
"We were drawn to Jersey Mike's because it truly is a family run business.
Working together with our daughters has brought us unparalleled quality of work and life. The deep seated values of taking care of people and giving back to our local community gives us satisfaction and pride every day. Oh, and by the way, we get to make the most delicious sub sandwiches on the planet."
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Franchise Owners in California & Idaho
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Former Special Education Instructor
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Drew (*left*) and Jonathan Scott built a business empire—together.

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ADVERTISING AND EDITORIAL
Entrepreneur Media Inc.,
18061 Fitch, Irvine, CA 92614,
(949) 261-2325, fax: (949) 752-1180
ENTREPRENEUR.COM

Printed in the USA GST File #r129677027

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Vol. 47, No. 2. ***Entrepreneur*** (ISSN 0163-3341) is published monthly (except for combined issues in Jan/Feb, Apr/May, Jul/Aug, and Oct/Nov) by **Entrepreneur Media Inc.,** 18061 Fitch, Irvine, CA 92614. Periodical postage paid at Irvine, CA, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to ***Entrepreneur,*** P.O. Box 6136, Harlan, IA, 51593-1636. One-year subscription rates in U.S.: $19.97; in Canada: $39.97; all other countries: $49.97; payable in U.S. funds only. For customer service go to entrepreneur.com/customerservice or mail subscription orders and changes to ***Entrepreneur,*** Subscription Department, P.O. Box 6136, Harlan, IA, 51593-1636. For change of address, please give both old and new addresses and include most recent mailing label.

Forget Desire. Focus on Value

How do we get what we want? By focusing on someone else's interests first.

A CURIOUS EMAIL rolled into my inbox recently. The subject line was "Write article." And here was the entire message:

"Hi Jeff. I wanted to write an article, who do I speak with? Thanks."

Maybe you have some questions. I do! What kind of article does this person want to write? What makes them qualified? Why would I want to publish it? When did my name become Jeff? And that's just the start.

But let's focus on the most telling word in this email—the one that explains what went wrong, and should serve as a warning sign for us all. The word is *wanted,* as in "I *wanted* to write an article." The email writer led with what he wanted, not with what he could provide. And although his email was particularly clumsy, his mistake was very common.

We are all, at some points, blinded by our own interests. We want something badly, and so, like a starving man who sees everything around him as food, we begin to see the people around us as providers. We expect them to deliver a service, as if they're hired for a job. We become needy. Demanding!

But here's the harsh reality: Nobody cares what you or I or anyone else wants. Instead, they care about what we can do for them. Consider how successful transactions take place. An entrepreneur may want an investor's money, but they don't say, "I want your money"; they talk about how they can make the *investor* money. And nobody tells a customer, "I want your purchase"; they tell a customer about how their product or service can make *the customer's* life better.

I wanted to write an article. That's what the email said. As if my job is to grant wishes. He was so laser-focused on that desire that he failed to sell me on an idea. He offered no value, even though that's what everyone is looking for.

Please understand, this isn't about reaching out to me. It's about reaching out to anybody. Do I expect us all to be selfless, always giving and never getting? I don't. We all want things, and we should. But we should also be mindful of the best way to get them. Otherwise, we're just wasting our and everyone else's time.

I mean, just imagine if I'd written this column—the thing you're reading right now—about what I really want. "Dear reader, I want you to buy this magazine and follow *Entrepreneur* on social media. Oh, and follow me, too! And listen to my podcasts!" Do I want those things? Of course. But if I said that, I'd give you no incentive to actually do them. So instead, I pay close attention to what my readers want. I correspond with them and talk to them at events; I take note of what they like and dislike. And then, when it comes time to produce this magazine, I reflect upon what I've learned and do my best to deliver value. I'm not saying I do it perfectly. But I know it's the only path forward.

That's the power of value, after all: When you know how to deliver it, you're in a far better position to receive value for yourself, too. That point was hammered home recently by an entrepreneur friend of mine, whom I shared these thoughts with. He runs a medical company and spends a lot of time fund-raising and building partnerships. "It's how I approach negotiations," he says. "You have a much better chance of getting what you want if you focus on what the other person wants. Then you can negotiate from strength, because you already know what's important to the other party."

I know it can sound obvious. But in day-to-day interactions, we can slip up—talking too much about ourselves, pivoting too quickly toward the thing we desire. So here's my challenge to you (and to myself!), at all times and in all interactions: Be relentless on value. You'll get what you want by providing what someone else wants first.

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Photograph / NIGEL PARRY

THE CHANGING FACE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP
3 WAYS TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS

Starting and growing a business requires equal amounts of skill, determination, and motivation. As it turns out, the group with the most motivation to become entrepreneurs this year, and in the years ahead, might be minorities.

People of color in the U.S. have a desire to start their own businesses at a rate of 20 percent higher than the rest of the population, according to the results of "The Changing Face of American Entrepreneurship," a survey by Northwestern Mutual. Conducted in 2018, the survey polled 8,000 people from across the U.S. from different backgrounds, races, and genders.

Results also showed that minorities are more probable than others to have a side hustle that they want to turn into their own business. "More likely to launch a side hustle and work with a financial advisor, minorities lay their foundation for a business sooner than their Caucasian counterparts," says Carrie Neumann, Northwestern Mutual's Senior Director of Multicultural Market Strategy. "We will continue to see the number of minority owned companies rise across the country."

Northwestern Mutual aims to serve as a resource for all entrepreneurs, helping to create financial goals, plan for the future, and protect the earnings that they have worked hard to generate. We spoke with Anitra Blue Francis, a Northwestern Mutual financial advisor, to find out how people of color can best succeed as entrepreneurs.

1. EVALUATE YOUR FINANCIAL SITUATION.

Starting a business costs money sometimes a lot of money. The amount you need should be budgeted carefully and on par with the company's projected cash flow, revenue, and onboarding costs.

"Since starting a business involves investing your own money, entrepreneurs have to rework their financial habits with one end game: saving for a full scale company," Blue Francis says. A financial advisor can help map your financial forecast and determine ways to fund your business such as loans, partnerships, and angel investors.

2. COMBINE YOUR PERSONAL FINANCIAL PLAN WITH YOUR BUSINESS'S FINANCIAL PLAN.

As an entrepreneur, the only person who is contributing to your financial future is you. Blue-Francis recommends that new business owners research individual retirement plans and use benchmarks to stay on track and save enough money for the date you wish to retire. Also consider insuring your business and protecting your ability to make money if you are unable to work.

"Combining your personal and professional financial goals will ensure that your life milestones coincide with bigger moments in your business," Blue Francis says. "Learning how to keep the business afloat while staying on track with your long term financial goals will set you up for success in both areas of your life."

3. REMEMBER: YOU'RE NOT ALONE.

Starting your own venture doesn't mean you have to do it all on your own. Advisors and other resources are available to help with virtually every aspect of starting and growing a business.

"Your skillset may be perfect for marketing and product creation, but business ownership involves much more," Blue Francis says. "Focus on the areas you need to improve first and then move on to honing your other skills."

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Business/Unusual

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Lilly Singh Aims Beyond YouTube

Social media stardom has a downside: Few who achieve it can transcend the digital platform and build a lasting brand. But with her new production studio, Lilly Singh intends to do just that. **by STEPHANIE SCHOMER**

Since 2010, Lilly Singh has been lovingly known to fans as Superwoman—a moniker she has more than earned after amassing 14 million YouTube subscribers, producing and starring in a live world tour, and writing a best-selling book, among other projects. The actress and comedian catapulted to YouTube fame with her observational videos that tackle everyday life, and as her own celebrity grew, she started attracting top talent as collaborators: Dwayne Johnson, Priyanka Chopra, and Selena Gomez have all appeared on her channel. Now the 30-year-old is making plans for the next phase of her career and thinking hard about her own needs as a creator. She's taking a closer look at her professional path, investing in her team, and shooting squarely for the traditional media world.

You started your YouTube channel in 2010, and over the past nine years, it's grown into an entertainment empire. When did you realize this could be a sustainable career?
Even after I reached a million subscribers, I was like, *This is just a fluke! I'm sure this is just luck!* I was the last person to really believe this was a career path. It wasn't until I did an international gig in India, appearing there as part of YouTube's FanFest. Seeing the audience reaction there, understanding how many people knew me there, it was a major realization: *Oh my God; the internet works!* Seeing people in a different country, across the world, relate to my content and interact with my business was really eye-opening.

Once you processed that, did it change how you thought about projects?
I realized my worldwide appeal more than ever, so I really made sure that my content was more universal and relatable no matter where someone lived and no matter what their environment was. And from a brand partnership perspective, I realized I had a responsibility to be selective about the brands I work with. My audience is diverse; I didn't want to create content through partnerships that excluded anyone.

How transparent are you with your audience about those decisions?
Transparency is everything in this business. My fans feel like they know me, feel like I'm accessible to them—they come up to me on the street if they see me, treat me like their big sister—so my relationship with them is all about authenticity. And if I partner with a brand I've never talked about before and start preaching about their

product, my audience will know it's not authentic. And if I make a mistake—just as a person, or through a partnership—I try to practice what I preach and admit it. No one is perfect. We're all growing, we're all learning. It's a new culture of doing business as a human, not as a corporation.

In December, you spoke out about gender equality on YouTube after *Forbes* published its annual list of the top 10 earners on the platform, all of whom were male for the first time in years. Why do you think that is?
I'm super proud of YouTube and the digital community because I think we're actually great examples of equality, and I think traditional Hollywood could learn from us. That's why I was so shocked to see that the top earners were all male. And all those men deserve it—they're earning it! But it just leads to the question of *why?* Is it that people don't feel female content is as universal? Are they not as willing to watch it? Do brands want to work with men more? I don't have the answers, but I'd like to ask those types of questions.

Where do those kinds of conversations need to take place?
Well, I made the error of believing that Twitter was the right platform for that conversation—and it is not. It's a layered conversation, and it can't be reduced to x amount of characters, and I take responsibility for that. But we should be having these conversations on panels, at conferences. I've had several sit-downs on gender equality with the heads of YouTube. Those are the outlets where change and action happen.

You began by posting videos you recorded at home. But you've since gone on a world tour, written a book, launched an apparel line, and started a social campaign to support girls and their education. How have you built a team to support these projects?
A lot of digital creators feel like they have to do everything themselves. It's the nature of our business. It's almost a layer of guilt we feel: *I'm an entrepreneur, and I must do everything myself!* But building a team has been the best, most crucial thing I've ever done. And I approach it in a simple way: I want people on my team who are excited about what we do. I've learned time and time again that no level of achievement on a résumé can replace passion. You need people who are willing to step out of their comfort zone and learn new things.

As more opportunities come your way, how do you decide which projects to pursue?
I used to try everything that came my way. Someone asked me to do stand-up, so I did. Someone asked me to write a book, and long-form writing seemed like a new challenge. But now my schedule is not as lenient, so I examine the impact a project will have on myself and others. If it's meaningful and positive, I'll consider it. But I don't have to say yes to everything anymore.

Last fall, you published a video explaining that you were taking a break from posting content for a bit. Why?
I was just mentally not in a good place. I was pushing out content at a crazy rate—there's this fear that if you don't publish constantly, you'll become irrelevant. I love making content and I love YouTube, but too much of anything is not good. So I took a couple of weeks and I didn't shoot, didn't write a script, didn't vlog. I spent hours a day just thinking: about my team, my career, my family. It sounds ridiculous, but I just didn't have time to do that before. I started writing down my goals, journaling, eating better, and getting more sleep, and it made such a difference.

Do you think it will change how you operate moving forward?
I realized I no longer enjoy being creative on such demand. I know there are deadlines and sometimes you have to make things happen, but the rate I was working at was taking away from the magic of creation. I never want to be in a position where I'm putting out work that I'm not 100 percent proud of. If something about a project doesn't work for me, I want to take the time to fix it. I've earned that.

> “I NEVER WANT TO BE IN A POSITION WHERE I'M PUTTING OUT WORK THAT I'M NOT 100 PERCENT PROUD OF. IF SOMETHING ABOUT A PROJECT DOESN'T WORK FOR ME, I WANT TO TAKE THE TIME TO FIX IT. I'VE EARNED THAT.”

Was it tough to tell fans you needed a break?
Absolutely. My brain kept telling me I was being weak and lazy. But you can't be the best creative version of yourself if you're not the healthiest version of yourself. People questioned my decision to publish a video about it, but I didn't want my fans to think I ghosted them! Plus, if my story can help someone else or start a conversation about mental health, I'm happy to swallow that pill.

Tell me about why you recently launched a production studio to focus on more long-form content.
It's called Unicorn Island Productions, and I love it! The goal here was to not only diversify my business but to make premium, longer-form content that won't necessarily work on YouTube. I want to make things I didn't have growing up, create stories and characters I didn't see.

Has it been an adjustment to build something in the world of traditional media?
People are so willing to take risks on YouTube. Now when I'm sitting in pitch meetings for my production studio, there are people I have to pitch, then they pitch their boss, and there's a whole gang of people who will decide what an audience will like, even what a character will look like. There are a lot of gatekeepers. And that's different for me, having someone tell me what they think is going to work when I have an audience of 14 million! I'm very tempted to be like, “I know what will work!” But it's a ladder you have to climb. You've got to play the game to change the game. I did that on YouTube, and I will respectfully do the same thing in traditional Hollywood.

Getting Your First "Yes!"

When launching a business, even the smallest victory can feel like a pivotal milestone. We asked six entrepreneurs: How did you get your first big win?

1/ Bait the hook.
"When my cofounder, Hari Karunanidni, and I started HackerRank—a platform to help companies hire developers—we created a fake résumé with perfect credentials and posted it on job boards. We got a slew of inbound calls from recruiters looking for this amazing candidate. Once we had them on the phone, we'd say, 'Hey, I'm not that person, but people like this are all over the world, and you don't need a résumé to find them.' It was a risky strategy, but it worked: That's how we landed one of our first enterprise customers."
—VIVEK RAVISANKAR, cofounder and CEO, HackerRank

2/ Follow up.
"The year I launched Splendid Spoon, I spoke on a startup panel at Brooklyn Brewery and met two buyers from FreshDirect, who were in the audience. Their headquarters was across the street from my incubator kitchen, so I followed up by dropping off samples. A few weeks later, they asked me to develop some local soup flavors for them. I am always knocking on doors—you get lots of noes, but that one yes makes all the difference."
—NICOLE CENTENO, founder and CEO, Splendid Spoon

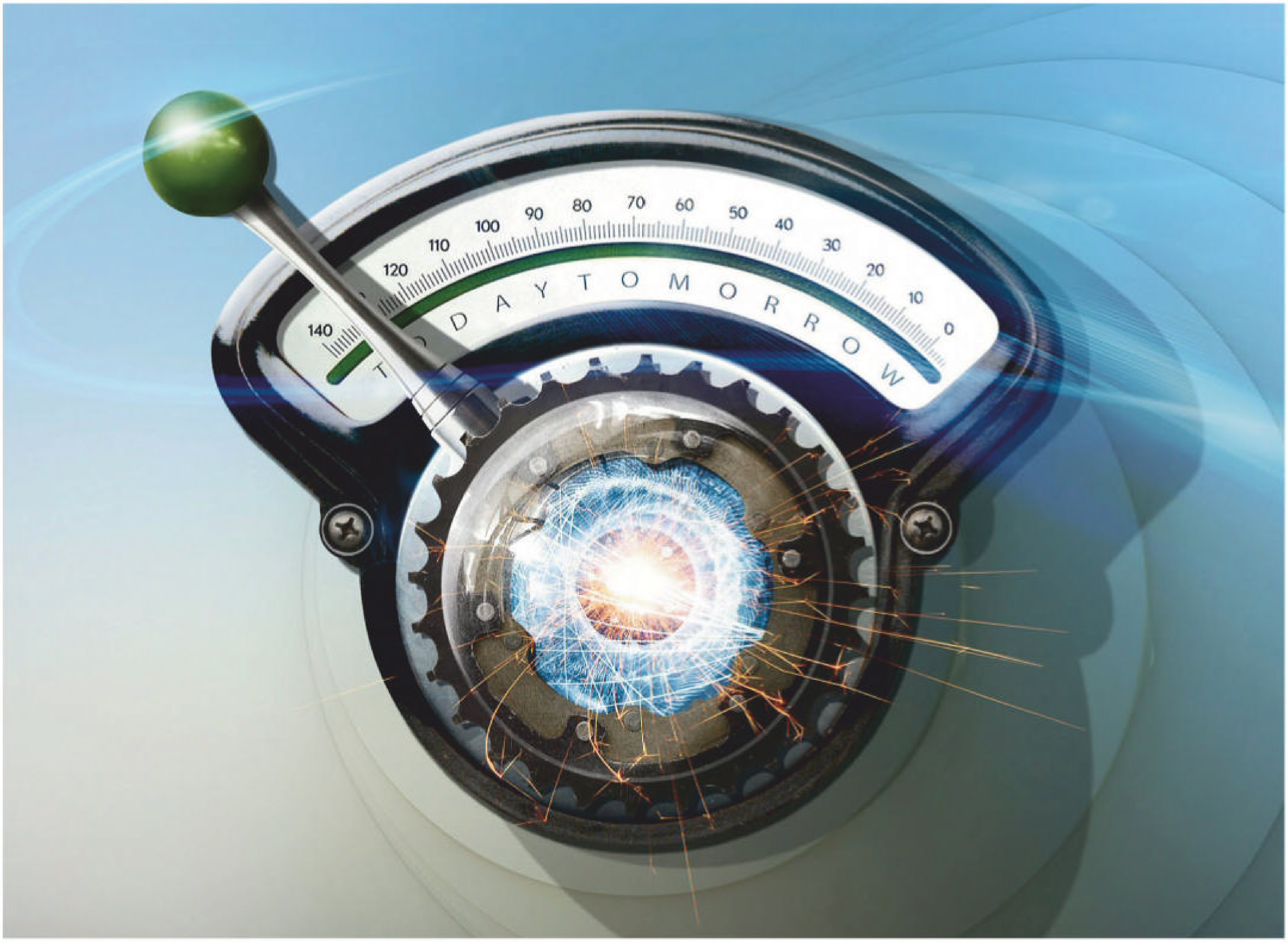
3/ Tell the truth.
"At Smart Furniture's first presentation to venture capitalists, one candid slide got us funded. It had these words in bold: HERE'S EVERYTHING WE SCREWED UP. I thought that leveling with investors at the outset would be key, and it was—it helped build instant trust."
—STEPHEN CULP, founder, Smart Furniture, and cofounder and CEO, PriceWaiter and Delegator

4/ Overprepare.
"I cold-called the national buyer at Kroger—the largest grocery chain in the U.S.—for several weeks straight. One day he picked up, and I dove right into my pitch. He tried to get rid of me by asking me to send him some materials later, but I had already emailed him that very information, so while I had him on the phone, I asked him to check his inbox! After about five minutes, he agreed to test our product in 100 stores. Today, we sell our entire line across 2,000 locations."
—NEEL PREMKUMAR, founder and CEO, Forto Coffee

5/ Get real.
"Breather's challenge was getting landlords on board with a crazy idea: that anyone with a mobile phone could book workspace in their building, on demand. We finally found one who agreed to give us a shot—and then she quickly changed her mind. I walked to her office and literally got on my knees and begged. I told her that if we didn't do the deal, I was going to be fired. Nearly five years later, that space is still on the Breather network. Sometimes you can't be too proud to beg."
—PACKY MCCORMICK, VP of experience, Breather

6/ Take a risk.
"I launched Supergoop! in 2007, and by 2009, we needed a strategic retail partner to scale. I'd been in touch with a merchant at Sephora years earlier, but she felt we needed to grow first. Now the timing was right, so I left her a voicemail saying I'd be in San Francisco the next week and wanted to meet. She never returned my call, but I flew out anyway—with no other plans—and hoped she would call back. I checked into a tiny hotel room with no windows, and my cellphone lit up. My future buyer said, 'Holly, can you come in tomorrow morning at 10 A.M.?'"
—HOLLY THAGGARD, founder and CEO, Supergoop!

Illustration / MICHELE MARCONI



Don't Wait Until Tomorrow

What's the greatest killer of companies? Corporate consultants **Benjamin Gilad** and **Mark Chussil,** who have worked with hundreds of giant brands, have an answer: It's waiting to act on something that needs to be done right now.

Practice saying *sed non hodie.* It means "but not today" in Latin. (Pronunciation: *sed known hoe-dee-ay.*) Why say it in Latin? Because it sounds better. It sounds scientific. And if you're saying it in Latin, nobody else can understand the terrible, horrible, dangerous sentiment you're expressing.

