D2C sales make up 90 percent of their business—and the brand is exceeding its original 2020 goals. “We’re flexing some new muscles,” Herman says. “We’ll continue to speak to customers directly.”



LEVI FRIED and HARMONY SAGE, founders /

Long Beach Beer Lab

OLD IDEA: Quirky place, quirky offerings

NEW IDEA: Become as essential as possible

LONG BEACH BEER LAB started with a simple premise: It was a brewery-meets-bakery, selling canned growlers to go and sourdough pizzas. After launching in its California neighborhood in 2017, it fast became a local favorite. But when nonessential businesses were ordered to close, husband-and-wife duo Levi Fried and Harmony Sage realized they weren’t considered essential. So they made some changes.

They transformed the beer lab into a grocer, dubbed Long Beach Bodega Lab. The pizza and beer were joined by eggs, yeast, rice, beans, and other coveted basics, and demand soared. “I’m busier than ever, and I only foresee getting busier,” says Fried, who doubled up on stocking items like flour—constantly updating their inventory—after a few weeks of observing customers’ new buying habits. “We’ve been bettering our system in dealing with logistics, online ordering—all those things that were foreign to us. The initial excitement has died down, but the enthusiasm has not.”



FRANCIS DAVIDSON, cofounder and CEO / Sonder

OLD IDEA: Short-term rentals

NEW IDEA: Stay as long as you need

SONDER FUSES the professionalism of hotels with the coziness of Airbnb. The hospitality company leases, designs, and operates apartment units, and rents them out for short-term stays. When COVID-19 hit, travel demand plummeted 90 percent. “We had to look at every lever we could pull to mitigate the drop,” says CEO Francis Davidson. “We started thinking about medical workers who may need housing, or people stuck somewhere because of travel restrictions.”

His team started focusing entirely on promoting long-term stays, offering a 40 percent discount for any booking longer than 14 days. “Those are now more than 75 percent of our business,” he says. Average occupancy is at just 65 percent, though that’s considerably better than the hotel industry’s decline. Davidson anticipates a long and slow recovery for the industry, but he’s seeing long-term stays as a new ray of hope. “It will continue to be a substantial part of our strategy,” he says. “And we’re just getting better and better at it.”



KAREN AKUNOWICZ, chef and owner / Fox & the Knife

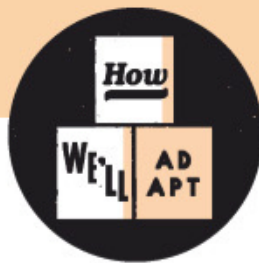
OLD IDEA: You come to us

NEW IDEA: We go to you

KAREN AKUNOWICZ NEVER served takeout. It’s not what her kind of restaurant does. The *Top Chef* vet opened her Boston restaurant, Fox & the Knife, in February 2019, and 12 months later, it had been praised by countless press outlets and named a James Beard Award semifinalist for Best New Restaurant. But in mid-March, when restaurants were told to close, she knew changes would have to be made.

That night, she asked her team to create their first-ever takeout menus, adjusted supply purchases, got in touch with her contact at delivery service Caviar, and created two new brands on Instagram: Fox at Home would offer takeout, and Fox Pasta Boston would sell fresh pasta by the pound. “How can we give people at home a little bit of the magic from Fox & the Knife?” Akunowicz says. Loyals embraced the new offering, which is keeping the business afloat. “It’s enough to sustain us for now, but it’s not viable for the long term,” Akunowicz says. “My mom always tells me, ‘Karen, you can do anything for a year.’ So I’m keeping her voice in my head.”

(CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT) PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF BOY SMELLS (HERMAN & KIEN); SONDER (DAVIDSON); MATT KURKOWSKI (AKUNOWICZ); LONG BEACH BEER (FRIED & SAGE)



“Incredible Innovation Comes Out of Dark Times”

Sara Blakely has steered Spanx through 20 years of ups and downs, including personal devastation and global catastrophe. It has taught her a lot about the value of adversity.

by **LIZ BRODY**

Maybe your article should be titled “What to Do When Your Panties Are on Fire. ha ha”

That’s what Spanx founder Sara Blakely emailed me after we talked. It was March. The pandemic had just begun.

Blakely is famous for a few things: She’s a rare female billionaire, the defining personality in the estimated \$1.8 billion global shapewear category, and just about every photo of her features a showstopping smile bright enough to reach the nosebleed section. But she has fallen on that happy face more than once.

“I believe a lot of really important, incredible innovation comes out of dark times,” she tells me. Spanx turns 20 this year, surviving September 11, the 2008 recession, and personal tragedy—and she expects no different now, despite closing her stores, watching sales slump, and losing a line of new product when a cargo ship caught fire. When we speak, she’s working from home, punting four kids under the age of 11 before they tackle her, and boldly reinventing herself and her company once again. “Actually,” she confesses, “I’m hiding in a closet.”

Here’s what she’s learned about crisis management.

CRISIS: Childhood trauma
STRATEGY: Train your mind

“**WHEN I WAS 16,**” Blakely says, “my friend was run over and killed by a car in front of me, and my parents separated. I was in a very, very dark place.” Before her father left home, he handed her a cassette series called *How to Be a No-Limit Person*, by the self-help author Wayne Dyer. “I put the tapes in,” she says, “and they changed my life forever.” She practiced letting go of what

other people thought and not worrying about being embarrassed; she embraced the idea that the only way to fail was not to try. She learned that times of despair contained hidden blessings. And this, she believes, is what set her up for success.

First she got a job selling fax machines. It was brutal being kicked out of offices all day, every day. “I knew it wasn’t the right path,” she says. “After a really bad day, I wrote in my journal, ‘I’m going to invent a product I can sell to millions of people that will make them feel good.’ And through tears, I looked up at the ceiling and said, ‘OK, universe; give me the idea.’” The universe didn’t deliver quickly; two years passed, and her father suggested that she get a job at CNN or Coca-Cola in Atlanta, where she was living. She said no. “I actually made an intentional decision to stay in a dark place, because I felt that if I became content at a job, it would keep me from an opportunity to achieve something much greater.”

Eventually, she did hit on a brilliant new idea. It was Spanx.

CRISIS: September 11’s impact
STRATEGY: Stick with your strength

BLAKELY LAUNCHED Spanx out of her apartment in October 2000, and its Footless Body-Shaping Pantyhose quickly caught the interest of Bloomingdale’s, Neiman Marcus, Saks Fifth Avenue, and Nordstrom. But she knew this wasn’t enough; consumers and salespeople might not understand the new product. So she went on the road, doing promotions for seven hours a day in fancy department stores. “I took pictures of my own butt in white pants with and without the



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF SPANX



▶ SPANX STRETCHES

Blakely, at HQ, has a staff of more than 250—a long way from when she ran the brand herself (*below*) out of her apartment.



product, went to Kinko's, got it laminated, and stood there showing women what it could do," she says.

This gained her traction—but her enthusiasm would soon be tested. Blakely made a big decision to invest in an advertising insert, which would be sent out by Saks. And it arrived in mailboxes exactly five days after the attacks of September 11, when nobody wanted to think about shopping.

She wondered if she should stop her daily appearances. That fall, there weren't many customers in the stores. But she did it anyway—and kept at it even after her best friend and roommate died in a horse riding accident a few months later. Emotionally drained as she was, she sensed it would pay off.

First there were the insights. Spanx was sold in the hosiery department—and because she was actually in the stores, she saw that almost nobody walked through there. So Blakely got busy. She stuffed envelopes with Spanx and placed them by

cash registers throughout the stores. "I also realized I had to win over the sales associates," she says. "So before my appearances, I would run around and ask everyone individually if they would come to a morning meeting, and I offered them free product." Then she'd bait them with contests, like whoever sold the most Spanx that day would get \$100.

"I ended up building a sales force, not on my payroll," she says. "Store associates would grab their customers and say, 'I have to take you to the hosiery department. You have to buy this new thing.' It was this really intense time of bonding, because everybody was hurting and vulnerable, and I made very deep connections, even down to the ladies in the gift wrap section. That ended up being an incredible boost to the business, because once people started going back into the stores, all these salespeople were selling for me and rooting for me."

CRISIS: The 2008 recession

STRATEGY: Choose profitability over growth

MANY OF SPANX'S competitors follow a Silicon Valley-style playbook: They raise a lot of money and then spend it aggressively to gain new customers. Spanx did the opposite. Even as the company took off, Blakely ran it with the tight grip of its new Power Panties. "We spent what we could to grow," she says. "But we've never put growth for the sake of growth over profitability and running the business in a way that we felt we could weather storms." That strategy kept Spanx stable during the 2008 recession.

To this day, Blakely has never taken outside money, owns



→ YOU GOTTA LAUGH

From the start (*above*), Blakely used humor to get through hard times. Now she trains her staff to do stand-up comedy.

100 percent of the company, maintains zero debt, and does all PR and marketing in-house. “One thing that has sustained Spanx through a lot of obstacles is that we have a zero-based budget plan internally,” she says. “Every manager starts at zero each year and has to make a case for how the money they’re asking for is going to have a return on investment. It doesn’t matter what last year’s budget was—you have to start again from scratch and build it up.” Although Spanx won’t reveal revenue numbers, Blakely says it has been profitable since its first month in business.

CRISIS: Mission drift at Spanx
STRATEGY: Check your internal culture

IN 2002, two years after founding Spanx, Blakely hired a CEO to run the business so she could travel as the face of the brand. That worked for a long time—but by 2016, she felt that the company was off track. So she took over as CEO again and looked for what needed to change.

First she tried on every product, both produced and in the pipeline, and tossed about 80 percent of them. “I thought, *Let’s dive deep and focus on only the best of the best,*” she says.

Then she addressed the culture, which had veered from the mission. “I wrote down the things that contributed to my ability to overcome odds and take risks,” Blakely says. The list wasn’t exactly out of a business school textbook. It included her stints in sales, public speaking, debate, and stand-up comedy, and once she had it in hand, she created the Be Bold Bootcamp. Now every employee, regardless of their job, gets coaching in those subjects. The goal is to help people think out of the box while also being quick to see the upside in down times. “We’ll rent a comedy club, and everybody stands on stage and works on how to frame things in a

funny way,” she says. “We’ve also held debate-offs at Emory [University]. Debate is about listening and compassion and seeing the other person’s point of view. It isn’t about ‘I win; you lose.’ It’s trying to find that win-win scenario.”

Not only did the reboot avert disaster; it led to innovation. Spanx had defined shapewear but now needed to be more. So it aggressively pushed its new Faux Leather Leggings. “That was an extremely pivotal moment because we truly became an apparel company,” says Blakely.

CRISIS: Happening right now
STRATEGY: Stay nimble and optimistic

AFTER A CAREER of navigating (and gaining strength from) hard times, Blakely is eager to inspire a new generation to do the same. Most important to her is developing a strong personal mindset: “As an entrepreneur, that’s your greatest asset, and you should work on it daily,” she says. “I do.” One thing she has done is partner with 3DE, a national education nonprofit, on a module for high school students that teaches them to think for themselves and see opportunities. Currently it’s in 13 public schools and on track to grow.

Now, in the face of COVID-19, she’s been counting on that same mindset. Since March, Blakely has cut costs, scaled back inventory orders, brainstormed new products, and donated \$5 million to help other female founders. With all her past crises, she was prepared for this moment and continues to ready for what lies ahead. “I’m in survival mode, but I have faith that it’s going to change,” she says. “We’re already learning as a company, and I have no doubt I am going to have some amazing inspiration.” **E**

Liz Brody is a contributing editor to Entrepreneur.

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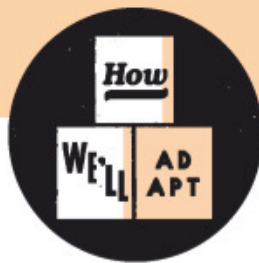


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ASK AN EXPERT



Lessons from Past Crises

Yes, it's possible to come out of the pandemic stronger. Here's how seven entrepreneurs thrived during the recession, 9/11, and other terrible events.

by LIZ BRODY



NIKKI HOWARD and JAQI WRIGHT, founders
The Furlough Cheesecake

LESSON: Stand out when others aren't.

IN 2018, Nikki Howard (*pictured, left*) worked in recruitment at the FDA and Jaqi Wright (*right*) was an analyst at the Department of Justice. But in December, the sisters were both furloughed in what turned out to be the longest government shutdown in history. By New Year's, they were worried about feeding their families. To cheer everyone up, Howard baked one of her sweet potato cheesecakes for church. "It was our mother who sat down with a pot of coffee and told us, 'You should sell

those,'" Wright recalls. The sisters jumped on it. They registered their company, The Furlough Cheesecake, threw up a website, and went out to friends and family on social media. Their first 24 hours in business, they sold six cakes. Then, after Wright contacted the local news, which eventually led to a profile on CNN, they got 1,000-plus cake orders...and that led to an appearance on *Ellen* (nearly 4,000 more). The sisters got cheesecakes in about 80 Walmarts for a short-term stint, and since then, they've been racing to keep up with the demand. Along the way, they left their government jobs. "Don't be obsessed with getting your business plan perfect," advises Wright. "At some point, you have to take your finger off pause and hit play."



KEN GIDDON, co-owner / Rothmans

LESSON: Look ahead at tomorrow's needs.

IN 1985, Ken Giddon was a 25-year-old bond trader when his parents asked him to shut down his grandfather's New York City menswear shop. Instead, Giddon revamped the store, Rothmans, and has been running it ever since—through 9/11, Superstorm Sandy, break-ins, and the 2008 recession, the last being the worst. "We were sunk," says Giddon. "But it gave us time to ask: What's our unique selling proposition, and what should it be?" That question led Giddon to a critical pivot. He realized that with the growing lure of online shopping, the store needed to give people a reason to come in. First, he doubled down on hiring and training superior salespeople. Second, he moved to higher-end inventory—a counterintuitive move with logic behind it. Rothmans had always been a discounter, but Giddon bet that if he focused in on the brand's ability to curate the best products for a fair price, his customers would approve. Apparently they did. Rothmans has not only beaten the odds of surviving as an independent retailer in Manhattan; it now has three stores.



LISA PRICE, founder / Carol's Daughter

LESSON: Get lean and step up.

IN JANUARY 2008, Lisa Price was ticking off resolutions for Carol's Daughter, the hair- and body-care company she'd started in her kitchen 15 years earlier. She'd just gotten her first real chunk of capital after taking an equity partner. That year, she began renovating new offices, hiring staff, building stores—just as the economy crashed. A few months in, retailers canceled. "Holiday 2008 was pretty awful," she says.

By 2009, much of the investment money was spoken for. So Price refocused. With her executive team, she decided that senior management would take a temporary pay cut to minimize layoffs. Then an opportunity appeared. In the past, to open a store in a mall, the brand would have to sit on a waiting list for upwards of three years. Now those spaces were freeing up as retailers went out of business. "In a weird way it worked out," says Price. "We were able to get in—and get space we couldn't previously afford because landlords were more flexible with negotiating." By October 2014, annual net sales hit \$27 million and Carol's Daughter was acquired by L'Oréal USA.



JENNIFER and CARL MAZZANTI, cofounders / eMazzanti Technologies

LESSON: Use the crisis to define your mission.

"OH MY GOD, another bomb." Jennifer Shine gasped as a throng of cops jumped the turnstiles and flew up escalators, shoving everyone out of the way. She and her cofounder, Carl Mazzanti, were heading into the World Trade Center for a meeting with a client, just as a plane hit the North Tower.

They survived 9/11. But would their computer network startup, eMazzanti? It was only 13 days old. After the attack, their few clients couldn't even use its services because the phone lines were down. Instead of ducking from the crisis, the cofounders redefined their company to embrace it. "We decided to focus on security and disaster recovery versus just being a generalist," says Shine, who has since married Mazzanti and set up hundreds of companies to withstand tornadoes, hackers, COVID-19, name your emergency. But at first, it was tough; after 9/11, they just got their new clients back online. "We didn't make any money doing that," she explains. "But I will tell you, all those original customers? Unless they've gone out of business, we still have them today."



ROSS KRAMER, cofounder and CEO / Listrak

LESSON: Know your clients.

ROSS KRAMER'S business used to be simple: "If you had \$250 and an email, we would take your money," he says. His company, Listrak, was basically an email blaster—sending out marketing messages for anyone. But when the 2008 recession hit, it lost hundreds of customers per quarter. Even though Kramer was bleeding cash, he spent some of it on a consultant—an expert who could look at his problems from an outside perspective.

The consultant told him to pick an industry and focus on that. Because Listrak didn't specialize in any type of customer, nobody saw it as essential to their business. Following the advice, Kramer realized that while retail made up only a tiny percentage of his 1,000 clients, it was the most lucrative sector. (E-commerce did well during the recession.) He then studied billion-dollar retail brands to see how he could bring their sophisticated digital marketing methods to smaller companies.

Kramer made the shift, and it paid off. Listrak's staff has grown from 30 employees to more than 300, and its annual revenue is up from \$6 million to \$60 million. "It never would have happened if we hadn't gone through that downturn," he says.

(CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT) PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF CAROL'S DAUGHTER; LISTRAK; EMAZZANTI TECHNOLOGIES; ROTHMANS



HOW WE'LL CONNECT

Entrepreneurship is not a solo experience. It's a collective effort—building a team, finding partners, fostering relationships with consumers that could last days or decades. So while the pandemic has changed the way we connect, it hasn't changed the simple fact that we must connect. With new tools, philosophies, and work-from-home strategies, we're setting ourselves up for an interconnected future—whether by screen, in person, or a bit of both.





How to Manage from Afar

If no one is in the office, how do you hire, manage, and keep your staff?
A top HR exec says not to worry—we're onto a good thing.

by LIZ BRODY



When the pandemic began, working from home seemed like a temporary solution. Now it's a permanent fixture, as companies like Facebook and Twitter let many employees stay remote forever, and the research firm Global Workplace Analytics predicts up to 30 million U.S. employees will regularly work from home within the next two years. (That's six times as many as did before.) "It's been a forced experiment that has proven for a lot of companies that this can work," says Paul Wolfe, senior vice president of HR at Indeed, the giant job posting site, whose 10,200 employees are remote until at least September. None of that should shock researchers: In the past few years, studies have found that working from home leads to higher employee satisfaction, lower turnover, and greater productivity. But new workplace settings come with new workplace needs. How do you recruit, manage, and keep employees? Wolfe, who previously oversaw HR at Match.com, Orbitz, and Condé Nast, explains.

