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You don't need a $5,000-a-month marketing firm to get results. With the Ultimate 2025 Social Media & Freelancer Marketing Bundle, you'll gain lifetime access to 10 expertly designed courses covering social media strategy, personal branding, and online business growth—all for just $34.99 (MSRP: $200) for a limited time.

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OpenAI’s New Agent Just Changed the Rules — Here’s How Solopreneurs Are Turning it Into Profit

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Most solopreneurs are still using AI like a note-taking app — but OpenAI’s newest update just turned ChatGPT into something far more dangerous (and profitable).

This isn’t a smarter chatbot. It’s a fully autonomous AI Agent — a 24/7 virtual worker that can browse websites, dig through inboxes, reverse-engineer competitors, and even handle your Instagram comments… without your constant input.

In this video, I’ll show you how top solopreneurs are scaling faster than ever with this Agent — automating lead generation, outreach and admin so they can grow without adding headcount.

Inside, you'll discover:

- **Instagram lead recovery:** How to find missed opportunities buried in your comments and DMs – and turn them into revenue on autopilot.
- **Next-level competitor intel:** Reverse-engineer winning content strategies and spot gaps your competitors missed.
- **Hyper-personalized outreach:** Build targeted lead lists, research decision-makers and send context-rich cold emails – all in minutes.
- **Podcast & media pitching:** Find the perfect shows, research hosts and create irresistible pitches that get replies.
- **Admin & follow-ups handled:** Clear your inbox, chase proposals and keep leads warm – without lifting a finger.

This isn't a "someday" AI feature. It's here now. Whether you're a consultant, creator, coach, or solo founder – if you don't learn to work with Agents like this, you're leaving money (and time) on the table.

The AI Success Kit is available to download for free, along with a chapter from my new book, *The Wolf is at The Door.*

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‘We’re in a Whole New World’: Mark Cuban Has 60 AI Apps on His Phone, According to Emma Grede (And She Might Not Be Exaggerating)

On a recent episode of the “Aspire With Emma Grede” podcast, billionaire entrepreneur Mark Cuban said that he thinks every business owner should be learning how to use AI by now, or at least “just asking it questions” — and if you aren’t, your business could be in trouble.

Grede, the co-founder of Skims and CEO of Good American, asked Cuban what he’d say to people who “don’t want any more technology” in their lives. He responded that it would be like saying no to WiFi and instead sticking to dial-up Internet service.

Related: Emma Grede Dropped Out of School at 16. Now the Skims Boss Runs a $4 Billion Empire.

“That’s like [a business] saying back in the day, ‘I don’t need to use a PC. I don’t need to use the internet. I don’t need a cell phone or WiFi,'” he said. “Those businesses died. Done.”

Cuban and Grede previously worked together on two seasons of “Shark Tank.”

When reflecting on the early days of technology, Cuban said that when he was building his business, “there was new software every day, the PCs and the networks were getting faster, and bandwidth was getting faster. And AI is the same way now.” He compared the current AI rush to the invention of the personal computer.

And according to what Grede told *Fortune* (that Cuban has 60 AI apps on his phone), he’s clearly at the forefront.

“We really delved into AI, [and he] gave me a new urgency around how I use AI,” Grede told the outlet. “He gave me a kick.”

Related: Mark Cuban Spends ‘Most’ of His Time Using This Decades-Old Communication Method. Here’s Why He Prefers It.

On the podcast, Cuban said that if you want to be an entrepreneur, you need to start “playing” with AI to get a sense of how it works. Cuban noted that the technology can help businesses streamline everything from content creation to slide decks to financial reports.

“Learn how to prompt; it becomes like a mentor,” Cuban said. “It becomes like having an entire staff of a thousand business professors.”

“We’re in a whole new world,” he added.

Related: AI Is Transforming the Workplace — Including Social Media Marketing. Here’s How Businesses Can Actually Use It.

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Here's How a New Employee's Major TikTok Mistake Led a Cookie Company to Viral Fame — and a 46% Increase in Sales

Gluten-free cookie dough brand, Sweet Loren's, has gone viral before (both Kylie Jenner and Glen Powell have touted the sweet treats), but this week, the brand achieved incredible viral success — and by total mistake.

While trying to update her personal TikTok name, the company's new social media manager, Ryan Weitz, accidentally changed Sweet Loren's TikTok name to her own — "Ryan." She says she immediately tried to change it back, only to find out she would be unable to do so for seven days.

"So I don't get in trouble, please make this follower count go up," she says.

Related: This Is What a $300 Million TikTok Strategy Looks Like

@sweetlorens new followers have the chance to get our new

> *flavor for free before it's on shelf ? #socialmediamanager #smm #helpme #jobstruggles #contentcreator #helpyourgirlout #managersbelike ♬ original sound – Ryan*

After telling her boss, the duo decided to do what any good social media manager would do – make a TikTok about it.

One week and 42 videos later, Sweet Loren's is still enjoying viral success, with more than 2.2 million views so far. The company has gained 10,000 followers in the last week, and website-based sales increased 46%, the social media team told PRWeek.

"TikTok is a place where you can have a little fun, so we decided to lean into it and create content around the moment," Weitz told the outlet. "I was pushed to really go for it, be unafraid, and it's paid off."