Sed non hodie is what too many big companies say in response to a possible slowing or reversal of growth. Every entrepreneur should learn from their repetitive mistake. Consider where the impulse comes from: Every company wants to maintain or enhance its performance. That's good—it's how capitalism is supposed to work! But their managers often react not by changing for the future but rather by extending whatever the company already has. In the process, they have no idea how to evaluate the outcome. Are they building up their company? Propping it up? Or just plain puffing it up?

Some examples:

When did airlines' cost-cutting go from sensible to requiring that passengers inhale before they can fit in their seats? They know someday a backlash will disrupt the model of sardines-in-a-can. But...not today.

When did pharma's infatuation with blockbuster drugs go from delightful jackpot to

Illustration / VIKTOR KOEN

essential lifeline? Every pharma executive we've worked with—and in our consulting practice, we've worked with hundreds—laments the overreliance on a few blockbusters and the culture that pushes lesser drugs off the development track. They know it will have to change because pipelines of the Next Big Thing are running dry, but...not today.

The problem is not that feverish growth won't last. The problem is not that stock prices rise and fall. The problem is that, judging by results, these companies have no idea what to do when growth stalls.

Sed non hodie! But not today, they say! Then when today happens, the inevitable is greeted as if the sky is falling. It's a complete and utter shock. Who would ever have predicted?

Today happens. And it happens in what looks like a sudden and unexpected decline even as signs might have been accumulating under a CEO's nose for *years*.

Today is always sudden. Frightened executives never recognize today until it is yesterday. Then the panic begins.

When companies push too hard to keep the growth going, it creates a bubble that ends up like the financial crisis of 2008: It blows up in their faces. You've seen the signs. A company squeezes too hard to keep costs down and starves the investment it needs to run the business in the future. When companies polish their numbers to make them shine, they create new expectations that are even harder to satisfy. It's happening now at GE, where shareholders of the once-venerable industrial giant are suing a former CEO, Jeffrey Immelt, for polishing GE's numbers as the company was deteriorating fast. His successor, John Flannery, was given just 14 months to deal with this reality before he was fired.

Underlying the decline of executives' and managers' skill at competing is the inability to accept bad news. But the fault isn't all theirs. It comes, too, from the investors and the boards of directors who say, "If you can't get the job done, I'll get someone who can *today*."

How do you get past the performance addiction—whether you're inside one of these big corporations or running a startup? As part of learning and practicing your skill at competing, you need to develop resilience.

The best way we know to develop some resilience for bad news is to live through a bad situation.

One of us (Mark) was fortunate (his word) to be on a flight when an engine exploded in midair. He was fortunate both in that he lived to tell the tale (no one was injured) and in that he was lucky to have had the experience. He's now *less* afraid of flying as a result: He saw what goes wrong and what goes right. While he does not recommend that we blow up lots of engines at 5,000 feet so all of us can enjoy this personal growth, he sees it as an utterly cheap way to learn an important lesson. (Cheap for him, not the airline.) No pain, no side effects, over in 20 minutes; that's about as cheap as it gets.

Here's the key: *A quick and cheap way to learn an important lesson.* The military does it with war games. Lawyers do it by arguing in front of mock juries. One of these days, virtual reality devices will make this a common tool for other professions and occasions. Not today, but soon.

Critically, the exploding-engine incident was a learning experience for Mark but not for the pilots of his aircraft. They'd already had their learning experiences in flight simulators! Which is exactly the point.

When you face a challenge, the solution is rarely solved by calculating more decimal points. Instead, it's solved by thinking differently—and perhaps the most insightful, useful, and important part of thinking differently is asking what can go wrong, and developing robust strategies to enable resilience. Don't wait for something to *actually* go wrong. Instead, when it's all going right, run simulations on the nightmare scenarios. Consider it the business equivalent of a flight simulator.

We've spent a lifetime—*invested* a lifetime—in this kind of approach. And we've seen it over and over again: Thinking differently doesn't happen automatically or overnight, but it does happen. And those who learn can pass the lesson on to others.

One way of looking at resilience is to test strategies against various scenarios. "What happens if..." questions are not negative but positive, because they help companies modify their strategies to survive various states of the world. If you happen to work in the automobile industry, for example, you might ask, "What happens to my brand if the acceptance of electric vehicles reaches a critical number?" That question is more than legitimate; it's *necessary* as part of your company's strategic due diligence. The answer might be to develop hybrid models because they are more acceptable to many consumers than pure electric cars. In other words, the strategy of hybrid is robust in several scenarios.

You can also apply this thinking to your own proposals and recommendations. Resilience and robustness mean making choices that don't depend on everything going just right. They can intrigue even a "not-today" executive overconfidently committed to heroic performance objectives.

Big bets require a sense of looming change. It is legitimate to make big bets as long as the decision-maker accepts the possibility of failure. Given their *sed non hodie* mentality, though, many corporations don't believe in big bets. That's bad for them and good for their competition. If you can challenge yourself and your team to improve your thinking, then you've found the fastest, cheapest, surest, and highest-leverage way to improve the quality of the decisions you make. Start today.

IF YOU CAN CHALLENGE YOURSELF AND YOUR TEAM TO IMPROVE YOUR THINKING, THEN YOU'VE FOUND THE FASTEST, CHEAPEST, SUREST, AND HIGHEST-LEVERAGE WAY TO IMPROVE THE DECISIONS YOU MAKE.

This article is excerpted from the book The NEW Employee Manual, *out now from Entrepreneur Press.*

Built to Last

When the founders of **MZ Wallace** set out to create a long-lasting handbag, the fashion industry wouldn't listen. But two decades later, their design is iconic. **by STEPHANIE SCHOMER**

Back in 1999, longtime acquaintances Lucy Wallace Eustice and Monica Zwirner got to talking at a New York farmers' market. Both were young mothers with fast-growing careers in fashion, and, as it turned out, both had been looking for the same chic, ultra-durable accessory. "There wasn't a great American nylon handbag, something that worked for *me*, someone who traveled and worked and had small children," Zwirner says. So the duo decided to make it themselves, and created the now-booming brand MZ Wallace. Here's how they got started.

IT'S IN THE BAG MZ Wallace founders Monica Zwirner (*left*) and Lucy Wallace Eustice.

1/ Embrace the naysayers.
The women walked around New York's garment district, knocking on suppliers' doors and looking for partners. "We told a leather vendor that we wanted to use his expensive Italian leather on nylon bags, and he was like, 'Why?'" Wallace Eustice says. "He told us that it was a waste of money." She took that as a positive: It meant, she says, "that we were doing something different."

2/ Think outside the box.
The women designed their bags with a quilted nylon pattern, but multiple fashion factories told them it couldn't be done cost-effectively. Not taking no for an answer, they looked for alternative manufacturers. "I started thinking about products that are quilted and realized—mattress pads!" Zwirner says. "I went through the Yellow Pages and called a mattress-pad manufacturer in Brooklyn, and he agreed to take on the job."

3/ Find your sales channel.
Rather than sell wholesale to large retailers, where products might get lost on shelves, Wallace Eustice insisted on launching with their own retail space. They rented a tiny shop on Crosby Street, a now-trendy stretch of Manhattan that was fairly desolate in 2000. As customers found the store, MZ Wallace capitalized on face time with shoppers. "If you sell wholesale, you get feedback from a buyer," Wallace Eustice says. "But we were getting feedback from the end users, and we could adapt production very quickly."

4/ Hire for your weaknesses.
As the company grew, Zwirner and Wallace Eustice focused on what they *didn't* want to do. "We didn't want to do the books—we never wanted to get in trouble for not doing our taxes right," Wallace Eustice says. They hired a part-time bookkeeper, followed by sales support. "It's easy to start to crumble as an entrepreneur when you attempt to do every job," Wallace Eustice says.

5/ Channel your strength.
On September 10, 2001, the founders had their biggest retail day ever, thanks to an influx of editors visiting for New York Fashion Week. "The next day, well, you can imagine," Wallace Eustice says of the September 11 attacks on lower Manhattan. "SoHo shut down, you couldn't be downtown, and all you could feel was grief. But you have to be resilient, as a New Yorker and as an entrepreneur—it's probably the biggest attribute, just not giving up."

6/ Celebrate the big wins.
Months after 9/11, Zwirner got a call from Target, asking MZ Wallace to produce a promotional tote for a film festival the corporation was sponsoring. "Monica called me and was like, 'I think I just got a $200,000 order, but I might be making a mistake,'" Wallace Eustice says. It was the first time they had dealt with large volumes, and they saw the difference even 25 cents per unit can make. "That order gave us security for a year," Zwirner says. "We knew: Rent is covered, everything is covered, running the business will be fluff."

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF MZ WALLACE

Inside Dollar Shave Club

Interviews by KRISTIN HUNT

IN 2012, Dollar Shave Club became a viral sensation seemingly overnight, thanks to its debut advertisement: a goofy, sharp-witted video starring CEO Michael Dubin that crashed the brand's website and has since amassed more than 25 million views on YouTube. Seven years later, that irreverent voice still guides the men's grooming company, which was acquired by Unilever in 2016 for a reported $1 billion. At the sunny Marina Del Rey, Calif., headquarters, team members host casual barbecues on the office patio and sometimes wander the open floors in sweat suits to celebrate "athleisure day." Instead of motivational posters as decor, a neon sign at the coffee bar playfully reminds staffers to get back to work. And they're happy to.

SARITHA IVATURI/ Director of data systems
"When I came to Dollar Shave Club, the most interesting part was the cultural diversity I saw here. We come from many different cultures, but at the end of the day, we all work toward a unified goal. It was a refreshing and pleasant surprise."

KEN MIRCH/ Senior director of member engagement
"Some days I'm here in sandals and socks, sweatpants, and a hoodie because we decided it was athleisure day. Making sure that our employees feel comfortable is kind of top priority. It's when you get the best work out of people."

MATT KNAPP/ VP creative, executive creative director
"Creativity is held in such high regard. I came from the agency world, and I love that I'm no longer limited to using my creativity on just advertising. I can inject it into solving real business problems. And there's nothing more satisfying."

Photograph / ADAM FRIEDBERG

TERRY SOLTANI / Senior creative project manager
"The struggle with a growing company is that you tend to see a divide between teams as there are more and more people to wrangle. But I've been really impressed by how our CEO is still able to be really close to the work we do. I love that aspect of working here—that we get to interact with the big guns."

KATIE JOKIPII / Senior manager of mass media and acquisition
"I'm on a DSC softball team, and I'm also part of DSC Cares, which is our group that volunteers in the local community. There are endless opportunities and ways to get involved."

JOSE ZUNIGA / CFO
"We're a very data-driven company. We enjoy working with Michael [Dubin] and the executive team to provide data and insights to inform decision-making. Data has the ability to help steer the conversation."

DANA FLEUR / Senior director of software engineering, front end
"The most challenging part of my job is probably keeping up with the tides. We're a really agile company, and we tend to look back at our wins and our losses and adjust from there. I'm in a position to effect change on that front, so I've got to keep my finger on the pulse."

AMBER HAMEED / VP of information systems
"The office is open and airy, with lots of natural light. It gives you a feeling of being awake and alive when you come in. It makes you gung-ho about getting down to work. And because we're all in the same space, it's always easy to pull people aside and have a conversation. You don't need a meeting room."

WHITNEY BONRUD / Senior marketing manager of content and social media
"We have something called power lunches. There's a Slack algorithm that pairs you up with someone you don't know, and the company foots the bill for the two of you to go to lunch together. It does more than just help you meet someone new, though—you discover ways you can help each other at work."

Be a Client...or a Cofounder?

Not everyone can afford a great manufacturer, distributor, or other big partner. So what then? Here's how three entrepreneurs chose to supercharge their business—by actually bringing their partners into the company.

by JASON FEIFER and STEPHANIE SCHOMER

ADVANTAGE/ Grow faster

Shira Berk

FOUNDER AND CEO/ Goodie Girl

SHIRA BERK HAD SPENT most of her career as a publicist, but in 2010 she started making gluten-free cookies and selling them at her children's preschool. The side hustle took off. Five years later she was operating her brand, Goodie Girl Cookies, out of a commercial kitchen, selling $25,000 in product a year, and she wanted to go bigger—fast. "I didn't want to take the time to raise the money and go on all the interviews with all the incubators," she says. As it happens, a manufacturer, Greg Toufayan, of the bakery company Toufayan, wanted to get into the startup game. So they came up with a plan: Toufayan would invest in Goodie Girl and focus on production, logistics, and financing, and Berk would focus on sales and brand building.

Does Berk miss having full ownership of Goodie Girl? Nope. "It has given me the ability to do things I never thought I'd be able to do," she says. In one year, sales shot to $1 million. "I'm able to go into retailers and say, 'I'm partners with one of the largest bakeries in the U.S.—what do you need?'" Once, Walmart's buyer requested a gluten-free fudge-stripe cookie. Goodie Girl whipped up a batch and sent it to Walmart within weeks. The buyer loved it. Today, Goodie Girl's national sales exceed $10 million.

ADVANTAGE/ Coordinate suppliers

Michelle Cordeiro Grant

FOUNDER AND CEO/ Lively

AFTER YEARS AS a Victoria's Secret exec, Michelle Cordeiro Grant knew one thing for sure: Lingerie is a business built on partnerships. "It can take 25 to 40 suppliers each supplying a component to make one bra," she says. So when she set out to launch Lively, a direct-to-consumer lingerie company that makes stylish but comfortable undergarments, she prioritized building that network quickly.

A meeting with Yossi Nasser, the third-generation CEO of lingerie manufacturer Gelmart, proved serendipitous. He'd spent years circling an idea for a direct-to-consumer business, but he didn't have the experience needed to make a product resonate. Cordeiro Grant saw opportunity. If she could build a relationship with this manufacturer that went beyond just manufacturing, she'd solve some of her biggest problems. Over eight months, they solidified a deal. Gelmart would invest in Lively, incubate the brand, and handle its supply chain. "The Gelmart design and technical teams are constantly traveling the world meeting with new suppliers, so we have access to their ideas," she says. And as Lively has grown more than 100 percent annually, its manufacturing hasn't missed a beat.

ADVANTAGE/ Gain the perfect support

Melissa Ben-Ishay

COFOUNDER AND PRESIDENT/ Baked by Melissa

FEW PEOPLE KNOW Melissa Ben-Ishay's full name, but many millions know her first name: She's the original creator and namesake of Baked by Melissa, a booming New York–based bakery known for its bite-size cupcakes. But the name is misleading, she says; it implies she built it alone. "People always ask me, 'How did you start the company—where did you get your capital?'" she says. "We didn't raise money. I surrounded myself with people who had skills that I didn't."

That includes two important vendors. The first was a caterer, Ben Zion, who had access to influential events throughout the city. The second was a café owner, Danny Omari, who had an available commercial kitchen and retail space. Both loved her cupcakes, but she couldn't pay for either's help. "What money did we have? Here I was just baking product, getting paid, and buying more ingredients," she says. So she offered both men equity and made them cofounders—and they, in turn, became her brand's champions, giving it the reach it needed to pop. Now she sells more than 30 million cupcakes a year. "It's virtually impossible," she says, "to do this alone."

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF GOODIE GIRL (BERK); PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF LIVELY (CORDEIRO GRANT); PHOTO BY WINNIE AU (BEN-ISHAY); PHOTOGRAPH BY SHUTTERSTOCK/KENISHIROTIE (PUZZLE)

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The Low-Risk Road to Success

There's no surefire, guaranteed way to launch a business. But by focusing on these fundamentals, you'll increase your chances of thriving. **by ADAM BORNSTEIN**

Q Before I launch my business, how can I set myself up for success while limiting risk?
—JACK, PORTLAND, OREG.

IF YOU OBSESS about making sure your business won't fail—rather than figuring out how to make it succeed—your focus will be in the wrong place. Fear doesn't get you far in entrepreneurship, so it's best that you keep your eyes on the prize.

Still, you *can* plan to limit downside. That begins by following the first rule of business: Understand your audience. Some researchers believe that more than 20 different factors—from time of day and culture to self-perception and mood—can influence buying behavior. Maybe that's true, but don't drive yourself crazy trying to track it all. You don't need a Ph.D. in psychology to sell a product or service. However, you *do* need to understand the personality of your target buyer. Who are they? How does your company help them? How much money do they make? What trends influence them? What do they read, watch, or listen to on a daily basis?

Invest in finding the answers to these questions. You may learn them through focus groups or surveys, by buying market research, or by other means. It's an investment you want to make.

After that, connect with those customers. I've done this a lot in the past few years, as I've helped launch three separate entities—an annual event, a consulting business, and, more recently, a wellness brand. I'll share a lesson from each.

First, you need to develop your story. When we started our annual entrepreneurial event, two12, we felt like we were the 872nd company to put on a business conference. How could we stand out? Our solution was to focus on solving the problems we saw in the space. We wanted to provide catered guidance and advice for attendees, the ability to meet face-to-face with the speakers, a personalized agenda, and no ticket upsells. Then we translated those solutions into a brand story—talking about how we'd eliminate the gap between where attendees are and where they want to be in business—and built the infrastructure to deliver on that promise. We sell out every year.

Next, focus on executing and learning. I see this at the wellness brand Ladder, where CMO Jack Gray often talks about the danger of any business seeking perfection. When you launch, he says, you don't need a plan to become a billion-dollar company. You only need a plan to be successful for today, tomorrow, and the near future. The point is to stay alive long enough to iterate.

Finally, set clear financial goals. Every company starts with an amount of money it can afford to lose before it goes belly-up, so always be mindful of that number. When you're disciplined about your spending, you're forced to challenge your assumptions about success. That's ultimately a good thing.

For example, when I launched Pen Name Consulting, I made the decision to not invest in a website. I just didn't have the budget. Instead, I invested in the team and the services that would make us a disruptive growth agency. The result: We worked with clients such as Microsoft, Equinox, and Dollar Shave Club before we ever had an online footprint. Eventually, we'd need to play catch-up. (We have a site now!) But forgoing a website helped us keep the lights on and pay our employees, and that's what mattered most.

All of this boils down to one primary goal: Do what you can to see another day. When those days start adding up, it usually means that your business is growing, succeeding, and headed in the right direction.

Adam Bornstein is the founder of Pen Name Consulting, a marketing and branding agency, and the creator of two12, a mentorship experience for entrepreneurs.

Illustration / FEDERICO GASTALDI

IT TAKES TWO

→ DOUBLE OR NOTHING
Jonathan (*left*) and Drew Scott, photographed in New York, December 2018.

Photographs / JAKE CHESSUM

Drew and
Jonathan Scott, the
home-renovating
stars of HGTV's
PROPERTY BROTHERS,
have built an
entertainment empire
out of hard work,
an eye for design,
and a healthy
dose of schmaltz.
And they owe it all to
this belief:
In business, two
heads are
better than one.

by JENNIFER MILLER

Drew and Jonathan Scott were about to enter their first-ever escape room. This was a decade ago, before the rooms—containing a series of puzzles that must be solved before time runs out—had become an international trend. The identical twins and hosts of HGTV's blockbuster series *Property Brothers* were traveling through Budapest, and their mother suggested they try the activity. So the brothers made their way into the basement of a building and apprehensively asked how it works.

"We lock you in; you try to get out," the owner replied, in what Jonathan describes as a menacing Eastern bloc accent.

"We thought for sure we were being kidnapped," he adds.

Instead, the brothers became each other's worst enemy. Drew barked orders at Jonathan, while Jonathan obsessed over small, inconsequential problems. They made it out—but barely.

The ironies here come in sizes small and big. Small: The Scotts' brand is all about creating rooms you'd never want to escape. On their flagship show, *Property Brothers,* they help buyers purchase a fixer-upper and then spend a couple of months on renovation and design. The two are dynamic partners and charmingly goofy, which keeps viewers going until the end of each episode, when there's a big reveal, TV-worthy gasps, and joyful tears. It's a formula that has worked for 13 seasons and counting, and has inspired six equally hot HGTV spin-offs (the latest of which, *Forever Home,* debuts later this year).

And here's the big irony: The brothers may have stumbled over each other in the escape room, but their entire professional success relies upon their strong sense of partnership. By moving together as one, they've been able to build upon opportunities like a bricklayer stacking bricks—turning a real estate business into a TV show, then that one show into six, then using those shows as a platform to launch a production company called Scott Brothers Entertainment, then using *that* platform to build Scott Living, a furniture, decor, and housewares brand that helped their company clear a half-billion dollars in sales in 2018, and now, launching a consumer-facing design platform called Casaza.

