These 3 Common Mistakes Are Holding You Back at Work, According to a Former Meta Engineer Known as the 'Coding Machine'

Software engineers are likely making a few common mistakes that prevent them from advancing in their careers, says a former Meta senior staff engineer — and these mistakes are general enough to apply to any job.

Michael Novati, an engineer who spent eight years at Meta and earned the nickname "Coding Machine" after being the top code committer company-wide for several years, told "The Peterman Pod" that there are three common mistakes engineers and other professionals make that prevent them from moving forward in their careers.

Novati, who now works at a remote software engineering fellowship program, Formation, as its chief technology officer, said one problem is "thinking too much" and "not doing enough." Novati said that oftentimes developers come to him to ask for advice or questions without first "turning the gears" and writing code to address the problem.

"Step one is do something, just do anything," Novati told "The Peterman Pod."

Related: 'It's Laughable': Okta's CEO Says AI Won't Replace Software Engineers Despite Other Tech Leaders' Predictions

The second mistake Novati identified is not asking "the right

people" for feedback, or not going to "respected people" or "people who have that experience and taste and judgement" for advice on how to improve. He gave the example of his days at Meta, when he was writing so much code that his manager spent all day reviewing it. His manager was the respected person Novati turned to for feedback, because his manager had the "judgement and taste" that Novati aspired to have.

The third mistake, which Novati admitted to making "a lot," was not taking action on feedback and taking it more as a harsh judgment or a pat on the back of approval than a call to action.

"My advice to people who are ambitious and who want to get those perfect scores and check off all the boxes is to really reflect on feedback, on how you can improve and try to push your comfort zone there, instead of trying to look at it as a judgment or a grade," Novati said.

The end goal is to "write a lot of code," get feedback from experienced people, and "actually [take] action" on the feedback, Novati said.

Related: OpenAI Is Creating AI to Do 'All the Things That Software Engineers Hate to Do'

As AI advances, software engineers might not have to write as much code as they used to, anyway. Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella said in April that engineers at Microsoft are using AI to generate up to 30% of new code at the company. Google CEO Sundar Pichai stated in the same month that Google was generating "well over 30%" of new code with AI.

Meanwhile, Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei predicted in March that AI would take over coding completely for all software engineers within a year.

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Your Company’s Security Strategy Has a Glaring Hole.

Here’s What’s Causing It — and How to Fix It.

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For well over a decade, organizations have been grappling with the security, privacy and compliance challenges brought by an increasingly complex digital workplace. The continued rise of decentralized teams, artificial intelligence (AI)-driven tools and the ever-growing stack of “Software as a Service” (SaaS) applications is only exacerbating the problem, and many leaders are still struggling to get the visibility they need.

It’s no longer enough to only consider the threat of outside attacks; in today’s efficiency-driven environment, modern security must also account for real-time application access, Shadow IT and employee behavior. Especially now, it’s mission-critical for business leaders to rethink security through an internal lens.

Related: 50 Things You Need To Know To Optimize Your Company’s Approach to Data Privacy and Cybersecurity

Productivity’s hidden trade-off

Amid the rapid pace of the modern work environment, employees experience constant pressure to do more with less. Still, tighter timelines and fewer resources don’t equal lower expectations from management. When deadlines loom and workloads pile up, workers aren’t waiting for IT approval. They’re finding the tools that they believe will quickly solve problems and drive business themselves.

That’s why SaaS platforms, rising in demand thanks to AI’s

rapid adoption, have become the go-to solution for modern teams. According to Gartner, global spending on AI software is projected to reach $297.9 billion by 2027. This surge reflects widespread adoption across all business functions as employees increasingly rely on project management apps, file-sharing services and generative AI assistants that promise speed, simplicity and results. The good news? Many of these tools deliver. But these unsanctioned applications are creeping into your business workflows, becoming privy to your data without ever touching your IT department's radar.

This unauthorized adoption of third-party tools is becoming a defining feature of the modern workplace. According to Verizon's 2025 Data Breach Investigations Report, 15% of employees admit to using corporate devices to access generative AI platforms, streamlining workflows and boosting output, but also expanding your organization's attack surface right under your nose.