> *@sweetlorens looking like I maybe won't get fired but please keep following to help me out ??? #sweetlorens #socialmediamanager #socialmediastruggles #internmessup #brandhumor #companytok #workfail ♬ original sound – Ryan*

Sweet Loren's finally got the ability to change its name back on Friday (though it still has yet to do so).

Join top CEOs, founders and operators at the Level Up conference to unlock strategies for scaling your business, boosting revenue and building sustainable success.

Related: Want to Go Viral? 3 Strategies to Make Your Next Campaign Go Viral

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This Overlooked Strategy Is Becoming a Game-Changer in Private Equity

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In private equity, the smartest general partners (GPs) are realizing that co-investments aren't just a fundraising sweetener; they're a strategic lever. Done right, they strengthen the portfolio, deepen LP relationships and reduce overall risk exposure. Yet many GPs still treat co-investing as an afterthought rather than a core element of fund strategy.

In today's climate, where LPs are more selective, underwriting

standards are higher and trust is harder to earn, co-investments can be the edge that separates high-performing GPs from the pack. Here's how the most sophisticated firms are using co-investing not just to raise capital, but to build resilient portfolios and tighter LP alignment.

Related: The Collaboration Between Limited Partners and Growth Partners: Investors' Perspective

Why co-investments matter more than ever

The co-investment market has matured rapidly over the past decade. According to Preqin's Global Private Equity Report, nearly 70% of LPs now expect co-investment opportunities from their fund managers. This demand is no longer limited to mega-institutional family offices. Sovereign wealth funds and even smaller foundations are seeking ways to increase exposure to direct deals while lowering blended fee structures.

Meanwhile, a 2023 report from PitchBook emphasized that co-investment volume is rising even in volatile markets, fueled by LPs looking for more control, lower fees and deeper access to quality deals.

For GPs, this presents both a challenge and an opportunity. The challenge: Co-investments can strain internal resources and slow deal execution if not managed well. The opportunity: When built into the fund's operations and strategy from day one, co-investments enhance portfolio flexibility, attract strategic LPs and reduce concentration risk, all without diluting fund governance.

Co-investing as a tool for

portfolio construction

Smart GPs treat co-investment capacity as part of their capital stack, not a separate, ad hoc offering. This mindset allows them to:

- **Pursue larger deals** than the fund alone could support, without increasing fund-level concentration.
- **Add diversification** by allocating fund capital to core positions and inviting co-investors into adjacent or higher-risk assets.
- **Act quickly** on opportunistic deals by pre-qualifying LPs who can co-invest with short notice.

Let’s say your $100M fund is targeting 10 core platform deals of $10M each. You come across a $25M acquisition that fits the thesis but exceeds your single-asset exposure cap. With co-investment capital lined up, you can still lead the deal, funding $10M from the fund and $15M from co-investors. This approach maintains portfolio balance while giving LPs direct access to a larger asset.

More importantly, it builds your reputation as a GP who brings access, not just capital.

For a case study of this dynamic in action, this piece from Hamilton Lane illustrates how co-investments have become an essential tool in modern private market strategy.

Related: **The Risks And Rewards Of Direct Investment For LPs**

Reducing risk while increasing ownership

One underappreciated benefit of co-investing is how it allows GPs to retain control of high-conviction assets without

overexposing the core fund. In many cases, the most attractive deals are also the most capital-intensive. Without co-investment partners, a GP must choose between taking a smaller slice or over-allocating from the fund.

By bringing in co-investors, GPs can secure majority or lead positions while staying within prudent limits. This improves control over governance, exit timing and value creation plans, all critical levers in reducing downside risk.

Additionally, co-investing can be a powerful tool in navigating market cycles. During downturns, GPs can selectively syndicate capital-heavy deals to preserve dry powder, while still deploying into discounted opportunities. The BVCA's 2023 Private Equity Guide offers insights into how firms are adjusting their co-investment behavior during a recession.

The operational backbone of a co-investment strategy

Of course, offering co-investments isn't just about having the deal flow. The GPs who excel at this have built internal systems to handle:

- **Legal structuring:** Quick SPV setups, allocation mechanics and clear governance roles
- **LP segmentation:** Understanding which investors have the appetite, capacity and decision-making speed to co-invest
- **Data sharing:** Secure, real-time access to diligence materials and post-investment reporting
- **Compliance and fairness:** Ensuring transparent allocation that doesn't disadvantage the core fund

This operational backbone is often the difference between

firms that “can” offer co-investments and those that do so consistently, cleanly and at scale.

For GPs looking to mature their fund ops, platforms like Carta and Juniper Square simplify co-investment administration, LP communications and investor onboarding.

More advanced GPs are also using tools like Passthrough to streamline subscription documents or Anduin for automated investor workflows.

Co-investment fosters lasting trust

From an LP point of view, we see co-investing as a way to display confidence and alignment. It gives them more say, more return and often a larger role at the table. When done fairly, it turns your investors into what they are — full partners. In a world that is becoming more relationship-based in terms of fundraising, GPs who put in consistent, thoughtful co-investments are at an advantage.

- Retain top LPs in future funds.
- Convert one-time investors into anchor commitments.
- Win allocations in competitive fundraising cycles.