> "DON'T LET PENT-UP FRUSTRATION LEAD TO NEGATIVITY THAT CAN DAMAGE YOUR TEAM."

The Scotts say they've done all this by treating their partnership as a gut check. "Sometimes you're running toward your target so hard that you don't stop to reassess," Jonathan says. Together, they're able to slow each other down, take a long, hard look at opportunities, and then make the right choice. Their partnership isn't just about building; it's about stopping to listen.

All of which is why they still go to escape rooms. In fact, they're fixated on them—and they've found their groove. "Now we're the Dream Team," Jonathan says. "We've learned to look at problems in [fresh] ways, and we naturally divide and conquer. It's funny, because it really does tie into what we do with our business."

ON A FRIGID MONDAY in December, the brothers arrive in New York fresh off a five-day Caribbean cruise—dubbed Sailing with the Scotts—in which fans paid to float around the ocean, attend design workshops, and perform karaoke with the brothers. Mere hours after

GROOMER, RACHEL HEVESI

they disembark, they cohost the *Today* show with Hoda Kotb and Kathie Lee Gifford, then head off to a meeting with Sunham Home, a textile company that's helping them with some Scott Living products.

There, they talk through patterns for pillow coverlets and towel thread counts—details they could easily outsource but insist on reviewing. They compromise and make changes in seconds. Drew questions the beading pattern on a pillow, and just as he's about to scrap the design, Jonathan suggests an alternative idea. Drew approves, and they're on to the next.

This is the Scotts' life now: a fast, efficient, high-profile series of opportunities that keeps them constantly together. It's a strange version of their childhood dreams. Though back then, their visions didn't necessarily involve real estate—or, frankly, each other.

Both brothers dreamed of fame. Drew wanted to be an actor; Jonathan, a magician. But in 1996 they weren't really either—just broke high school grads in search of a side hustle. As a way to make cash, they started flipping houses. It seemed like a good plan; the two were handy (they'd learned from their father, who built the family home in High River, south of Calgary), and a provision in Canadian real estate law allowed them to take over someone else's mortgage without personally qualifying. They made $50,000 on their first flip. It was addictive.

Over time, they honed a divide-and-conquer approach. Drew did most of the buying and selling, which suited his gregarious nature. Jonathan, who preferred to work behind the scenes, went back to school for construction and design. They picked up various acting gigs here and there, but the business was becoming too much of a cash cow to deny. In 2004, they made it official by creating Scott Real Estate, a one-stop shop for buying, selling, and renovating.

Just more than a year later, though, Drew felt unsettled. "I remember thinking, *Real estate isn't my only passion,*" he says. He had to give acting another shot, and announced he was moving to what's known as Hollywood North: Vancouver.

Jonathan was blindsided. "When your business partner tells you he's leaving the province, you freak out," he says. "We'd never had this kind of money or success, and you want to move away and do acting?" Jonathan considered his options. He could guilt Drew into staying, or he could support his decision. He settled on the latter. Yes, Drew's leaving might kill the business—or just kill Jonathan, who now had to work 18-hour days—but if Drew stayed and came to resent Jonathan, both the business and the relationship would be in peril. He couldn't risk it.

Drew went to auditions and networked his butt off for nearly a year but had secured just a few small bookings when he realized he'd racked up $140,000 in debt. "It was the first sleepless night I'd ever had," Drew says. As he lay awake, a song by Jim Cuddy came on the radio: "Pull Me Through." Drew realized he already knew how to pull himself out of this situation, and thought of his brother and their real estate business. "I went back to my roots, " he says.

That very night, Jonathan received an email from his brother asking for Scott Real Estate's marketing template. "That's when I knew," Jonathan says. "He's back." Acting, it seemed, was an ambition of the past. Whatever came next they would do as a team.

> "GET OUT OF YOUR EMPLOYEES' WAY, BUT LET THEM KNOW YOU'RE THERE: TEXT ME, EMAIL ME, ASK ME."

TO THEIR SURPRISE, Drew's failed Vancouver expedition ended up being a huge win for the Scotts' growing business. Those costly dinners and networking events left him with a fresh Rolodex of valuable contacts that allowed Scott Real Estate to expand to a new province—and their new clients' proximity to the entertainment industry got the brothers wondering if they could merge their old dreams with their new success.

They started pitching a cohosted renovation show. Despite promising meetings, production companies passed. Finally, they found a taker: Cineflix, a midsize Canadian production house that developed the idea for *Property Brothers* and sold it to Canada's W Network after a female exec's feedback: "Two

young hot guys in tight jeans, renovating? Sold." The show debuted in 2010 with strong ratings, HGTV picked it up in the U.S., and viewership skyrocketed. (Today, the majority of their audience is female.)

Some of what came next was the natural extension of having a hit TV show—the production company, the retail opportunities, and, frankly, the money. "There are probably less than 100 actors who make more than we do across our empire," Jonathan says, surprised at how things turned out. "We thought it was the bee's knees to be a successful actor, but pursuing that would have never opened up this world to us."

To juggle it all, they share responsibilities fluidly. Drew has more downtime during filming, so he'll work on Scott Living while Jonathan is on set. "Between shots, we're always on email," Jonathan says. "Our team knows that we divide and conquer; if Drew has responded [to an email], I don't." The success of that system has kept them keenly aware of the importance of partnerships. They're better together—and sometimes, better with others as well.

Over nine years of making TV, Drew and Jonathan have come to rely on the scores of local contractors and designers they work with as they film in cities throughout North America. As a result, those entrepreneurs' profiles have risen. And *that,* the Scotts realized, created a new opportunity worth capitalizing on.

In October, the Scotts launched a consumer-facing design platform called Casaza. It showcases rooms designed by people the brothers have personally vetted. Every item is hand-selected and available for purchase. Eventually, the Scotts say, users will be able to hire the site's featured designers along with local "Casaza pros" who will come to someone's house for measurements, while Casaza will refer contractors to do the work. Unlike other home sites that charge designers for viewer eyeballs, Casaza showcases them free of charge.

Featured talent is already seeing results. Jessica Davis is a Nashville-based designer whose firm has been featured on *Property Brothers* six times. She sees Casaza as a way to further legitimize her work. "Clearly, if these very successful professionals are willing to work with me, I might have an idea about this industry," she says.

Keia McSwain feels similarly. She's the owner of Denver-based firm Kimberly + Cameron, as well as president of the Black Interior Designers Network. Casaza, she says, is one of the few platforms that seems explicitly interested in showcasing minority designers. "Who else has reached out to us as far as being inclusive?" she says. "Nobody." The site has already brought her new clients and business partners. "They've given me confirmation and affirmation. With them it's less about the 'say' and more about the 'do'."

The Scotts love hearing feedback like that. At this point, the value of partnerships just feels like a truism to them. "We want our company to be the easiest relationship anyone's ever had," Drew says. "A lot of talent on shows are high-maintenance jerks. At the end of the day, people want to work with who they like. We have the same thing between us."

In an hours-long interview that stretched throughout their busy New York day—before and during breaks at the *Today* show, through their time at the textiles company—they were pressed repeatedly about the potential fault lines of their partnership. But the honest answer, they say, is that there's no drama to speak of. They faced it already; they saw what it was like working solo and then what blossomed when they were together.

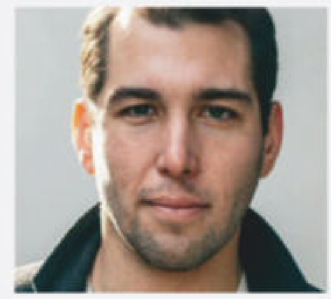
"There is never one defined right or wrong brother," Drew says. "We each have our individual truths. But together we're the better truth." E

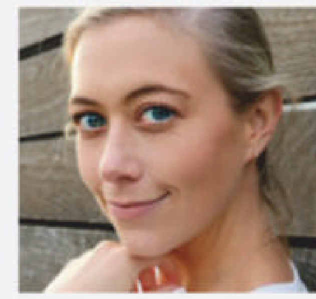
Jennifer Miller is a writer living in New York. Her latest novel is Mr. Nice Guy.

FREE ADVICE

from the **PROPERTY BROTHERS**

The Scotts share their best tips on working together (and staying sane) with two *Entrepreneur* readers.





There's no way around it: Business is personal—especially when your cofounder is a sibling, a spouse, or a close friend. **Dean Praetorius** and **Kiki Von Glinow** (*pictured above*) know this all too well as the husband-and-wife founders of Brooklyn-based digital consultancy Toast Media Group. The couple told *Entrepreneur* that they're refining how they work together, so we put them on the phone with Jonathan and Drew Scott to talk about partnership best practices, mutual respect, and learning to let go.

KIKI: So nice to meet you guys. We always jump at the chance to get free advice, so this is great. Diving in: How do you give each other feedback that's constructive and respectful?

DREW: We call it a no-B.S. policy. Just get it out. Don't let pent-up frustration lead to negativity that can damage your team. Try to keep emotion out of it—these are business decisions.

JONATHAN: It's easy for Drew because he has no emotions that we're aware of. We call him the robot.

KIKI: That's Dean, too! But within that no-B.S. policy, what's the structure? Is it just full transparency all the time?

DREW: Never be aggressive with communication. I can say anything to Jonathan; we've always had our own language. But if I'm that direct with anyone else, it comes across as aggressive. I've learned that I need to smooth out my communications with other people.

KIKI: We very much have our own language when it comes to our personal life, so we're now developing that professional language with each other.

JONATHAN: The more intimately you know someone, the more you can lose respect for their role. It's important to respect that person the same way you would respect an executive from another company. If you don't like an idea they have, don't say, "That's a dumb effing idea!" Propose a solution instead of a dead end.

KIKI: Make it constructive rather than dwelling on what's wrong.

JONATHAN: Right. And remember, there are a million right ways to do things. Drew might do something differently than I would have, but the outcome will be the same—the job gets done. Don't second-guess each other, because that can be damaging.

DEAN: We have a lot of overlapping skill sets. How do you determine who should be the lead on a project?

DREW: We're the same way. For a while, we just divvied up tasks, but that back and forth can get disorganized, especially for your team. Now if something is more design-based, we let Jonathan lead the charge. So while he's doing all the designs for *Property Brothers,* I'll be focused on production.

JONATHAN: The most important thing is consistency for the third parties you're dealing with. However, make sure you give yourselves the space to have new experiences and keep learning.

KIKI: That's a good point—especially in digital marketing, everything is always changing, so we both need to keep evolving.

JONATHAN: You need to be prepared to take calculated risks, fail fast, and fix quickly.

DREW: And with that in mind, keep each other up to date. We have regular check-ins so we know where a project is. And listen to each other—just because you're leading a project doesn't mean you can't utilize tips from someone else. That kind of collaboration has helped us grow.

KIKI: One of our biggest mistakes so far has been treating those touch-bases as second fiddle to our client and team interactions.

DREW: My wife and I used to struggle with this because we work together—she's a creative director at Scott Brothers Global. Those check-ins would end up being at the end of the day, just when we should be shutting down from work. I have the bad habit of checking emails before I go to bed. But you've got to make yourself put it down and focus on what matters, which for us is family. Deal with it in the morning.

JONATHAN: We create a lot of our own chaos, right? There are so many calls and emails. But a lot of the buzzing we do on a day-to-day basis, I bet 40 percent isn't accomplishing anything. Focus on the stuff that moves the needle.

KIKI: You're totally right.

DEAN: Especially with clients.

JONATHAN: You have to get your clients to respect your time. If you tell them you're available day and night, guess what? They'll call you day and night. Use the illusion of choice. Tell them you're available Tuesday at 4 or Wednesday at 3. They'll think, *Wow, this is a busy company!*

DEAN: So Kiki and I are a partnership right now, but we're growing. How do you take that leap?

DREW: Jonathan and I are particular about how things are done. To expand to a place where we're not the ones pitching and we're not the ones in meetings all the time, that was tough. But you have to give other people that chance. When we first started bringing on employees, I micromanaged, and it took me a long time to realize how annoying that was.

JONATHAN: Get out of your employees' way, but let them know you're there. I always say, before you spend 10 hours trying to figure something out, just text me, email me, ask me. Maybe I can save you six of those 10 hours.

DEAN: We often wonder, should we tell clients that we're married? It's a funny point to make sometimes.

DREW: My wife and I have talked about that. In a meeting, do I introduce her as my wife or as our creative director? But it's an amazing thing to prove how well you work together. You have a professional aesthetic and you've worked with impressive brands. Paired with your synergy as business partners and as a married couple? Clients will love that.

JONATHAN: I'm a strong believer in being proud of your dynamic. Growing a brand together is a great thing, and people will respect that.

There's more Property Brothers! To hear their full conversation with Kiki and Dean, listen to the February 25 episode of our podcast Problem Solvers *on iTunes or wherever you get your podcasts.*

THE
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What happens when you blow off the traditional wisdom of starting a business? Take it from these 11 entrepreneurs: THINGS CAN WORK OUT EVEN BETTER.

THE RULE I BROKE

There's an old saying that floats around the internet, always popping up in those collections of inspirational phrases: "Learn the rules like a pro so you can break them like an artist." Did Pablo Picasso say it? The Dalai Lama? Alexander McQueen? All have been cited as the source, but whatever—its origin doesn't matter. It endures because it's true.

Entrepreneurs are rule breakers, too, but the smartest among us know that you don't go smashing windows *just because*. We don't break rules for the fun of it. We break rules when we understand the systems that created those rules—and then, with careful thought and steely resolve, we can see bending that system to our will. We learned the rules. We know what we're doing. And that's why, when the time is right, we don't follow them.

On the following pages, we offer a celebration of rule breakers. And unlike that quote above with the cloudy origin, these words of inspiration are fully attributable: Eleven entrepreneurs tell us how they built their businesses by ditching the old ways. Learn from them—and then, when you see fit, go do something else entirely.

Chris Stang

COFOUNDER AND CEO/ The Infatuation
RULE BROKEN/ Follow what your industry does

In 2014, when most digital publishers knew only one way to build an audience, Chris Stang and his cofounder, Andrew Steinthal, chose a very different path: They started sending text messages.

The guys had left their music-industry marketing and PR jobs to launch a digital restaurant guide called The Infatuation. The conventional content playbook at the time called for building a big Facebook audience, then flooding it with content. Facebook, after all, drove most content sites' traffic. "That seemed to be a very bad way to build a resource for people," Stang says. The guys didn't want to give Facebook that much control over their audience, and they worried they wouldn't learn much about their users based on those clicks.

What to do instead? Eventually, they launched a product called Text Rex. Users could text a number with a restaurant question ("Where can I take my wife for Italian in the East Village?") and an Infatuation staffer would reply with a recommendation. Users' questions turned out to be invaluable insights. Now The Infatuation knew exactly what people wanted and could build content to match. "It made us very good at serving the community with recommendations, and it also made us rank much higher in search results," Stang says. Today, Facebook's algorithm change has hurt all publishers' traffic, and less than 4 percent of The Infatuation's traffic comes from Facebook—but the brand has expanded to 35 cities and bought Zagat, the once dominant restaurant-recommendation brand. "Facebook can change their algorithm all they want," Stang says. "We'll just keep doing what we do." **—JASON FEIFER**

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE INFATUATION

Jenny Fleiss

COFOUNDER AND CEO / Jetblack (and previously, cofounder, Rent the Runway)
RULE BROKEN/ Have a detailed business plan

Q & A

When cofounders Jenn Hyman and Jenny Fleiss began fund-raising for Rent the Runway back in 2009, they would have horrified any MBA professor—because they didn't have a formal business plan. No problem: To date, their dress-rental service has raised more than $210 million in venture capital. That success prompted Fleiss to take a similar freewheeling approach to her next venture, Jetblack, a mobile digital shopping service that launched last June within Store No. 8, Walmart's incubation arm. Planning is overrated, explains Fleiss.

What's wrong with writing out a long-term strategy?
The mistake of a business plan is that it can make you less nimble. You're not going to have everything figured out from day one, and you might be less inclined to tweak or change aspects of your business, because you've already locked into your model.

How do you raise money without a business plan?
When Jenn and I started working on Rent the Runway, we purchased some dresses and launched a pop-up where we could collect data and do video interviews. The first woman who walked in put on a gold-sequined dress, twirled around, and said, "I look hot." That's the most powerful piece of our business, and with video, we were able to show that in ways male VCs otherwise couldn't have related to. Second, gathering data was a testament to our hustle. That was game-changing in our ability to fund-raise.

How did you explain the profit model?
I've seen plans that are 60 or 80 pages. We had a lean PowerPoint deck with about 15 slides. It had our preliminary financial model, unit economics, a few other things. But we edited them on the fly. It was a living, breathing process.

Did your strategy change with Jetblack?
Not much. We began by talking to consumers. There still isn't a business-plan document. **—CLINT CARTER**

Ajeet Singh

COFOUNDER/ ThoughtSpot
RULE BROKEN/ With founders, two is company, three's a crowd

Ajeet Singh and his cofounder, Amit Prakash, refused to settle for mid-level engineers. To build ThoughtSpot, an ambitious AI-powered analytics platform with Google-like searchability, they'd need industry-leading talent across a variety of fields. Singh's background is in launching enterprise software, and Prakash is a machine-learning expert. In addition they needed top minds in search infrastructure, cluster management, business intelligence, and more. "It was all about recruiting the best people in the world," says Singh.

The problem? "These are people who are making $1 million to $2 million a year," he says. To help incentivize top talent to join the new, still unproven venture, Singh and Prakash offered company ownership and a cofounder title. Over six months in 2012, Singh interviewed 50 to 60 people and took on five of them, so by the time he was done, he'd assembled a team of seven cofounders.

ThoughtSpot is now worth more than $1 billion. "A large cofounding team can be a problem," says Singh. "But we know when to defer to each other, and when we do disagree, we do it with respect." **—C.C.**

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF JETBLACK (JENNY FLEISS) PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THOUGHTSPOT (AJEET SINGH)

Charlotte Cho

COFOUNDER/ Soko Glam and Then I Met You
RULE BROKEN/ Leverage your community for sales

Charlotte Cho is considered *the* authority on Korean beauty products, which is a very valuable thing to know about. The industry is enormous, and her company, the e-commerce marketplace Soko Glam (and its associated blog, *The Klog*), is on track to hit $100 million in revenue this year. In sum, Cho and her company are Korean-beauty-industry hit-makers.

But in 2018, when Cho launched her own skincare line, called Then I Met You, she had one rule: It would *not* be sold on Soko Glam. Which is to say, she wouldn't use the massive sales platform she built to support her new company. Plenty of people told her she was crazy, but she believed in an idea bigger than sales: authenticity. The skincare line isn't *technically* a Korean beauty product (the company is U.S.-based), and she didn't want her Soko Glam audience to feel deceived. "Then I Met You is built on the Korean concept of *jeong*, which is a deep, emotional connection that forms over time," Cho says. "It's sentimental. I want the brand to live on its own and find its community, rather than get lost on Soko Glam."

Instead, she paved a path for her new brand. She leveraged existing relationships with influencers, which helped Then I Met You collect more than 10,000 Instagram followers before it even launched. When it did debut, sales were brisk...and within 24 hours, multiple retailers had approached Cho about distribution. She turned them down. "We're starting a conversation with our customer," she says. "It's important that we remain in control of that conversation." **—STEPHANIE SCHOMER**

Carlos Watson

FOUNDER AND CEO/ OZY
RULE BROKEN/ Stick to the schedule

Carlos Watson lets no calendar hold him down. "As the founder of a young company, I know how hard and special it is to get the right people in the room," says Watson, a former MSNBC news anchor whose company, OZY Media, has become known for its massive annual OZY Fest in New York and its growing stable of TV shows. "When that happens, you can't be so tied to your schedule that you're afraid to go deep." With our busy days, he says, people often don't give great ideas the focus and attention they deserve—so if he's on an important roll with someone, he says, he'll sometimes order in food and treat the moment like an intellectual hackathon. As a result, he's moving his calendar around on the fly every day (including, let it be said, the day of his original interview with *Entrepreneur*!). "That's not always easy, and that's not always pretty, but it's the only way to get something to a full place of development," he says. "Ignore your schedule and win the moment." **—J.F.**

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THEN I MET YOU (CHARLOTTE CHO) PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF OZY (CARLOS WATSON)

Andrew Ofstad

COFOUNDER/ Airtable
RULE BROKEN/ Just get out an MVP—quick, quick!