1/ HIRING: Expand who you need.

There are many benefits to hiring remote workers. You're not limited by geography, which may give you access to a more diverse range of candidates, and you can hire based on talent alone...not whether you'd like to sit next to them all day, every day. But that means you'll be sifting through many more résumés. The solution, Wolfe says: Stop being reactive in hiring, looking at candidates only when there are open jobs, and start being proactive. "So you meet a candidate and go, 'Oh my God; you'd be a great addition to our company. I don't have the perfect job for you right now, but let's stay in contact.'"

Interviewing these candidates will also feel different; it's harder to get a sense of someone without being in the same room. "You just really have to hone your interview skills to ask the right questions," he says. Ask about how they set their schedule at home, including examples of challenging days. Another good question: "How did you and your last manager work out goals and objectives and keep each other updated? And if you saw a roadblock, did you raise the red flag early or try to figure it out on your own?"

2/ MANAGING: Create the path.

Running a distributed staff means ramping up what good managers already do—which

is to say, make sure everyone feels like they're on a path to success. "You need to be really clear about goals and expectations, timelines and project plans," Wolfe says. You should also be empathetic. Not everyone will manage their workload at home the same way, so you'll need to learn their individual patterns and needs. "Always check in with them to ask, Is the work meaningful? Do they like the people they work with? Do they feel they're having an impact?" Wolfe says.

3/ OPERATING: Track goals, not hours.

The old workweek may slip into obscurity for some industries, Wolfe says. Employees might, say, take off Wednesday for a kid's play and catch up on Sunday. This kind of goal-based work—as opposed to hour-based work—is something employees have wanted for ages. Companies have resisted it, stuck in their outdated office mentality, but Wolfe believes that the companies who embrace it will drive engagement and boost loyalty.

To keep a team on task in this new time-shifted world, managers should break up projects into short- and long-term deliverables, with clear systems to communicate who's hitting them. "Giving people the ability to manage their work lives is a really powerful thing," he says.

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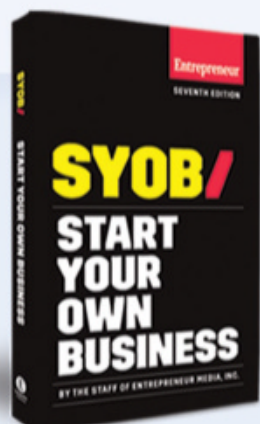
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Lead with Transparency

In times of crisis, a leader can rise up—even if, like **Eric Yaverbaum**, they're sick in bed with COVID-19. Here's what he learned.

by **JASON FEIFER**



IN LATE MARCH, Eric Yaverbaum was out for a run when his body shut down. “It just hit me,” he says. “My breathing got very labored. I got a cough, extreme fatigue, body aches like I’d never felt in my life.” He went to the hospital, where a test confirmed his condition: He had COVID-19.

Doctors sent him home to quarantine himself.

Yaverbaum is the chairman of Ericho Communications in New York City, and he now faced a challenging question: How does he lead his company while fighting a terrifying illness? To answer that, he drew from his experience in crisis communications. He wanted to be transparent, open, and trusting of his team. We spoke in April, after he’d been in bed for 11 days. (He’s since recovered.)

What have the past 11 days been like?

Bizarre. You can feel the virus moving around in your body. The aches—even if you’ve gotten the flu full-out, it makes those aches look like junior varsity.

What did you do after being diagnosed? You still had a company to lead.

I have employees on both coasts. I communicated immediately, and I let my entire company know exactly how I felt. What my company knows about me personally in the past

11 days is significantly more than I ever felt I needed to talk about. I communicated with all the tools that I had, and I did it transparently, optimistically, and realistically.

Your staff must have been afraid—for you, of course, but also their jobs. How did you address that?

Realistically. I said, “Who wouldn’t be afraid?” People like to know about tomorrow. Fear of the unknown exists in everybody’s mind. We are suddenly in an era where we have no idea.

The illusion of control has finally been made clear for what it always was: *an illusion.*

It’s leadership’s job to share calm. Not chaos. I watched September 11 out my office window. I saw jumpers—with everyone in my office covering our mouths, trying to process what we were watching. I was in charge of an organization then. I had to decide what to do, with zero experience. There’s no playbook. It’s instinctual. And I think that in this crisis, you will see great leaders show up. They will help us all take steps forward.

Did you put other people in charge in your absence?

For decades, I’ve said this about the success of the organizations I’ve run: If I’m not the dumbest one in the room, I’m in the wrong room. I have smart people working for me. If they’re not empowered to make decisions when I can’t or am not available, then

we’re not that great an organization.

How do you think we move forward from here?

If you’re feeling like *There is no way...*, then this would be a good time to make a way. What it all boils down to is *How do you enjoy the space between where we are and wherever we might be going?*

You might start with the recognition that the most important things in life aren’t things. It turns out that what we thought might never be gone tomorrow is already gone in so many ways. And if it wasn’t obvious to you before, the people who need help look a lot like people who don’t need help.

If your first thought this morning wasn’t *Thank you*, you might want to reconsider what matters now. We all got dealt some new, real surprising cards, and now we have to learn how to play those new cards. And I say, play the hell out of them.

AND JUST LIKE THAT
EVERYTHING
CHANGED...

WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER!
"THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME"
STAY THERE!

#HAPPY #HOPEFUL #GRATEFUL





Marie Kondo-ing Your Home Office

The guru of declutter takes on the new remote workspace (and pays a visit to mine).

by **FRANCES DODDS**

Every office has its politics. But bringing your office into your home, as many of us have in quarantine, escalates the usual state of affairs. I share a 500-square-foot apartment with my fiancé, Chad, and I've found coworking and coexisting to be a bit of a minefield. We're allies, but inanimate enemies lie in wait: an ill-placed coffee mug, a computer cord stretched across the floor like a booby trap. The explosions have an existential ring to them: "But why, *why??!*"

So when I discover that Marie Kondo will be paying us a Zoom visit to discuss her new book, *Joy at Work*—published in early April, just as the pandemic took off—I am eager to experience her much-celebrated, life-changing magic.

At the appointed time, Kondo "arrives," accompanied by her English-speaking interpreter, Marie Iida. Kondo looks fresh and minimal in a white crewneck sweater. A copy of *Joy at Work* sits on a shelf over her right shoulder. The whole scene is very Zen, but Kondo assures me that outside the frame, her remote work setup is less than serene. "This is certainly new for me," she says. "My children are playing in the other room. I'm home the entire day, so I make three meals for them, and in between..." I think she says something about work and a dog and health, but feedback fuzzes up the connection.

Joy at Work is Kondo's fifth book, cowritten with Scott Sonenshein, an organizational psychologist. In it, she takes the method that mesmerized the world in *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up* and applies it to our professional lives, advising us to remove clutter from all areas of our career—office, email, desktop files, apps, daily calendar. The idea is to clear time for those aspects of your work that spark joy, and ultimately to ask if your occupation makes you feel happy and fulfilled. "For me, the goal was to create a book that allows you to think about how you want to work in the first place, and what your ideal is when it comes to your career," she says. "I think this book really gives people an opportunity to listen to their hearts."

Sadly, a 30-minute Zoom session is not enough time for Kondo

to listen to my heart (it tends to go on). But it's enough for a tour. I show her my desk with its curated baubles, stack of papers, and nest of electronic cords. Then we visit my bedroom, where Chad is perched on the bedside with his laptop on a barstool. "That's where I keep my coffee mug!" he says, pointing at the windowsill.

"I'm so happy that you shared your specific work area with me!" she says, sounding genuinely happy. "It will just take a few tricks of storing to make it a lot better." Her voice rises and falls in the warm, lively timbre that endeared her to millions of fans on her show, *Tidying Up with Marie Kondo*. "Around your desk, the first things I saw were a few small accessories. Just having a little tray or any small boxes you like can really clear space. And the electric cords—if you don't need to keep them all connected to a power source, it might be helpful to designate a spot to store some of them. As for that pile of documents, it's amazing how much difference it makes to store them vertically in a file folder. It really allows you to keep track of what and how much you have."

In regard to Chad's "office," she says, "I think it's very important to demarcate when you're using the bed for work and when you're using it to relax and sleep on. So disconnect the cords at the end of the day, and put them in a box at the foot of your bed, or anywhere you'd like, but just make sure you're clearly shifting gears. Anything that allows you to move from work mode to relaxation mode is very important."

Much of her work involves teaching her pupils to let go of things. But that can be especially difficult in a time like this, when people are losing so much already. When I ask Kondo if she has any advice, she bows her head and closes her eyes like a passing meditation. "A lot of people have anxiety about what's ahead for us, but I do feel that now is precisely the moment to reflect on how precious the things are that we already possess," she says. "The question of what sparks joy allows you to shift your perspective and foster gratitude for why you do what you do, and the people and things you have in your life." Even that trusty computer cord, trip-wired across the living room floor.





What Should My Office Look Like?

Architecture firm **Gensler** is helping businesses redesign their workspaces. Is this what the future looks like?

by **FRANCES DODDS**



→ **WORK SPACE**

A door-free conference room creates new options; (right) an imagined workstation fuses open space and privacy.

In 1931, in the midst of the polio epidemic, the Swiss architect Le Corbusier finished his famous Villa Savoye, on the outskirts of Paris. When you walk into the building, the first thing you see is a stand-alone ceramic sink. Todd Heiser has been thinking about that sink a lot lately.

“It encouraged people to have good hygiene,” he says. “Moving forward from this pandemic, I think we’re really going to see a refocus on zoning and what happens when we come into a space.”

Heiser is a co-managing director of the Chicago office of Gensler, a global architecture firm that has created a data-driven tool called ReRun to help businesses reimagine their offices to accommodate new social distancing guidelines based

on their individual space, staff size, and advice from the CDC and the WHO.

“Depending on what your space can absorb, you may only want to bring back 25 percent of people to the office,” Heiser says. But capacity isn’t the only concern. Some clients are worried about open floor plans, while others are just as fearful of enclosed spaces: Doorknobs

have become the new enemy.

“We’ve been hearing that many of our users don’t want as many doors on rooms,” Heiser says. “So we’re actually creating something that’s a mix between an office and a workstation. We’re calling it an ‘office.’ Or we’ll pull the doors off a conference room and use that as an additional workspace.”

Heiser envisions a future



(THIS PAGE) PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF GENSLER



that will embrace facial recognition technology to grant touch-free access to workspaces, and anticipates a refreshed demand for automatic doors, intuitive elevator systems, and even infrared temperature sensing. He knows that remote work will be a big part of our business culture moving forward, but he mostly feels optimistic about the future of the office

and how employees exist within it.

“This pandemic has created a new sense of essentialism,” he says. “It’s made us value the power of human connection, and also to ask, *What do we really need? Why do we need to go to an office?* We’re probably going to realize we don’t need some of the things we thought we did.”

STAYING TOGETHER, APART

How do you keep a remote team happy?

To find out, we picked one company—the sexual health startup **Dame Products**—and asked some of its 17-person team to send us their tips (and selfies).



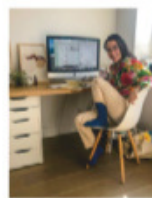
EMMA ROONEY, sales coordinator

“Structure has been key to keeping productivity up. Getting dressed in the morning and staying out of my bedroom during the day has been helpful, and creating a schedule for my day and a cutoff time in the evening is a necessary boundary. Plus, I’m constantly motivated by the work my colleagues are doing. I’ve been practicing mindful gratitude—I’m thankful to have a job to wake up to during these unimaginably tough times.”



JAEHELLE JOHNSON, engineering technician

“We’ve been having more frequent full-company check-ins, to just see each other’s faces. I think we’re using Slack 10 times more than we ever did when we were physically together. And we’ve started having video chats outside of work hours—to have virtual drinks together and decompress.”



ALEXANDRA FINE, cofounder and CEO

“We’ve been having daily virtual morning meetings. We make a Google Doc with our agenda, and every staffer adds what they accomplished yesterday, what they’re trying to get done today, and if there’s anything in their way—like if they’re waiting on a document from someone. It’s a great way to create accountability, and a great way to make sure everyone showered and is taking care of themselves. I think we’ll keep doing these meetings when we’re back in the office.”



JOSH NALVEN, head of voice and experience

“I know too much about computer networking from past jobs—and from being the unofficial IT guy at Dame. I have Ethernet cables in multiple lengths, and my 50-foot cable has been the real MVP of this quarantine. Your internet is faster and more reliable when you’re hardwired into your router.”



ANTHONY FRANCIS, senior engineering technician

“I’m keeping productivity up by sticking to a plan but allowing for downtime. I’ve set aside an hour each day for professional development, like learning a new skill or taking a course. My workstation is packed up at 6 to get ready for family time—and to clean up the dining table before Mom comes home.”



How to Talk to Your Team

In a crisis, keeping your staff informed and inspired is a complicated but necessary task. Here's how one CEO does it—by creating constant conversation.

by **STEPHANIE SCHOMER**



SUDHEESH NAIR KNOWS what bad communication looks like. During the 2001 and 2008 economic downturns, he was working at companies where the leadership team made decisions behind closed doors

and simply conveyed instructions to team members afterward. “There was no context for employees,” says Nair, now the CEO of ThoughtSpot, an analytics and data company. “When you give people responsibility without context or authority, it’s a recipe for disaster.” That’s why, throughout the COVID-19 crisis, Nair is taking a different approach to leading his 500 global employees. “We’re going for radical transparency and candor,” he says. Here’s how he’s creating a better conversation.

1/ Be an accessible leader.

Before the company started working from home, Nair would often take breaks at the Sunnyvale HQ’s coffee shop, and his casual conversations often led to valuable insight. “I wanted to duplicate that in the worlds of Zoom and Webex,” Nair says. “Whenever I have some free time on my calendar, I’ll send out a Zoom link in Slack and let our staff know that I’ll be hanging out for the next half an hour. Anyone can join, and it’s like a virtual coffee place.” He

started calling these virtual coffee chats AMAs, like on Reddit’s Ask Me Anything series, but has shifted the moniker to AMTA, for Ask Me or Tell Me Anything.

“Sometimes our CRO joins me, and it has really helped us understand and work through the difficulties and challenges people within the company have been going through.”

2/ Create a structure, and stick to it.

“Structured communication is extremely important right

now,” Nair says. Individual team meetings are happening three times a week, and a weekly all-hands meeting allows the exec team to regularly present news to the entire staff. Some spotlight particular populations within the company; one featured female leaders, who talked about the extra pressure women may be feeling at this time, especially those juggling families, children, and now homeschooling. “We changed the structure from being just a broadcast to really opening it up to be an inside view of other people’s experiences,” he says.

3/ Acknowledge your team’s stress.

“We know that work is not everything, and especially with something like this happening around the world, it’s critical to put our experience in the context of *We are still so blessed despite everything going on, rather than Why is this happening to me?*”

Nair says. ThoughtSpot has provided all employees with a free subscription to a yoga and meditation app, and asked author Mike Robbins, an expert in authenticity and appreciation, to speak with the staff. Says Nair: “We’re trying to create a holistic approach.”

4/ Give employees a platform—and a voice.

Even with the increase of meetings and impromptu chats with the leadership team, Nair knows that not everyone at ThoughtSpot may be comfortable publicly voicing their opinion. With the help of a tool called Officevibe, Nair and his executive team have been soliciting anonymous feedback from all employees across the company, allowing any staffer to voice concerns or complaints without attaching their name to it. “We’re getting really candid feedback,” he says. “And that kind of feedback is so critical.”



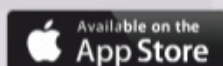
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It Pays to Do Good

Why so many brands have stepped up to help others, even as they're short on cash themselves.

by **JASON FEIFER**



RHONE WAS hurting. The company sells men's activewear, and when the pandemic began, it had to shut down four stores and manage many wholesale losses. Its cofounders took large pay cuts, and employees' salaries were reduced 10 percent. Then, despite Rhone needing to conserve cash, its cofounders decided to give steep discounts to customers—and donate 2 percent of net sales to a nonprofit that helps frontline medical workers.

"Some could say, 'We should be protecting ourselves first,'" says Rhone cofounder and CEO Nate Checketts. "But brands need to think about people before they just think about making money." And in an unexpected way, efforts like this *are* good for business. Rhone tracks employee sentiment across time and saw that after the company announced its charitable giving, satisfaction rates were way up. Sales went up, too.

In the past few months, many entrepreneurs have been thinking this way—offering free services, discounts, charitable contributions, and more. (Checketts is helping to organize many of them: He cofounded Brands x Better, a collection of 100-plus brands that commit to certain levels

of giving.) He says there's a strong financial case to be made here. During crises, consumers tend to default to cheap and easily accessible products. When small and local brands step up to help, however, consumers become more willing to return.

"This deepens existing customer loyalty, because

there is a level of confirmation bias," he says. "When you love a brand and you see a brand doing good, you're like, *This is why I love that brand!*"

Where should a brand donate? Don't overcomplicate it, he says. Some leaders may want to ask employees, or even vote on where the money goes. But that

creates division, Checketts says: Employees will become attached to their ideas and disappointed if they lose. Instead, he advises leaders to pick a cause that feels natural...and then rally everyone around it.

He also cautions against being too self-promotional. People love good deeds—but not if they appear showy. (In a recent PRWeek/Morning Consult survey, 42 percent of adults said that brands try too hard to show off their social missions.) That's partly why Checketts cocreated Brands x Better. With an organization, he says, his PR department could focus on promoting the group's efforts—rather than just praising themselves.

"Think about your brand as a relationship," he says. "We all know the person who only comes to you when they want something, versus somebody who's there for you when you need them—and then if they ever need anything, they don't even need to ask." That's the kind of brand he wants to build.

4 WAYS TO GIVE

Good ideas, large and small.



1/ Raise funds.

Thynk Global is a new Miami coworking space. Cofounders Maghan Morin and Jeanine Suah (*from left*) hosted a virtual "cowork danceathon"; funds raised would provide free coworking space around Miami for local entrepreneurs displaced by COVID-19.

2/ Change lives with cash.