According to HarbourVest’s 2023 LP Survey, nearly 80% of LPs reported higher satisfaction and trust in managers who offered co-investment access, especially when the deals performed well and were communicated transparently.

Related: Why Direct Investments By LPs Are On the Rise

A word of caution: Don’t over-promise

With all its advantages, co-investing is not a silver bullet. When used excessively or poorly, it may bring execution risk,

create inefficiencies and bring LPs into conflict. The most common shortcomings are:

- Providing too much in co-investments, devaluing their quality
- Granting favors with allocations
- Procrastinating closings from side deal logistics
- Failing to coordinate internal bandwidth to handle the complexity

The best firms are selective. They set expectations with LPs early, often in the PPM or DDQ, and focus on quality over quantity. One excellent co-investment that delivers a win can be more powerful than five rushed ones that don’t perform.

Co-investments are no longer optional; they’re a defining feature of modern private equity. But the edge doesn’t come from offering them. It comes from integrating them into your portfolio construction, risk management and LP strategy.

The smartest GPs know this. They use co-investing not just to fill out a cap table, but to build durable LP relationships, de-risk big bets and unlock operational agility. As fundraising becomes more competitive and LPs demand more from their managers, those who treat co-investing as a core fund ops capability, not a last-minute offer, will stand out.

In private equity, the smartest general partners (GPs) are realizing that co-investments aren’t just a fundraising sweetener; they’re a strategic lever. Done right, they strengthen the portfolio, deepen LP relationships and reduce overall risk exposure. Yet many GPs still treat co-investing as an afterthought rather than a core element of fund strategy.

In today’s climate, where LPs are more selective, underwriting

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Tricks to Prevent Jet Lag, According to Science

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Any traveler who crosses multiple time zones is likely to experience jet lag. The good news, however, is that jet lag can be prevented. Whether you’re traveling for the upcoming holidays or a business trip in the future, here’s what you need to know to beat jet lag.

Related: Business Travel Can Wreck You—Here’s What To Do About It

What is jet lag?

First, let’s talk about jet lag in general.

A person suffering from jet lag has a temporary sleep problem due to time zone differences between their normal daily rhythms and the time zone they are in. You usually experience this problem when traveling across three or more time zones. You will notice this especially if you cross the international date line. That’s the line between the South and North Poles, and it’s also the boundary between one calendar day and the next.

The conditions of travel can also contribute to jet lag, including sleep deprivation, long periods in an uncomfortable position, excessive drinking of caffeine or alcohol and poor air quality in the cabin.

As you arrive in a new time zone, your circadian rhythms remain accustomed to the time of day from where you departed. As your body adjusts, you may experience symptoms of jet lag.

Symptoms of jet lag

There are a variety of symptoms associated with jet lag, but the most common are:

- Fatigue
- Daytime drowsiness
- Nighttime restlessness
- Problems sleeping
- Difficulty concentrating
- Irritability
- Headaches
- Digestive problems
- Mood swings

After traveling, these symptoms usually last 24 to 48 hours.

Related: 4 Ways to Prevent Jet Lag From Sabotaging Your Business Trip

Is there a way to reduce or resolve jet lag?

To overcome jet lag, you need to align your body's circadian rhythm with your destination's sunrise and sunset times. There are also a few other steps you can take:

Sync up your circadian rhythm

You need to synchronize your body's 24-hour internal clock to the 24-hour day at your destination if you're going to beat jet lag. There are, however, a number of factors that must be taken into account in order for this to be accomplished:

You should take into account whether you are traveling east or west. It is common for jet lag to increase when traveling eastward. Similarly, think about the number of time zones crossed. If you cross over three time zones, you're more likely to get jetlagged. Travel time, the arrival time of your flight, and your typical sleep schedule also play a role.

As a result of these variables, jet lag cannot be treated in a single way. A plan involving light exposure and melatonin is typically necessary to quickly overcome jet lag. Together, these can help you retrain your internal clock.

Also, in order to adjust your circadian rhythm, you need to time your activities properly. Exposure to light and melatonin at the wrong time of day can aggravate jet lag and further disrupt your circadian rhythm.

Keep in mind that the symptoms of jet lag may persist even when you have a well-developed travel plan. Although jet lag affects everyone differently, reorienting your circadian rhythm can reduce the likelihood of it negatively impacting

your trip.

Related: 7 Things to Add to Make Your Morning Routine More Productive in 2022

Melatonin

Melatonin is a hormone produced naturally by the body. At night, just before sleep, your body begins to produce melatonin. In addition to helping you initiate sleep, melatonin regulates your circadian rhythm.

By disrupting your circadian rhythm, jet lag can alter the production of melatonin. The right dosage of melatonin supplements may help realign your internal clock. Supplements containing melatonin can be purchased over the counter without a prescription. It is also possible to boost melatonin levels with prescription drugs that influence melatonin production or its effects on the body.

Melatonin can be taken by most people without significant side effects. However, it may have interactions with other medications in some people, causing grogginess and stomach problems. Before taking melatonin, consult your doctor as with any drug or supplement.

According to the UCLA Sleep Disorders Center, low, short-acting doses (0.5 mg or less) are recommended in the following situations.