Q & A

The prevailing wisdom in Silicon Valley is that by moving fast to launch a minimum viable product (MVP), you can generate buzz, harvest feedback from customers, and begin working out the kinks in your idea. Airtable took a slower approach. Rather than rush to market, the company spent three years developing the collaborative workflow software that finally launched in 2015. And the wait was worth it: Last year the company hit $20 million in revenue and raised $100 million in Series C funding. Andrew Ofstad, one of the cofounders, explains the wait.

Why the long development period?
There's a lot of overhead that comes with customers. Once you launch a product, you have to grow the support team, pay for marketing, and scale your servers. We wanted to focus on the product-and-engineering side instead. Also, the cost for getting it wrong was high for us, because people would be using our product for their core business workflows. If we mess up and lose somebody's data, or we're down for two hours, that could lose a ton of business for somebody.

Was there pushback from your investors?
There was definitely some pressure. They were like, "Maybe you should hire some more people or launch the product and spend on marketing?" But we would explain our rationale, and they would ease up. Ultimately we were lucky, because our investors trusted us.

Is the lesson that other companies should incubate their products longer?
When I was a product manager at Google, I was measured by the number of launches I did. The thinking was, *Let's launch something, get feedback, and see where we go from there.* I think that works for simple products where the MVP isn't technically challenging, or if you're just trying to figure out a market. But if you have a long-term vision, and you're convinced that vision will bring value, then it's definitely worth taking your time. **—C.C.**

Jeff Raider

COFOUNDER/ Harry's
RULE BROKEN/ Launch light and nimble

In 2013, just after launching their men's mail-order shaving-supply company, Harry's cofounders Jeff Raider and Andy Katz-Mayfield began plotting to buy the 93-year-old German factory that produced their razor cartridges.

The investment would cost $100 million. But at just a month in, Harry's sales were devouring their initial inventory—the founders had to order more blades, fast. So they decided to swing big. "We saw an opportunity," says Raider. "We could build a new kind of company in the space," one that could grow to meet demand and innovate along the way. "So, as we learned about our customers, we could quickly incorporate their needs into the manufacturing process," he says.

The cofounders raised the money, bought the factory, and initiated expansion efforts that more than doubled their production footprint. Did the gamble work? It seems so: In 2016, Target began carrying Harry's products, and last year the company launched a women's shaving line called Flamingo. And the factory is still growing. "We just bought a piece of land," says Raider. "We're going to build another [manufacturing] structure." **—C.C.**

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF HARRY'S INC. (JEFF RAIDER) PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF AIRTABLE (ANDREW OFSTAD)

THE RULE I BROKE

Brian Kelly

FOUNDER AND CEO/ The Points Guy
RULE BROKEN/ Hide the guts of your business from your customers

How does a company make money? It can be a tricky question if you collect and sell data without consumers' knowledge, or benefit in other ways that consumers never see. That's why, back in 2011, the question gave Brian Kelly a lot of heartache.

At the time, he had a little blog about how to optimize credit card points and frequent-flier miles. It attracted a small and loyal following but barely any advertising revenue. A friend suggested that Kelly start using credit card companies' affiliate links instead: If Kelly wrote about a card and linked to it, and a reader followed that link and signed up, Kelly would get a kickback. He was nervous. "I was wary of becoming the snake-oil salesman," Kelly says. Would readers trust him if they knew he profited from his recommendations?

He decided to try it, but with transparency; he explained the affiliate links at the top of every post. Some readers complained, but most didn't care. And Kelly quickly saw the upside. The affiliate money helped him quit his job to run the site full-time, and he sold it to Bankrate a year later. Now he oversees a staff of 35 writers that reach 8.8 million readers a month, and the affiliate deals have expanded into full-on launch campaigns with major cards. "It's so lucrative, and it allows us to focus on what we do," he says.

From all this, Kelly has taken a lesson: If you trust your users, they'll trust you back. Sure, the occasional person still complains about the affiliate deals, but, he says, "I don't even need to respond anymore. An army of readers will say, 'Duh; that's the whole point. But we're smart and we can decide what's right for us.'" **—J.F.**

Payal Kadakia

FOUNDER/ ClassPass
RULE BROKEN/ Launch with a completed product

Q&A

ClassPass, the platform that lets members automatically book a variety of fitness classes, operates in more than 80 cities around the world, has 400 employees, and has raised $255 million to date. But when it launched in 2013, it intentionally hadn't developed the technology to manage these bookings—leading to internal chaos. Why? Founder Payal Kadakia explains.

Why put the cart before the horse?
Early versions of our products used sophisticated technology. But they didn't address our customers' needs [which made the tech build-out worthless]. So when we launched ClassPass, I was determined to be absolutely positive we were providing a product people really wanted.

At first you had to manually book some 20,000 reservations?
There were less than 10 of us, practically living on almonds, trying to get this off the ground! But launching without a fully automated back end allowed us to watch customers' behavior. Once we knew precisely what to build, we did. **—LIZ BRODY**

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE POINTS GUY (BRIAN KELLY) PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF ALMOND BOARD OF CALIFORNIA (PAYAL KADAKIA)

Brooklyn Decker

COFOUNDER/ Finery
RULE BROKEN/ Where others failed, you might, too

Q & A

The elevator pitch is "The *Clueless* closet on steroids" or (for the clueless about *Clueless*) "Spotify for your clothes." We're talking about Finery, the new wardrobe app that records and helps style everything you own on your phone, and points out what you're missing. It has raised $7 million and counts hundreds of thousands of users. Model, actress, and Finery cofounder Brooklyn Decker explains why her startup will succeed where many have failed.

When you launched in 2017, didn't you look at the market and think: *Maybe women just don't want this*?
That was definitely, of course, a fear of ours. But a lot of those platforms were ahead of their time. They launched before you had Spotify on your phone, your thermostat on your phone, your financing, travel booking, baby monitor—everything mobile. Clothing was the last frontier, and it was only a matter of time before someone else did it. So we thought our timing was right.

What makes you think you'll succeed?
The companies that came before us were prohibitively expensive and required manual entry—taking photos and inputting all the data about each piece. Finery is fully automated. It's free now, but we will introduce a reasonable subscription model soon. The majority of our users have said they would pay for our services.

Didn't you meet your cofounder, Whitney Casey, in a rather unusual way?
Oh, well, yes. We met in Palm Springs at a girls' margarita weekend. Whitney brought costumes. I was a bottle of tequila, and she was the cactus. Yep, that's how it all started. —L.B.

PHOTOGRAPH BY KRISTEN KILPATRICK (BROOKLYN DECKER) PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF RSE (MATT HIGGINS)

Matt Higgins

COFOUNDER AND CEO/ RSE Ventures
RULE BROKEN/ Listen to the doubters

Matt Higgins has always been full of crazy ideas. But to his regret, many have been shot down by those he's worked with. (Ask him about the kids' mittens subscription service.) So after cofounding the private investment firm RSE Ventures, with a portfolio that includes the International Champions Cup and Momofuku, he came up with a rule: "Dreams need a lot of TLC in the early days so they have a chance to take hold," he says. "So I always surround myself with only optimistic, intelligent people with subject-matter expertise." Once you have at least 10 positive conversations about the idea, he says, you can bring in the naysayers to pressure-test it.

Case study: A guy named Nicholas Horbaczewski walked into Higgins' office with a PowerPoint about drone racing. Back then, people were just flying the things in parks. But Higgins could see this had all the hallmarks of a marketable sport. Using his rule and avoiding the skeptics, he says, "RSE took the leap. We were the first investor in the sport. Three years later, it's a global sport carried on ESPN, broadcast around the world in 75 countries, and the company we invested in, Drone Racing League, is making the fastest drones in the world." —L.B.

THE SUPREME ZEN OF LOVING YOUR HATERS

In the years since founding Moon Juice, **AMANDA CHANTAL BACON** has been laughed at, ridiculed, and troll-mobbed more than most entrepreneurs will be in a lifetime. Then she used it all to grow her company.

by LIZ BRODY

A January chill tunnels through the streets of Manhattan as Amanda Chantal Bacon walks into ABC Kitchen early for lunch with investors, shaking off Los Angeles jet lag and her most recent troll. Before she got on the plane, the 35-year-old founder of Moon Juice says, she spotted a comment on the company Instagram: "This person was cursing, 'I don't like your content anymore. I used to buy you; now I don't. Get your *shit* together, Amanda Chantal Bacon.'"

She's thinking about it still, but she's not stuck on it. Bacon is, in the booming parallel universe of alternative medicine–slash–wellness that's been defined by Gwyneth Paltrow's Goop, one of the most visible stars outside of Paltrow herself. And she has other things on her mind. Investors to check in with. Stores to visit. Plus, she volunteers, "My boobs are fantastic!" (She's a radiant four months pregnant.)

As an entrepreneur, Bacon is as offbeat as the herbal supplements her buzzy company makes, a medley of exotic ingredients that have led to $20 million in annual sales, and placements in Sephora, Nordstrom, and Urban Outfitters. For her, talk of trolls, money, and boobs over ginger soup is business as usual—because her success (and celebrity) seems to stem from an ability to combine retail savvy with unabashed oversharing.

Sitting at lunch, cozied up in a baggy, faux-mothy sweater that brings out her lapis eyes, Bacon shows a confidence honed from years of blowing off haters. One might even say she's fed them fodder. This is a founder who describes her company as "a cosmic beacon." She drops astrological references ("It's probably my Scorpio rising") as easily as she talks capitalization and revenue. Her face appears constantly in the press. Her wedding cake (baked with Sex Dust, one of her products) became a news story. When someone stole a giant pink crystal from one of her stores, she begged for its return on Instagram and chided: "You do not want the energy of a stolen crystal, please trust me!"—which, of course, got more than 890 likes.

But while Moon Juice has perked up the staid domain of herbal remedies with a playful infusion of a haute woo-woo and wacky cool, the backlash has been cruel and, at times, very personal; Bacon has been accused of being pretentious, narcissistic, in a bubble, and far worse. She has also been overlooked as a businesswoman who has built a strong company. And to her own personal great shock, all of this has given her a resiliency she didn't realize she had. Her skin has grown as thick as it is glowing.

Got something to say? she asks. *Bring it.*

The origins of Moon Juice trace back to when Bacon was a girl hiding among the fabric rolls of Betsey Johnson, waiting for her mother, who was CEO of the iconic fashion brand, to finish work. In those days, Bacon struggled with chronic respiratory problems, for which doctors stuffed her with medications that didn't help. So at age five, her mom took her to a practitioner of Ayurveda, a system of medicine with roots in ancient India that emphasizes diet, breathing, and herbal remedies. He said the fix was simple: Cut sugar, wheat, and dairy from her diet. It was the '80s. There was no gluten-free section at the grocery, no almond milk in the deli. But she got creative, and the diet worked. "The change was radical," says Bacon.

In her teenage years, she did teenage things: She ditched the restrictions of her youth and loaded up on candy, cigarettes, and pot. She also ditched college to travel the world, and then, in her 20s, she joined the food industry—attending the New England Culinary Institute in Vermont and landing a job running the line at Lucques, a fine-dining restaurant in Los Angeles. But her health deteriorated. She struggled with crippling allergies and what would later be diagnosed as Hashimoto's, an autoimmune disease. Then she remembered her old Ayurvedic diet and went on a three-week green-juice cleanse. "There was a huge shift in my mood, in my energy, in my libido," she says. "I was so excited, so pumped."

"I THOUGHT, OH MY GOD. AM I OK? BUT IT WAS THE ODDEST THING—I JUST DIDN'T CARE."

Now she had found a purpose: The diet would direct her life. "I wanted to tell everyone, 'You guys; it's crazy. I have felt like shit for so long,'" she says. "I was Tom Cruise jumping on Oprah's couch."

Bacon started studying what are known as adaptogens—substances in plants and fungi said to help mitigate the effects of stress on the body—and putting them in nut milk and smoothies. The drinks were just for her, but they became so time-consuming to make that she joked she might as well open a juice shop. "I kept repeating the joke," says Bacon, "and it started to seem like a really good idea." She crunched the numbers and decided she could open with $150,000. Her mother was skeptical but loaned her the money. And Bacon got to work.

This was early 2011 and ahead of the juice-shop curve. "Nobody wanted a $9 bitter green juice," says Bacon. "Nobody wanted a $12 smoothie that didn't have a frozen banana in it." And certainly, nobody had heard of the weird-sounding ingredients Bacon had organized her life around and now wanted to evangelize to the masses. But she was Tom Cruise on the couch, and she hurled herself into sourcing ingredients, buying equipment, scouting locations. She signed a lease on a 500-square-foot space in nearby Venice for less than $2,000 a month, and within days—surprise!—discovered she was six weeks pregnant. "I was not married. I was not in a stable or happy relationship. And I didn't know what I had gotten myself into," she says. "Starting a business at 27 is daunting enough, but to also know you're going to be a single mother?"

What happened next was the fortune of a perfectly timed product-market fit, as the wellness movement was bubbling up, with Los Angeles as one of its centers. On January 23, 2012, Bacon opened her shop with counter staff she hired off Craigslist and her four-month-old son, Rohan, in tow. She named the place Moon Juice and sold drinks along with herbal blends she packaged in jars that looked meant for face cream. Each blend, a powdered mixture of dried ingredients she called "dust," carried an evocative name like Sex Dust or Brain Dust, and promised to improve a portion of the user's life (say, their libido or their thinking power). That day she opened, locals arrived out of curiosity. Japanese tourists snapped photos. The shop sold out before closing. And the fast popularity would help fuel her to quickly open two more stores.

But the real game-changer, it would seem, was the rise of Bacon's personal profile. Before long, she made an appearance on Goop.com—photographed inches from Gwyneth Paltrow, as the two women looked hard at work making something called "sex bark." ("Moon

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF MOON JUICE

Juice is magic," the site would declare.) Soon Bacon was something of an L.A. celebrity, and she started receiving national press, including a piece in *Elle* in which she detailed what she ate in a day. It all seemed fun and harmless. But then, nine months after the *Elle* piece ran, everything went sideways.

In early February 2016, Bacon was driving to her son's school to pick him up when she noticed a cluster of moms outside. "They were whispering, and they were definitely whispering about me," she says. "Then my phone started blowing up with people texting, 'Have you seen this?' 'You all right?' I was like, *What is going on?*"

Bacon got her son into the Prius and opened a YouTube link someone had sent. As she hit "play" on a video that was fast on its way to more than a million Facebook views, a bearded dude with a hairy chest filled the screen and, in the most mocking precious patois, began impersonating her. "I'm Amanda Chantal Bacon, and I invented Moon Juice," he said. Then he went on to read most of the *Elle* food diary.

The article had been nothing more than a long series of quotes from Bacon, in which she rattles off what she consumes every day. At 8 A.M., for example, she explains that she drinks a chi in the car, which "contains more than 25 grams of plant protein, thanks to vanilla mushroom protein and stone-ground almond butter, and also has the super endocrine, brain, immunity, and libido-boosting powers of Brain Dust, cordyceps, reishi, maca, and Shilajit resin." It goes on like that, every few hours detailing another elaborate grouping. She'd written it in a dash, just one more item on her to-do list—and it hadn't occurred to her that, to anyone outside her wellness community, this diet seemed a kind of self-parody.

Somehow, after nine months of quietly sitting on the internet, the piece had found an unintended audience—and they were mocking it, condemning it, and had plenty to say about her personally. Bacon has always been a hypersensitive person, she says, and so as she watched this video in the car, she began to also watch herself for a response. "And there was this sudden moment like: *Oh my God. Am I going to cry? Get angry? Am I going to shut down? Am I OK? What's going to happen?*

"But then it was the oddest thing," she says. "I just didn't care." It felt like being in freefall when the parachute opens: calm, safe, the destination inevitable. "For some reason, I didn't take it personally—which I have to tell you, truly, was a shock."

Instead, she saw it through the lens of an entrepreneur. The viral reaction was also a lot of honest feedback. It was data.

She drove home and, emboldened, began reading everything. She was trending on Twitter, with some implying that her son needed to be saved from this insane woman. "And there was a whole thread that I wouldn't be a single mother if I had given steak to my baby daddy so his dick could get hard," Bacon says.

There was also a lot of focus on the cost of her products. "To stock up for her *pre-breakfast*," snarked one writer on *The Frisky*, "it costs almost as much as it does for my husband and I to feed ourselves for an entire month." A *Jezebel* piece titled "I Have Never Heard of, Much Less Eaten, Any of the Foods in This Juice Lady's Diary" was even less kind. And the bearded dude on YouTube had kept a running tally of costs on his video, so that every time he read one of the ingredients that Bacon had consumed, a ka-chinging cash register added its full-unit price to a tally until it rested at $1,210.97. Good points, she realized: Moon Juice seemed elitist. It felt unattainable, and it sounded disgusting (and maybe like snake oil). And who was she to be delivering health advice? She came off like a spaced-out, privileged hippie chick. "At the heart of it all, they were really good questions," she says. "And questions I wanted to answer. In a weird way it actually reinvigorated and inspired me."

The other thing she noticed? Her company's website had crashed. Moon Juice sales were through the roof—and the spike didn't let up, leading employees to work double shifts for the next four months to get product out the door. "The whole thing," Bacon says, "pushed us to grow to the next phase."

→ JUICE BREAK Bacon in one of her Moon Juice shops, on Melrose Avenue, Los Angeles.

Bacon's business had begun with nut milks and juices, and so, as she contemplated how to scale, she first thought to mass-produce the drinks. But after some testing, she abandoned the effort. Shelf-stable versions of her drinks tasted only so-so, and Bacon didn't want to devalue her brand that way. So she shifted her focus to the dusts, those jarred herbal powders. "The dusts had seemed far-out when I first started selling them in the shops, a niche thing," she says. But by 2016, they were catching on—doing well in the stores and online. Here, she realized, was a bigger opportunity: She could build on them and target stressed-out consumers across America.

To make this happen, Bacon needed cash. And as it turned out, being internet-famous did not hurt her chances. "We actually begged for an introduction," says Amanda Eilian, cofounder of Able, an investment fund with a portfolio that includes The Wing, Goop, and Maven. "Pioneers get arrows in their backs, and Amanda is a pioneer." She and her partner, Lisa Blau, closed their first investment in December 2016. (They declined to share specifics, but Blau says their average initial check size is $200,000.) In total, Bacon raised more than $7 million.

Funds in hand, Bacon hunkered down to build a team and develop new products. Along the way, she started to address some of the questions that had come up from the *Elle* backlash, like complaints about Moon Juice being expensive. She was making dusts out of organic ingredients, which kept costs high, but she saw two ways to improve: She could bring down other costs, like in packaging and shipping. She could also start a more intentional conversation with her consumers about the value they get for their money, and get them to compare what they spent on highlights and manicures against a $38 jar of adaptogenic herbs.

Then it was time to go for the jugular. Rather than limit herself to the wellness market, she decided to expand into beauty, which can be less price-sensitive. Customers had been asking for it, and, bottom line, gorgeous looks are an easier sell than stress reduction. Bacon figured she would create a line of topical products and, from there, lead customers into the idea that how you look starts with what you put in your body—developing edible dusts and supplements that claim to improve skin, complexion, and more. But how and where to sell these products? That decision would address head-on much of the criticism she'd gotten about being in a Hollywood bubble. "It was a wakeup call that Moon Juice can't just be little boutiques in New York and L.A. and celebrities," she says. "My end goal was to help as many people as I can. And the people who come through the doors of Sephora and Nordstrom, that's not an elitist crowd."

In 2016, Bacon had never set foot in a Sephora—she'd seen it, frankly, as "the most toxic place on Earth." But she now realized it was exactly where she needed to be. Buyers at the chain had been watching her, too, as they'd seen their customers becoming more interested in "ingestible beauty." "We met with Amanda, and we were totally sold on the brand," says Priya Venkatesh, senior vice president of merchandising, skincare, and hair at Sephora. "Everything from the packaging to the formulas to the brand story was alluring to the customer; it was a new perspective, and it was exciting."

A year and a half after surviving the internet hailstorm, Moon Juice launched on Sephora.com, followed by the stores. Today the chain carries 15 Moon Juice products, both online and in the stores, including an exclusive adaptogenic exfoliant and plumping jelly serum. Nordstrom, Urban Outfitters, and boutique stores around the country also carry the brand. Most exciting for Bacon is her new product SuperYou, Moon Juice's first vitamin-like capsule. It promises to lower stress, and Bacon sees it as a gateway to a whole kingdom of other wellness supplements. Unlike the dusts and juices, she figures, everyone takes pills.