In this situation, ignorance is not bliss. Without visibility into what tools your employees are using, you're not just risking data breaches; you're operating completely in the dark.

Using visibility to drive security

Security isn't just about firewalls and antivirus software anymore. It's also about visibility, and right now, most leaders don't have it. Verizon notes in its report that, from 2024 to 2025, breaches involving third parties doubled from 15% to 30%. That's not just a trend; that's a dire warning.

In a world where productivity often trumps policy, it's hard to bring the iron fist down on driven employees who are just trying to do more with less (trust me, I understand). Luckily, you don't have to.

Related: 4 Things Your Employees Are Doing Right Now That Are

Compromising Your Network

Rewrite the rules with empowerment in mind

When I think of SaaS sprawl, the first thing that comes to mind is Acceptable Use Policies (AUPs) – the guiding document in your company for all things access. While you might be tempted to lay down the law, rethinking your company's AUP can't be guided by fear. Instead, you have to rewrite the rules in a way that provides both security and the much-needed speed to enable productivity.

With this delicate topic in mind, I remember feeling frustrated. I knew the danger SaaS sprawl posed – not just to security, but also to our favorable legal, reputational, and compliance standing – but how was I supposed to make my employees care? In the end, I knew my company had to customize our AUP to meet the needs of our workforce.

To craft effective policies, it's important to:

- **Acknowledge good intentions:** It's understandable that most employees are using SaaS tools to do their jobs better, which is more admirable than malicious. Let that idea shine in your AUP to foster a sense of trust and transparency.

- **Avoid scare tactics:** Instead of cracking down on unfettered SaaS usage, make it clear that you're open to two-way dialogue and constructive compromises. Lay out a clearly defined process that enables access to innovative applications while also making sure that security controls are followed.

- **Redirection over restriction:** Outright bans on productivity tools like AI are unrealistic. Not only

will your employees find workarounds, but they'll remember your cruel response when they were just trying to be better workers. If a tool or application needs to be off-limits, suggest a more secure alternative whenever possible.

- **Make it a team effort:** Today, security isn't just IT's job. Employees thrive when they are made to feel important; now is their moment of glory. Trust your employees and use your AUP to empower them to be part of the solution.

- **Call out common pitfalls:** If you know of a risky tool that is frequently used, it's better to name it than hope workers read between the lines. Don't let popularity create confusion, which can lead to costly mistakes.

There's a tool for that

While updating your AUP is a step in the right direction, you might be asking: "How do I make sure these new policies are working?" That's why SaaS monitoring platforms exist to give you the visibility you need.

While features vary depending on which platform you use, these tools offer real-time insights into employee app usage, flag suspicious activity and help enforce access controls. SaaS monitoring platforms also reveal which tools your employees actually rely on daily, helping you streamline subscriptions and refine policies.

Related: The Role of Leadership in Creating a Cybersecurity Culture – How to Foster Awareness and Accountability Across the Organization

Security and innovation can coexist

While SaaS and AI may look like enemies, what business leaders really need to tackle is secrecy around the use of these tools. The real risk lies in what you don’t see.

As leaders, we need to help our employees stop thinking of security as an impediment to innovation and instead see it as a potential foundation for it. By increasing visibility across the organization, embracing greater transparency, rewriting the rules and investing in the right tools, we can protect what matters most without slowing down what’s next.

For well over a decade, organizations have been grappling with the security, privacy and compliance challenges brought by an increasingly complex digital workplace. The continued rise of decentralized teams, artificial intelligence (AI)-driven tools and the ever-growing stack of “Software as a Service” (SaaS) applications is only exacerbating the problem, and many leaders are still struggling to get the visibility they need.

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A Program That Helped Build 144,000 Jobs Gets Slashed by Budget Cuts — What Happens Next Is Pivotal for Small Business Support

Opinions expressed by Entrepreneur contributors are their own.