- **Traveling westward:** When you have adapted to local time, melatonin can help shift the body clock to a later time.
- **Traveling eastward:** Until your body clock has become accustomed to local time, take melatonin at local bedtime every night until it has shifted to an earlier time.

For those who cannot take melatonin or prefer natural alternatives, more natural deep sleep gummies are an option.

These gummies often contain ingredients like valerian root, chamomile, magnesium, or passionflower, which can support relaxation and improve sleep without the use of melatonin.

Light exposure

Natural light is the most important factor affecting circadian rhythm. People interpret sunlight, even on cloudy days, as a crucial signal to regulate their internal clock.

When you are exposed to natural light at your destination, acclimatizing to the new time zone is easier. Don't rush outside, however. As soon as you land, you may wish to avoid light until the following morning, depending on how far you have traveled and the time you landed.

Light from artificial sources, such as electronic devices, also affects circadian rhythms. As such, when you're planning to go to sleep, remain in the dark and try to avoid artificial light.

When natural light isn't available, what can you do? An LED light box can provide higher illuminance with stronger circadian effects. If you're traveling westward, maximize your exposure to bright light in the evening. If you're traveling eastward, make sure you are exposed to as much light as possible in the morning.

How to prevent jet lag

Once again, jet lag is incurable. You can, however, prevent it or reduce its severity in several ways. Listed below are some science-based tips:

Before you travel:

- **A few days before your trip, adjust your sleep schedule.** When traveling east, try to go to bed and wake up

earlier every morning. During your westward travels, try waking up later and going to bed earlier.

- **Leave home well rested.** “Flying halfway around the world is stressful,” states renowned travel writer Rick Steves. “If you leave frazzled after a hectic night and a wild bon voyage party, there’s a good chance you won’t be healthy for the first part of your trip.”
- **Avoid alcohol and caffeine before your flight.** It is possible that these substances will dehydrate you and cause you to suffer from jet lag.
- **Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water.** There is evidence that dehydration can worsen jet lag symptoms. Stay hydrated throughout your trip.
- **Consider fasting.** There is a theory that claims fasting triggers a temporary reset of circadian rhythms. As such, you could try fasting for 12 to 16 hours. If you have a long, international flight, this could be easier because you could avoid food on the plane.

During your flight:

- **As soon as you board the plane, set your watch to the time of your destination.** Your new time zone will be easier to adjust to if you do this.
- **If you are traveling a long distance, you should try to sleep on the plane.** Sleeping on the plane helps regulate your internal clock by aligning your sleep schedule with the destination’s time zone, reducing the shock of transitioning to a new time zone. This rest also minimizes fatigue, making it easier for your body to adjust and recover from the long flight. Try relaxing and resting if you cannot sleep.
- **Don’t drink alcohol or caffeine on the plane.** It cannot be stressed enough that these substances can dehydrate you and make jet lag worse.
- **Every few hours, get up and move around.** As a result, blood clots will be prevented and circulation will be

improved.

- **Don’t worry, get comfy.** Worrying about jet lag can make the condition worse. Basically, anything you can do to get comfortable enough to sleep can have a very strong placebo effect.

After you arrive at your destination:

- **Get as much sunlight as you can.** A natural sleep-wake cycle is regulated by sunlight, which helps regulate your circadian rhythm
- **Eat your meals at the local time.** The University of Surrey found in a 2018 study that eating on a local schedule can alleviate some jet lag symptoms.
- **Get regular exercise.** Exercise, fresh air, and daylight are the worst enemies of jet lag. In addition to improving sleep quality, exercise reduces stress.
- **Keep awake until the local bedtime on arrival.** Your body may beg for sleep, but force your body’s transition to the local time. This helps synchronize your body’s internal clock with the new time zone.

Related: 7 Tips for Successful International Business Travel

While jet lag can definitely be a drag, don’t let it ruin your trip. With these tricks, you should be adjusted in no time.

Join top CEOs, founders and operators at the Level Up conference to unlock strategies for scaling your business, boosting revenue and building sustainable success.

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How Adding More Offers and Services Can Actually Harm Your Business — and What to Focus on Instead

Opinions expressed by Entrepreneur contributors are their own.

If you've ever thought, "Maybe I just need another offer," you're not alone. Many entrepreneurs, especially in service-based businesses, get stuck in the cycle of adding more services and more packages to try to capture different types of clients or boost cash flow quickly.

Unfortunately, more offers is rarely the answer.

Related: 5 Ways to Tell If Your Company Should Start Offering a New Product

The allure of adding more

It makes sense in theory to add a new offering — if you add another offer, surely that widens your net, right? You figure you'll meet more people where they are, increase chances of conversion and maybe bring in more recurring revenue.

But instead, if you're adding offers too frequently and too quickly, your marketing becomes diluted and confusing to your audience. Your average consumer may end up spending more time trying to decide what to buy instead of having a clean, smooth sales funnel.

Then, once you've sold a few of each of your offers over time,

it becomes really complicated to service those offerings. Your time gets split, billing gets confusing, and in my experience, service quality usually declines.

What starts as an effort to grow can quickly become a trap, draining your team's energy and your business's momentum.

Instead, your best marketing asset is a clear message and a confident sales process.