Moon Juice may be a particularly famous herbal supplement, but it's a small player in a thriving industry. Herbal products are one of the fastest-growing segments of the country's $31 billion supplement industry, according to IBISWorld, which predicts an increase to $33.6 billion over the next four years. And any entrepreneur in the industry will be bedeviled by this question: *But does your product work?*

Compared with pharmaceutical drugs, supplements are poorly regulated. There's no requirement to prove they work (though there are limits on what benefits they can claim to have), and it's nearly impossible to actually test this stuff with the kind of randomized, controlled, double-blind studies that are considered definitive. This is in large part because the whole supplement industry sits on an IP fault line: You can't patent a rose or a tree or the other kinds of natural ingredients that herbal supplements are made from. "The estimated average cost of developing a drug that ultimately achieves FDA approval is about a billion dollars now," says David Katz, M.D., M.P.H., director of Yale University's Yale-Griffin Prevention Research Center. Even if Bacon *could* pony up that kind of money to do definitive trials on the ingredients she uses, every other company could then use her findings to come out with their own competing version.

That's why many herbal supplements, including Moon Juice, draw from traditions that carry a built-in trust. Bacon's ingredients have been staples of Ayurvedic and Chinese medicines for centuries. Although science hasn't proven their value in humans, Katz does say that some small studies in animals and cell cultures have found that they induce a calming effect. And Katz's colleague Joshua Levitt, a naturopathic physician and clinical preceptor for the Yale School of Medicine, has been using the same herbs with his patients for decades. "They're fantastic," he says. "And I think they're especially appropriate now with all the challenges of the modern world." *Entrepreneur* asked him to review SuperYou, and he described the supplement as "a straight-up adaptogenic formula"—though he couldn't evaluate Moon Juice's other products, because, unlike SuperYou, their exact ingredient formulas aren't listed.

"THIS ARTICLE COULD TRIGGER SOME NEW RAGE."

Bacon knows she still has a lot of convincing to do. The supplements industry is rife with quality-control problems—from purity and potency to contaminants. She spends about 40 percent of her R&D budget on testing her products both in-house and at third-party labs, and wants to do whatever she can to distinguish herself from brands that aren't as rigorous. "It's so hard to see that," she says. So this will be the next conversation she hopes to have with consumers.

These days, Bacon spends a lot of time on the road in malls across the country, educating Sephora staff and talking to shoppers. (Sephora doesn't share sales figures, but Venkatesh says consumer response is "very encouraging.") Meanwhile, a steady stream of customers are signing up for SuperYou subscriptions, according to Bacon ("I handwrite these people love letters," she says) and Moon Juice is close to 100 employees, 70 percent of them women. New products are coming this year, including a supplement for "super hair," and so Bacon has taken out a moderate loan to carry her to the next big raise, which she plans to do when sales reach $50 million a year. "I would rather take on a loan now than give up a bunch of equity at this point," she says. "With that, I don't get to grow as fast."

The internet hordes have largely left her alone lately, minus the one-off haters on social media. "That's not to say there won't be a resurgence at any moment," Bacon says. "This article could trigger some new rage. I assume that as long as I keep having this provocative conversation about wellness, there are going to be uncomfortable moments. And I assume that I'll take it all in stride." And she is still listening. For example, that comment on Instagram from the person who now despises her content? "I hate to give life to a troll, but it's like, *Yeah, I hear you*," she says. "The site's content *has* become a little dry. It's hard to keep being creative. And we've got to do something about it."

She's also winning over unexpected fans. For example, there's that bearded dude from YouTube—the one that mocked her *Elle* story. His name is Jarrett Sleeper, and today he admits he wasn't actually all that upset at Bacon back then. "It's just funny to think of someone who's lived in this bubble so long that they truly believe they're telling a relatable story," he says. In fact, he's totally into alternative medicine; his mother is a yoga teacher. And in the past few months, he spent $106 on, of all things, Moon Juice. Yes. "I go to the Silver Lake shop when I'm sick," he says, naming one of Bacon's L.A. locations. "I love that stuff. It works."

Hearing this relayed at her lunch with investors, Bacon sits there in the loud din of the busy restaurant and takes it in with a slow smile and a calm vigilance. "That's awesome," she says. Chalk it up to the adaptogens. E


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Entrepreneurial Insights from the Cannabis Industry

PHOTOGRAPH BY SHUTTERSTOCK/STERLING MUNKSGARD

Silent Bob Gets Real

Director **Kevin Smith** created memorable big-screen stoners. Now they're a legitimate business.

by JONATHAN SMALL

OP 100 CANNABIS LEADER ★
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Life really does imitate art. In his 1994 indie film *Clerks*, writer-director Kevin Smith introduced the characters Jay and Silent Bob—two guys who spent all day peddling weed outside a New Jersey Quick Stop. Smith himself played Silent Bob; his childhood pal Jason Mewes played Jay. The characters would return in many of Smith's movies...and now, 25 years and a different regulatory environment later, the duo are getting their own legal cannabis brand, Jay and Silent Bob's Private Stash. Manufacturing-and-distribution company Chemesis International is to thank for it: The company initially approached Smith, who was more than enthusiastic to finally become a real-life ganjapreneur.

You're a famous weed enthusiast. Why name the brand after your characters, instead of yourself?
Honestly, I could have probably gone with Kevin Smith, because that name is synonymous with this space. But Jay and Silent Bob get to be us, and [Mewes and I] do everything together. His wife runs our business. So there was never a moment where I was like, "Get out. Weed's mine!" Like every good stoner, you should share as often as you can.

As a storyteller, did you build a storyline around the brand?
Yes; it's woven in. They call that "synergy" in the business. The weed hit the streets in January, we start shooting our movie *Jay and Silent Bob Reboot* in early March, and then it's out at the end of this year. It makes fun of sequels and reboots by being both at the same time.

A lot of celebrities put their names on products, but they're not that involved in the business. Are you?
This is an incredible business because it's not like you just make it here and you're done. In every state, you've got to find a different flower if you're going to sell it there, because you can't take the California weed over to Colorado and vice versa. It's this amazing job where people tell you, "We need you to smoke all this weed and tell us what you think." Then you get to do it again and again. So quality control is very easily part of the job. But the marketing stuff was something that took my breath away. The team at Chemesis came up with these little pre-rolled joints that go into a little container and look like something you'd get at Quick Stop. That was right up my alley. I would buy that even if I weren't a stoner.

Why's that?
[Playing the characters at the Quick Stop] was something we did, like, 25 years ago, hoping that it would turn into something. It's nice to know that a quarter of a century later, it worked. And now we live in this weird, wonderful world where it can go beyond the screen. We literally sell weed in real life.

What do you make of the new gentrification of cannabis?
I don't have a garage-band fan mentality, where it's like, *This was ours first! Now everyone else is just a poser.* Come on! If you came late to the game, it doesn't matter—you're here now, so enjoy it. Same with weed. It works for everybody, and it has a positive effect. I'd rather see it go deeper into the suburbs and see soccer moms smoking weed. I don't mind sharing space at the stoner table with people who are way above my station in life now, because I know they're getting probably something as positive out of it as I am. Gentrify away, I say. It would be a much better world.

→ STRIKING BACK
Joints from Jay and Silent Bob's Private Stash come pre-rolled and are sold individually.

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF CHEMESIS MEDIA TEAM

HOW THIS ENTREPRENEUR TURNED $18,000 INTO A CBD POWERHOUSE

PureKana CEO Cody Alt shares his top insights on scaling an in-demand brand.

Cody Alt had been in the entrepreneur game for years before he hit it big with CBD. After running successful crude oil and meal prep businesses in his 20s, Alt had already established himself as a hungry self starter who'd stop at nothing to see his operations scale, before he turned an investment of $18,000 into millions with PureKana one of the industry's top selling and consistently highest-rated CBD companies.

PureKana entered the hemp landscape in 2017, when competition was quickly starting to build; but in just a few months, Alt's venture broke away from the pack even the market's pioneers with its ultra concentrated, Kentucky harvested CBD known for making good on claims of relieving stress and anxiety.

And he's already onto other ventures including Kushly, which sells edibles, vape pens and pre rolls to marijuana dispensaries in Arizona and California. Thinking big comes naturally to Alt.

Here, he shares his top tips for building and marketing a brand from the ground up.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IS YOUR BIGGEST ASSET.

Alt started PureKana with a relatively meager investment, but he credits word of mouth regarding the product's quality and not extra rounds of funding—for quickly scaling the brand.

"Most people think that you need a lot of money or a big investor to get going: You don't," Alt says. "If you come up with a superior product and people like it, you've won. Take care of those customers like they're your last, and word of mouth will be your best friend."

CAPITALIZE ON WHAT YOU KNOW.

A year before launching PureKana, Alt was banking valuable know how with his company Elevate Media, which provided social media management for cannabis related brands. By the time he was at the helm of his own CBD venture (along with co founder Jeff Yauck), Alt was thoroughly familiar with his product's consumer and the type of marketing that would speak to them.

"I had a pretty good track record with logos," Alt says, adding that he'd found that "simple, sexy and modern-looking" images were more likely to draw interest from his target customers than marijuana leaves or other typical cannabis imagery "that a lot of people think you need if you're in this space."

By the time he was running PureKana, Alt says, "I had a knack for marketing and building brands."

EMBRACE THE COMPETITION.

"Everyone and their mother is trying to start a CBD business now," Alt laughs. But he's fine with that. More competition means there are more "foot soldiers educating consumers on CBD. The good business people will thrive."

Competing businesses can also serve as motivation to smart entrepreneurs about staying current and engaged, whether by introducing new products or ramping up social media giveaways and email marketing, "which is a great way to get in touch with customers and see what they like," he says.

To flourish in this space, an entrepreneur has no choice but to stay abreast of new developments and trends, stay competitive, and to "evolve as the industry does," Alt says.

PURE KANA

To learn more about PureKana's line of CBD and other premium products, visit purekana.com.

→ **C-COMMERCE** Ross Lipson's Dutchie puts cannabis delivery at your fingertips.

From Grub to Ganja

How I used my online food-delivery expertise to build **Dutchie,** an online cannabis-delivery startup.

by ROSS LIPSON

Cannabis had just been legalized for recreational use in Oregon, so I and everyone else in my town lined up, sometimes for an hour, outside the busy dispensaries. When I finally got to the counter, I had mere minutes to read the menu and even less time to discuss it with the budtender and make an informed decision. It was a terrible customer experience.

That's when it hit me: What if I could just go online, educate myself about the products available at each dispensary, determine which was right for me, click a button, and have them delivered straight to my home?

The concept wasn't completely random. In my previous life, I ran and sold two online food-ordering companies. The first I helped start in college, after I noticed how much time students wasted looking through stacks of paper menus and calling restaurants for delivery. After graduating, I discovered there were no online food-delivery businesses in Canada, so my partner and I created GrubCanada, scaled it from coast to coast, and sold it to Just Eat in 2012.

Now I live in Bend, Oreg., where I ran my idea by my brother. He hates 99.9 percent of the stuff I pitch him, but he said, "You have to do this." So he joined as my CPO. We named the company Dutchie (slang for "joint") and got to work applying the same ideas that we would in online food ordering.

We soon learned that the cannabis business was a different beast. It would require some creative rethinking.

At first, we stuck with what we knew: We built a system that looks a lot like a restaurant delivery service. Customers can shop on our platform, and then a dispensary receives the customer's order and is responsible for delivering the product. But as soon as we launched, we ran into a big problem. Dispensaries may sell up to 1,000 products, always get new products in, and run out of stock all the time—which means their inventory is constantly changing. This is the opposite of the restaurant business, where menus stay the same. When was the last time you ordered from Domino's and were told they ran out of pepperoni pizza?

We quickly got calls from frustrated dispensaries that were getting orders for sold-out products, and from angry customers who'd ordered something that wasn't available. It was devastating—I thought we might have to shut down. Then we came up with a solution. We integrated our software with major POS systems, so when a dispensary added or sold out of a product, Dutchie updated automatically.

One crisis solved, but soon there were others. In my former businesses, we used Google AdWords, Instagram, and Facebook to market, which you can't do with cannabis. We had to get the word out, but how? One thing I learned from the food-ordering business is that when a customer uses your service, it's easier to get them to order again than it is to get somebody new to order. We needed to encourage repeat business.

That's why we got creative with customer service. When somebody orders from Dutchie for the first time, we surprise them a week later with an appreciation package in the mail. Inside is a handwritten thank-you note, some Dutchie swag, and a pair of custom Dutchie slippers. Our message is: *Relax and let the dispensary come to you, or order for pickup.* That personal touch builds brand loyalty and creates word of mouth.

Dutchie is now in more than 250 stores across nine states. If I could share one takeaway for those considering jumping into the cannabis business, it would be to stay in your lane. If you become a master at something, no matter what business it is, then stick to that expertise. For me, it was online ordering. I'm still in online ordering today. I've switched my focus to cannabis because I saw an opportunity, but at the core of what we're doing—our operation, our logistics, our software, our team—it's the same as helping you order a pepperoni pizza.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF DUTCHIE

Capturing a Bygone Smoke

How do you build a brand that feels artisanal and handcrafted? **Henry's Original** wanted to go vintage, but it isn't always easy re-creating the past. **by JASON FEIFER**

Jenna Meister left her senior Airbnb job in 2015 and cofounded a cannabis company. Its goal: Build a premium brand that felt antique, harking back to the 1960s, when Northern Californians grew cannabis next to their vegetable gardens. "These people thought, *I believe in this, and am going to do it regardless of what the government says I should or shouldn't do,*" Meister says. To convey that sensibility, she hired the design firm Pavement—and then obsessed over the details for nine months before her product made it to shelves. Here were some of the big decisions.

1/ Name

From the beginning, cofounder Jamie Warm wanted to call the company Henry's Original. It was inspired by a farmer he met in Mendocino County, where the startup's cannabis is sourced. Meister wasn't sold at first; she worried the name Henry sounded too old and masculine. But after surveying potential customers, she discovered an unexpected plus: It made the brand feel instantly familiar. "Almost everyone has someone named Henry in their life and has an affinity toward them," she says. "It brings the heritage aspect and antique feel."

2/ Sticker

Meister began studying antique apothecary and whiskey bottles, looking for details to import onto Henry's packaging. One jumped out strongest—a hand-done element, be it a stamp or a number, that's added at the end. To replicate that, Henry's places a sticker on the bottom of each box to identify the strain of cannabis inside. "We wanted it to feel like it was applied just for this batch—and that it didn't just roll off an assembly line," she says.

3/ Box

As Airbnb's head of community development, Meister learned how customers are won over by great experiences. She wanted the same for Henry's packaging, for it "to feel like you open and reveal something." So rather than build a box that simply opened, she made it a tray and a sleeve, like a matchbox. Users would push out the tray to unveil the smokes. It cost way more than a regular box—but how much? "A lot," is all she'll reveal.

4/ Cork

Henry's team wanted to keep its smokes fresh without using cheap-feeling bags, and a tube with a cork felt like an appropriately vintage solution. But its half-gram smokes were so small that standardized cork sizes wouldn't cap the tube. "I contacted, like, every cork supplier in the world," Meister says, and she eventually found one to make custom sizes, each order taking months to fulfill. An early batch was a millimeter off, forcing the team to screw them in by hand. "My hands were blistered and raw," she says. But the result looked authentic.

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF HENRY'S ORIGINAL

→ **INTO THE DEEP END** Juan and Ellie Lamonaca are first-time franchisees.

Franchise Love at First Sight

When **Conserva Irrigation** hired a new PR agency, it got more than just a publicist—it found a passionate pair of franchisees. by **STEPHANIE SCHOMER**

Ellie Lamonaca first entered the franchise world as a publicist, whose job was to help a franchise get media attention. But six years into her career, a new client captured her attention in a very different way. It was Conserva Irrigation, a sprinkler-system inspection and services company that helps homeowners and commercial properties cut down on water waste and bills. As a resident of South Florida, Lamonaca immediately understood the value of its business model—and saw opportunity. She texted her husband, Juan, and suggested they become Conserva franchisees, and in April 2017, the newlyweds opened their first territory, in Fort Lauderdale. They've since grown into two territories and are eyeing a third, and they've learned the value of investing in a strong team, taking the time to understand an industry, and putting in the hard work.

Ellie, you spent years doing PR for franchises. What about Conserva Irrigation made you want to change careers?
ELLIE: When we'd get a new client at [PR agency] Fish Consulting, we'd go to their headquarters for a huge, immersive onboarding meeting. I'd done this a thousand times with brands. Halfway through our Conserva orientation, I started texting my husband because I was intrigued by the concept and knew we could do this.
JUAN: Ellie had never previously pitched me on a concept. But we talked for hours after her meeting with Conserva. I work in construction, and we own our own company, and I've always known irrigation to be the bottom of the totem pole; it's where contractors cut corners to stay on budget. So once I understood the concept—not to mention the professionalism, the branding, the training—I was in.

Did you feel hyper-prepared to take this on, or was there still a learning curve?
ELLIE: I felt like I had a bit of a leg up—I had spent almost a year pitching the company to the media—but no matter what, when you become a franchisee, chances are you're not an expert in the industry, so of course there was a learning curve.
JUAN: When we first opened, Ellie kept her day job, I kept my day job, and we were running our Conserva company at night and on the weekends. We quickly realized that in order to scale and meet the needs of our community, we had to hire a technician. Now we have three on our team.

Has hiring been a challenge?
ELLIE: It was one of our biggest lessons. In the service industry, your employees are not just a part of your business; they *are* your business. We could not have a team that wanted to clock in and collect their paychecks. We needed people who were invested in the success of this business. Once we found them, we had to involve them and incentivize them. We quickly implemented bonus opportunities to keep our team motivated. Other Conserva franchisees gave us great advice: Once you recruit one good person, treat them well and they'll recruit their peers and people they've worked with in the past—and that's happened! We take a lot of pride in that.

You're both millennials. How has being young business owners influenced the way you operate your franchise?
JUAN: We fall into the stereotype of the hardworking millennials. We work day and night; we're not 9-to-5. If a customer calls us at midnight, we pick up. And we're hiring a lot of peers who also relate to that work ethic. Plus, we're out there with our employees—we don't sit in our office. I let our guys handle the situations, but I'm out there with them in the field, and I think that earns us some respect. They're not laborers—we all work as a team.

The Long Road to Success

Hao Lam's life has been defined by persistence. As a young adult, he used it to escape Vietnam. Now he channels his determination into growing his tutoring franchise, Best in Class Education. by **TRACY STAPP HEROLD**

Hao Lam knows how to work hard to reach a goal—for much of his young life, he didn't have any other choice. As a Chinese boy growing up in Saigon after the Vietnam War, he tried to escape more than 10 times over a span of 11 years. Finally, in 1988, at the age of 20, he succeeded, arriving at a Philippine refugee camp after seven crammed days on a fishing boat along with 140 other people.

He eventually landed in Canada, where he earned his high school diploma and a degree in math before moving to Seattle with his wife, Lisa—another passenger from his fishing-boat escape. Lam became a serial entrepreneur, but his love of math and education eventually won out. After running a tutoring center as a licensee of BrainChild Education Centers, Lam bought the company outright in 2010, rebranded to Best in Class Education, and started franchising. Today, the company has 59 locations in 12 states, with plans to open 100 by 2020. He knows the path won't be easy—but he's no stranger to long journeys.

PHOTOGRAPH BY BEN LEDDUSIRE

How did you first get into tutoring?
I hated going to school in Vietnam because of all the propaganda they taught. But my mother hired a Chinese and math tutor, and I fell in love with math. Later, in Canada, I would ride my bicycle to fellow students' homes to tutor them. It was the start of my teaching career, and it became my passion. I eventually turned my passion into my vocation, but I didn't really know what I was getting myself into with running a business, let alone a franchise. Plus, I was trying to do multiple other things as well; at one point I had a mortgage company, a real estate company, and four restaurants.

What happened with those other ventures?
During the recession, I had to close all of them. Best in Class stayed in business, but the franchise didn't grow like I'd expected. It made me realize I'd had my hand in too many different places, and instead I needed to do one thing and one thing only, and stay laser-focused on it. My focus now is building stellar franchisees, so they can work together and with me to build better teachers and create successful students.

How do you help your franchisees succeed?
Teaching is still my passion, but now it just takes the form of coaching and mentoring my franchisees. I have a monthly group video call with all our franchisees, and after that they can book slots for one-on-one talks with me. We talk about anything and everything—not just business, but family issues, personal growth, goal setting. The biggest thing is being available to them. I'm also always reminding them of our core values, which are summed up in the acronym PEACE: positive, energetic and passionate, adaptable, collaborative, and efficient. These are the characteristics I look for in franchisees, and what I tell my franchisees to insist on when they're hiring their own staffs. Why hire someone and train them how to smile? Hire smiling people.