Larry Connor, CEO of the real estate company The Connor Group, made \$1.6 million in the stock market during the pandemic's early days. He gave it all to employees in the form of bonuses, then pledged an extra \$1.5 million as a small-business-loan program.

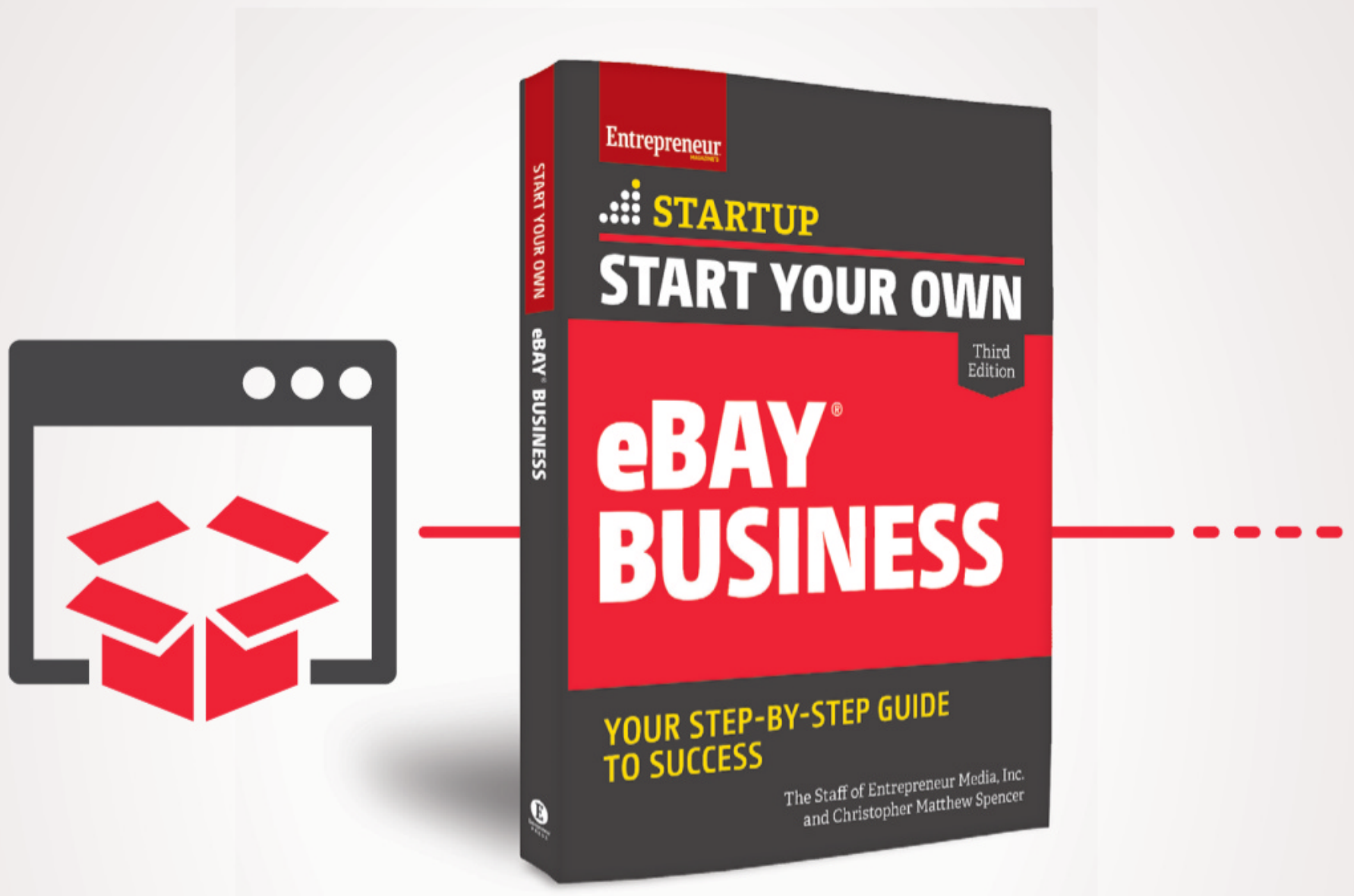
3/ Support communities.

When racism began being directed to the Asian community, Meena Harris' Phenomenal Woman Action Campaign sold shirts that say PHENOMENALLY ASIAN. Celebrities wore them, sales spiked, and net proceeds went to the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum.

4/ Form a new organization.

Lillian Chan has spent 15 years in construction and knew her industry had unused N95 masks. So she swiftly created Give Armor, a group that matches excess supply of PPE with hospitals and clinics.

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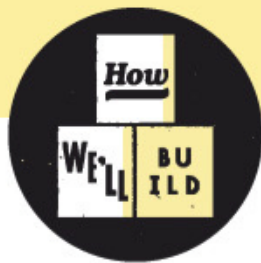
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HOW WE'LL BUILD

In the pandemic's early days, celebrated investor Marc Andreessen wrote an essay about the power of entrepreneurship. "Every step of the way, to everyone around us, we should be asking the question, What are you building?" he wrote. "What are you building directly, or helping other people to build, or teaching other people to build, or taking care of people who are building?" On the following pages, entrepreneurs offer their answers.





What Investors Want Now

Some say it'll be harder to raise money. Some say there's no difference. But this much seems clear: No matter what, investors' expectations have changed.

by LIZ BRODY

Pitching investors was difficult before—and now? “Fasten your seatbelts; it's going to be a bumpy ride,” warns a report from the National Venture Capital Association (NVCA). It predicts that for the next several quarters, VC firms will struggle to raise their own funds, which means less cash to deploy to entrepreneurs.

But Anna Whiteman is more optimistic. She's VP at Coefficient Capital, a firm that focuses on digitally powered consumer brands (Hydrant, NomNom, Just Spices). Even if the road is bumpy, she says, it's heading into exciting territory. But to start, entrepreneurs will need to think differently about growth.

You read that NVCA report. How do you think COVID-19 will affect investors in general?

I really don't think it should cause too seismic a shift in the amount of capital deployed—just the manner of deployment. The rate of investing, at least at our level, Series A and Series B, won't really change. I think you'll see perhaps a bit of a pullback at the seed stage, where it's a little more risky. One interesting thing we're seeing across the investment landscape is that where growth was initially prioritized, now there's a shift to profitability.

The past decade has been so much about Silicon Valley making things efficient. What kinds of startups are getting VCs' attention now?

I think what we're seeing is an acceleration of a lot of the trends we were already excited to invest behind—for example, the shift to grocery moving online, telemedicine, bringing fitness in the home. Also, what will be increasingly important is a brand's ability to build community, be sustainable, appeal to the Gen Z demographic, and use new social channels in interesting ways.

During the lockdown, I'd say a good DIY hair-color brand could make a killing.

It's really funny you mention that. I was reading a report where 1,000 consumers were interviewed, and between Gen Z, millennials, and boomers, the one consistent trend that popped up in the center of the word cloud was “hair dye at home.” Everybody's looking for that. The aesthetics of working on Zoom will be interesting to watch. You know, beauty historically has been surprisingly recession-proof. In 2008, it did quite well. People wanted lower-cost and easier ways to feel good about themselves.

How are founders pitching you now—by Zoom?

One interesting question is, can you do a deal without having physically met the teams behind the brand? We luckily haven't had to confront that yet. Investors might have to get comfortable with getting

to know somebody and understand the way they build their brands entirely virtually. I'm very open to that. But I hope the whole industry can evolve.

Do you have any advice for founders who are pitching now?

The key things I want to hear as an investor are not necessarily to wow me with your growth expectations. I really appreciate founders who are working toward profitability and are developing sound unit economics within their model. Also, the flowery language that founders might have previously used when everything was a go and all markets were wide open—that doesn't need to be said right now. Investors are looking for truth in pitches. And one more point: The more you can leverage an organic community and word-of-mouth marketing, the better. Because that speaks to the strength of your brand.

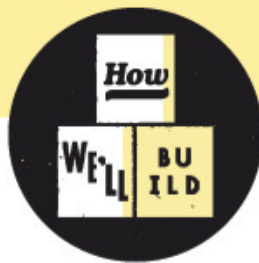


PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF ANNA WHITEMAN

What's a good way to demonstrate that community?

Previously, it was built through physical meetups—we'll see how that evolves going forward. But community can mean many things, and we like to see it across multiple channels. Facebook and Instagram engagement is great, but if your consumers are on TikTok or YouTube, you have to invest in the content angle and make sure the message resonates fundamentally with them. Another example is having a high click-through rate on email newsletters. Also, the quality and sentiment of reviews is meaningful. There are a few companies out there with just some of the most outrageous, hilarious Amazon review pages I've ever seen, and that really speaks to a consumer's willingness to put time and energy into telling other people about the brand.

All these things help drive organic customer acquisition, which at the end of the day contributes to profitability and the bottom line. So as I said, try to build the most rational and efficient business model you possibly can, because that's what investors want to hear. We're in the business of growing brands. There is capital to be deployed, and I'm excited to get to work.



The New Social Network

How do you learn, grow, and make new connections while stuck at home? I took a trip into the world of virtual conferences—and may not want to go back.

by IRINA LOGRA



→ FROM CHINA WITH PIXELS
HTC's annual gathering moved from Shenzhen to the platform Engage.

I am in Los Angeles. My new friend Grégory is...somewhere in France, I think? But together, our avatars are exploring a business conference on a virtual island. The day just ended, so we stroll to the beach and await a tour by motorboat. Then we realize no boat is necessary; the water is walkable. So off we go, two digital avatars wading into the digital blue.

As our professional lives become more digital, it's worth wondering: Is *this* the future? Can human connection thrive in pixels? Virtual conference spaces seem to offer some insight, because while they were niche before COVID-19, they're now in high demand. VirBela, which creates the virtual space I'm in, recorded a 600 percent increase in sales since March. VR platform Hubs by Mozilla says it's doubling users every few weeks. Augmented reality startup Spatial reported 1,000 percent growth.

Skeptics might say, "Virtual spaces aren't like real life!" That's true—though in my experience, some things are strangely the same. A conference room still looks like a conference room, and a panel still features a lineup of experts in chairs. (Their avatars can be just as boring as in real life, too.) At one session, other avatars' heads even kept blocking my view—so realistic! But there were many digital upgrades too: People's bios and LinkedIn profiles are a

click away, I could find anyone immediately without wandering around, and I never worried about forgetting someone's name; it's glowing over their head.

But *reality* isn't what these spaces are really going for anyway. "Trying to fully replicate the offline experience in a digital world is like taking a horse carriage and replacing the horse with an engine," says Andrey Lunev, who produces virtual events with the company XR Crowd. Instead, developers seem to start with a different question: *How can this new experience feel safely familiar?* VirBela's environments look a little like Fortnite, and company president Alex Howland says that's on purpose. More realistic graphics require powerful hardware, and he wants people to have access regardless of whether they're using an Oculus or an old PC.

In any case, users say the space isn't what's valuable. It's the real people who inhabit it.

That's how Ashley Huffman felt. She lives in Toronto and leads marketing for the tech company Nano Magnetics, and recently attended the virtual version of a conference that's usually held in China. She was surprised at how human it felt. "When you're inside an event 10 feet away from the chairman of HTC, Cher

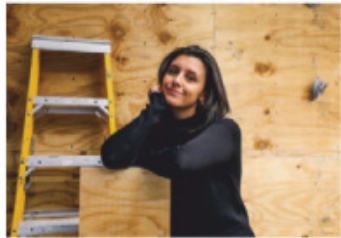
Wang,” Huffman says, “it feels like she’s talking with you.” Moscow-based VR developer Alina Mikhaleva loves to hear that; she’s the founder of Less Media Group and hopes more people will now try the new technology. “The crisis allows us to take a break, reflect on our old habits, and rethink what we want to build in the future,” she says.

But once COVID-19 is contained, will we abandon virtual spaces and return to the real world? It may not be that simple. The education industry offers a case study: Completion rates for online courses were averaging in the single digits, so a few years ago, some institutions adopted virtual spaces. Stanford University began using VirBela for parts of an executive online program called LEAD and saw great results. “We could bring the community together in a way that you can’t do in a videoconference,” says Peter DeMarzo, the program’s director. He plans to keep going.

Perhaps, then, the future will be a hybrid. For example, the event I attended was called Laval Virtual 2020; it’s the digital version of an annual event held in Laval, France. Organizers want people to come in person, but they loved that the digital version drew 6,600 people—many of whom may never get to France. So now they’re exploring how to offer both versions at once, like a gathering of humans with two planes of existence: the real and virtual worlds, both of which have their benefits.

YES, YOU CAN LAUNCH IN A CRISIS

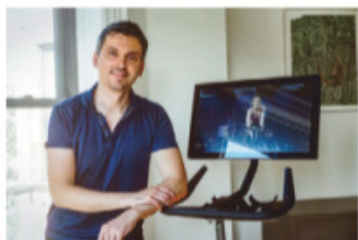
Wondering if now’s still the time to start something new? These founders went for it, and here’s what they learned.



Serve customers first. Charge them later.

Ariela Safira had big plans for April 7. That was when she’d open the doors to Real, her women-focused mental health studio in Manhattan. But by the big day, lockdowns had begun.

Still, Safira saw an opportunity ahead of her. “We were two days into quarantine, and my team and I got on a video call to think of a new way to provide care,” Safira says. “Because right now, people need mental health-care.” Over eight days, they built a digital platform to serve New Yorkers, and launched it on March 27. The price: free through May. That way, they could reach as many women as possible and start a relationship that could develop down the line. “This platform and this crisis are bringing out a very open and vulnerable side of people,” says Safira. “And our therapists are here for them.”



Become part of people’s routines.

Pasha Chikosh had spent 18 months developing Stryde, a new at-home exercise bike. Much like a Peloton, Stryde would come with a tablet—but instead of producing content, Stryde would enable users to stream classes from a wide variety of real-life fitness studios. (Or riders could just zone out

with Netflix.) But then the world turned upside down, delaying Stryde’s first shipment of bikes.

At first, it seemed like the company would be stalled... but then Chikosh saw an opening. “Our studio partners had to shut down, and they were looking for a way to start connecting to their consumers digitally,” he says. His streaming app could be the solution—even if it didn’t come with a bike. So in March, Stryde launched its app and started streaming more than 100 classes to users; all revenue from its \$29.99 monthly user fee would go to the studio partners until mid-July. This made studios happy, of course, and it also made Stryde the go-to app for all those studios’ fans. A few months later, when the bikes were finally ready for delivery, demand was strong. “We have exceeded our goals by orders of magnitude in terms of pace of sales,” Chikosh says.



Start small, and grow steadily.

Heather Hopkins hated online dating. She’d waste months texting with people before meeting in person, only to discover they had no chemistry. So she made a rule: She had to video chat with someone before meeting in real life. “That chemistry was totally transferable,” she says.

The idea eventually led her to create GOATdate, a dating app that matches people—and then forces them to have a five-minute video conversation before they can message each other. She launched it in March,

planning to promote it with a tour of 25 colleges, workplaces, and events. All were canceled except four, but that was enough to earn her 1,000 users. As the pandemic began, she focused on serving them—and user growth soared. “They’ve become the word-of-mouth advocates that we wanted,” she says. “The beautiful thing is that they found us because they were looking for this type of solution.”

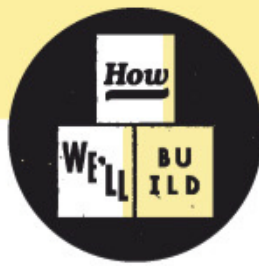


Serve your users’ new needs.

For college students in need of cash, a new startup called Thrive was ready to offer a solution: It would give loans of up to \$25,000 to anyone who’d secured a job or internship. The company was supposed to launch April 8... but by then, of course, most universities had shut down. Thrive decided to launch anyway, because some students had signed up and they still had job offers. “That generated demand,” says cofounder Deepak Rao (pictured with cofounder Siddharth Batra, from left). But then: “Companies stopped hiring and rescinded some offers.”

What to do? Rao wasn’t sure, so he listened to his users and started to see opportunity. Because Thrive’s loans are tied to students’ employment, the startup was hearing which companies were hiring and which weren’t. That was valuable data, which it turned into a real-time tracking tool. “It became extremely popular—30,000 college students regularly check it—and it’s helped us get the brand out,” Rao says. “There’s no playbook for this!”

Reporting by Liz Brody, Stephanie Schomer, and Jessica Thomas



5 Lessons from Pandemic-Proof Businesses

While most businesses have suffered through this crisis, some became hugely popular. Here's what they've done to capitalize, and the lessons they hold for any entrepreneur.

reporting by **FRANCES DODDS, STEPHANIE SCHOMER, and JESSICA THOMAS**

MIKI AGRAWAL, founder and CCO / Tushy

1/ Keep the conversation going.

THERE WEREN'T MANY good things about the Great Toilet Paper Shortage of 2020, but to Miki Agrawal, there was one upside: Americans were embracing the bidet. Agrawal is the founder of Tushy, a bidet attachment company launched in 2014. Last year, the company did just under \$10 million in sales...but this year, it's on track to do five times that. "We sold out by the second weekend of March," she says. "We had our first million-dollar day."

But the spike in demand, coupled with production facilities in Asia, led to some lengthy delivery delays. "Our customers had to wait five weeks, and that sucked," Agrawal says. Her strategy? "We were just *extremely* transparent." Tushy explained and apologized for the delays, and also took the opportunity to share the benefits of bidets—and that toilet paper can cause hemorrhoids, UTIs, and anal fissures. That kept customers eager for their purchase to arrive. "We've been educating and educating, because it's a real behavioral shift," Agrawal says. "Finally, people took the leap."



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF TUSHY



LESLIE VOORHEES MEANS, cofounder and CEO / Anomalie

2 / Build trust with big gestures.

LESLIE VOORHEES MEANS' customers kept asking the same thing: *Can you get me my dress on time?* It was an understandable concern. Her company, Anomalie, enables brides to create custom wedding dresses online and have them shipped straight to their homes, and her already anxious base was starting to panic as COVID-19 put weddings on pause. She was also seeing increased demand: As brick-and-mortar bridal salons shuttered, incoming inquiries to Anomalie spiked to 1,500 a day, and sign-ups soared 25 percent. But the question lingered: Could she really deliver, fast?