The power of fewer, better offers

Here's what I'd do instead. Focus your effort on one core offer that solves a big, specific problem, and refine the hell out of it.

When you refine offers instead of replacing them or adding to them constantly, you have a chance to get the same benefit of tweaking your offer to meet the market — which you absolutely should — with less confusion to your audience.

Once you launch that offer, start A/B testing messaging with your audience. See what resonates, and then slowly move your messaging more towards that. Monitor how long clients stay with the offer. Ask them what they like about it and what they wish it included, and maybe create an add-on to address the needs that surface.

Don't get me wrong — I still recommend you try lots of new things and iterate quickly, shedding things that aren't working and doubling down on things that are. Just use those learnings to iterate on what you already have, instead of launching something new every other day.

This also doesn't mean you can only sell one thing forever. But if your core offer isn't selling, don't assume you need a second one. You may just need to optimize the one you've got.

Related: Is Your Offer Not Selling? Try These 3 Fixes to Make

It Irresistible.

What to ask yourself before launching a new offer

If you're tempted to build out yet another service, take a pause and ask yourself a few things.

First: Have you fully optimized the marketing, pricing and delivery of your current offers? Do you have enough volume to even know where people are dropping off in your existing conversion funnel, and to know how clients feel about their experience with you?

Next: Can you actually handle another offer right now? Do you or your team have the bandwidth to service it? It feels nice to sell something, but it won't last without proper servicing.

Lastly: Are you solving a real pain point, or are you projecting what you want to sell? Why do you think this offer will resonate? What data do you have to prove it?

If your answers don't point clearly toward expansion, it may be worth hitting the brakes.

What to do instead of adding a new offer

Let's say you decide to hold off on that new offer idea. If things feel slow or stagnant, there are other ways to generate momentum without creating an entirely new service.

1. Audit your client journey, including every single stage of your funnel. Look at where people are falling off, and what that tells you about opportunities for your pipeline to be improved.

2. You also may just need a pricing refresh. Take a quick look at your margin in the last few months. Are you actually bringing money home? How do you compare in pricing and value to your peers and competition? I've seen businesses be underpriced far too often — in fact, nearly 50% of small businesses in the U.S. aren't making any profit, and in many cases, that's because they are afraid to charge more.

3. Look at re-engaging audiences you already have. Reach out to past clients personally to say hi or congratulate them on their most recent milestone. Offer them an incentive to work with you again or to refer someone new to you. Sometimes, simple, personalized touches can get you the same amount of attention that yet another launch would, without the messaging confusion for your audience.

Related: How to Evolve Your Core Product

A bloated offer suite might feel like you're "doing more," but often it just muddies the waters for you, your team and your clients. Instead, get obsessed with making one thing irresistible going into this fall. Track the data, refine the messaging, and build the systems to deliver it efficiently — then revisit expansion only once that's humming.

If you've ever thought, "Maybe I just need another offer," you're not alone. Many entrepreneurs, especially in service-based businesses, get stuck in the cycle of adding more services and more packages to try to capture different types of clients or boost cash flow quickly.

Unfortunately, more offers is rarely the answer.

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Meet the 76-Year-Old ‘C-Suite Whisperer’ Who Transforms Top Companies Like SpaceX and Chick-fil-A. Here’s Her Best Advice From More Than 50 Years in Business.

You could call Rose Fass, 76, the “C-Suite whisperer” — because she knows exactly what it takes to transform some of the world’s most powerful companies.

Image Credit: Courtesy of fassforward. Rose Fass.

In 2001, following her role as chief transformation officer at Xerox and her establishment of the Center for Business Transformation at Gartner Group, Fass started her own firm: fassforward Consulting Group.

Fass co-founded the company with Gavin McMahon. McMahon didn't have a background in transformation work, but he was "very smart" and seemed like the right person for the job, especially at a time when a woman co-founder could gain more credibility by partnering with a man, Fass tells *Entrepreneur.*

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of Their Best Advice.

Fass and McMahon continue to lead the company together today. Fass is chair, and McMahon is co-CEO with David Frost.

“ We translate complex strategies into something simple and executable,” Fass says. “We help leaders tell stories around those strategies. We do a lot around storytelling, leadership development and shaping culture. It really works, and we find that our clients stay with us a long time.”

Today, fassforward is the “how-to” firm that helps top companies like SpaceX, American Airlines, Chick-fil-A, Verizon, Yahoo! and more position themselves for growth and success.

Related: 8 Success Lessons Entrepreneurs Can Learn From Chick-fil-A

But when Fass and McMahon launched the firm, first out of Fass’s house, then in a small office above the post office in Pelham, New York, they had to be strategic to land major clients – without borrowing any money along the way.

The co-founders relied on three key principles to generate business, Fass says:

1. Be choosy and build a reputation: “We realized we weren’t famous, but we needed our clients to be. We didn’t want any dinky clients.”

Estée Lauder was fassforward’s first client, followed by Interpublic Group and Mastercard.

2. Touch a client every day: “ You have to touch a client every day. You’re in business to do business, not to play office and get your business cards ready.”

3. Never compromise on the deliverable: “ If a client wants you to do something that you know you can’t do in the

timeframe they're requesting, be open and honest."