You recently published an autobiography, called *From Bad to Worse to Best in Class: A Refugee's Success Story*. Why do you think it's important to share your story?
I did a book tour last year, speaking at Best in Class locations, elementary schools, colleges, and business groups. I love sharing my story. But when I talk to people, it's never to brag about how successful I am—I'm sharing my stories of failure. Because every time I failed, I learned a lesson.

How to Hire a Law Firm

No one likes paperwork. And in the always-complicated world of franchising, there's plenty of it. Three franchise-industry vets talk about how to identify your legal needs—and find the best lawyers to keep your business moving forward. **by STEPHANIE SCHOMER**

1/ Get Specific, and Do Your Research!

From Lane Fisher, cofounder, Fisher Zucker

We've been in business for more than three decades. The bulk of our work is with franchisors, and we've always said: experience, expertise, results. If you're a franchisor, look for a lawyer with a good reputation in the industry, and seek representation from someone who works with like-minded entities. If you're an emerging brand, for example, find a lawyer who represents emerging brands, not a Burger King–size operation.

Franchisors need someone who can translate their brand's secret sauce into the Franchise Disclosure Document—helping to explain how you stand out in a congested marketplace, how to price your opportunity, and how to award territories to prospective franchisees. Find a practice with someone who undertakes regulatory compliance, so they're responsible for the FDD. We do registration work for 180 brands, filing compliant documents and working with state examiners for nearly 30 years, which streamlines the registration process. A good law firm anticipates changes in the law and shares that information with clients.

On the franchisee side of things, I've seen plenty of people who think that the person who wrote their will or their lease can be their mentor through purchasing a franchise—and that's a big mistake. Look for people who have experience with brands, and with your particular silo of an industry.

So where to start? Check out the American Bar Association's forum on franchising and the International Franchise Association's attorney listings. And google the people, for God's sake! Check their references, and get a sense of their passion. If the last thing an attorney argued was a zoning change for a condo, that might not be your person.

2/ Things to Remember

From Matt Kelton, COO, Showhomes

SHOWHOMES is a Nashville-based home-staging franchise with 32 franchisees operating across 18 states. It needed a law firm with a bird's-eye view of the industry and hired Gray Plant Mooty to…

1/ Stay compliant.
Kelton tries to keep abreast of law changes, but he relies on Gray Plant Mooty to catch them all. Recently, for example, the law firm advised Showhomes to update its website to comply with changes to the Americans with Disabilities Act. "All our websites need to work for people with vision or hearing issues," Kelton says. "If they don't, you're going to get a big fine."

2/ Spend wisely.
Kelton has worked in franchising for more than 20 years, and has seen people hire attorneys simply because of their affordable rates. "They might have a low price, but they'll talk so much to run up your bill," he says. "Look beyond price, and find someone with great referrals who gets to the point."

3/ Get tough.
"We had a situation where a franchise was underreporting, and we worked with Gray Plant Mooty in a lawsuit, which we won," Kelton says. "You have to enforce your business agreements—and Gray Plant Mooty has created an environment where I can be blunt with them about what we need."

3/ Unexpected Success

From Jason Mazzarone, founder and CEO, SoBol

What he expected/ Mazzarone, the founder of East Coast acai bowl café SoBol, wants to sell more franchises—so he needed his attorneys at Internicola Law Firm to help him update his FDD annually.

What he got/ Instead of just laying the groundwork to find new franchisees, the law firm has helped SoBol work with its existing ones. "Internicola challenges us, has guided us on business practices, and helps our communication with our franchisees," Mazzarone says.

PHOTOGRAPH BY SHUTTERSTOCK/BILLION PHOTOS

What It Takes to Become the (Big) Boss

Making the switch from franchisee to franchisor comes with a brand-new learning curve. Four entrepreneurs who've made the transition share their most valuable lessons. by **STEPHANIE SCHOMER**

"Know Where You Need Help"

After one year as a Buffalo Wings & Rings franchisee, **Nader Masadeh** bought the entire company and stepped in as CEO—and realized the organization needed more work than he'd anticipated.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF BUFFALO WINGS & RINGS

When Nader Masadeh's family moved to Cincinnati from Jordan when he was a child, most of his relatives worked in restaurants. "When you come to the United States as an immigrant, skills don't always transfer," he says. "Restaurants provide accessible work."

Masadeh was no exception: He put in time at Taco Bell and Burger King. But after graduating high school, he took a different path. He studied engineering and business, worked for auto parts manufacturers and then Procter & Gamble. In 2004, he purchased a Buffalo Wings & Rings franchise. He'd planned at first for his father to operate the franchise, but he soon fell for the business more broadly.

"I loved the brand, the niche it's in, the food it serves," he says. "I didn't understand why it hadn't taken off." He was certain that with some additional systemization and professionalism, he'd have a hit. In 2005, he made an offer to buy the brand from the current owner, and she accepted.

After the purchase, Masadeh brought on two partners, and identified their first big problem. "The other store owners had licensing agreements, so they weren't paying royalties, and they weren't getting any corporate support," he says. That meant he had no money coming in and would have to get creative about fixing the company. The solution would take almost five years and a lot of changes—rethinking the company's relationship with franchisees, where they'd open new locations, and even what the restaurants looked like.

Now Masadeh has some tough advice for franchisees looking to become franchisors: "A great franchisee isn't always a great franchisor, and vice versa," he says. "Know your skills, know where you need help, and hire people to help you make the transition."

What He Learned

1/ Take inventory.
Masadeh and his partners took stock of what they had: some old uniforms and equipment in a warehouse, and a very out-of-date Franchise Disclosure Document. Then they spent the next 18 months cleaning up the operation—creating a new manual, a marketing plan, brochures for prospective franchisees, and a unified menu. "There hadn't been any corporate support before," he says. "We had to build that in."

2/ Start fresh.
The brand had a bad reputation in Cincinnati, thanks to the poorly run restaurants of the past. That made it hard to find new franchisees locally. But when Masadeh ran some ads online, he received inquiries from California, Texas, and Florida. So he decided to go where the opportunity was and rebuild the brand where it could be introduced fresh. "Those development agreements were a big win," he says. (Today, there are 12 stores—nine are franchises—open in Cincinnati.)

3/ Expand the audience.
The original Buffalo Wings & Rings model felt like most sports bars: dark, masculine, and loud. "We realized that if we made it more family- and female-friendly, we'd have a bigger opportunity," Masadeh says. They added a dining room that was brighter and not so loud. They made the restrooms more accessible from the dining room with no need to walk through the bar. And they updated furniture to make the space more inviting.

4/ Listen to your markets.
Both Masadeh and one of his partners are originally from Jordan, and they believed they could bring the brand back home. But they failed on their first three attempts. "We tried to adapt our model to the local culture but quickly realized that's not what they wanted," he says. "They wanted the Americanized experience—the wings, the menu in English, the sports, the bar." They opened stores with their U.S. model, and sales skyrocketed.

"I'd Rather Be in Control of My Own Destiny"

How **Alexis Courtney** went from a Cookie Cutters multi-unit franchisee to the company's co-owner and COO.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF COOKIE CUTTERS

Alexis Courtney had spent eight years as a high school teacher when she became pregnant with her second child and quickly realized that life as an educator would no longer cut it. "My income was pretty much a wash once my husband and I factored in daycare for two kids," she says. "We decided that if I was going to be working, we wanted it to benefit our family."

Her husband, Neal Courtney, had been a longtime exec with Famous Brands International, the parent company of TCBY and Mrs. Fields Cookies, and the couple wondered if they should launch their own business. But neither had the bandwidth or a foolproof idea. Then Alexis took their daughter for a haircut at Cookie Cutters Haircuts for Kids, one of the only kids' salons in Utah, and was charmed by the experience. She knew she had her solution: They'd become Cookie Cutters franchisees. "We bought an existing store that employed six stylists, and our first Saturday, we did 135 haircuts," Alexis says. Demand remained high. They soon operated five locations in Utah.

Alexis's new franchisee career worked... for a while. Then Neal's company relocated the family to Colorado and promoted him to CEO, forcing Alexis to schlep back and forth between the two states to maintain their Cookie Cutters locations. The situation worked, but it wasn't ideal.

Then in 2014, Cookie Cutters' founders offered to sell the brand to the Courtneys. They bought the company, installing Neal as CEO and Alexis as COO. It was a big leap—emotionally and financially—but one that's paid off. Now the brand is closing in on 100 locations open across the country.

What She Learned

1/ Move slowly.
The Courtneys didn't have the cash on hand to buy Cookie Cutters, so they spent four months discussing the opportunity and plotting out the financing. That gave them the time to determine a plan they were comfortable with—and identify the risks they were willing to take. "We had to roll our 401(k)s into this business, which is scary," Alexis says. "But if we didn't buy it, someone else would. I'd rather be in control of my own destiny."

2/ Experiment with sales channels.
Cookie Cutters' previous owner hadn't focused on selling new locations, but the Courtneys wanted to. They updated their FDD and started marketing. They poured $30,000 into internet advertising that resulted in not a single new franchisee, so they switched paths and started working with FranNet, a consultancy and brokerage that connects franchisors with prospective franchisees. "We've sold pretty much every franchise through FranNet," she says.

3/ Build your toolkit.
To manage a growing roster of franchisees, Alexis had to learn to work smarter. She adopted Asana, a project management application. "I have boards for all my franchisees," she says. "If someone is new to Cookie Cutters, I have a 12-week plan to share with them, starting with a weekly phone call and about four or five tasks they need to accomplish. It helps us get things done without overwhelming new partners."

4/ Shift your communication.
When the Courtneys were running a franchise, they had a fairly simple operation: Alexis had her tasks, Neal had his, and that was that. But now that they're running a larger corporation, they've had to change their style. "Everything we're working on has to be run past the other person in order for our operation to be synergistic," Alexis says.

CRUISE PLANNERS

"There's No Better Way to Put Capital to Work"

As an Anytime Fitness franchisee, **David Graham** saw how the right business model can supercharge a young brand. Then he used that insight to launch a kids' coding school.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF CODE NINJAS

When David Graham built his current business, Code Ninjas, he didn't want to build just a coding school for kids. He wanted to build *the* coding school for kids. "It's a timely, niche business, and we knew someone would end up being the 800-pound gorilla in the space," he says. "We wanted it to be us."

Code Ninjas was also a return to form for Graham, a longtime lover of coding who'd taken an unexpected detour into a very different line of work. He began his career as a software developer, and owned and operated a consulting firm, a video game business, and a coding program for adults, then became fixated on...the world of fitness? "I liked the recurring revenue model," he says plainly. "But I had no idea how to open a gym." So in 2010, he became a franchisee with Anytime Fitness. He was impressed with the operation and came away with a big lesson: "I saw the capacity of franchising in an expansion model, and I thought, if I ever have an idea that I need to take national—and quick—there's no better way to put capital to work."

In 2016, when he came up with the idea for Code Ninjas, a programming school for kids with a strong focus on fun, he did just that. He developed a strong infrastructure and started selling franchise locations. There were bumps along the way, but iteration and a focus on serving his partners turned Code Ninjas into a hot commodity that's sold 380 locations in just 20 months.

What He Learned

1/ Define your niche.
Graham saw his coding competitors as all academically oriented. "But we wanted kids to actually *want* to come to Code Ninjas," he says. So he focused on fun, and he tested multiple curricula before starting to franchise. "We tried lectures, we tried bug-fix programs, and we realized finally that kids want to build their own games on our platforms."

2/ Adjust for growth.
At first, Graham says, he overestimated how much people would be willing to pay to enter the system. "We had sold 12 units in six months—not the pace we wanted," he says. So he cut the franchise fee in half and trimmed additional costs to make the opportunity increasingly appealing to prospects. "It caught on fire," he says. "We sold 240 franchises in our first year."

3/ Cater to your franchisees.
"We identified early on that some of our franchisees were kind of nerdy guys like me. They're introverts," he says. So his team created a system that would work best for their partners. "As an example, we do a weekly executive call where we go over everything happening in the company, and they can ask questions if they have them."

4/ Create clear goals.
Because of the brand's rapid growth, Graham has created KPIs to track success at every level of the company, making sure quality doesn't falter. "Every employee has KPIs, and they roll up to their team manager, and they roll up to the executives," he says. "It helps us take the pulse of the organization. Those KPIs are our heartbeat, so if we don't track it, we won't know if things are erratic."

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"If Franchisees Don't Do Well, We Don't Do Well"

Sammy Aldeeb spent years as a multi-unit franchisee of restaurants. When he decided to launch his own pizza brand, he focused on putting the franchisee first.

Sammy Aldeeb is well aware that pizza is an oversaturated market. But it's still full of opportunity. "Pizza will never go away," he says. "You can be a millionaire and eat pizza, or you can be a college kid on a student budget and eat pizza. That's why it's a $45 billion industry."

That's also why, after 10 years as a successful franchisee for brands including Marble Slab, Subway, and Great American Cookies, Aldeeb sold his portfolio of nearly 30 locations and started developing his concept for Urban Bricks, a made-your-way pizza franchise, built in the style of Chipotle.

"Fifteen years ago, I would only eat burritos from my favorite ma-and-pa Mexican restaurant in San Antonio," he says. "But now, I love designing my own burritos at Chipotle. America is shifting to customized everything, so why not do that with pizza? No one orders a supreme anymore."

Even with a decade of experience as a franchisee, transitioning to franchisor of an upstart brand was a culture shock. "Before, if a store didn't do well or if operations weren't intact, I had no one to blame but myself," he says. "But when you're a *'sor*, it's a different game. If franchisees don't do well, we don't do well."

What He Learned

1/ Ask for help.
The red tape that comes with launching a franchise boggled Aldeeb's mind. "I was amazed at the amount of paperwork and dollars it took to legally establish the business," he says. Rather than try to do it alone, he prioritized finding strategic partners and resources to talk him through the process. "I give the International Franchise Association a lot of credit. They've been a great resource, probably one of the best investments we've made."

2/ Price for the right franchisee.
Aldeeb wanted passionate franchisees rather than those with a ton of business experience, so he was determined to keep buy-in costs relatively low. Today, he's proud that his franchise fee stands at $35,000. "I've been in their shoes, so I think with their pocket," he says. "We have been cautious on costs, not only on build-outs but on the menu items. The restaurant business is tough—we want this to be monkey-proof and sustainable."

3/ Set clear expectations.
Aldeeb was confident that he'd created a system and a set of guidelines that would help his franchisees succeed. But he didn't plan on doing any hand-holding, and he told them that up front. "I always tell our partners, 'We are going to teach you how to fish, but we will not fish for you,'" he says. "If you don't learn to do the work yourself, you don't need to be in this business—or any business, for that matter."

4/ Fix what's broken.
Aldeeb has learned that not every franchisee will be an instant success, and he's proactive when a store is underperforming. "If they fail, we fail," he says. "We put on our aprons, retrain that team, and try to reestablish what attracted the franchisee in the first place. We owe that to them as an emerging brand they took a chance on."

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF URBAN BRICKS

CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE

Entrepreneurs everywhere are writing their own success stories with brands like these. Find your next growth opportunity by exploring what each one has to offer in this section.

Bio-One
Bio Hazard and Crime/Trauma Scene Cleaning

Board & Brush
DIY Studio

Cruise Planners
Travel

Mosquito Joe Franchising, LLC
Outdoor Pest Control

Pillar To Post
Home Inspection

Sport Clips
Hair Care

ABOUT BOARD & BRUSH CREATIVE STUDIO

Board & Brush is the fastest-growing DIY wood sign workshop chain in the country. Local studios offer instructor-led workshops, private parties, corporate events and fundraisers. All projects are a flat fee and include everything needed to leave with a piece of art that looks professionally made.

BOARD & BRUSH CREATIVE STUDIO FUN FACTS

- 800,000 of their designs are hanging in people's homes nationwide
- 222 locations in just four years
- Ongoing training, online booking, social media tools
- Over $50 million in sales since inception
- Close to 1 million followers on social media
- Low start-up cost $62,289 - $89,406
- 20% discount for Military Veterans and their spouses

EVERYONE HAS A CREATIVE SIDE

As Julie Selby, founder of Board & Brush Creative Studios, tells it, it all started with a holiday party in her basement.

"I'm a do-it-yourselfer and love a good weekend remodeling project, so when it came time to host a neighborhood get-together for the holidays, we decided to make it a wine and craft project kind of night, with everyone getting to create a wood sign for their home," shared Julie. That was back in December 2014. By March 2015, the first Board & Brush Creative Studio was opened in Hartland, WI, where Julie and her husband Curt, who now serves as company Vice President, reside. Fast-forward to early 2019 and there are studio locations in 37 states, making it the fastest-growing DIY wood sign workshop franchise in the country.

Julie's goal with the business model was to empower women, and men too, to tap into their creative side and complete a project from beginning to end. "I see the power of DIY every day, building a person's confidence just as it built mine, and inspiring people to take on that next project," said Julie.

All materials are supplied by the studio and there are hundreds of designs for attendees to choose from, with new ones added each month.

For franchisees, it's a chance to live their dream of being an entrepreneur while enjoying earning potential, flexibility and the freedom to balance work and family life.

Even with the meteoric growth, Julie still makes a point to visit with each new potential franchisee to get to know them before they sign on. She envisions the studio network growing to 250 by the end of 2019. While that may seem pie-in-the-sky thinking to some, to Julie it's business as usual. After all, she's in the creative can-do business.

Board & Brush creative studio®

For Board & Brush Creative Studio Information:

Kelly Karcher, Director of Franchising and Expansion (608) 658-4729

kelly@boardandbrush.com boardandbrushfranchising.com

ABOUT PILLAR TO POST HOME INSPECTORS®

North America's leading homeinspection company with nearly 600 franchisees in 49 states and 9 Canadian provinces.

PILLAR TO POST HOME INSPECTORS® FUN FACTS

- Franchise Fee: $21,900
- Provides flexibility and financial security
- Helps your work/life balance
- Allows you to take control of your financial future

REAL ESTATE PRO PUTS EXPERTISE TO GOOD USE IN HIS NEW ROLE AS PILLAR TO POST HOME INSPECTOR

Talk about fast growth! 42-year-old Jon Garnsey, possessing a solid background in real estate, relocated from Washington state to open Pillar To Post Home Inspectors® of Twin Falls but his territory encompasses almost all of south central Idaho, including Custer, Camas, Gooding, Twin Falls, Cassia, Jerome, Lincoln, Minidoka, Blaine and Butte counties. To put that in proper perspective, Garnsey's 10-county territory covers almost 12,000 square miles. "The northern border reaches within 20 miles of Montana and my territory borders both Utah and Nevada in the south," said Garnsey, who added that his territory includes Borah Peak, the highest peak in Idaho, located in Custer County and countless natural wonders in between from the Snake River Canyon to picturesque Sun Valley.

Garnsey said he was drawn to Pillar To Post because of its unparalleled focus on technology and customer service. Garnsey's real estate experience runs the gamut from working with first-time homebuyers, investors and community partners to managing a real estate office. "My complementary experience in real estate investment and building-industry knowledge helps me provide realtors and customers the exceptional service they deserve," Garnsey said. "With Pillar To Post's reputation as

the best in the industry, it was an obvious match."

As the housing market consistently grows, homeowners clearly recognize the importance of hiring a certified home inspector. A recent survey released by the American Society of Home Inspectors (ASHI) found that 88 percent of all U.S. homeowners believe home inspections are a necessity, not a luxury.

Additionally, the home inspection industry is largely comprised of aging owner-operators. As they leave the industry, homeowners desire a strong reliable brand that utilizes the latest technology and education, and that's Pillar To Post Home Inspectors' mission. Always providing the newest and best technology available, new programs, certifications and training, the company also enjoys 5 Star status in the VetFran program.

PILLARTOPOST HOME INSPECTORS

For Pillar To Post Home Inspectors® Information:

Pillar To Post
pillartopostfranchise.com
franchise@pillartopost.com
(877) 963-3129

BURANDTS TOOK CONTROL OF THEIR FUTURE WITH SPORT CLIPS

ABOUT SPORT CLIPS

Founded in 1993, Sport Clips Haircuts is a men's sports-themed hair salon providing clients a championship haircut experience at a reasonable price while watching sports on TV. The semi-absentee/manager run business model allows you as the franchisee to work on your business, not in your business. With more than 1,800 locations across the U.S. – in all 50 states – and in Canada, we provide more than 33 million haircuts annually and are continuing to expand.