Voorhees Means knew she could. She'd spent years building a vertically integrated supply chain and nurturing relationships with small factories around the world, which made her less vulnerable to disruption. But brides don't care about supply chains. "We started offering refunds of 1.5 times the cost of the dress if we didn't deliver on time," she says. "We knew we could produce, and wanted to give our brides that confidence." It did the trick: "March was our best sales month ever."



ANDY HUNTER, founder and CEO / Bookshop.org

4 / Pick up the big competitors' slack.

ANDY HUNTER wanted to help independent bookstores drive sales, and he did...modestly, at first. He launched Bookshop.org in January; it's an online platform and affiliate network that helps fill the gap for indie stores that don't have robust e-commerce offerings. After a few weeks, the platform sold about \$5,000 worth of books a day. *Not bad*, he thought.

When COVID-19 hit, indie bookstores struggled to stay open—but then Amazon, their usual competitor, de-prioritized book shipments. Bookshop.org was suddenly perfectly positioned, and daily sales, driven by the small shops utilizing the platform, skyrocketed to \$150,000. "We experienced two and a half years' worth of growth in three weeks," he says. He quickly staffed up, hiring newly laid-off booksellers. Now he's exploring opportunities to keep the momentum going. To start, he's fielding requests from European and Canadian shoppers and improving his infrastructure to handle higher demand. "We're taking this opportunity to achieve a kind of stickiness and try to become essential," says Hunter.



DAVE HUNT, founder and CEO / Crossrope

3 / Expand access, even if it hurts.

CROSSROPE WAS HOPING for a big year. It's a cross-training jump rope brand, and it had some big marketing promotions in store for 2020. "So we ramped up production," founder Dave Hunt says. "And that was really fortuitous." After a respectable January and February, sales started spiking the week of March 9—because as more Americans were trapped at home, they were looking for new ways to stay fit. Soon Crossrope was setting sales records daily: For nearly four weeks in April, every single day broke its 2019 Black Friday record.

This was exciting but also scary: Crossrope was on pace to run out of inventory. To cope with that, it started limiting the number of items each customer can order. "It's not the ideal economic setup, but it's keeping us stocked and helping us get products to people who really want them," Hunt says. He figures it's better to get his brand into the hands of more people, even if it slows down sales. "We're grateful we can make it work."

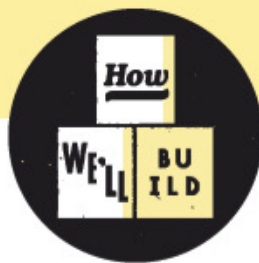


BRIAN SMITH, cofounder and COO / Winc

5 / Become the center of a community.

WHAT'S GETTING quarantined adults through this crisis? Booze. And the wine-delivery startup Winc knows that better than most. In 2019, it added an average of 200 new members a day—and now it's averaging 2,000. In March and April, Winc brought on more than 96,000 new customers, achieving its highest revenue months to date. It was exciting...but also an organizational challenge. "Tripling or quadrupling output in a warehouse, while implementing additional safety protocol, was very challenging," says Brian Smith, Winc's cofounder and COO.

To keep up with the demand, Winc's in-house wine-making team moved quickly to blend and bottle the previous harvest. But when it became clear that Winc could serve a unique role for the small wine producers it works with around the globe, it launched new collaborations and placed larger orders to meet demand. "The dislocation of the restaurant industry is a blow to the wine business, not just culturally, but from a point of distribution," Smith says. "Having the ability to sell at scale through our website has allowed us to be an even better partner to winemakers."



A Website That Does Everything

A strong digital presence is now more important than ever. These tools make it easy to run your business online.

by JOHN BRANDON



EMILY L'AMI LAUNCHED her brand's website the old-fashioned way: She paid an agency \$10,000 to make it. But the result was underwhelming—and that was a problem. Her company, a therapeutic-perfume startup called Bodha, was taking off. She needed an upgrade.

So even though she's not technically inclined, L'Ami tried to build a site herself using Squarespace. "I gave myself two days," she says. "I decided, *I'm going to stick with it and figure it out.*" The result: Bodha.com is a stunner—original photos, integrations with social media, contact forms, and the all-important shopping cart. Now it draws about 12,000 page views per month and is a significant driver of sales to her business.

Success stories like these are now common for website builders like Squarespace, Wix, and GoDaddy. Years ago, they all offered basic services—designing a simple site, registering a domain, and so on. But they've since evolved into comprehensive business tools, featuring things like a full-featured shopping portal, SEO assistance, a CRM, live-chat functionality, and much more. Starting this year, they'll even help businesses do marketing and promotions.

Scott Frankum, a web design expert, says it's now possible for any entrepreneur to build complex sites using modern builders. Wix's new product, called Editor X, even supports font scaling,

grid layouts, a full improved blog platform with SEO, and advanced responsive design (which automatically adjusts to screen size, user behavior, and operating system).

"Sites used to be flat brochures," he says. "Now they can handle business processes, provide help desk support, and link to customer relationship management

data." Another example: With GoDaddy's product Websites + Marketing, a wizard lets you optimize and insert search terms on your home page for better Google results, and you can enable site-wide Google ads.

With Squarespace, you can run email campaigns, and web visitors can sign up for events. A brand-new

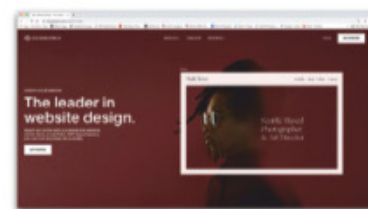
feature shows your Instagram page on your website—which L'Ami loves.

What's next for modern website builders? Natasa Djukanovic, the CMO of top-level domain company Domain.Me, says the builders will likely adopt emerging trends. This might include skeuomorphism (mimicking real-world objects) and neomorphism (dark and light shadows). Content marketing—a way to draw in new visitors—will evolve using long-tail keywords for niche markets. She does offer a warning, though. "It's important to follow trends that feel right for your brand rather than just implement trends for the sake of popularity," she advises.

Frankum says website builders will add more features for business process automation—like what to do if a visitor needs sales or support help but doesn't want to talk to anyone. They may offer mobile text marketing over Bluetooth, and much more. But for L'Ami, her next move might feel straight out of the year 2000: She's thinking of adding a CRM. No problem—these services have that, too.

TEST TIME

We built a site on each platform. Here's how it went.



SQUARESPACE

Price / \$18 a month for business plan
Best feature / Integrating Instagram content onto your actual site

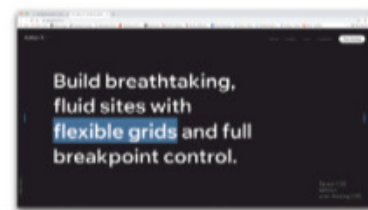
Our review / Design templates are better than average. Our test site has a spacious, friendly look with plenty of white space.



GODADDY WEBSITES + MARKETING

Price / Starts at \$10 a month
Best feature / Inserting SEO terms on your home page and in blog posts

Our review / The tools are all intuitive and powerful. One ding: You can't assign blog posts to a specific author.

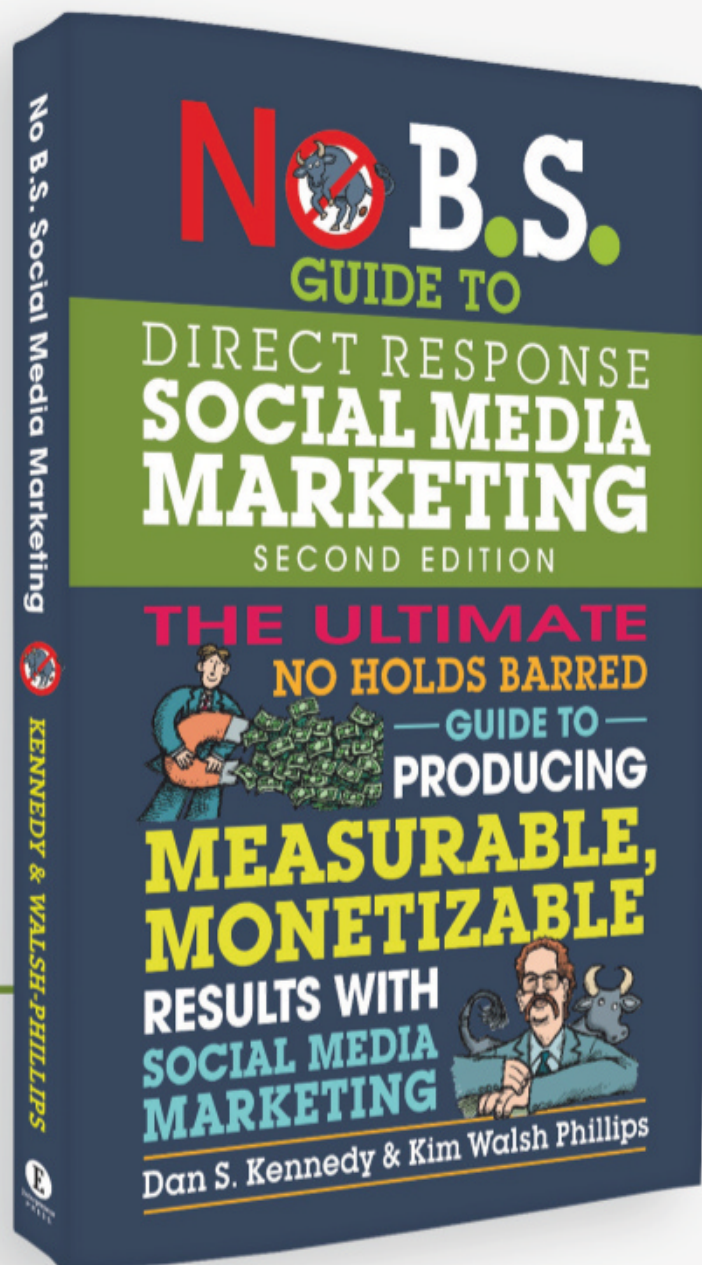


WIX EDITOR X

Price / TBD
Best feature / Responsive design improves the site on any screen

Our review / The interface is easy and well-designed, but some of the advanced features for responsive design might require some training.

SOCIAL MEDIA IS NOT MARKETING



Sending a message to millions on social media accomplishes little for most businesses. Before you post make sure you include these six direct-response rules:

1. **Always include an offer**
2. **Always include a reason to respond right now**
3. **Always have clear instructions**
4. **Always include tracking**
5. **Always follow-up**
6. **Always measure your results**



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HOW WE'LL THRIVE

Nothing will ever be the same, we're told. *The world is forever different.* That may be true in some ways. We may want and create new things; we may engage with new technologies; we may be focused on new problems to solve. But let's not forget: We can flourish in this new world, just as we did in the old. There's still a bounty of possibilities, and an open sky for our ambitions. We do not need to settle for less. We can thrive. We *will* thrive. Here's how.





The Next Wave of Innovation

The best ideas are born from necessity—and right now, the world desperately needs good ideas.

If past crises have taught us anything, it's that entrepreneurs will rise to the challenge and help create a smarter, brighter, better tomorrow on the other side of tragedy.

by **HAMZA MUDASSIR**



BLACK SWAN EVENTS, such as global recessions and pandemics, change the trajectory of governments, economies, and businesses—altering the course of history, often for the better. The Black Death in the 1300s contributed to the dissolution of the feudal system in Europe and put us on the road to a modern employment contract. A mere three centuries later, a deep economic recession—thanks to the Hundred Years' War between England and France—helped kick-start a major innovation drive that radically improved agricultural productivity.

Fast-forward and the SARS pandemic of 2002–2004 catalyzed the meteoric growth of a then-small e-commerce company called Alibaba, helping establish it at the forefront of retail in Asia. The financial crisis of 2008 also produced its own happy side effects. Airbnb and Uber shot up in popularity across the West as the subprime crisis meant lower savings and income for the masses, forcing people to share rooms and car rides to cover for the deficit.

With COVID-19, we are only seeing the first signs of how consumers and businesses will change. Remote working, for example, is now being embraced by tech and nontech companies alike. It's impossible to guarantee which of today's shifts will resonate tomorrow, but we know this for sure: Some of them will create longer-term digital disruption that will shape businesses for decades to come.

An entrepreneur's mission is to stay ahead of these shifts and anticipate their effects. *That* is where the biggest opportunities will be tomorrow. Here are three examples.

1/ Supply chains will merge to become ecosystems.

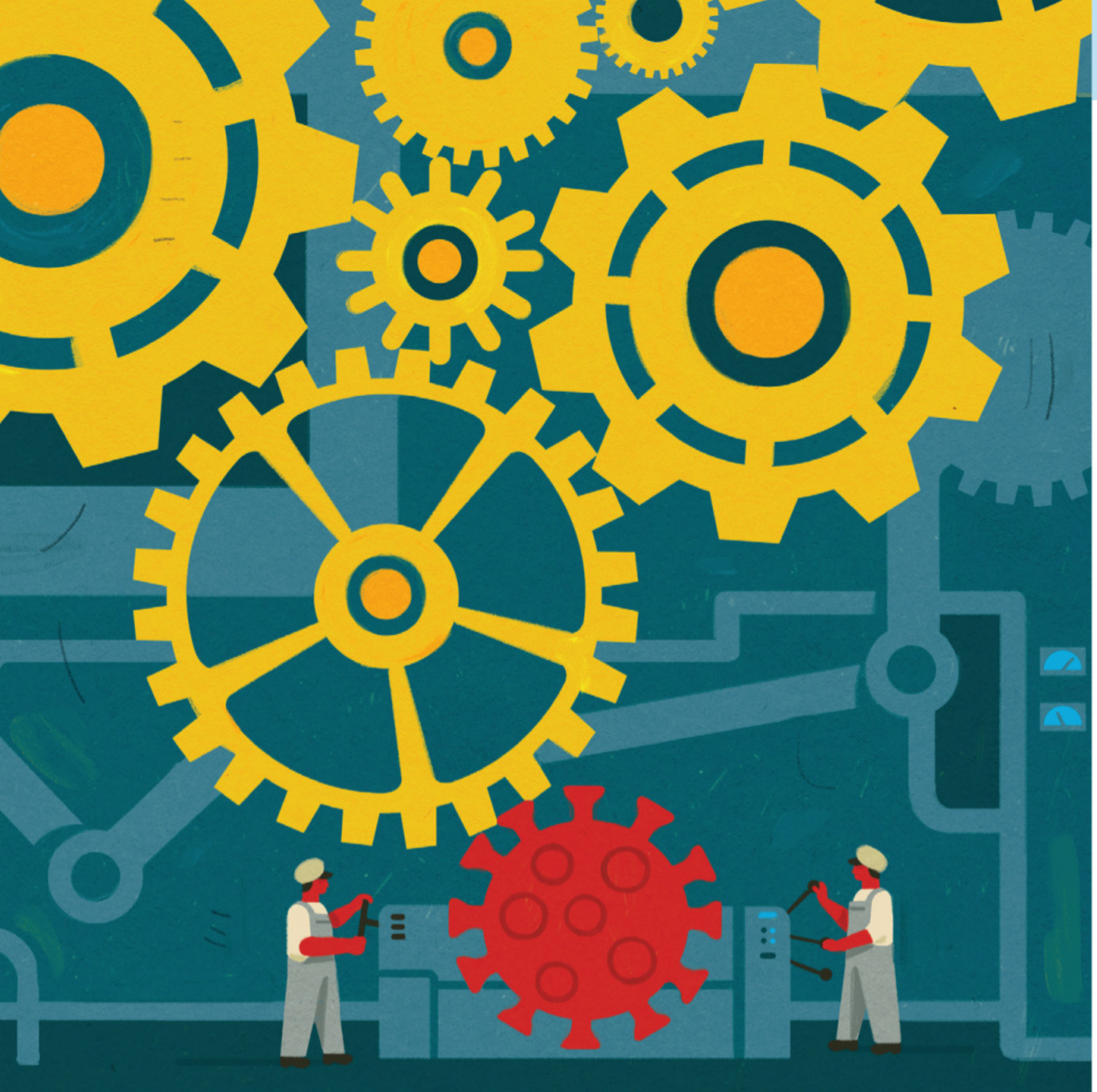
Global supply chains have long kept quality relatively constant, while driving lower costs at every step. COVID-19

turned this approach into a house of cards. When China slowed down to contain the pathogen's spread, it knocked out the supply for a variety of goods and services globally. This failure will be a catalyst for supply chains across the world to merge into a *mesh*—where manufacturing will be more spread out around the world, and businesses will use multiple, and sometimes even redundant, sources to ensure that they can survive a single point of failure. These more complex ecosystems will be powered by sophisticated digital platforms and advanced technologies such as 5G, internet of things, and blockchain. That way, costs can still be kept low while improving resilience.

Leaders should get ready for this change today. Use this lull period to start transforming your company—reimagining your business, its strategy, and its operations as digital-first. This will not only help with integrating your company in the new digital supply chain ecosystem but also make it cost- and quality-competitive. Next, start actively striking strategic partnerships with your industry peers, vendors, and key customers—across geographies—to build your own micro-ecosystem. That way, your business can become resilient *now*, instead of waiting for the new ecosystems to catch up.

2/ Talent will be nurtured digitally.

When everyone started working from home at the beginning of this crisis, *systems* seemed like the most important thing. People found new ways to communicate, and they established new workflows. But once this crisis is over, many of us may never return to an office: Remote work will become the new normal. This will raise new challenges. Employee morale, productivity, and mental health will need to be treated in new ways. Digital services such as Braive and Moment Pebble can help, but astute entrepreneurs will want to be ever-mindful of this...or build the next generation of services to help.



In a work-from-home world, leaders will also need to manage talent differently. Remote-first employees tend to be more productive, but they are also typically more independent and empowered. This may make it harder for managers to prioritize key projects, review employees' performance fairly, and promote the right people. To prepare for this, start building a new management playbook for your company. Entrepreneurs can learn a lot by studying the operational models of successful remote-first companies such as GitHub and Automattic.

3 / Digital bureaucracies will become mainstream.

COVID-19 caused governments to spin into action more quickly than ever. China broke records by constructing a 645,000-square-foot hospital in just 10 days in Wuhan. South Korea drove rapid testing of more than 200,000 of its citizens and used smartphones to tag the movement of the infected. By the end of this, governments will have a new appreciation for the importance of digitization and rapid decision-making—and

that, in turn, will create incredible opportunities for entrepreneurs. Licenses, approvals, and international expansion will become easier. Local companies will have to step up and fulfill their local governments' digitization needs. Vast, highly profitable opportunities will come.