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Entrepreneur sat down with Fass to learn more about how business leaders should think about some of the most pressing opportunities and challenges in the workplace today.

"AI should be considered an asset."

Fass has lived through the development of technologies that many business leaders now take for granted – like voicemail, email, text messaging and the World Wide Web – and she says that it's a mistake to consider technology adoption "a risk."

Of course, AI is the latest to shake up the workplace and world, and Fass says that if leaders don't embrace it, the technology will embrace them.

" How you use AI is important," Fass explains. "It's augmented intelligence, not a replacement for your intelligence, and you have to ask intelligent prompts and intelligent questions."

Related: AI Just Took Over the Hottest Job…in AI

Many of the C-suite executives Fass counsels insist they need an AI strategy, but that's not the right way to look at it, she says. Their strategy should always be their business strategy: AI is just a tool that can help them pursue it.

" AI should be considered an asset like your people are an asset, your product's an asset, your footprint's an asset, your IP, everything that you have in your company that helps you deliver on your strategy," Fass says. "And that's what AI does. It helps you deliver on your strategy and on the promise to your customers."

"We [women] need to be glib enough to hold our own."

When Fass started at Xerox on the management track in 1977, “it was all men selling machines.” She was supposed to learn from one of the company’s top bookers, but he was “not interested” in working with her. Then another representative asked her if she’d like to see his automatic input device — and everyone laughed. “I was so embarrassed,” Fass recalls.

Fass saw two options. She could run to HR, but who would care? Or she could be glib. She chose the latter: Fass said she might be interested, but heard he shuts down after one copy. All of the men laughed again — and the booker who hadn’t wanted to work with her immediately changed his mind.

“We [women] need to be glib enough to hold our own,” Fass says. “We don’t have to act like men, but we also don’t have to act like we are skittish and sensitive. I don’t think you should take any crap; you have to be able to give it back in a way that you gain respect.”

Related: This 103-Year-Old Doctor Opened Her Medical Practice Before Women Could Have Bank Accounts — Here Are Her 6 Secrets to a Healthy, Successful Life

What’s more, Fass says women don’t have to be “one of the boys” to stand out in the professional arena. A recent client told Fass she couldn’t relate to her boss’s passion for golf and was concerned it might hinder their relationship, but Fass told her not to worry.

“ I said, ‘You just took him to a really creative session,'” Fass recalls. “‘He’s brilliant. He loves to use his mind. That’s where you create the opportunity.’ You don’t have to be in the boys’ camp. That’s the advice I would give any woman. Find ways to be yourself and authentic and do it in your own way.”

“Women and men both need mentors that have been around.”

Two in three working adults ages 50-plus (64%) think older workers face age discrimination in the workplace today, and just over one in 10 say they've been passed up for a promotion or chance to get ahead because of their age, according to an AARP report.

That means that young people are missing out on the institutional memory that older people bring, Fass says.

"Women and men both need mentors who have been around, who have seen the good, the bad and the ugly," Fass explains. "People who have lived through 9/11, people who lived through odd and even gas lines, people who lived through assassinations, people who've lived through recessions, the big bank fail."

Related: This Is What You Need to Know About Age Discrimination in the Workplace

Fass stresses that an employee's potential shouldn't be based on their age, but on their vitality, experience and willingness and readiness to do the job.

> *"Emotional intelligence is more important now than it's ever been."*

Needless to say, Fass has honed her leadership expertise over more than 50 years in business.

Leaders who want to make a real impact should remember that people are their No. 1 asset — and that the more people they work with, the more their leadership will improve, Fass says.

"Emotional intelligence is more important now than it's ever been," Fass adds. "We're living in a really tough world. We don't have a lot of leaders as mentors. That's really critical. You can raise a high bar when you have a high touch."

Cultivating a “high touch” workplace environment can be challenging in today’s digital world, where the technology that connects employees with their leaders can also create distance.

“ You have to get on a calendar and an appointment with your boss,” Fass says. “I never grew up with that. I could walk into the office or pick up the phone.”

To combat that divide, Fass says a leader‘s calendar should always leave space for what she calls “office hours.” Fass sets aside two hours when anyone on her team is free to reach out with anything they’d like to discuss.

Related: How to Evolve From Manager to Mentor and Create a Lasting Impact in Your Organization

Additionally, ever since the pandemic hit, Fass has hosted virtual team check-in meetings twice a week. Mondays are for people to share what’s on their plates; Fridays are for people to share what’s on their minds.

“It’s a great practice, and my CMO from Mastercard has adopted it,” Fass says. “A lot of people have. Everybody gets to know what everybody else is doing, and it’s very quick, 30 to 40 minutes.”

Finally, as important as it is for leaders to be emotionally intelligent, available mentors, they should make sure they’re never overstepping into someone else’s role.

“[Your job as a leader is] not to do the job of the people that are working for you,” Fass says. “It’s allowing them to do the job, teach, train, get out of the way. They make a mistake, let them help you figure out why they made that mistake. So they don’t do it again. You don’t go in and do it for them.”

This article is part of our ongoing Women Entrepreneur® series

highlighting the stories, challenges and triumphs of running a business as a woman.

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Treating Everything As 'Urgent' Is Burning Out Your Team. Take These Steps to End the Chaos.