SPORT CLIPS FAST FACTS

- Franchise Fee: $59,500 for 3 licenses
- Estimated investment: $204,800 - $368,300 (per store)
- Recession proof $75 billion industry with repeat customers
- Stable cash business with minimal inventory requirements
- No industry experience required – comprehensive training provided
- Simple and straightforward business model

In 2012, Scott Burandt was laid off. But he and his family were prepared. The Burandts had already embarked on a journey towards financial stability through business ownership with Sport Clips Haircuts.

Years prior, layoffs and an out of state relocation were both real possibilities for the Burandts. Neither Scott nor his wife, Anne, wanted to uproot their four boys, especially for a company that did not provide much in the way of job security.

The couple saw franchising to secure their financial future. After much research, Scott says, "Sport Clips and its values stood out from the rest."

The semi-absentee business model meant Scott could keep his current job and income while the family built their business on the side.

In 2007, the Burandt family signed with Sport Clips and by March of 2009, they had successfully opened their first two stores. From there, their business grew at a steady pace, opening several more stores in the following years.

In 2012, Scott was finally laid off, but their business was at a place where they could replace Scott's corporate income. Today Scott and Anne have grown their business to a total of 13 stores.

"Sport Clips has been everything we hoped for. We set personal and financial goals we have already been able to achieve. Most importantly we have the flexibility to be with our family, which was a priority," says Scott.

Over the years, the Burandts have been able to scale successfully. "Sport Clips isn't a get rich quick scheme. It takes time and work to develop your business. If you are patient and follow the system you can do well. You just have to stick with the system," says Scott. "Everything they told us about Sport Clips was true. We achieved everything we hoped with this opportunity and within the timeline we had established for ourselves."

SportClips HAIRCUTS

For Sport Clips Information:

Sport Clips Franchise Recruitment
SportClipsFranchise.com/owner
Franchise.Recruitment@SportClips.com
(833) 575-7307

Sue Palenik, Cruise Planners franchise owner since 2010.

ABOUT CRUISE PLANNERS

Cruise Planners is the nation's largest home-based travel agent franchise network with low overhead costs and the ability to work from anywhere with Internet connection. As an American Express Travel Representative, travel advisors earn instant credibility with consumers and train with the best in the industry.

CRUISE PLANNERS FUN FACTS

- Low-cost franchise: $10,995 with low overhead
- Be your own boss, work from anywhere, travel the world
- No experience needed: training and ongoing coaching provided
- Entrepreneur's #1 travel franchise 16 consecutive years

CRUISE PLANNERS: BE YOUR OWN BOSS, WORK FROM ANYWHERE

"I didn't want to work to make others look good anymore," said Sue Palenik, after being laid off from her job of nearly a decade. "Owning my own business was about me creating my own personal identity."

In 2010 at the age of 50, Sue changed course and invested in a Cruise Planners franchise. "Cruise Planners was the perfect fit for me. I always had a passion for travel, so why not work in the industry that would bring me joy?"

No experience necessary

As a Cruise Planners franchise owner and full-service travel advisor, Sue customizes amazing travel experiences ranging from cruises to guided land tours and all-inclusive resort vacations. Sue didn't have any prior experience as a travel professional, so she relied on Cruise Planners' comprehensive training and ongoing, personalized business development coaching, which helped her franchise grow to well over $1 million in annual sales.

Work from anywhere

Cruise Planners' home-based business model and award-winning technology are designed so you can work your business from anywhere, including while traveling. "From my cell phone, I can book a cruise, price something out or send a quote, so I can service my clients and also travel the world."

Don't wait for retirement to travel

Changing her career at 50 years old, Sue knew she wanted to be in control of her own success, and Cruise Planners provided that possibility. When Sue looks back on her journey, she admits she didn't think this level of success was possible. But through hard work and the support of the Cruise Planners Home Office, she has truly achieved her dreams. "Why wait?" she advises. "Do it on your terms and start living your dream now."

Franchise owners, like Sue, can work their travel business from anywhere, including while traveling the world.

CRUISE PLANNERS® | AMERICAN EXPRESS TRAVEL

For More Cruise Planners Information:

franchising@cruiseplanners.com

cpfranchise.com/cpstory

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MOSQUITO JOE CONTINUES TO GROW AND MAKE OUTSIDE FUN AGAIN IN 34 STATES, PLUS WASHINGTON D.C., AND NOW HAWAII!

Mosquito Joe continues its rapid ascent to leading in the mosquito control industry. After seeing explosive growth in the last six years, the company is aiming for another record-breaking season.

Entering the franchise space in 2013, Mosquito Joe has grown to over 285 open locations throughout the United States. After being acquired by Neighborly, formerly the Dwyer Group, Mosquito Joe joins the ranks of other household names such as Molly Maid, Mr. Rooter, and Grounds Guys.

A Network Of Real People

The franchise industry is an attractive opportunity for those looking to embark on their journey to business ownership, but want the assurance of a proven system. What truly differentiates each franchise opportunity is the level of support from the franchisee network. Mosquito Joe is proud to be made up of people from all backgrounds who have used the system and the existing network to their advantage.

From veterans with decades of service experience to couples seeking to integrate their families into the business, Mosquito Joe benefits from the wealth of knowledge each franchisee brings. President Lou Schager has made a diligent effort to cultivate a family-like atmosphere that allows franchisees to collaborate openly. Owner of Mosquito Joe of Western Wake shared, “We appreciate all of the support among the franchisees. It has been an incredible experience to have so many people not competing but working towards the same goal.”

Plans For The Future

While the company began their stronghold in the Mid-Atlantic region, Mosquito Joe developed into the South, Northeast and Midwest in just a few short years. Breaking ground in new markets such as Colorado and this year, Oahu, Hawaii, means the company continues to take its commitment to making outside fun again nationwide. With an even larger home network thanks to Neighborly, Mosquito Joe is poised to reach their expansion goals in no time.

ABOUT MOSQUITO JOE

Realize your dreams of business ownership by joining the Mosquito Joe family! Find out how you can take advantage of a low-cost, high-growth industry, enjoy your leisure and family time, and make a difference in your community by making outside fun again.

Our opportunity gives you the ability to join a proven system that offers best-in-class systems, outstanding Corporate support, memorable branding, a collaborative franchisee network, as well as growth potential.

Mosquito Joe has become an industry leader in mosquito control, recognized across the country for protecting outdoor spaces from mosquitoes, fleas, and ticks. Due to the seasonality of our business (depending on location) our franchisees are able to enjoy a higher quality of life that allows them to run their business full speed during the season and use the off-season to relax and focus on their local marketing and business development efforts.

Along with other Neighborly brand companies, Mosquito Joe has become a household name associated with quality customer service and impressive results. Our customers rave about the peace of mind our services provide and keep them returning to us season after season. The bright colors and catchy slogans make us stand out amongst our competitors and keep our business top of mind.

Franchisees in our system come from a variety of experiences including couples, veterans, even first responders who all share a common goal of making a noticeable impact on their communities. We look for those that are outgoing, business-oriented, and look forward to enjoying what they do. With extensive training and support from our Corporate Team, you can become an owner of your own business and join this exceptional group of professionals.

MOSQUITO JOE

For Mosquito Joe Information:

Jodi Ramoino, Director of Franchise Development (757) 216-1533

jramoino@mosquitojoe.com mosquitojoefranchise.com

ABOUT BIO-ONE

Bio-One franchises are the final responders on crime scenes. We work with all law enforcement to clean and recover crime scenes, hoarding situations, meth labs, and much more. There is no situation that we can't or don't handle. Bio-One franchises are the last line of defense.

BIO-ONE FUN FACTS

- 80+ Successful Franchises Nationwide
- Low Start-Up Cost and Minimal Operational Overhead
- No Restrictive Territories, Work anywhere in your State
- Work with Law Enforcement, FBI, and Department of Justice

BIO-ONE, THE MOST EXCITING FRANCHISE IN EXISTENCE

As a Bio-One franchise, you will team up and work shoulder-to-shoulder with local law enforcement, the FBI and all first responders. This is a career that truly lets you be a hero in your community. If you're a fan of hit shows like CSI and Dexter, the life we lead might just be for you.

Do you ever wonder what happens after the police leave a crime scene? Someone has to recover the scene and is going to be paid quite handsomely for doing so…is that person you?

Be a part of a franchise where no two days are ever the same. Who wants to own just another cleaning company or basic restoration company with a ton of competition? Be a part of something fulfilling, rewarding and exciting. Become a Bio-One franchise owner and live the American dream. Inquire Now!

Bio-One
CRIME & TRAUMA SCENE CLEANING

For Bio-One Information:

Bio-One Inc.
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Info@BioOneInc.com
(720) 463-3004

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY SHUTTERSTOCK/COSTELL077

GROWTH ENGINES

Our annual ranking of the 150 fastest-growing franchises in the nation.

by TRACY STAPP HEROLD

Want a peek into what's hot in the world of franchising right now? *Entrepreneur*'s list of the fastest-growing franchises is a great place to start. These 150 companies added a combined 9,768 franchise units in North America between July 2017 and July 2018, according to the data collected for the 2019 Franchise 500 ranking—proving them to be some of the most popular concepts with franchisees.

Our hot list contains companies old and new. It's topped by Taco Bell, a brand that's thrived for decades, but it doesn't take long to find lesser-known brands. There are franchises with thousands of units, as well as ones with less than a hundred (though that's not likely to last for long if their growth rate continues). As is typical in franchising, quick-service food reigns supreme on this list—there are 30 companies represented. The personal-care industry is right behind with 29, thanks especially to the ever-expanding fitness category. Maintenance services, children's businesses, and hotels are also seeing fast growth.

Companies are ranked based on their net franchise unit growth in the U.S. and Canada between July 2017 and July 2018. Ties are broken based on percentage growth. Remember as you read through the ranking that it is not intended as a recommendation of any particular company. Growth may be a good indicator of a strong franchise opportunity, but it's only one of many factors to consider, and you should always do your own thorough research before investing.

1
Taco Bell
Mexican food
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
4
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
6,299/606
FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+351

2
Dunkin'
Coffee, doughnuts, baked goods
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
2
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
12,676/0
FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+312

3
Jan-Pro Franchising International
Commercial cleaning
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
39
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
8,790/0
FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+304

4
Orangetheory Fitness
Group personal training
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
25
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
977/23
FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+246

5
N2 Publishing
Monthly community publications
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
445
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
998/4
FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+241

6
Jack in the Box
Burgers
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
19
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
2,085/157
FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+227

7
Stratus Building Solutions
Environmentally friendly commercial cleaning
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
42
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,549/0
FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+224

8
Dream Vacations
Travel agencies
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
101
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,331/0
FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+212

9
Planet Fitness
Fitness clubs
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
7
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,540/68
FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+182

10
Great Clips
Hair salons
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
8
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
4,261/0
FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+170

11
Club Pilates Franchise
Reformer Pilates classes
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
134
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
367/0
FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+163

Taco Bell

TACO BELL TOPS our fastest-growing ranking for the first time this year, and the brand shows no signs of slowing down, with plans to open 1,000 new domestic restaurants by 2022. Almost a third of those will be the company's Urban In-Line or Cantina concepts, which do away with the drive-through. This makes it possible for Taco Bell to expand into previously underserved areas, like New York City, where 125 new restaurants are planned over the next five years. Both concepts feature open kitchens, local artwork, shareable tapas-style menus, free wi-fi, and outlets for charging devices, often in a smaller footprint than a traditional Taco Bell.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF TACO BELL

12
7-Eleven
Convenience stores
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
10
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
63,754/2,439
FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+161

13
Kona Ice
Shaved-ice trucks
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
67
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,048/18
FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+154

14
Sonic Drive-In
Burgers, hot dogs, chicken sandwiches, breakfast, ice cream, beverages
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
3
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
3,365/228
FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+153

15
Buildingstars International
Commercial cleaning
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
199
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
877/6
FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+142

16
CPR Cell Phone Repair
Electronics repairs and sales
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
24
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
507/4
FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+136

17
Pizza Hut
Pizza, pasta, wings
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
16
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
15,325/93
FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+136

18
McDonald's
Burgers, chicken, salads, beverages
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
1
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
34,521/2,885
FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+136

19
F45 Training
Fitness studios
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
297
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
793/5
FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+134

20
9Round
Kickboxing fitness circuit-training programs
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
112
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
708/7
FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+131

21
HomeVestors of America
Home buying, repair, and selling
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
30
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
980/0
FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+129

22
Jersey Mike's Subs
Subs
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
9
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,347/84
FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+128

23
Anytime Fitness
Fitness centers
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
20
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
4,043/38
FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+113

24
The UPS Store
Postal, business, printing, and communications services
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
5
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
5,071/0
FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+92

25
Vanguard Cleaning Systems
Commercial cleaning
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
76
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
3,327/0
FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+90

26
Fyzical Therapy & Balance Centers
Physical therapy, balance and vestibular therapy, preventive wellness services
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
64
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
310/6
FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+88

27
Mathnasium Learning Centers
Math tutoring
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
40
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
924/13
FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+88

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF N2 PUBLISHING

N2 Publishing

WHAT DOES N2 Publishing (#5) have in common with Netflix, Facebook, and Etsy? A culture deck. The community magazine franchise features the 53-slide deck on its website, outlining the values, beliefs, and behaviors it expects all franchisees and employees to share. As the deck states, for N2, "Cultural fit is a requirement, not an extra." With startup costs as low as $975, the company has grown swiftly after just a few years franchising—while making it clear that "brilliant jerks" need not apply.

28
uBreakiFix
Electronics repairs

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
29

TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
393/28

FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+86

29
KFC U.S.
Chicken

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
23

TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
20,775/668

FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+85

30
Fit Body Boot Camp
Indoor fitness boot camps

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
122

TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
540/1

FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+84

31
Burn Boot Camp
Women's fitness centers

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
424

TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
178/5

FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+80

32
Jimmy John's Gourmet Sandwiches
Sandwiches

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
11

TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
2,737/56

FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+80

33
Tropical Smoothie Cafe
Smoothies, sandwiches, wraps, salads, soups, coffee drinks

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
65

TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
676/1

FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+79

34
Holiday Inn and Holiday Inn Express
Hotels

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
36

TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
3,867/3

FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+79

35
Motel 6
Economy hotels

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
73

TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
908/395

FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+78

36
Home2 Suites by Hilton
Midprice extended-stay hotels

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
89

TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
237/0

FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+76

37
Blaze Fast-Fire'd Pizza
Assembly-line pizza

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
61

TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
277/6

FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+76

38
Auntie Anne's Hand-Rolled Soft Pretzels
Soft pretzels

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
79

TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,934/13

FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+76

39
Board & Brush Creative Studio
DIY wood-sign workshops

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
Not Ranked

TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
147/5

FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+72

F45 Training

F45 TRAINING (#19), which originated in Australia, is quickly making its mark on the U.S. fitness industry. And part of its expansion has been through a unique program that brings its 45-minute high-intensity interval-training classes to college campuses, including USC, Johns Hopkins, and the University of Texas. There are 25 universities on board so far—most acting as franchisees—with some offering classes to students for free. The company plans to sell at least 50 more units to colleges this year.

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF F45 TRAINING

40
Smoothie King
Smoothies, healthful snacks, health products
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
22
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
944/28
FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+72

41
Fazoli's Franchising Systems
Italian food
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
252
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
161/52
FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+70

42
Carstar Franchise Systems
Auto collision repair
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
96
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
603/1
FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+70

43
Sport Clips
Men's sports-themed hair salons
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
17
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,707/69
FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+69

44
Supercuts
Hair salons
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
31
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,889/913
FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+69

45
RE/MAX
Real estate
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
15
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
7,985/0
FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+69

46
STEM For Kids
Biomedicine, engineering, and coding programs for ages 4 to 14
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
415
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
75/5
FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+68

47
N-Hance Wood Refinishing
Wood cabinet and floor refinishing
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
238
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
541/0
FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+60

48
Restoration 1
Water, fire, smoke, and mold restoration
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
165
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
166/0
FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+57

49
Cinnabon
Cinnamon rolls, baked goods, coffee
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
74
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,512/1
FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+57

50
GymGuyz
Mobile personal training
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
231
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
194/4
FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+56

51
Checkers Drive-In Restaurants
Burgers, fries
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
88
TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
623/256
FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+56

Sport Clips

LAST YEAR was a banner year for Sport Clips (#43). As the brand celebrated its 25th anniversary, it served more than 33 million clients (up from 31 million in 2017) and generated $685 million in system-wide sales, an increase of 10 percent. Though smaller than some of its competitors, Sport Clips is the only hair-care franchise with locations in all 50 states, and in addition to expanding that already wide footprint, the company launched a new mobile app, offering check-in, wait time, and reminder features.

PHOTOGRPAH COURTESY OF SPORT CLIPS

52
Marco's Pizza
Pizza, subs, wings, cheese bread
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
83
TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
905/0
FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+56

53
Anago Cleaning Systems
Commercial cleaning
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
52
TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,559/0
FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+56

54
Hampton by Hilton
Midprice hotels
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
27
TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
2,381/0
FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+56

55
Mosquito Joe
Outdoor pest control
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
47
TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
286/2
FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+54

56
Hand and Stone Massage and Facial Spa
Massage and spa services
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
133
TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
379/1
FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+54

57
Big O Tires
Tires, tire services, auto products
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
172
TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
449/0
FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+54

58
Ace Hardware
Hardware and home-improvement stores
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
13
TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
4,946/122
FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+53

59
Merry Maids
Residential cleaning
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
38
TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,719/5
FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+52

60
Firehouse Subs
Subs
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
49
TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,118/37
FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+52

61
iLoveKickboxing.com
Kickboxing fitness classes
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
442
TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
259/5
FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+51

62
Budget Blinds
Window coverings, window film, rugs, accessories
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
35
TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,154/0
FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+50

63
CycleBar
Indoor cycling classes
2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
492
TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
150/0
FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+49

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF GOLDEN CORRAL

Golden Corral

ONLY ONE full-service restaurant made our fastest-growing list: Golden Corral (#108). That's thanks in part to the new restaurant design the company unveiled in late 2017, which adds almost 1,000 square feet to the dining room (while removing the same from the now more efficient kitchen) and includes homey details like wood-toned ceilings, a stone fireplace, and tiled walls. Existing and new franchisees have been enthusiastic, with 12 new units already under construction this year and more in the pipeline.

ChemStation

An Opportunity to Manufacture Your Future

The Opportunity

As the owner of a franchised ChemStation Manufacturing Center, you will be in the business of custom-formulating biodegradable, environmentally friendly products and delivering them into refillable containers at your customers' locations. ChemStation is a proven, established manufacturing business. Since 1984, we have offered the opportunity to many who wanted to be their own boss.

You will be your own boss and own a business while still retaining an association with a head office organization that can provide the training, support, and national presence that solo startups have to cope without.

You're Not Alone

As the CEO of your own ChemStation Manufacturing Company, you are in business for yourself, not by yourself. You will have access to:

- National brand recognition
- Corporate support
- Training – introductory, regional, industry-specific
- Research and development
- Technical support
- Equipment fabrication and service
- Proprietary software
- Regulatory assistance
- National accounts

You will join an elite group of business owners on the cutting edge of the manufacturing process. Manufacturing has been the foundation of the world's economy. ChemStation takes the typical manufacturing process, adds a high-tech twist to provide a precision, custom built, chemical product at a competitive price. ChemStation is an industry leader in the Mass Customization manufacturing process.

Your Tools

You will have the finest bulk delivery program on the market. A complete training package will provide you with all the product and equipment knowledge you need to appreciate the uniqueness of ChemStation. No one else has our trade secret formulas. No one has our computerized blending capabilities or our delivery metering system. You will have the state-of-the-art H700 manufacturing system. At the push of a button, you control the manufacture of general purpose cleaners, floor strippers, vehicle washes, food processing concentrates, heavy-duty degreasers, and many other custom blends.

Your Customer Base

ChemStation has already opened the doors in a number of business disciplines and niche groups:

- Asphalt
- Concrete
- Brewing
- Landfills
- Airports
- Manufacturing
- Printing
- Paper
- Bottling
- Food Plants
- Car Washes
- Refineries

Additionally, you will open new markets and be exposed to national accounts inside and outside your territory. You and your sales team will address these markets with a delivery concept that is fresh, original, and unduplicated.