This is just the start. In the meantime, we, of course, can't lose sight of the many tragedies people will suffer. The health and safety of our employees, partners, and suppliers is top priority. But once the threat is gone, we'll find that COVID-19 has irrevocably changed the way businesses will compete over the next decade. Firms that choose to capitalize on these underlying changes will succeed—and the ones that do not will forever be disrupted.

Hamza Mudassir is a visiting fellow in strategy at University of Cambridge, and the managing director at Platypodes.io, where he consults on strategy and digital disruption.



The New Startup

A new world calls for a new kind of startup. But it won't be solving entirely new problems.

by JASON FEIFER



ated a payment system, and now 80 percent of Kenyan adults use it as their primary method. That enabled a whole host of other industries across energy, education, healthcare, etc., that were never possible before.

That's what I'm talking about: How do we channel this creator's mindset to solve problems domestically and internationally, to capture meaningful opportunities in the market? Coronavirus is laying bare the challenges we have in our society; we have to face them differently than we have before.

I'm reminded of George Packer's old description of Silicon Valley startups: They solve "all the problems of being 20 years old, with cash on hand, because that's who thinks them up."

Nailed it. Part of the solution is *who* is solving the problem! To solve the most impactful problems, we need entrepreneurs with more diversity of thought, geography, gender, and culture.

Once an entrepreneur has a solution, what next?

I think we've been plagued by this notion of "Move fast and break things," where it's OK to

take risks and make mistakes with no mention of the consequences. We have an opportunity to revisit that, for the better. The best entrepreneurial creators are also managing risks. They build risk management into their KPIs, their operations, their culture.

That doesn't mean you shouldn't take risks; it means figuring out what risks are acceptable. We don't know what best practices will be yet, but let a lot of ideas come from the bottom up. It's the folks at the front line, who know a business really well, who can guide some of this.

We're talking about building for the future, but...when exactly does "the future" start?

The author William Gibson once said, "The future's already here. It's just not evenly distributed." The problems of tomorrow are still going to be the problems of today, and the problems of yesterday. Healthcare, education, financial inclusion—those are not new challenges. Try to identify a pain point in your community, and in your society, that you feel really passionate about and that you have an approach to tackling. That's a really good place to start.

Entrepreneurs create solutions—but with the world bogged down in problems, it's hard to know where to begin. Global investor Alexandre Lazarow has some advice: Take inspiration from companies built in the most difficult environments.

Lazarow is the author of the book *Out-Innovate*, in which he studied 200 companies built in small and often challenging marketplaces—where resources and talent may be scarce, and where economic uncertainty reigns. So how do those entrepreneurs there thrive? "They have sustainability and resilience built into their DNA, and into the operational fabric of the business," he says. Here, he talks about how to take a long-term approach and build for the future.

How do you innovate in such a time of uncertainty?

In Silicon Valley, they're obsessed with disruption. Everyone is either disrupting or being disrupted. But what we need today is different. We need *creators*. This isn't a semantic difference; it's offering a product or

service that wasn't already available in the formal economy, or available at all. And these entrepreneurs are the shoulders upon which others build, so they're actually building their ecosystems at the same time.

Here's an example: M-Pesa, a mobile banking startup in Kenya. They cre-

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Life on the Other Side

What does business look like after the worst is over? **Cheryl Leung** can tell you. She runs the fashion brand Sau Lee in Hong Kong, which is months ahead of the U.S. in recovery.

by **STEPHANIE SCHOMER**

Cheryl Leung knows what the future looks like—and it's looking pretty good.

Leung is the founder of Sau Lee, a fashion brand based in Hong Kong, the city where she grew up. It's also a city that felt the effects of the coronavirus crisis well ahead of the United States and, in turn, got a head start on its recovery.

"We have seen Hong Kong kind of come back to life," Leung said in early May, just after the city had started reopening businesses, restaurants, and gyms. "Businesses are starting to get more crowded, and you can feel a sense of positivity when you go out. People are still quite careful, but there's a more vibrant energy going around."

Her hopefulness comes after a brutal few months that upended what should have been her brand's biggest year. After five years of slowly building the business, Leung had secured a number of partnerships with U.S.-based retailers, including Shopbop, Rent the Runway, Revolve, and BHLDN. "It was our year going into 2020," Leung says.

When Hong Kong and China started shutting down in January, Leung worked overtime to manage a disrupted supply chain and coordinate with factories to ensure she could deliver orders to those U.S.

retailers on time.

"We didn't know that this would become a *global* crisis and actually also affect the consumer side of our business," she says. As the breadth of the pandemic became clear, Leung had to rethink her operation—and force herself to find a new approach to problem solving.

"The initial shock was quite hard to take," she says. "But I've learned to take a step back, to take bad news and break it down a little bit. I try to solve small problems one at a time to make them more manageable. Because in the beginning, that *big* bad news was really hard to handle."

Her measured approach helped her take pragmatic steps with partners, shifting deliveries and cutting back on order volumes as business slowed. It also helped Leung find the headspace to think about what her operation might look like after the crisis, and she identified two big opportunities: product assortment and target audience.

"We predominantly make dresses for occasions and events, so now we're thinking about how we can be a part of our customer's everyday life," she says. "And we're focusing our sales a bit more locally, promoting more in the Hong Kong market, especially as we see a change here."

That local focus is already creating positive results, and Leung encourages founders around the world to embrace other local businesses as a support system as the global economy struggles to regain its footing.

"This has opened people's eyes, and everyone wants to be supportive of

their own local community," Leung says. With every sale on Sau Lee's website from April through mid-May, the brand offered a gift with purchase that directly supported another Hong Kong business. "It's been great to connect with other people in the industry and in our community, and try to brainstorm new ways of surviving."

Local consumers are responding. "We've seen an increase in demand here in Hong Kong, and we're trying to just keep costs low as we drive steady sales so we can get through the next few months," she says. She anticipates a similar shift as other countries ease restrictions and is feeling optimistic about the rest of 2020.

"I think we've managed to get through this, and we'll see a good return toward the end of the year," Leung says. "It can be hard to see the light at the end of the tunnel, but if you can survive this, you're going to be stronger for it. There are lessons to be learned."





Before You Rebuild, Ask This One Question

And it's not the question you're thinking.

by **MATT HIGGINS**



How can I rebuild my business as fast as possible?

It's the one question all founders and CEOs are considering right now. And it's the wrong one.

Instead, we should all be asking, "If I were starting my business today from scratch, what business would I build?"

It's natural to want to fight the carnage, to take up the clarion call of resistance and defiantly get your business reopened as soon as possible. But what if the coronavirus didn't just close your doors? What if it actually opened an aperture to an alternative universe, one where your business moves faster than ever?

Now is the time all leaders should resist the reflex to preserve the status quo. There's no going back, because every business was built for the time *before* COVID-19. Rebuilding that business is like rebuilding a relic. It's time to let go and create something new.

For example, I recently spoke to a New York City-based founder who runs—or *ran*—a wildly successful national brick-and-mortar and e-commerce business. She wanted to get back to business quickly. But I asked her, "Rather than fighting to quickly reopen your stores [with very expensive operating costs] and selling your products online [with very expensive customer acquisition costs], what if you redeployed those resources to find even more supermarkets to sell in? Less capex, less infrastructure, and more cash runway to stay alive."

If that works, and her business starts growing in a new way, then she'll have to ask herself this: *What if I'm actually better off in this new world than the one I'm trying to go home to?*

EVERY ENTREPRENEUR and CEO needs to do this. Clear some mind space, light a candle, and reimagine. Here's how to run a simple self-audit:

1/ Give yourself permission to challenge every assumption.

Block out the mirage of frenetic stock market swings, and forecast what the world will actually look like in one year. What I know for sure is that seemingly conservative assumptions today will end up naively optimistic in retrospect.

Qatalyst Partners points out that both the 1929 and 2000 crashes lasted three years and saw five false rallies of 20 percent before reaching the bottom. Assume consumer sentiment will be in the tank for longer than anyone projects, because that's how it always goes.

But don't be afraid to accept this downside scenario. With self-awareness comes the greatest arbitrage in business: the ability to iterate before you're forced to.

2/ Write down how your business has evolved since you launched.

When you look back, you'll see that the biggest upside in your business was probably never on your radar—and it almost definitely wasn't in your pitch deck. Most companies ignore the true nuggets of gold within their own four walls, just waiting to be mined.

Need inspiration? Remember that Kodak actually invented the digital camera in 1975—then blew off its inventor and shoved the patent in a drawer until it was too late

to stave off bankruptcy.

Before COVID-19, were you treating a product or a service as a mere tinkering, when it should have been the main event? Reorient version 2.0 of your business—and go after it!

3/ Remember how you really felt before the crisis.

Were you happy with how things were going—or, at least, happier than friends who work for bosses? If the answer is no, then you've just diagnosed a misalignment between your dreams and reality. Don't rebuild the same business to satisfy your ego; rebuild it to satisfy your soul. Life is too short, as we are being reminded once again.

No one has all the answers, but I do believe there's no chance of finding them if you start out asking the wrong question. The stakes—and the opportunities—have never been greater. Don't squander it by making a carbon copy from a bygone era.

Matt Higgins is a recurring shark on ABC's Shark Tank, cofounder and CEO of private investment firm RSE Ventures, and an executive fellow at Harvard Business School.



The Laws Have Changed

The rules that govern business have shifted in the past few months, creating lots of new opportunities for entrepreneurs. But will the changes really stick?

by JASON FEIFER



The restaurant industry has spent years pushing a once radical idea: *Restaurants should be able to sell alcohol to go.* But very few lawmakers supported it.

Then COVID-19 arrived. To help restaurants survive, more than 30 states temporarily changed their laws to allow off-premise alcohol sales. Consumers are thrilled; in surveys, up to 85 percent say they want to-go alcohol forever. So now the industry has a new ambition. “Our goal is to make these temporary ordinances permanent,” says Mike Whatley, the National Restaurant Association’s VP of state and local affairs.

This isn’t an isolated story. As the pandemic alters industries, it has also altered the rules that govern them. “Governments are saying, ‘You know, we have some rather restrictive legislation,’” says Matt Ridley, author, most recently, of the book *How Innovation Works*, and a member of the U.K. House of Lords. “I think this will prove to be a moment of opportunity for entrepreneurs to change the way we do things.”

To take advantage, Ridley says that entrepreneurs should look for fallen barriers. Telemedicine is a perfect example. U.S. laws once restricted how doctors could connect with patients and be reimbursed for virtual visits. That changed recently, leading to a boom in remote medical care—and opportunities for entrepreneurs to develop new solutions. The same is true in other industries, where laws once made disruption difficult.

“If you were thinking of starting a new airline, for example, with a wholly new model of how you handle passengers and so

on, this might be a very good moment,” Ridley says. “Quite a lot of airlines may disappear. A crisis is a period in which incumbents lose power, and that creates virgin soil for competitors.”

What happens if these law changes really are temporary? That’s where Uber may serve as a useful guide, Ridley says. The company famously (and infamously) expanded into new cities, even if local laws forbid it. By the time lawmakers caught up, people loved Uber—and were angry at their local government for trying to stop it. Uber generally won the fight.

“I’m not suggesting that people break the law,” Ridley says, but there’s still a lesson to learn. Laws are being interpreted differently now, especially in areas that are useful during a pandemic. If an entrepreneur can seize an opening, and use it to prove how valuable their new idea is, then they may change consumers’ expectations forever.

Stan Khlevner knows this well. He’s the founder of Airzus, a company that uses drones for construction site mapping. He’d long wanted to try drone deliveries, but that was against FAA rules. When the pandemic began, he called the FAA anyway to ask if he could deliver necessary supplies to people stuck

at home—and to his shock, the FAA said yes. It had begun reinterpreting its rules, and now said this: Drone operators can run deliveries...but they must be able to see the drone at all times.

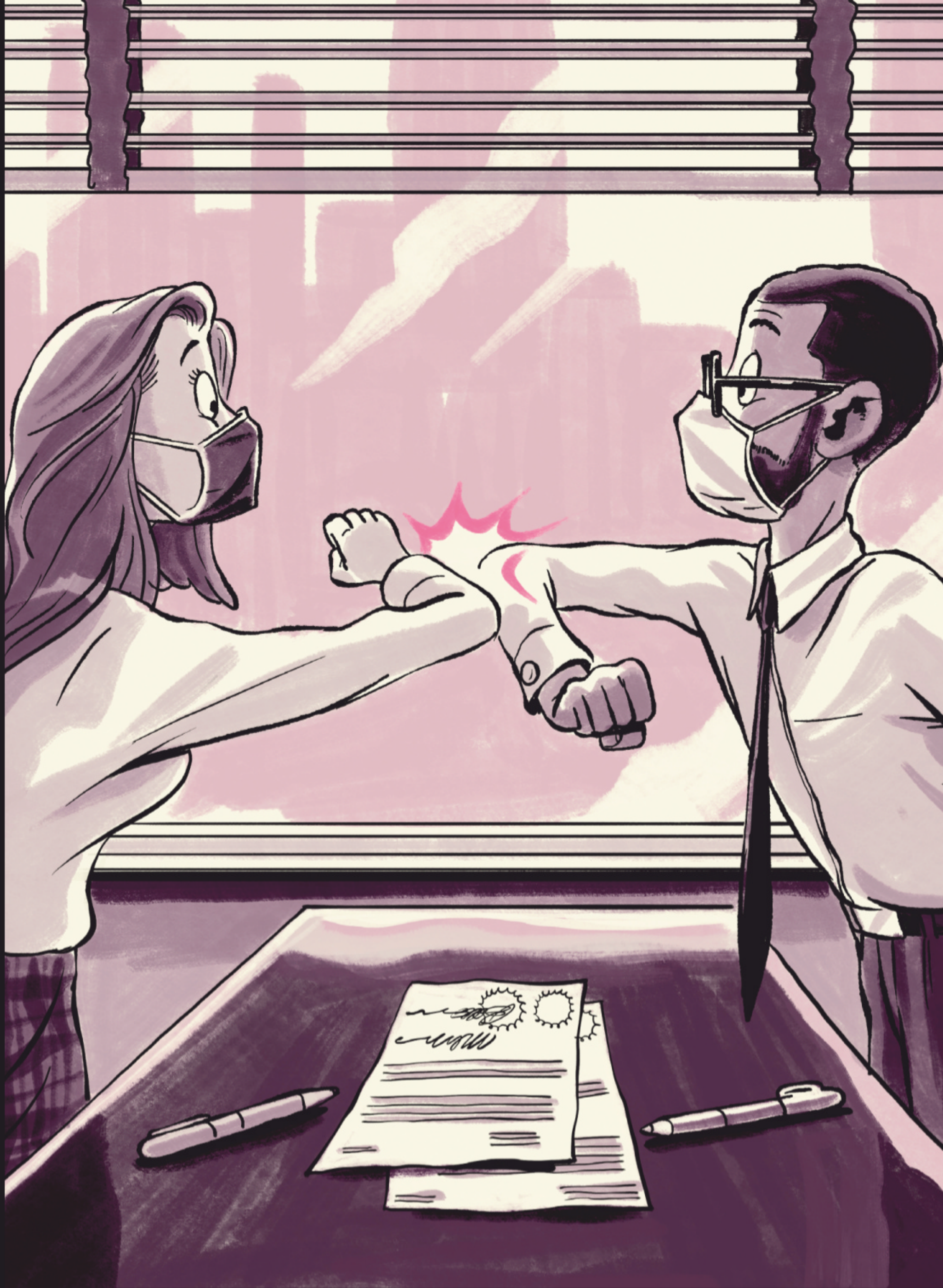
With that go-ahead, Khlevner launched a brand called Dive Delivery that operates in two California counties. His packages contain two face masks and a bottle of hand sanitizer, and he said it’s been very popular—and leaves people wanting more. “Almost all the customers that have received drone deliveries have asked, ‘When can we order more things?’” he says. “People are ready for this.”

What comes next is anyone’s guess. But now, perhaps more than ever, experts say entrepreneurs may be able to influence future laws. It’s why Whatley, of the National Restaurant Association, likes to see entrepreneurs proudly touting their newly legal services. “Put it on social media,” he says. “We’ve seen a lot of these go viral, especially the alcohol issue, based on a restaurateur tweeting about it and getting customers’ support. The more people get accustomed to being able to order a margarita with their favorite taco to go, it makes it much harder for lawmakers to take it away.”



HOW WE'LL FRANCHISE

As the pandemic has unfolded, questions have swirled around franchising. Can food service, its biggest category, survive in a time of social distancing? Will people continue to buy franchises in uncertain times? And can brands make large, expensive changes across hundreds or thousands of units? So far, the answer seems to be: *Yes!* The pandemic has shown just how resilient and adaptable franchising can be. Here's what comes next.





Make It a Team Effort

As our world moves toward recovery, franchises have a secret weapon that other businesses don't: strength in numbers.

by **JAMES VITRANO** and **DANNY CATTAN**



Franchising has always been a little different from the rest of the business world. We grow differently. We operate differently. But COVID-19 threw everyone a colossal curveball, and no business—franchise or otherwise—was spared.

But while other entrepreneurs struggle through this crisis alone, the franchise industry still has a unique strength to rely upon: community. Franchises are built upon the idea of working together, and now, more than ever, it's crucial that we do.

For franchisors: It's time to show up for your franchisees. And for franchisees: Now is the time to ask your franchisor for help. They are, after all, the experts in how to operate your concept and the different ways it can be configured or adapted. Any good franchisor will offer flexibility in how the model can operate, enabling a franchisee to try something a little different.

Keep in mind that many franchise concepts were developed and sold to franchisees based on a world that may not exist anymore—at least not the way it did pre-COVID-19. There might be a need to fundamentally rethink offerings on a permanent basis, rather than just a temporary one.

For example, if a franchise has traditionally been a lunch-and-dinner destination, but there are just too many other businesses selling to-go lunches and dinner packs as our

communities reopen, try selling breakfast instead. And if you didn't deliver before, why not try it now? These experiments might just become a staple of your business moving forward.

Small shifts in service can become valuable competitive differentiators. Grocery stores that are visibly cleaning carts between customers are putting shoppers at ease, and smart gas stations have shifted to full-service pumping to keep folks safely in their cars. What added comfort or service can *you* offer to attract customers—both now and in the future?