Opinions expressed by Entrepreneur contributors are their own.

Urgency, when genuine, helps teams act quickly and meet real deadlines. But when urgency becomes the default mode, it turns into a source of constant pressure. Over time, this leads to burnout, poor decision-making and reactive behavior that harms long-term goals.

The best leaders are starting to shift this mindset. They help their teams separate real urgency from false urgency. They guide people to pause, think and plan rather than rush, respond and regret.

Related: Burnout Threatens Employee Well-Being and

Productivity — Here's How to Stop It From Infiltrating Your Workplace

The problem with treating everything as urgent

When every request is marked "ASAP," it eventually stops meaning anything. People get used to running at full speed regardless of the situation. In the short term, things get done. But over time, the costs add up:

- **Staff fatigue increases:** People stop distinguishing between what's critical and what's just loud.
- **Important work is delayed:** Urgency often leads teams to focus on fast tasks, not meaningful ones.
- **Team dynamics break down:** People begin blaming one another for delays, missed details or errors that stem from rushing.

The truth is, urgency should be rare. When everything is urgent, nothing is.

Real vs. false urgency

Before training a team to rethink urgency, leaders must first understand the difference.

Real urgency is tied to clear, time-sensitive outcomes. A security breach. A client presentation tomorrow. A product defect before a public launch. These are valid reasons to act fast.

False urgency often comes from poor planning, vague expectations or habits that reward being busy. It shows up as:

- Emails marked high priority without explanation

- Slack messages with “urgent” in all caps, sent during off-hours
- Rushed deadlines that aren’t connected to any real risk or outcome
- Leaders are panicking and passing that stress to the team

The best leaders know how to filter these signals and help their teams do the same.

Related: Long Work Hours Lead to Burnout — Not Productivity. Learn When to Step Back From Certain Tasks — And When to Step Up

How top leaders rethink and reframe urgency

1. Model calm responses — even under pressure

People look to leadership to determine the seriousness of an issue. If the leader panics, everyone else tends to follow. Leaders who stay grounded, even during actual high-stress situations, train their team to assess rather than react.

When something important comes up, they ask:

- “What’s the actual deadline here?”
- “What happens if we don’t act right now?”
- “Is this urgent, or is it just loud?”

This type of thinking starts to spread. Teams begin asking these same questions before jumping into action.

2. Build a culture of thoughtful planning

False urgency often results from unclear planning. The best leaders invest time upfront to prevent chaos later.

They set clear expectations for:

They make sure teams have enough notice for major tasks, and they push back on unrealistic timelines from other departments or clients. This doesn't mean avoiding deadlines; it means preventing unnecessary ones.

3. Introduce a shared language around urgency

When everyone defines "urgent" differently, confusion takes over. Effective leaders establish straightforward systems to categorize requests. For example:

- **Critical:** Must be addressed immediately. Clear consequences if delayed.
- **High:** Needs attention within 24-48 hours.
- **Standard:** On track for delivery within regular timelines.
- **Low:** Can be deferred or reviewed when time allows.

These definitions help teams prioritize instead of treating every request the same.

4. Reward thoughtful work, not just fast work

Speed often gets attention. The person who replies in five minutes is praised more than the one who responds in two hours with a better solution.

Top leaders change this. They recognize:

This shift teaches teams that the best work isn't always the quickest; it's the most accurate, useful and durable.

When real urgency strikes: Set clear, temporary protocols

Urgency can't be avoided entirely. There will be times when fast action is necessary. Strong leaders make this clear, but they also make it temporary.

They say things like: "This needs to be done by the end of the day, and here's why. We'll return to normal workflow tomorrow."

This prevents panic from spreading and reminds the team that urgency is the exception, not the rule. When repeated often, it creates discipline. People learn to shift gears when needed, but they don't live in that mode full-time.

Managing communication expectations

Urgency often shows up in how people communicate, especially in remote or hybrid setups. Leaders who want to reduce false urgency establish clear boundaries:

- **No expectation of instant replies:** Unless marked critical, messages can be addressed during working hours.
- **Use subject lines or Slack labels:** This helps the team instantly understand the priority level without guessing.
- **Avoid back-to-back urgent emails:** If everything you send is marked urgent, the team will start ignoring it or, worse, resenting it.

Related: Don't Let the 'Urgent' Overtake the 'Important'

What to do if your team is already operating in constant urgency

If your team is stuck in the habit of constant rushing, the fix won't happen overnight. But it can be done with consistent action.

1. **Acknowledge the pattern:** Call it out in a team meeting. Share the goal of creating a healthier workflow. Make it clear this is not about slowing output, it's about improving results and reducing stress.
2. **Audit current requests:** Review the last two weeks of "urgent" items. How many were truly time-sensitive? What could have been avoided with better planning?
3. **Introduce priority levels:** Start labeling tasks with real urgency levels. Encourage team members to do the same when assigning or requesting work.
4. **Protect team focus:** Block time for deep work. Reduce unnecessary meetings. Allow time buffers around deadlines to accommodate last-minute changes without turning everything into a fire drill.
5. **Train direct reports to do the same:** Encourage managers under you to follow the same habits. If urgency is only controlled at the top, it will return quickly. Build shared standards that last across layers.