"ChemStation is a great franchise for the person with the business skills and desire to run his or her own company. You receive professional training and continuous support services from ChemStation's International Headquarters. Plus, their unique, environmentally friendly system gives you a distinct advantage over the competition. Which is why, over the past twenty two years, we've purchased five ChemStation franchises."

—Skipper Hunt
ChemStation of North Carolina, et al.

For more information contact
franchise@chemstation.com

64
Transworld Business Advisors
Business brokerages, franchise consulting

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
257

TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
274/0

FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+49

65
Baymont by Wyndham
Hotels

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
140

TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
497/0

FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+48

66
Code Ninjas
Computer-coding learning centers for children

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
Not Ranked

TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
46/0

FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+46

67
Cornwell Quality Tools
Automotive tools and equipment

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
81

TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
689/0

FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+46

68
Chester's
Chicken

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
110

TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,192/0

FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+46

69
McAlister's Deli
Sandwiches, salads, baked potatoes

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
41

TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
400/28

FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+45

70
Mac Tools
Automotive tools and equipment

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
54

TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,266/8

FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+45

71
Amazing Lash Studio
Eyelash-extension salons

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
344

TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
191/0

FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+44

72
Motto Mortgage
Mortgage brokerages

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
Not Ranked

TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
70/0

FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+43

73
Crunch Franchise
Fitness centers

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
148

TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
213/26

FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+43

74
Red Roof Inn
Economy hotels

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
62

TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
432/121

FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+43

75
Trademark Collection by Wyndham
Hotels

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
Not Ranked

TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
98/0

FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+42

76
Keller Williams
Real estate

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
32

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
978/0

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+42

77
911 Restoration
Residential and commercial property restoration

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
57

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
179/0

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+41

78
College Nannies, Sitters and Tutors
Nanny-placement, babysitting, tutoring

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
138

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
188/0

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+41

79
GoliathTech
Foundation systems for the construction industry

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
268

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
202/0

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+41

80
Cookie Cutters Haircuts for Kids
Children's hair salons

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
147

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
82/1

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+40

81
Realty One Group
Real estate

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
136

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
99/21

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+39

82
Moe's Southwest Grill
Mexican food

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
149

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
716/5

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+39

83
Patchmaster
Drywall repair

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
Not Ranked

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
38/9

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+38

Top States/

California is home to the highest number of fastest growing franchises, with 21 companies headquartered in the state. Other well-represented states include Texas (15 companies), Florida (14), Georgia (10), and New Jersey (10).

84
Freddy's Frozen Custard & Steakburgers
Frozen custard, steakburgers, hot dogs

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
51

TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
287/24

FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+38

85
Fit4Mom
Prenatal and postpartum fitness and wellness programs

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
Not Ranked

TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
297/1

FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+38

86
Culver's
Frozen custard, specialty burgers

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
6

TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
661/6

FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+38

87
Tide Dry Cleaners
Dry cleaning

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
167

TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
82/11

FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+37

88
Real Property Management
Property management

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
491

TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
310/0

FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+36

89
Matco Tools
Mechanics' tools and equipment

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
37

TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,791/2

FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+36

90
Visiting Angels
Nonmedical home care

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
169

TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
620/0

FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+35

91
The Camp Transformation Center
Fitness/weight-loss services

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
458

TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
80/13

FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+34

92
Patrice & Associates
Hospitality, retail, and sales recruiting

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
155

TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
141/1

FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+34

93
The Learning Experience Academy of Early Education
Preschool/educational childcare

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
84

TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
192/20

FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+33

94
The Joint
Chiropractic services

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
109

TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
367/48

FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+33

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF NEKTER JUICE BAR

Nekter Juice Bar

NEKTER JUICE BAR (#97) follows a cluster approach to growth, entering adjoining markets with three to five locations, usually about three to five miles apart. The brand first expanded throughout its native California, then entered nearby Nevada, Arizona, and Colorado. Now it's spreading nationwide and expects to open 75 more stores this year. Part of Nekter's secret to success is a national sourcing and distribution program that ensures each store stays stocked with the local produce customers crave.

95
Sunup Insurance Services
Insurance

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
Not Ranked

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
47/0

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+32

96
Pure Barre
Barre fitness classes and apparel

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
267

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
486/13

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+32

97
Nekter Juice Bar
Juices, smoothies, acai bowls, non-dairy ice cream

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
214

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
69/47

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+31

98
Challenge Island
Educational enrichment programs

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
307

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
77/3

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+31

99
Happy Tax Franchising
Tax preparation, electronic filing, bookkeeping/accounting

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
Not Ranked

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
132/0

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+31

100
FirstLight Home Care Franchising
Nonmedical home care

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
222

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
185/0

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+31

101
Homewood Suites by Hilton
Upscale extended-stay hotels

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
70

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
468/0

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+31

102
Lawn Doctor
Lawn, tree, and shrub care; mosquito and tick control

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
58

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
568/0

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+31

103
Clean Juice
Organic juices, smoothies, acai bowls

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
Not Ranked

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
47/7

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+30

104
My Salon Suite/ Salon Plaza
Salon suites

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
313

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
70/25

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+30

105
Green Home Solutions
Mold remediation and indoor air-quality services

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
Not Ranked

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
165/0

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+30

106
Rent-A-Center
Rent-to-own furniture, electronics, computers, appliances

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
200

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
180/2,316

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+30

107
CMIT Solutions
IT and business services for SMBs

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
91

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
205/0

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+30

108
Golden Corral Restaurants
Family steakhouses, buffets, and bakeries

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
34

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
448/43

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+30

109
Destination Athlete
Youth sports apparel, equipment, and services

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
216

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
73/0

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+29

110
1-800-Packouts
Building contents packing, cleaning, storage, and restoration

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
Not Ranked

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
71/1

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+29

111
JDog Junk Removal & Hauling
Junk removal

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
493

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co. Owned)
95/0

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+29

112
360 Painting
Residential and commercial painting

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
265

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co. Owned)
111/0

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+29

113
Pet Supplies Plus
Retail pet supplies and services

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
46

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
227/215

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+29

114
Primrose School Franchising
Educational childcare

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
55

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
382/0

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+29

115
FastSigns International
Signs, graphics

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
95

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
683/0

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+29

116
Hilton Garden Inn
Upscale midprice hotels

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
78

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
788/0

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+29

117
Skyhawks Sports & Supertots Sports Academy
Sports camps and programs

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
177

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
91/63

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+28

118
TeamLogic IT
IT managed services for businesses

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
176

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
143/0

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+28

119
Phenix Salon Suites Franchising
Salon suites

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
197

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
227/3

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+28

120
Bin There Dump That
Residential-friendly dumpster rentals

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
250

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
148/0

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+27

121
Workout Anytime 24/7
24-hour health clubs

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
263

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
156/1

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+27

122
Wireless Zone
Wireless devices, services, and accessories

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
355

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
367/0

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+27

123
Which Wich Superior Sandwiches
Sandwiches

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
146

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
465/2

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+27

124
Kumon Math & Reading Centers
Supplemental education

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
14

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
25,854/27

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+27

125
Frutta Bowls Franchising
Acai, pitaya, and kale bowls, and fruit smoothies

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
Not Ranked

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

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+26

126
Freedom Boat Club
Membership boat clubs

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
270

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
149/19

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+26

127
PuroClean
Property damage restoration and remediation

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
179

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
263/0

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+26

128
Circle K
Convenience stores

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
152

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
2,563/5,620

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+26

129
Rooter-Man
Plumbing, drain, and sewer cleaning

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
93

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
639/46

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+26

130
Nurse Next Door Home Care Services
Medical/nonmedical home care

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
190

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
146/9

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+25

131
Weichert Real Estate Affiliates
Real estate

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
103

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
348/131

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+25

132
The Patch Boys
Drywall repair

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
Not Ranked

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
59/1

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+24

133
Goldfish Swim School Franchising
Infant and child swimming lessons

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
50

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
69/1

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+24

134
Dogtopia
Dog daycare, boarding, and spa services

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
204

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
69/6

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+24

135
Brightway Insurance
Property and casualty insurance

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
127

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

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+24

136
Novus Glass
Auto glass repair and replacement

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
120

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
1,991/32

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+24

137
Signal 88 Security
Private security guard and patrol services

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
256

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
405/0

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+24

138
Deka Lash
Eyelash extensions

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
Not Ranked

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
38/2

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+23

139
Urban Air Adventure Park
Trampoline parks/ entertainment centers

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
97

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
46/5

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+23

140
Snapology
STEAM education programs

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
Not Ranked

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
52/1

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+23

141
Aussie Pet Mobile
Mobile pet grooming

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
478

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

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+23

142
Hommati
3-D tours, aerial videos, and other services for real estate agents

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
Not Ranked

TOTAL UNITS
(Franchised / Co.-Owned)
22/0

FRANCHISE GROWTH
(U.S. & Canada)
+22

143
Modern Acupuncture
Acupuncture

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
Not Ranked

TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
23/0

FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+22

144
Concrete Craft
Decorative concrete coatings

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
240

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

FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+22

145
Duck Donuts Franchising
Donuts and coffee

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
247

TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
69/0

FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+22

146
Supporting Strategies
Bookkeeping and operational support for small businesses

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
Not Ranked

TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
85/0

FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+22

147
InXpress
Shipping services

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
410

TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
325/0

FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+22

148
Scooter's Coffee
Espresso drinks, smoothies, pastries

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
460

TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
171/16

FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+22

149
Christian Brothers Automotive
Auto repair

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
210

TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
185/1

FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+22

150
AmeriSpec Home Inspection Services
Home inspections

2019 FRANCHISE 500 RANK
260

TOTAL UNITS (Franchised / Co.-Owned)
274/0

FRANCHISE GROWTH (U.S. & Canada)
+22

Room to Grow/

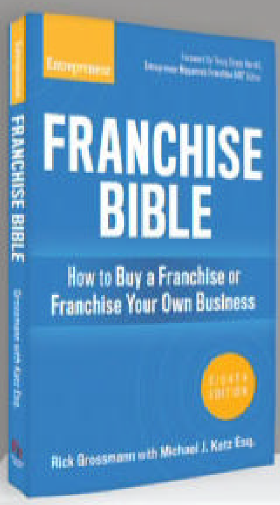
Only 37 of the fastest growing franchises had more than 1,000 franchise units open as of mid 2018.

OPPORTUNITY SPOTLIGHT

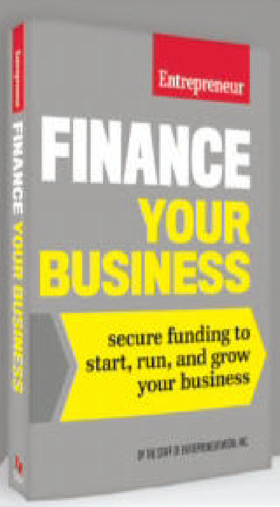
One of these opportunities could mark the turning point to owning a business of your own, realizing your personal dreams and securing true financial independence. So go ahead, make your first move by considering all that they have to offer in this Opportunity Spotlight. Then make your first call.

Starting a Business

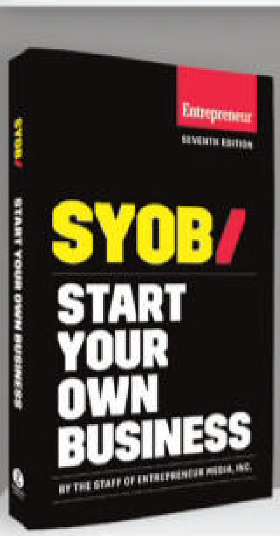
You've got the idea and the passion; now learn what you need to know to hit the ground running



Franchise Bible



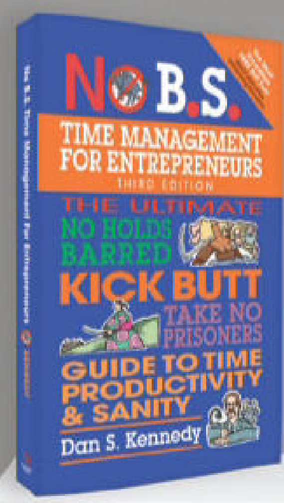
Finance Your Business



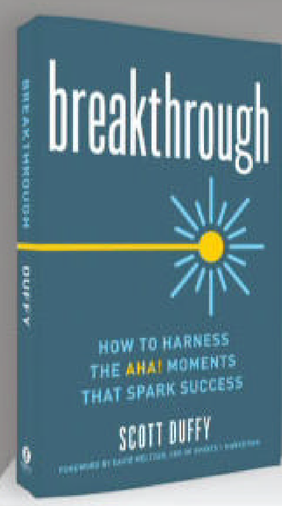
Start Your Own Business

Planning

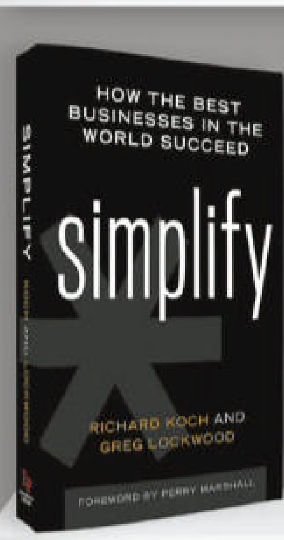
Preparation is key to your success—uncover valuable tools to establish and grow your business



No B.S. Time Management for Entrepreneurs



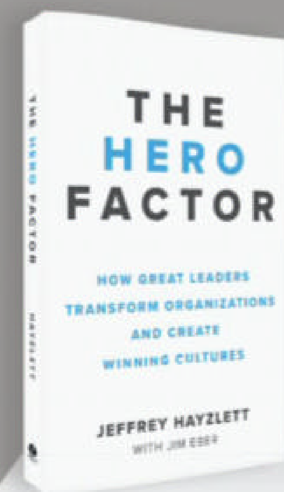
Breakthrough



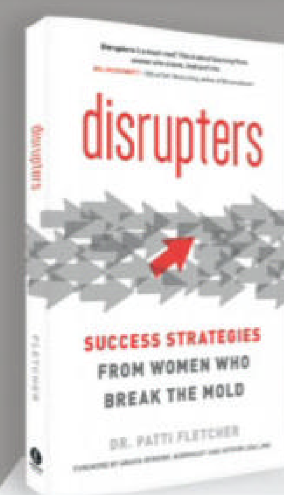
Simplify

Leadership

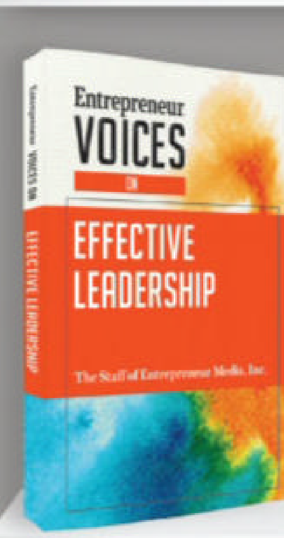
Your success is driven by your ability to lead—discover strategies and techniques to improve your leadership skills



The Hero Factor



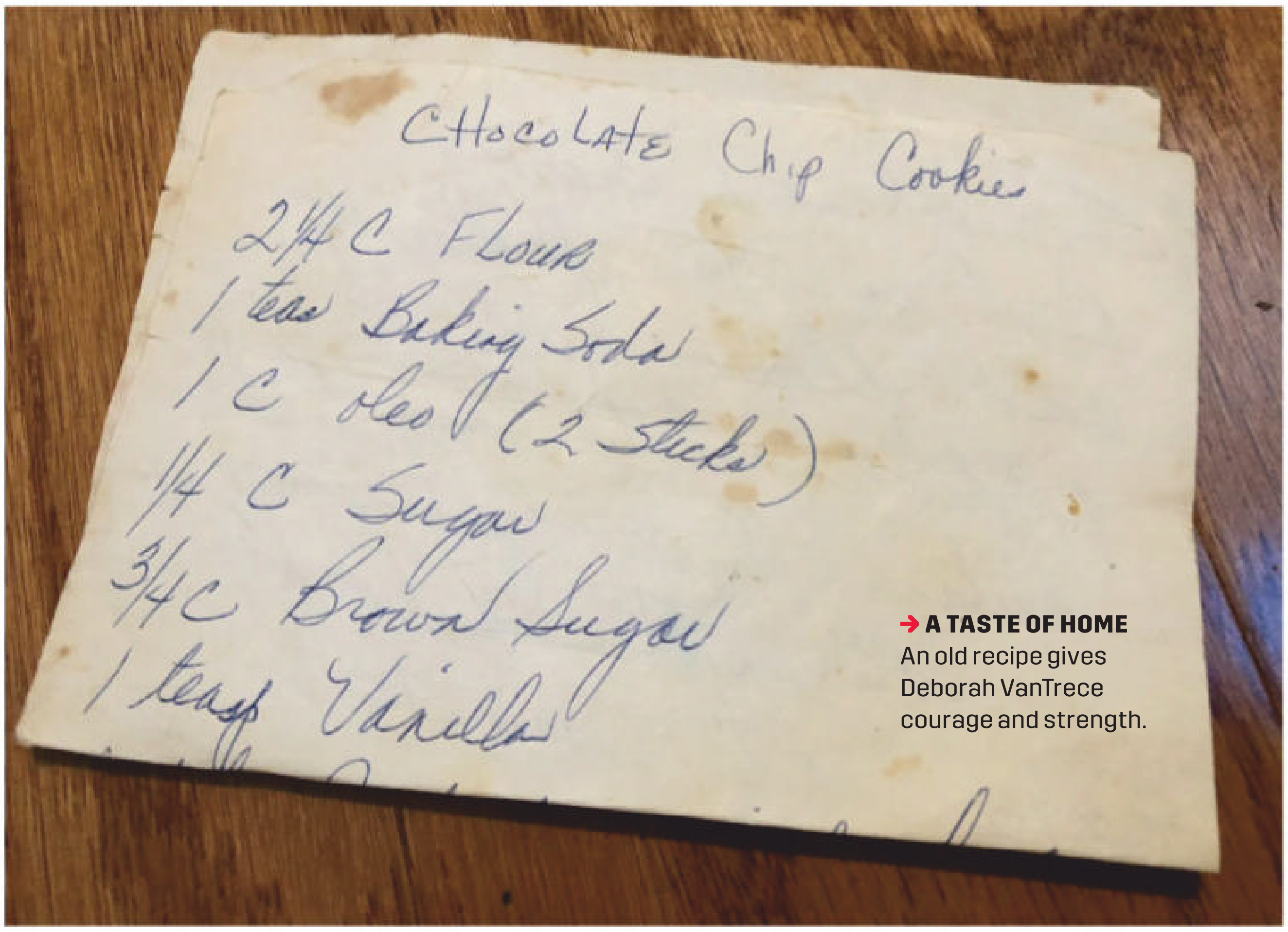
Disrupters



Entrepreneur Voices on Effective Leadership

Shelve Under

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



→ A TASTE OF HOME
An old recipe gives Deborah VanTrece courage and strength.

A Sweet Reminder

by Deborah VanTrece, chef and owner, Twisted Soul Cookhouse and Pours

I keep a recipe in my bedside table. It's for chocolate chip cookies with black walnuts, and it's handwritten by my mom, who is deceased. She received the recipe from her mother and passed it to me long before I'd go on to become a professional chef. I keep it safe in a plastic bag, and I probably look at it three or four times a month, more often if things are rough.

As a child, I spent a lot of time with my mom in the kitchen. It was the place in our home where family gathered. I grew up in the Midwest during a time of civil unrest, in an era of segregation and racial tension. My mom taught me how to navigate this time, and how to free myself from boundaries set by others. When I eventually moved to Atlanta to pursue my restaurant career, I experienced some culture shock: I was a black, gay woman suddenly living in the South, working in an industry dominated by white men. A lot has been thrown at me, and there have been struggles. As a business owner, I've learned the importance of tenacity and the value of networking with others. In this diverse environment, I've found many systems of support and understanding.

But I also still rely often upon the lessons my mother taught me. She made me realize that anything is achievable. She made me fearless: Failure is not something I entertain. And this is why I keep that cookie recipe so close to me. When I look at the recipe, it makes me feel like my mom is still with me, and it reminds me that I can face this business with confidence. My mom was a hardworking lady, and when I remember all she did for us, it gives me strength. I have other recipes from her, but the fact that this one is handwritten feels special—she entrusted me with a piece of who she was, and it lets me have little conversations with her.

Today, I'm the chef and owner of Twisted Soul Cookhouse and Pours in Atlanta. And, of course, Mama Helen's Chocolate Chip Cookie is on our menu. It can put a smile on anyone's face.

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."**

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF DEBORAH VANTRECE