For restaurants, it might mean rearranging your dining room from 50 seats to 30. But what comes next? What safety systems will need to become part of your foundation to keep jittery customers feeling comfortable in six months? In a year? Start brainstorming now and you'll never be caught off-guard.

And remember to embrace the franchisor-franchisee relationship here—an ongoing dialogue between the home office and its operators can spark creative ideas and solutions that the entire company can benefit from.

As you have those conver-

sations, don't forget to think beyond operational ideas. If, as a franchisee, your sales are down 40 percent, consider asking your franchisor how they can help—and perhaps suggest they take top-line royalty payments down by 40 percent, or temporarily waive support fees or marketing royalties for the months of impact.

In terms of long-term financial stability, talk about extending terms and reducing royalty percentages. For example, for a franchisee with a seven-year agreement, explore extending that to a 12-year agreement; franchisors might consider reducing royalty percentages in exchange for the extended commitment. (One thing a franchisor shouldn't be during a cash crunch is short term-oriented.)

Franchisors *want* franchisees to stay afloat and succeed. How corporate offices support their owners now tells franchisees a lot about who they're in business with—and what to expect as we all move toward brighter days. By working together, both parties will be ready for whatever tomorrow brings.

James Vitrano and Danny Cattan are executives at the franchise Fat Tuesday.

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An Opportunity to Learn

For seasoned **franchisees** and new owners alike, guiding a business through a pandemic is a brand-new experience—one with its own kinds of successes and lessons.

reporting by **JASON FEIFER** and **STEPHANIE SCHOMER**

JENNIFER PERKINS, franchisee / Main Squeeze Juice Co.

TAKING CARE OF THE TEAM

JENNIFER PERKINS OWNS two Main Squeeze Juice Co. locations just outside New Orleans with her brother, Andrew Blackwell. When his wife gave birth to twins mid-March, Andrew joined his family in quarantine—and Jennifer found herself navigating a pandemic without her business partner.

“It’s been really hard,” she says. “Not to mention I haven’t gotten to meet my nieces! But safety is what’s important, more than anything.”

That’s true of their businesses, too. Their juice and smoothie shops have required a dramatic increase in safety precautions, and while foot traffic has dwindled, drive-through purchases have quadrupled. Inside, Perkins is working overtime to keep her staff healthy and comfortable.

“A lot of our younger staff’s parents wanted them to quarantine with them, and that makes sense,” she says. “But it did leave us short-handed, so for the team members who committed to go through this with us, it’s easy to feel overwhelmed.”

As they’ve taken on extra shifts, longer shifts, and the increased pressure of serving food items in a pandemic, Perkins has hustled to hire additional support staff and make sure her team members aren’t stretching themselves too thin.

“Sometimes it’s as simple as sending someone home a little early and letting them know that the store will be OK,” she says. “Sometimes it’s making sure our high school employees have the time to take their classes on Zoom and keep up with their school-work. Our team has been the backbone of this business, and we’re finding new ways to support each other.”

It has paid off: Sales for the month of April were stronger in 2020 than in 2019.

“I can’t lie and say that any of this was super easy or super planned,” Perkins says. “I had my moments of doubt and panic: *Are we doing the right thing? Is this the right way to handle it?* But now that we know we’ve come out on top, it’s a super proud moment for our team.”



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF MAIN SQUEEZE JUICE CO.



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REGAL PATEL, franchisee / Pieology

TAKING CARE OF YOUR OWN TOWN

OWNING A PIZZA SHOP is all about serving your community. So when the Pieology in Stamford, Conn., closed its dining room in the wake of COVID-19, its owners only got busier.

“We’re not doctors or nurses, but we needed to do something,” says Regal Patel, who owns the location with friends Nishant Patel and Sahil Patel (*pictured, from left*). “We have pizza, and we have food—let’s keep our community fed.”

The trio and their team (whom they managed to keep employed and busy with delivery and takeout orders) got to work assembling care packages of food and pizzas to distribute throughout the community and to the frontline workers at local hospitals. They started including a roll of toilet paper to deliver a laugh along with the food—and realized that their stock of supplies could be even more impactful than pie.

“It’s always safety first at restaurants,” Regal says. “So we contacted our glove supplier and were able to order and donate 6,000 pairs of gloves to a local hospital, and they were just like, ‘Holy Jesus, that’s a lot of gloves for one business to give!’”

With pizza sales down and their charitable efforts up, Patel and his co-owners are stretching their wallets thin. “We’re doing this out of our own pocket, and there’s no profit at the restaurant right now,” he says.

But as they waited to reopen their dining room, they even doubled down with the brand and launched takeout at a new, second location that was originally put on pause as the pandemic spread. “We know that it will operate differently than restaurants of the past,” Regal says. “But now is the time to adapt and create a new blueprint to serve.”



PATTY CLISHAM, franchisee / Ductz

MAINTAINING TRANSPARENCY— FOR STAFF AND CUSTOMERS

PATTY CLISHAM purchased her Ductz franchise—which conducts HVAC restoration and air duct cleaning—in 2007. “And six months later, the economy went to crap,” she says.

Looking back, she envies the clarity she had at that difficult time. “We could see where that crisis was coming from and why,” Clisham says. “But now, this, this is an unknown adversary.”

And for her business—one that requires sending employees into people’s homes—COVID-19 is an adversary that has changed everything. Clisham used to be booked out for three weeks; now she’s booking week to week. Two months into the pandemic and she’d already lost \$60,000 compared with 2019. And the jobs that are coming through require extra care.

“We’re disinfecting tools, taking temperatures before a job, wearing masks, wiping down switch plates and door-knobs or anything that we touched,” she says. “We have to make our customers comfortable and share that process with them.”

Clisham has been transparent with her team, as well. She counts herself as one of the lucky business owners who received a Paycheck Protection Program loan (she says a good relationship with her bank helped her file for relief as soon as possible, and quickly) and was up front with employees about what the months ahead may look like.

“I sat my guys down and said, ‘Look, we’re not going to have a lot of work,’” she says. “‘But you’re going to get paid, and I want you to stick with me through this, because when we come out of it, we’ll be OK.’”

She knows a lot of other business owners can’t say the same.

“We’re going to make it through this *because* of the PPP money, I’ll tell you that,” she says. “I tend to have about three months’ worth of payroll and emergency funds set away, but when you don’t have any money coming in from jobs, that will go fast. I’m so thankful we got that relief.”



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MEGHANA PATEL, franchisee / Kumon

LENDING SUPPORT, ASKING FOR SUPPORT

MEGHANA PATEL was scheduled to open her first Kumon learning center on April 15 in Valdosta, Ga. But when state-wide shelter-in-place orders made it clear that she would not be able to open the doors to her new after-school destination as scheduled, Patel considered hitting pause on the whole operation—until she heard from her would-be customers.

“Parents we had spoken to were panicking, and had expressed interest in maintaining some kind of schedule for their kids,” she says. “So we decided to open up early, on April 1, to help those families.”

Lessons at Kumon—which focus on math and reading for students ages 3 to 18—quickly shifted to the digital realm as the crisis spread across the country, and Patel, who’d just completed her initial training with the company, found herself seeking support once again.

“I was nervous; you know, I had never used Zoom before,” Patel says with a laugh. “So to have the company there, ready to walk me through it every single day and have them lay out a plan to conduct lessons that way, really made me comfortable and confident.”

She is still participating in weekly digital training sessions hosted by the company, but as shelter-at-home orders have been lifted in Georgia, Patel is also starting to figure out what in-person classes may look like. “Kumon has sent us all the PPE and hand sanitizers we’ll need. We have a daily sanitation plan in place, and I’m limiting all in-person lessons to just two to five kids, no more,” she says.

But it won’t be business as usual for some time: “Some parents are comfortable coming in for lessons, others are not. But we’re in a position now to accommodate whatever way they and their kids want to learn.”



MIKE ZIEGENBALG, franchisee / Dream Vacations

CRAFTING YOUR PITCH FOR THE MOMENT

DREAM VACATIONS franchisee Mike Ziegenbalg sells travel—especially cruise bookings—for a living. That seems like a tall order now, when planes look scary and virus-filled ships were the subject of horror-show news stories. Despite all that, Ziegenbalg booked 32 people on a cruise while his customers were locked away at home...and he plans to book a lot more.

His secret: It starts with a foundation he laid seven years ago, when he started a “travel club” in his community. It’s a regular gathering of people with wanderlust, who talk about travel and learn about new destinations. The club has 500 members—and when his home state of Georgia went into lockdown, he decided to keep the club going virtually. “My belief is people want to travel again and are ready,” he says. They need something to look forward to.

The missing piece, therefore, was trust: They needed the confidence that cruising was safe. So he focused on a small cruise in Egypt set for late 2021, and said he’d be going, too. (Translation: The size felt safe, the timing felt right, and his presence means he stands behind his sales pitch.) It worked, and he learned an important lesson: “Don’t just wait for them to call or come to you,” he says. “Clear your mind and come up with new ideas and solutions.”



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Finding New Ways to Grow

Franchisors are leading their teams and networks through this crisis by taking care of their communities and keeping an eye on the future.

by **STEPHANIE SCHOMER**

ROB PRICE, CEO / School of Rock

CREATING SUPPORT THROUGH COMMUNITY

“**OUR BUSINESS COULD NOT** be better designed to *not* withstand a pandemic,” says Rob Price, the CEO of School of Rock. The music-education franchise teaches 40,000 students at 267 locations around the globe; its performance-based curriculum creates ensembles of kids who rehearse together for months before putting on one rocking show. “It requires that camaraderie,” Price says.

So as the pandemic spread, Price sprang into action. He activated his team to create a digital offering that maintained the community aspect of School of Rock’s lessons, and within a week, they had a remote solution in place. It quickly became clear that the company would be able to retain most of its clients through the crisis—and Price started thinking about other ways they could support their community.

“I tell our franchisees, ‘We were in the pandemic business well before COVID,’” Price says. “We’ve long been dealing with the pandemic of anxiety and depression and teenage suicide, which will take far more victims than COVID. How can we create awareness and space, at this time, for emotional and psychological well-being?”

With the help of their philanthropic partner, the Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide, School of Rock reached out to top-notch musicians—who found themselves with an unusual amount of free time—and asked them to participate in free digital Artist Sessions, where students would be able to directly engage with seasoned musicians. So far, band members from acts like Slipknot, Sum 41, and Pink have participated, chatting freely with hundreds to thousands of School of Rock students about music, overcoming challenges, handling stress, and achieving their best.

“The objective here is awareness,” Price says. “Our driving force right now can’t be our business needs. It has to be the student needs.”



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MUHSSIN AND BARY EL-YACOUBI, cofounders / Send Me a Trainer
BUILDING A NEW NETWORK

LAUNCHING A FRANCHISE in the midst of the pandemic might sound like a bad idea, but for Muhssin and Bary El-Yacoubi (*pictured, from left*), now is the perfect time to build a strong foundation.

The brothers are the founders of Send Me a Trainer, an on-demand fitness and technology company that pairs qualified trainers with customers who want someone to guide them through a workout in their own home. The pair spent the past decade perfecting the platform, signed their first two franchisees just ahead of the crisis, and once it hit...they signed their third.

“Awarding that franchise at the height of all this was a really good indication that our business is going to be a part of the future of fitness,” says Muhssin, who notes that other than shifting to digital sessions, Send Me a Trainer’s model didn’t have to change at all. “Right now, consumers are getting educated that they can work out from home, and they’re looking for those workouts that are convenient and flexible. Consumer behavior will continue to evolve and adapt.”

And customers aren’t the only ones looking for a solution. “There are a lot of qualified trainers who used to work at gyms and are now sitting at home wondering how they can get clients,” says Bary. “They’re reaching out to us to learn about the platform. Increased consumer demand and an increased supply of talent means we can take this business to a whole new level.”

That, of course, will depend largely on whether or not the brothers can continue to grow their network of franchisees, though they’re already fielding incoming interest from potential franchisees and multi-unit developers stateside and abroad.

“We’re just naturally suited for this environment,” Muhssin says. “Our startup investment starts at \$50,000. That’s going to accommodate a lot of people who want to own a business.”



SALOMON MISHAAN, founder and CEO / OXXO Care Cleaners
KEEPING A SAFE DISTANCE

OXXO CARE CLEANERS may as well have been designed with a pandemic in mind. The dry cleaner, which has nearly 60 locations in the United States and Indonesia, lets customers drop off and pick up their clothes, any time of day or night, via an ATM-style system.

“Walk up, scan your app, the door opens, and your clothes are there,” says founder and CEO Salomon Mishaan. “It’s zero contact. As an essential business, this allowed us to never shut down, because there was no system to rework.”

Still, business has taken a hit as most of OXXO’s customers have settled into their sweatpants. In March, sales dropped 20 percent; by April, they had been cut in half. Mishaan has been listening closely to franchisees’ concerns, deferring royalty fees, and even reaching out to their individual landlords asking for help, support, and leeway.

But he’s optimistic about the future; he anticipates the dry cleaning business bouncing back much quicker than other services might once the pandemic comes to an end—something that he’s betting will be good for franchisees and for the growth of the business.

“There are, unfortunately, a lot of unemployed people right now, and they’re going to want a way to get back to work quickly,” he says. “I always look at buying a franchise as buying a job. And I think our business in particular will be an appealing space.”

In the meantime, Mishaan is doing whatever he can to keep customers coming in. “We told them we’d clean their pants for free,” he says, laughing, “because they’re all on the computer at their desk at home all day, and we know they’re not wearing pants.”



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ADAM CONTOS, CEO / RE/MAX

PUTTING COMMUNICATION FIRST

MANAGING A GLOBAL ORGANIZATION of 130,000 real estate agents across 110 countries and territories requires extreme communication in good times. In a pandemic, those conversations become even more necessary.

Which is why Adam Contos, CEO of real estate company RE/MAX, has prioritized communication between his leadership team and the company's 8,300 franchisees as the business works its way through the COVID-19 crisis.

"We've been through six recessions, and we've built our business model to be very resilient as a result," says Contos. "Part of that is a very strong communication infrastructure."

Even before the crisis, the company broadcast weekly Facebook Live sessions to share news and business tips with its network of franchisees, and in the beginning of the year, Contos launched a weekly "Mind, Body, and Business" chat. That series has since become a vital way for the leader to help keep his community grounded, motivated, and empowered.

"This week, for example, I talked about perseverance," Contos says. "We all have to understand that your mind typically stops before your body does. Think about running or bike riding or doing a plank—you choose to stop before your capabilities actually end. And it's the same thing in business: We have to remember that our capabilities and strengths are far greater than what we give ourselves credit for."



LAURA SPAULDING, founder and CEO / Spaulding Decon

KEEPING CLEAN AND CLEANING UP

LAURA SPAULDING IS used to dirty jobs. The former cop and Army vet started Spaulding Decon in 2005 after spotting an opportunity in crime-scene cleanup, and she has turned the company into a growing franchise specializing in everything from meth-lab cleanup to mold remediation. And she knew, upon first hearing of coronavirus, that her business was about to boom.

"We got \$30 million worth of requests in estimates the first two weeks when it hit here," Spaulding says. "In a normal week, that figure would be \$100,000."

Spaulding's team and franchisees are regularly hired for cleanup jobs related to such viruses as MRSA and C. diff, and they had all the personal protective equipment they needed. Staffing, however, was another story.

"We had to hire more administrators, and we had five or six new people just answering phones and firing off estimates," she says. "We were fielding inquiries from New York and Chicago, places where we don't even have locations, so we had to mobilize from corporate and work with our franchisees to help them meet and handle these more far-flung jobs."

While COVID-19 is just another virus for the Spaulding Decon team, the founder has seen a dramatic shift in customer sentiment. "We're seeing a paranoia that we haven't seen with other viruses," she says. "I think it will lead to a new kind of disinfection standard for all businesses, and that's what we're trying to prepare for now."

That could mean an additional boost for the business—and would-be franchisees think so, too. "Our incoming inquiries from prospective franchisees have probably increased tenfold," she says. "Our service is need-based, not want-based. And that's recession-proof."



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Airbnb and Match.com... for Restaurants?

To help save the food industry, this founder has a plan:
Think differently about who uses the kitchen.

by **JASON FEIFER**



LET'S SAY YOU GO onto Grubhub, see that there's a new franchise in town called The Captain's Boil, and order a shrimp basket for delivery. Score! But here's what you don't see: Your lunch was actually made inside a Ruby Tuesday.

This is the magic of Franklin Junction, which bills itself as a mixture of Airbnb and Match.com—but for restaurants. The platform finds kitchens with extra capacity and matches them with brands that want to expand into new locations. It was conceived by Aziz Hashim, founder and managing partner of NRD Capital, which owns more than 700 franchise units in North America. He launched it in January and originally intended it for his own stores (including The Captain's Boil and Ruby Tuesday). But once COVID-19 hit, he opened it up to any brand, and he's now working with Nathan's Famous and exploring other partnerships.

"It's a business, but also a bit of a public service," Hashim says. And it might be a peek into the future of franchising.

Franklin Junction launched in 2020, but it's been in the works for two years. Why did you originally make it?

The world has too many restaurants and not enough people. More and more restaurants keep coming online. Yet the demand for restaurants stays constant, or even goes down. So if you look at net sales over the past few years, you don't see that there's a lot of growth.

How is Franklin Junction a solution?

Restaurants are very expensive to build. If you don't have as much volume as you would like, the natural tendency is to ask, "How can I raise sales?" One way to do it is through discounting, but this is ridiculous. All your expenses have gone up—labor, insurance, rent. But you can't raise your prices?

The industry was under capacity 15 to 20 percent

before COVID-19. If you know anything about the retail business, it's all at the margin. If you fill up that last 15 or 20 percent, you make a lot of money. All your fixed costs are covered already. So, can I sell food for other people? The difference between innovating your own food and other people's food is: You get the benefit of the other person's branding!

That's a big change to how the industry operates. Do you think restaurateurs are more open to this change because of COVID-19?

Significantly. During this time, with dine-in basically closed, a lot of restaurants have been down 50, 60, 70 percent. The need for sales is tremendous. It's urgent. People need revenue, and they need it today. We're getting flooded with inquiries. We just can't keep up. And we're also getting inquiries from non-restaurants—a store or a hotel.