In the long run, teaching your team to rethink urgency is not just a productivity improvement; it's a leadership responsibility.

Urgency, when genuine, helps teams act quickly and meet real deadlines. But when urgency becomes the default mode, it turns into a source of constant pressure. Over time, this leads to burnout, poor decision-making and reactive behavior that harms

long-term goals.

The best leaders are starting to shift this mindset. They help their teams separate real urgency from false urgency. They guide people to pause, think and plan rather than rush, respond and regret.

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Why Corporate America Is the Perfect Training Ground for Future Entrepreneurs

Opinions expressed by Entrepreneur contributors are their own.

The journey from a corporate cubicle to the helm of a startup is a well-trodden path. Many successful entrepreneurs, from Elon Musk to Sara Blakely, cut their teeth in corporate environments before launching their ventures.

But what drives this trend? Why do so many entrepreneurs emerge from the structured world of Corporate America? Drawing

on my Rich Habits research, which studied the daily habits of wealthy and poor individuals, we can uncover key factors that explain this phenomenon.

Join top CEOs, founders and operators at the Level Up conference to unlock strategies for scaling your business, boosting revenue and building sustainable success.

Why the corporate training ground is a breeding ground for skills

Corporate America serves as a de facto training ground for future entrepreneurs. My research has found that wealthy individuals, including many entrepreneurs, consistently engage in habits like continuous learning, goal-setting and disciplined time management.

Corporate environments naturally foster these traits. Employees are exposed to structured systems, deadlines, and performance metrics, which instill discipline and accountability — I found these qualities in 88% of the wealthy who set daily goals compared to just 2% of the poor.

In corporate settings, individuals often gain expertise in specific industries, from finance to technology to marketing. This deep domain knowledge is critical for identifying market gaps and opportunities. For example, working in a corporate marketing department might reveal inefficiencies in customer acquisition strategies, inspiring an entrepreneurial solution. 68% of the wealthy in my study pursued self-education to enhance their skills, a habit often honed in corporate roles through training programs, mentorship, and on-the-job learning.

Moreover, corporate jobs provide access to networks of professionals, clients and suppliers — resources that are invaluable when launching a business. I found that 79% of

wealthy individuals actively network, a practice often developed in corporate settings where collaboration and relationship-building are part of the job.

Related: 10 Things Wealthy People Do Every Day

Financial stability as a launchpad

One of the biggest hurdles for aspiring entrepreneurs is financial risk. Corporate America often provides the financial stability needed to take the leap. My research found that 65% of wealthy individuals had multiple streams of income before achieving success, often starting with a stable corporate salary. This financial cushion allows future entrepreneurs to save capital, pay down debts or fund early-stage ventures without immediate pressure to generate profits.

Corporate employees also gain insight into cash flow management, budgeting and resource allocation — skills critical for running a business. For instance, a mid-level manager overseeing a department budget learns to prioritize spending and optimize resources, directly applicable to bootstrapping a startup. 94% of the wealthy live below their means, a habit often cultivated in corporate jobs where steady paychecks encourage prudent financial planning.

The push factor: Dissatisfaction and ambition

While Corporate America equips individuals with skills and resources, it also fuels the desire to break free. My research revealed that 76% of wealthy individuals pursue their dreams and passions, compared to just 10% of the poor.

Corporate environments, with their rigid hierarchies and limited upward mobility, can frustrate ambitious individuals who crave autonomy and impact. This dissatisfaction often

pushes high-performers to entrepreneurship, where they can control their destiny.

Take the example of Reed Hastings, who worked at a software company before founding Netflix. The constraints of corporate life – bureaucracy, slow innovation and lack of ownership – often clash with the entrepreneurial mindset. 70% of the wealthy focus on big-picture goals, a trait that corporate employees with entrepreneurial aspirations develop as they grow frustrated with incremental progress in their roles.

Related: Why I Walked Away From a Career to Start My Own Business

Risk tolerance and resilience

Entrepreneurship demands a stomach for risk, and Corporate America inadvertently trains individuals to handle it. My work shows that 52% of wealthy individuals took calculated risks, compared to just 6% of the poor. Corporate employees often face high-stakes projects, tight deadlines, or performance reviews, which build resilience and decision-making under pressure. These experiences prepare them to navigate the uncertainties of entrepreneurship, from pitching to investors to weathering cash flow challenges.

Additionally, corporate failures – missed promotions, failed projects or layoffs – teach valuable lessons about persistence. I found that 86% of the wealthy believe in overcoming failure, a mindset forged in the corporate world where setbacks are common but not career-ending.

The corporate-to-entrepreneur pipeline

The transition from Corporate America to entrepreneurship isn’t accidental – it’s a logical progression fueled by skill-

building, financial stability, and a hunger for more. My Rich Habits research illuminates why this pipeline exists. The habits of the wealthy — discipline, continuous learning, networking and risk-taking — are often cultivated in corporate environments, giving employees the tools to succeed as entrepreneurs. Meanwhile, the frustrations of corporate life push ambitious individuals to seek greater freedom and impact.

So, the next time you hear about a corporate employee launching a startup, it’s no surprise. Corporate America isn’t just a job — it’s a launchpad for the entrepreneurial dream.

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