Franklin Junction could lead to more restaurants

in each city. But didn't you say that's a problem?

The solution relies on more consumer *variety*. It's not that America or the world doesn't need new kinds of food. We just don't need to build new restaurants. That's where I'm coming from.

So demand remains static, but now a physical restaurant can get a larger share of that demand—because it's offering more options?

Exactly. We like to try new stuff, but in the past, in order for you and me to try new stuff, some poor entrepreneur had to spend \$2 million to build a restaurant. Then, if you and I decide we don't like that food, that guy lost his life savings.

You know the old adage "You've got to spend money to make money"? We're going to spend no money, and we're going to make money. We've got extra kitchen capacity. Let's go sell some other people's stuff!



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- ✓ Provides flexibility and financial security
- ✓ Helps your work/life balance
- ✓ Allows you to take control of your financial future

Veteran and Former NTSB Investigator Finds Perfect Career Fit with Pillar To Post Home Inspectors®

Jack Vanover has been on a long-time mission. As a U.S. Army Infantryman for 13 years, he was deployed to Iraq three times. After his service, he became a flight instructor and Aviation Accident Investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board.

“For five years after my military service, I had an intense and exciting career,” said Vanover, but I was ready to work for myself, have more flexible hours, and build a business where I could thrive, but still spend more time with my family.”

He found a perfect fit with Pillar To Post Home Inspectors®, the No. 1 home inspection company in North America. Vanover launched operations in March and serves Pierce, King and Snohomish Counties in Washington state.

“I knew my skillsets would be perfect for

this job and that I could benefit homebuyers and sellers. My position as an Aviation Accident Investigator prepared me to look at a home as a series of systems that work together to make it operate as intended—much like an airplane,” said Vanover. “If one system fails or is degraded in an airplane, it will affect the performance of the remaining systems and structure as a whole. Understanding how all of the systems function independently as well as in conjunction with each other as a part of the home is critical.”

Pillar To Post Home Inspectors® is the brand to which more than three million families have turned to for more than 25 years to be their trusted advisor when buying or selling a home. A professional evaluation both inside and outside the home is at the core of Pillar To Post Home

Inspectors® service. Pillar To Post Home Inspectors® input data and digital photos into a computerized report. All information is provided to clients in a customized binder for easy reference, allowing homebuyers or sellers to make confident, informed decisions.

“I chose Pillar To Post Home Inspectors® because they repeatedly ranked as the No. 1 home inspection company wherever I looked,” said Vanover. I also liked their 5-Star status with VetFran, a program offered by the International Franchise Association that provides discounted franchise fees to veterans.

“My wife Lindsay will also work in the business with me. It’s what I always wanted and can bring in my daughters eventually; a nice family business with big demand for excellent service,” concluded Vanover.



For Pillar To Post Home Inspectors® Information:

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The World's Best

Our list of 200 franchises that are expanding (and thriving!) around the globe.

compiled by **TRACY STAPP HEROLD**



In a time when businesses around the world are facing a common challenge, our ranking of the top global franchises offers insight into how some of the strongest brands in the world are handling it head-on. These 200 companies represent more than 436,000 individual franchise units around the world, and more than half of those are outside the U.S.

To put together this list, we adjusted our Franchise 500 ranking formula to give extra weight to those international units. All companies that applied for the 2020 Franchise 500, indicated that they are seeking new franchisees outside the U.S., and had at least five units open internationally as of July 2019 were

considered. Other factors taken into account by the formula, which looks at more than 150 data points in all, include costs and fees, brand strength, franchisee support, and financial strength and stability.

Keep in mind as you browse this list that it's not intended as an endorsement of any particular company. No matter where you are in the world, it always pays to do your homework before investing in a franchise. 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.

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1

McDonald's

Burgers, chicken, salads, beverages

STARTUP COST
\$1.3M–\$2.2M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
35,461/2,647

2

KFC

Chicken

STARTUP COST
\$1.4M–\$2.8M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
22,774/329

3

Pizza Hut

Pizza, pasta, wings

STARTUP COST
\$357K–\$2.2M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
17,120/56

4

7-Eleven

Convenience stores

STARTUP COST
\$47.1K–\$1.2M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
66,307/2,382

5

Dunkin'

Coffee, doughnuts, baked goods

STARTUP COST
\$395.5K–\$1.6M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
12,957/0

6

Dairy Queen

Ice cream, burgers, chicken

STARTUP COST
\$1.1M–\$1.8M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
7,035/2

7

Kumon Math & Reading Centers

Supplemental education

STARTUP COST
\$74.4K–\$156.6K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
26,256/22

8

Baskin-Robbins

Ice cream, frozen yogurt, frozen beverages

STARTUP COST
\$93.6K–\$401.8K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
8,072/0



TACO BELL / No. 9

FOR A FEW HOURS on two Fridays in April and May, Taco Bell transformed its Irvine, Calif., headquarters into a “Truck Thru at HQ” in order to serve free meal boxes to frontline and essential workers driving larger vehicles like semitrucks, fire trucks, ambulances, and news vans, which usually can’t fit in traditional drive-throughs. The company also deployed its own taco trucks across the U.S. to offer food to healthcare workers, grocery store employees, food banks, and teachers.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF TACO BELL

9

Taco Bell

Mexican food

STARTUP COST
\$525.5K-\$2.96M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
6,662/474

10

Anytime Fitness

Fitness centers

STARTUP COST
\$76.7K-\$521.4K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
4,510/10

11

RE/MAX

Real estate

STARTUP COST
\$40K-\$284K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
8,629/0

12

Ace Hardware

Hardware and home-improvement stores

STARTUP COST
\$286K-\$2.1M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
5,179/133

13

Arby's

Sandwiches, fries, shakes

STARTUP COST
\$320.6K-\$2M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
2,355/1,137

14

Petland

Pets, pet supplies, boarding, daycare, grooming

STARTUP COST
\$290.5K-\$1.1M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
215/17

15

H&R Block

Tax preparation, electronic filing

STARTUP COST
\$31.6K-\$149.4K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
3,877/6,388

16

Subway

Subs, salads

STARTUP COST
\$140.1K-\$342.4K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
41,600/0

17

Papa John's International

Pizza

STARTUP COST
\$130.1K-\$844.4K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
4,702/643

18

Carl's Jr. Restaurants

Burgers

STARTUP COST
\$1.6M-\$2.1M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,608/48

19

The UPS Store

Postal, business, printing, and communications services

STARTUP COST
\$138.4K-\$470K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
5,166/0

20

Super 8 by Wyndham

Hotels

STARTUP COST
\$231.8K-\$4.7M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
2,889/0

21

Novus Glass

Auto glass repair and replacement

STARTUP COST
\$54.5K-\$258.2K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
2,014/30

22

Keller Williams

Real estate

STARTUP COST
\$183.9K-\$336.99K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,026/0

23

Snap-on Tools

Professional tools and equipment

STARTUP COST
\$172.2K-\$375.3K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
4,597/207

24

Hampton by Hilton

Midprice hotels

STARTUP COST
\$7.6M-\$20.3M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
2,491/0

25

Supercuts

Hair salons

STARTUP COST
\$151.4K-\$321K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
2,509/374

26

Eye Level Learning Centers

Supplemental education

STARTUP COST
\$59.3K-\$126.8K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
813/808

27

Rainbow International Restoration

Indoor cleaning and restoration

STARTUP COST
\$172.2K-\$278.6K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
419/0

28

Interim HealthCare

Medical home care, medical staffing

STARTUP COST
\$125.5K-\$198.5K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
593/0

29

My Gym Children's Fitness Center

Early-learning/fitness programs

STARTUP COST
\$36.8K-\$277.2K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
694/0

30

The Little Gym International

Child-development/fitness programs

STARTUP COST
\$186.5K-\$441.5K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
442/0

31

Hardee's Restaurants

Burgers

STARTUP COST
\$1.5M-\$2M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
2,112/117



FASTSIGNS INTERNATIONAL / No. 60

FASTSIGNS' CORPORATE OFFICE worked with the International Sign Association to write letters to make sure its franchisees' businesses would be deemed essential. Hundreds of FastSigns locations were able to stay open—and to prove just how essential they are: They not only produced COVID-19 signage for hospitals, parks, mass transit, and businesses but also began manufacturing things like face shields, PPE, intubation boxes, and sneeze guards.



32

Smoothie King

Smoothies, healthful snacks, health products

STARTUP COST
\$263.6K–\$844.5K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,037/36

33

Ben & Jerry's

Ice cream, frozen yogurt, sorbet, smoothies

STARTUP COST
\$149.2K–\$504.3K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
577/38

34

Hilton Hotels and Resorts

Upscale hotels and resorts

STARTUP COST
\$30.6M–\$128.96M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
453/63

35

Pearle Vision

Eye care and eyewear

STARTUP COST
\$77.7K–\$620.5K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
418/107

36

Circle K

Convenience stores

STARTUP COST
\$189.3K–\$1.9M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
2,802/8,346

37

The Maids

Residential cleaning

STARTUP COST
\$63.3K–\$141.2K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,278/174

38

Jazzercise

Group fitness classes, conventions, apparel, and accessories

STARTUP COST
\$2.4K–\$17.2K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
8,560/2

39

Chem-Dry Carpet & Upholstery Cleaning

Carpet and upholstery cleaning, tile and stone care, granite countertop renewal

STARTUP COST
\$67.6K–\$185.8K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
3,576/0

40

Liberty Tax Service

Tax preparation, electronic filing

STARTUP COST
\$58.7K–\$71.9K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
2,922/84

41

Buffalo Wild Wings

Wings, bar food, alcohol

STARTUP COST
\$1.9M–\$3.8M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
639/635

42

Servpro

Fire, water, and other damage cleanup and restoration

STARTUP COST
\$160.1K–\$213.95K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,715/0

43

Mac Tools

Automotive tools and equipment

STARTUP COST
\$131.5K–\$287.6K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,124/1



SKY ZONE / No. 90

WHILE SKY ZONE locations had to close during the coronavirus outbreak, the company kept itself in customers' minds and hearts with the launch of its Sky Zone Game app and custom Zoom backgrounds of its trampoline playing courts. It also began offering free virtual birthday parties, with a Party Pro guiding the birthday boy or girl and 10 friends through games, dance battles, trivia, sing-alongs, and more.

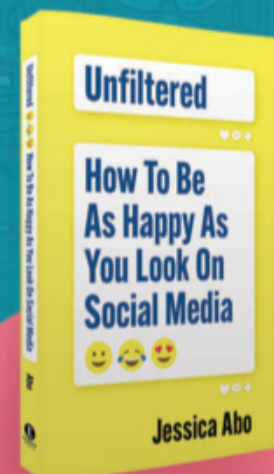


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44
Auntie Anne's
Soft pretzels

STARTUP COST
\$199.5K-\$385.1K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,892/11

45
Holiday Inn and Holiday Inn Express
Hotels

STARTUP COST
\$7.9M-\$24.97M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
4,046/3

46
Gold's Gym
Health and fitness centers

STARTUP COST
\$2.2M-\$5M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
581/140

47
The Alternative Board (TAB)
Peer advisory boards, business coaching

STARTUP COST
\$48.6K-\$97.8K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
290/25

48
PostNet Neighborhood Business Centers
Packing, shipping, printing, signs, marketing solutions

STARTUP COST
\$185.6K-\$227.6K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
675/0

49
GNC Franchising
Vitamins and nutrition products

STARTUP COST
\$149.7K-\$388.6K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
2,949/3,070

50
ServiceMaster Clean/ServiceMaster Restore
Commercial/residential cleaning, disaster restoration

STARTUP COST
\$93.7K-\$294.4K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
4,919/10

51
Steamatic
Insurance/disaster restoration, cleaning, mold remediation, air quality control

STARTUP COST
\$114.4K-\$195.6K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
184/0

52
Firehouse Subs
Subs

STARTUP COST
\$57.5K-\$868.7K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,136/38

53
Midas International
Auto repair and maintenance

STARTUP COST
\$191.7K-\$460.5K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
2,011/0

54
Ramada Worldwide by Wyndham
Hotels

STARTUP COST
\$212.97K-\$14.1M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
871/0

55
Budget Blinds
Window coverings, window film, rugs, accessories

STARTUP COST
\$110.3K-\$234.4K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,213/0

56
Anago Cleaning Systems
Commercial cleaning

STARTUP COST
\$11.3K-\$68.3K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,692/0

57
Kids 'R' Kids Learning Academies
Childcare centers

STARTUP COST
\$4.4M-\$5.7M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
173/0

58
uBreakiFix
Electronics repairs

STARTUP COST
\$55.4K-\$236.3K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
513/15

59
Matco Tools
Mechanics' tools and equipment

STARTUP COST
\$93.4K-\$272.7K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,812/2

60
FastSigns International
Signs, graphics

STARTUP COST
\$218.6K-\$298.7K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
710/0

61
Great Clips
Hair salons

STARTUP COST
\$136.9K-\$259.4K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
4,371/0

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62
Color Glo International
 Leather, vinyl, fabric, carpet, and surface repair and restoration
STARTUP COST
 \$56.3K–\$61.4K
TOTAL UNITS
 (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
 139/0

63
Jan-Pro Franchising International
 Commercial cleaning
STARTUP COST
 \$4.2K–\$54.7K
TOTAL UNITS
 (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
 9,155/0

64
F45 Training
 Fitness studios
STARTUP COST
 \$227K–\$315K
TOTAL UNITS
 (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
 1,045/0

65
Leadership Management International
 Leadership and organization training and development
STARTUP COST
 \$20K–\$27.5K
TOTAL UNITS
 (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
 458/0

66
Marco's Pizza
 Pizza, subs, wings, cheese bread
STARTUP COST
 \$293.5K–\$788.6K
TOTAL UNITS
 (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
 933/0

67
Allegra Marketing-Print-Mail
 Printing, marketing, mail, signs, promotional products
STARTUP COST
 \$30.9K–\$373.9K
TOTAL UNITS
 (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
 287/2

68
Signarama
 Signs
STARTUP COST
 \$116K–\$315K
TOTAL UNITS
 (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
 709/0

69
Planet Fitness
 Fitness clubs
STARTUP COST
 \$1.1M–\$4.2M
TOTAL UNITS
 (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
 1,779/80

70
Abrakadoodle
 Art-education programs for children
STARTUP COST
 \$38K–\$81.9K
TOTAL UNITS
 (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
 487/2

71
Romp n' Roll
 Recreational and enrichment classes, camps, parties
STARTUP COST
 \$198.7K–\$399.2K
TOTAL UNITS
 (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
 355/2

72
A&W Restaurants
 Root beer, burgers, hot dogs, chicken, sides, ice cream
STARTUP COST
 \$269K–\$1.2M
TOTAL UNITS
 (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
 953/4

73
9Round
 Kickboxing fitness circuit-training centers
STARTUP COST
 \$99.7K–\$143.1K
TOTAL UNITS
 (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
 790/7

74
YESCO Sign & Lighting Service
 Sign and lighting service and maintenance
STARTUP COST
 \$65K–\$352.2K
TOTAL UNITS
 (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
 61/37

75
Gyu-Kaku Japanese BBQ Restaurant
 Japanese barbecue restaurants
STARTUP COST
 \$1.2M–\$2.5M
TOTAL UNITS
 (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
 751/26

76
Red Roof
 Economy hotels
STARTUP COST
 \$160.5K–\$5.4M
TOTAL UNITS
 (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
 483/99

77
CPR Cell Phone Repair
 Electronics repairs and sales
STARTUP COST
 \$55.7K–\$170.5K
TOTAL UNITS
 (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
 565/6

78
Wyndham Hotels
STARTUP COST
 \$1.5M–\$68.1M
TOTAL UNITS
 (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
 132/0

79
Sport Clips
 Men's sports-themed hair salons
STARTUP COST
 \$224.8K–\$373.3K
TOTAL UNITS
 (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
 1,769/69



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80
Ziebart
Auto appearance and protection services
STARTUP COST
\$291.8K-\$463.1K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
376/12

81
Days Inn by Wyndham
Hotels
STARTUP COST
\$292.6K-\$8.3M
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,728/0

82
Jiffy Lube International
Oil changes, preventive maintenance
STARTUP COST
\$207K-\$500K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
2,094/0

83
Merry Maids
Residential cleaning
STARTUP COST
\$89.6K-\$125K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,705/3

84
Hilton Garden Inn
Upscale midprice hotels
STARTUP COST
\$13M-\$27.1M
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
841/0

85
Express Employment Professionals
Staffing, HR solutions
STARTUP COST
\$140K-\$211K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
800/0

86
Kinderdance International
Children's dance, gymnastics, fitness, and yoga programs
STARTUP COST
\$18.1K-\$46.8K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
161/2

87
Travelodge by Wyndham
Hotels
STARTUP COST
\$178.1K-\$8.1M
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
435/0

88
UFC Gym
Boxing, kickboxing, Brazilian jiu jitsu, high-intensity interval training, and group fitness classes
STARTUP COST
\$199K-\$4.2M
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
127/14

89
Howard Johnson by Wyndham
Hotels
STARTUP COST
\$369.8K-\$9.6M
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
338/0

90
Sky Zone
Trampoline parks/entertainment centers
STARTUP COST
\$1.3M-\$2.8M
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
201/9

91
Once Upon A Child
New and used children's clothing, equipment, furniture, toys
STARTUP COST
\$246.7K-\$391.7K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
385/0

92
Regus
Flexible/virtual offices, coworking spaces, meeting and training facilities
STARTUP COST
\$650.3K-\$1.7M
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
28/3,079

93
Carstar Franchise Systems
Auto collision repair
STARTUP COST
\$298.2K-\$804.3K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
675/2

94
Minuteman Press International
Printing, graphics, and marketing services
STARTUP COST
\$74.9K-\$180.1K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
967/0

95
Right at Home
Home care, medical staffing
STARTUP COST
\$80.2K-\$147.2K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
591/1

96
Dogtopia
Dog daycare, boarding, and spa services
STARTUP COST
\$668.3K-\$1.4M
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
119/12

97
Doubletree by Hilton
Upscale hotels and resorts
STARTUP COST
\$22.8M-\$79.2M
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
453/0

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MINUTEMAN PRESS INTERNATIONAL / No. 94

MINUTEMAN PRESS launched Bounce Back USA, a resource to distribute free COVID-19 awareness and prevention posters to businesses in its franchisees' service areas, and also offer those businesses a free ad on BounceBackUSA.com. The initiative, which was first conceived by Nashville franchisee John Taylor before being adopted by Minuteman Press corporate, has close to 10,000 participating businesses already, and is now being offered in Canada, Australia, South Africa, and the UK as well.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF MINUTEMAN PRESS/BOUNCE BACK USA

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98 Sir Speedy Print Signs Marketing

Printing, signs, marketing services

STARTUP COST
\$227.98K-\$277.98K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
220/0

99 HouseMaster Home Inspections

Home inspections and related services

STARTUP COST
\$61.1K-\$106.2K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
313/0

100 Church's Chicken

Chicken

STARTUP COST
\$964.2K-\$1.6M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,385/165

101 Maid Brigade

Residential cleaning

STARTUP COST
\$94.7K-\$116.7K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
449/1

102 Image360

Signs, graphics, displays, digital imaging

STARTUP COST
\$192.6K-\$365.3K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
309/2

103 Sylvan Learning

Individualized supplemental education

STARTUP COST
\$68.7K-\$159.1K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
575/8

104 Snap Fitness

24-hour fitness centers

STARTUP COST
\$153.98K-\$529.9K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,300/38

105 Pak Mail

Packing, shipping, crating, freight, mailboxes, business services

STARTUP COST
\$155.5K-\$232.5K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
375/1

106 Expense Reduction Analysts

Business financial consulting

STARTUP COST
\$66K-\$85.9K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
697/0

107 Cinnabon

Cinnamon rolls, baked goods, coffee

STARTUP COST
\$108.5K-\$368.1K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,539/1

108 Freedom Boat Club

Membership boat clubs

STARTUP COST
\$149.2K-\$458.7K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
174/22

109 MaidPro

Residential cleaning

STARTUP COST
\$57.6K-\$222.5K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
267/1

110 Orangetheory Fitness

Group personal training

STARTUP COST
\$576K-\$1.5M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,208/17

111 CleanNet USA

Commercial cleaning

STARTUP COST
\$14.8K-\$45.9K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,746/0

112 Fibrenew

Leather, plastic, and vinyl restoration and repair

STARTUP COST
\$87.8K-\$99.5K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
239/0

113 Merle Norman Cosmetics

Cosmetics and skin-care products

STARTUP COST
\$39.5K-\$180.9K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,115/2

114 Glass Doctor

Auto/residential/commercial glass installation, repair, and replacement

STARTUP COST
\$127.3K-\$265.5K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
172/0

115 Yogi Bear's Jellystone Park Camp-Resorts

Family camping resorts

STARTUP COST
\$62K-\$3M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
81/0



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116
Real Property Management
 Property management
STARTUP COST
 \$86.8K–\$117.8K
TOTAL UNITS
 (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
 325/0

117
Two Men and a Truck International
 Moving services
STARTUP COST
 \$100K–\$585K
TOTAL UNITS
 (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
 299/3

118
School of Rock
 Music education
STARTUP COST
 \$271.5K–\$494.1K
TOTAL UNITS
 (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
 219/48

119
Great American Cookies
 Cookies
STARTUP COST
 \$177.7K–\$476.1K
TOTAL UNITS
 (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
 383/0

120
Qdoba Mexican Eats
 Mexican food
STARTUP COST
 \$475.5K–\$1.1M
TOTAL UNITS
 (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
 371/362

121
AlphaGraphics
 Printing, marketing communications, signs and graphics
STARTUP COST
 \$102.3K–\$380.6K
TOTAL UNITS
 (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
 270/0

122
AAMCO Transmissions and Total Car Care
 Transmission and general auto repairs, diagnostic services
STARTUP COST
 \$223.6K–\$330.5K
TOTAL UNITS
 (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
 598/13

123
Hushe
 Pet-product delivery
STARTUP COST
 \$21K–\$107.5K
TOTAL UNITS
 (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
 539/1

124
PuroClean
 Property damage restoration and remediation
STARTUP COST
 \$72.8K–\$192.6K
TOTAL UNITS
 (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
 285/0

125
Wingstop Restaurants
 Chicken wings
STARTUP COST
 \$374.1K–\$782.4K
TOTAL UNITS
 (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
 1,413/32

126
Embassy Suites by Hilton
 Upscale all-suite hotels
STARTUP COST
 \$17.9M–\$85.5M
TOTAL UNITS
 (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
 253/0

127
Motel 6
 Economy hotels
STARTUP COST
 \$206.9K–\$8.8M
TOTAL UNITS
 (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
 937/309

128
Dale Carnegie
 Workplace training and development
STARTUP COST
 \$108.4K–\$255.8K
TOTAL UNITS
 (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
 238/1

129
Paris Baguette
 Bakery cafés
STARTUP COST
 \$719.3K–\$1.4M
TOTAL UNITS
 (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
 3,333/48

130
Mr. Rooter
 Plumbing, drain, and sewer cleaning
STARTUP COST
 \$74.98K–\$182.1K
TOTAL UNITS
 (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
 283/0

131
Nathan's Famous
 Hot dogs, hamburgers, seafood, chicken, cheesesteaks
STARTUP COST
 \$276.4K–\$1M
TOTAL UNITS
 (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
 258/4

132
First Choice Haircutters
 Family hair salons
STARTUP COST
 \$177.8K–\$302.6K
TOTAL UNITS
 (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
 249/137

133
Precision Tune Auto Care
 Auto repair and maintenance
STARTUP COST
 \$127K–\$253.6K
TOTAL UNITS
 (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
 273/53

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NIGEL TRAVIS

Chairman, Dunkin' Brands Inc., Author of *The Challenge Culture*

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134

Wild Birds Unlimited

Bird-feeding supplies and nature gift items

STARTUP COST
\$150.8K-\$260.99K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
341/0

135

Pirtek

Hydraulic and industrial hose service and supply centers/mobile services

STARTUP COST
\$161.9K-\$782.3K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
495/7

136

Plato's Closet

Teen- and young-adult clothing resale stores

STARTUP COST
\$251.7K-\$390.7K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
479/0

137

Mathnasium Learning Centers

Math tutoring

STARTUP COST
\$112.8K-\$149.1K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,030/17

138

LeafSpring Schools

Educational childcare/preschool

STARTUP COST
\$3.7M-\$6.8M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
19/5

139

Rooter-Man

Plumbing, drain, and sewer cleaning

STARTUP COST
\$46.8K-\$137.6K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
666/29

140

Tutor Doctor

Tutoring

STARTUP COST
\$73.3K-\$100.99K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
662/0

141

Mr. Appliance

Residential and commercial appliance installation and repairs

STARTUP COST
\$60.8K-\$139.5K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
268/0

142

Drama Kids International

After-school drama classes and summer camps

STARTUP COST
\$33.8K-\$68K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
238/0

143

The Cleaning Authority

Environmentally friendly residential cleaning

STARTUP COST
\$71.5K-\$167.8K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
223/3

144

Homewood Suites by Hilton

Upscale extended-stay hotels

STARTUP COST
\$12.3M-\$25.97M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
492/0

145

SafeSplash/ SwimLabs/ Swimtastic

Child and adult swimming lessons, parties, summer camps

STARTUP COST
\$44.5K-\$1.8M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
154/9

146

Hawthorn Suites by Wyndham

Hotels

STARTUP COST
\$225.7K-\$12.8M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
110/0

147

Charleys Philly Steaks

Philly cheesesteaks, fries, lemonade

STARTUP COST
\$253.2K-\$582.3K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
562/59

148

Pita Pit

Pita sandwiches and salads

STARTUP COST
\$179.8K-\$428.8K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
564/6

149

Enviro-Master International Franchise

Restroom hygiene products and services

STARTUP COST
\$180K-\$324.1K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
77/0

150

La Quinta by Wyndham

Hotels

STARTUP COST
\$3.9M-\$11.7M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
600/314

151

Crunch Franchise

Fitness centers

STARTUP COST
\$255.5K-\$2.3M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
255/25

152

Pop-A-Lock Franchise System

Mobile locksmith and security services

STARTUP COST
\$96.9K-\$130.3K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
577/4

153

STEM For Kids

Biomed, coding, business, and engineering programs for ages 4 to 14

STARTUP COST
\$19.9K-\$48.7K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
117/5

154

American Poolplayers Association

Recreational billiard leagues

STARTUP COST
\$20.5K-\$28.4K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
316/8

155

Aqua-Tots Swim Schools

Swimming lessons

STARTUP COST
\$502.1K-\$1.1M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
102/1

156

AmeriSpec Inspection Services

Home and commercial inspections, ancillary services

STARTUP COST
\$53.6K-\$72.3K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
272/0

157

Microtel by Wyndham

Hotels

STARTUP COST
\$3.96M-\$6.1M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
343/0

158

Stratus Building Solutions

Environmentally friendly commercial cleaning

STARTUP COST
\$4.5K-\$72.9K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,787/0

159

Senior Helpers

Personal, companion, and Alzheimer's home care

STARTUP COST
\$104.8K-\$144.3K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
304/12

160

Transworld Business Advisors

Business brokerages; franchise consulting

STARTUP COST
\$74.9K-\$97.2K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
294/1

161

N-Hance Wood Refinishing

Wood cabinet and floor refinishing

STARTUP COST
\$51.97K-\$167K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
590/0

162

Duraclean

Carpet and upholstery cleaning, disaster restoration, mold remediation

STARTUP COST
\$79.6K-\$129.9K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
262/9

163

Closets By Design

Custom closet and home/office organization systems

STARTUP COST
\$152K-\$428K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
62/6

164

Fully Promoted

Branded products and marketing services

STARTUP COST
\$71.9K-\$240.9K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
280/0

165

CertaPro Painters

Residential and commercial painting

STARTUP COST
\$133.3K-\$169.5K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
359/0

166

Pretzelmaker

Pretzels

STARTUP COST
\$216.2K-\$343K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
255/0

167

Play It Again Sports

New and used sporting goods/equipment

STARTUP COST
\$268.3K-\$391.3K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
297/0

168

Vanguard Cleaning Systems

Commercial cleaning

STARTUP COST
\$5.5K-\$36.6K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
3,239/0

169

GradePower Learning

Supplemental education

STARTUP COST
\$99.8K-\$270.5K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
154/3

170

Club Pilates Franchise

Reformer Pilates classes

STARTUP COST
\$167.97K-\$280.4K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
562/1

171

Wyndham Garden

Hotels

STARTUP COST
\$549.2K-\$21.5M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
119/0

172

Padgett Business Services

Financial, payroll, consulting, and tax services

STARTUP COST
\$20.2K-\$99.98K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
331/0

173

Curio Collection by Hilton

Upscale hotels

STARTUP COST
\$3.6M-\$112.4M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
74/0

174

Soccer Shots Franchising

Soccer programs for ages 2 to 8

STARTUP COST
\$41K-\$53.95K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
223/9

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175

Qualicare

Medical/nonmedical home care, patient advocacy

STARTUP COST
\$84.6K-\$194.6K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
51/3

176

Gotcha Covered

Window treatments

STARTUP COST
\$75.7K-\$93.9K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
93/0

177

Home Instead Senior Care

Nonmedical senior care

STARTUP COST
\$108.9K-\$124.9K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,051/3

178

Sandler Training

Sales and sales-management training

STARTUP COST
\$97.5K-\$114.5K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
240/0

179

Weed Man

Lawn care

STARTUP COST
\$69.8K-\$86.9K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
303/41

180

Blaze Fast-Fire'd Pizza

Assembly-line pizza

STARTUP COST
\$545.5K-\$1.1M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
330/7

181

Tony Roma's

Ribs, steak, seafood

STARTUP COST
\$2.1M-\$3.5M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
131/2

182

ComForCare Home Care

Nonmedical and skilled home care

STARTUP COST
\$96.2K-\$208.7K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
213/0

183

Pillar To Post Home Inspectors

Home inspections

STARTUP COST
\$37.1K-\$45.9K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
577/0

184

Mr. Electric

Electrical services

STARTUP COST
\$98.6K-\$234.8K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
169/0

185

Metal Supermarkets

Metal stores

STARTUP COST
\$216.5K-\$403K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
82/9

186

milliCare

Flooring, carpet, and textile maintenance

STARTUP COST
\$110.7K-\$154.9K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
56/0

187

Hooters

Casual restaurants

STARTUP COST
\$956.5K-\$4.3M

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
210/202

188

InXpress

Shipping services

STARTUP COST
\$85.6K-\$169.99K

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
355/0

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DIVOT TOOL
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189 Wingate by Wyndham

Hotels
STARTUP COST
\$375.5K-\$10.8M
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
164/0

190 Gloria Jean's Coffees

Specialty coffee
STARTUP COST
\$173.2K-\$473K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
859/0

191 Quesada Burritos & Tacos

Mexican food
STARTUP COST
\$239K-\$320.5K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
121/3

192 1-800-Got-Junk?

Junk removal
STARTUP COST
\$241.8K-\$289.7K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
153/2

193 Poolwerx

Pool and spa maintenance, service, remodeling, and supplies
STARTUP COST
\$93K-\$309.5K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
145/16

194 Little Kickers

Preschool soccer programs
STARTUP COST
\$25.2K-\$37.1K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
335/2

195 Brooklyn Fitboxing USA

Boxing and kickboxing group fitness programs
STARTUP COST
\$150K-\$261.2K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
114/2

196 InterContinental Hotels & Resorts

Hotels
STARTUP COST
\$70.5M-\$103.1M
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
203/6

197 30 Minute Hit

Kickboxing circuit-training programs for women
STARTUP COST
\$100.6K-\$165.5K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
62/0

198 Challenge Island

Educational enrichment programs
STARTUP COST
\$48.3K-\$62.95K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
101/3

199 Kid to Kid

New and used children's and maternity clothing and products
STARTUP COST
\$301.8K-\$484.8K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
110/4

200 Snapology

STEAM education programs
STARTUP COST
\$40.4K-\$214.9K
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
148/2



SOCCER SHOTS / No. 174

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OPPORTUNITY

S P O T L I G H T

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CREATIVITY



Bring your ideas to life with businesses that thrive on your inspiration and imagination.

- Arts and Crafts Business
- Event Planning Business
- Fashion Accessories Business
- Freelance Writing Business
- Photography Business
- Self-Publishing Business
- Wedding Consultant Business
- Online Coupon/Daily Deal Business
- Specialty Food Business

CUSTOMER SERVICE



Use your people skills to provide superstar service for a pet business, as a travel service provider, through your own restaurant or in a retail store.

- Automobile Detailing Business
- Bar and Club
- Bed and Breakfast
- Clothing Store and More
- Hair Salon and Day Spa
- Food Truck Business
- Microbrewery, Distillery, or Cidery
- Pet Business and More
- Restaurant and More
- Retail Business and More
- Travel Business and More

DETAILS & LOGISTICS



Put your Type-A personality to work for you through businesses like imports/exports, wholesale distribution, freight brokerage and medical claims services.

- eBusiness
- Freight Brokerage Business
- Green Business
- Import/Export Business
- Medical Claims Billing Service
- Vending Business
- Wholesale Distribution Business
- Staffing Business
- Transportation Service



Stop dreaming and start doing



COMMUNICATION



Put pen and paper to work in a grant writing business, use your networking skills in a public relations business, or have your graphic design speak a thousand words.

- Blogging Business
- Consulting Business
- Grant Writing Business
- Graphic Design Business
- Public Relations Business

HANDS ON



Bring in the bucks while experiencing the satisfaction of tackling hands-on projects through cleaning services, landscaping, construction and more.

- Cleaning Service
- Coin-Operated Laundry
- Construction and Contracting
- Lawn Care Or Landscaping

TEACHING



Share your knowledge and expertise through child-care services, information marketing or tutoring services.

- Child-Care Service
- College Planning Consultant
- eLearning or Training Business
- Information Marketing Business
- Online Education Business
- Tutoring and Test Prep Business

HELPING OTHERS




Lend a hand and make a difference in people's lives—whether through personal training, senior care or coaching ventures.

- Coaching Business
- Personal Concierge Service
- Personal Training
- Senior Services Business
- Nonprofit Organization

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WHAT INSPIRES ME

Embracing the Dings, Dents, and Bumps

by **JASON MINICK**

Owner / Minick Photography **Partner** / Aerial Content Group

→ TOUGH STUFF

His grandfather's old aluminum lunch pail reminds Minick to work through setbacks.



I grew up in the 1970s in a small town in central Pennsylvania and spent a lot of time at my grandparents' house, a railroad-style home just down the street from my parents. My grandfather, Charles, would come home from a long day's work, covered in dirt and oil, and share a sugary sip of coffee from a thermos he kept in a banged-up aluminum lunch pail.

My grandfather was an entrepreneur. After serving in WWII as a second lieutenant in the Corps of Engineers for the U.S. Army Reserve, overseeing construction projects across France and Germany, he returned home and realized

there was a need for his skill set in the local community. He started his own custom grading and excavation business and got to work. And the work was hard.

I like to think that I inherited some of his grit and entrepreneurial attitude. After doing photography for local newspapers for about a decade, in 2006 I set out on my own and founded Minick Photography, which does a mix of corporate and commercial work, along with portraits and video production. More recently, I also cofounded a 3D-mapping and drone photography company called Aerial Content Group.

Now, as I sit in my office every day editing and adjusting images, something familiar sits on a table nearby: my grandfather's old lunch box. It functions

as a catchall for my keys, sunglasses, and whatever else I can toss in to reduce office clutter.

But it's much more than just a holder of stuff. I imagine that each ding, dent, and scratch has a story. Maybe there was a minor mishap on the job site when something didn't go quite right. Maybe it fell off the excavator at lunchtime. Each mark stands for something my grandfather had to push through, something he had to solve or overcome.

Things in my own business aren't always easy. Life hasn't always been easy, either. That lunch pail reminds me that there will be dings and dents along the way, and that you have to push through, no matter what. Each mark tells a story, gives you character, and makes you stronger.

WHAT INSPIRES YOU?

Tell us about a story, person, object, or something else that pushes you forward, and we may include it in a future issue. And we may make you photograph or illustrate it, too. Email INSPIRE@ENTREPRENEUR.COM with the subject line "WHAT INSPIRES ME."

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