SCORE, the nonprofit that has supported small businesses for over six decades, recently faced a major setback: the latest tax and spending bill eliminated about 60% of its federal funding — a core part of its budget. For an organization that offers free mentoring to hundreds of thousands of entrepreneurs annually, this looks like a serious blow.

But what if this funding cut is not the end of SCORE — but a new beginning?

With a vast network of 10,000 volunteer mentors and a proven track record of economic impact — including helping start 58,000 new businesses and creating 144,000 jobs in 2024 alone — SCORE has always been a vital lifeline for small business owners. However, without reliable federal support, SCORE faces a crossroads: continue to rely on uncertain government appropriations or reinvent itself as a self-sustaining business.

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Small Business Owners Face

The real impact behind SCORE's numbers

According to SCORE, every federal dollar invested generated $45 in economic benefits. This was achieved through four million mentoring hours across 200 chapters, advising over 300,000 entrepreneurs annually. These numbers show that SCORE's work isn't just a feel-good story — it's an economic engine.

Yet, despite these impressive results, the realities of federal budget cuts have forced SCORE's leadership to confront a difficult question: How can SCORE continue fulfilling its mission without government backing?

Facing tough realities: the bigger budget picture

As an advocate and advisor for small businesses in this country, it pains me to see great organizations like this lose their support. SCORE is clearly a valuable agency that has helped countless small businesses in the more than 60 years since its founding in 1964. But I'm also a realist.

The reality is that, regardless of what we want, there are limitations to what we can afford. Yes, I'd like free education, free healthcare, clean water, safe highways and strong defense. I also appreciate all the research done by so many government agencies and academic institutions that received federal support. But I, like many business owners, also see a $2 trillion annual deficit and a $36 trillion national debt and don't know how we and our children and grandchildren can sustain that level of liabilities. Some things have to be cut. Some things have to go. And it looks

like SCORE, like many other good programs the Federal government funds, is one of those things. Government spending must be prioritized and trimmed where possible. Unfortunately, this means good programs sometimes lose funding – even those with proven results. It's painful for advocates and advisors to see a respected organization like SCORE face these challenges. But the truth is, many federally funded programs will need to find new models to survive.

A bold proposal: what if SCORE became a business?

SCORE's greatest asset isn't just its volunteers or history – it's its infrastructure, leadership and brand recognition. These assets could enable SCORE to spin off from government support and operate as a private, self-sustaining entity.

It already has the foundation – a trusted name in the small business community, a robust volunteer network and experienced leadership. With the right strategy, SCORE could attract investors, lenders or equity partners who see the value in its proven return on investment. And that ROI can be translated into real dollars.

Imagine SCORE charging a sliding scale of fees based on a business's ability to pay – allowing startups and small enterprises with limited resources to still receive help, while those who can afford it contribute. Or consider raising funds from corporate sponsors who already invest heavily in small business programs, redirecting those dollars toward SCORE's mission.

SCORE could also contract its expertise to consulting firms or financial institutions – creating new revenue streams while expanding its impact.

Why change is necessary

SCORE's traditional model – volunteer consultants supported by government-paid staff – has its limitations. Volunteers vary in quality and motivation, and government employees don't operate under typical business incentives that reward customer satisfaction and performance. For SCORE to thrive in a post-funding world, it must adopt a model that encourages accountability, quality and sustainability.

The opportunity ahead

If SCORE were to disappear, would more small businesses fail? Would the economy suffer? Probably not dramatically – other organizations and market forces would fill some gaps.

But SCORE has a unique opportunity to redefine itself – not just as a nonprofit supporter of small business but as a business itself, accountable for its outcomes and financially self-sufficient. Like the entrepreneurs it helps, SCORE can pivot, adapt and innovate.

Related: **How to Secure a Small Business Grant in 5 Easy Steps**

Final thoughts

Brigett Weston, SCORE's CEO, recently said, "Without federal support, this incredibly efficient and effective program is at serious risk of no longer fulfilling its mission." That risk is real.

But it's also a chance.

SCORE can lead the way in demonstrating how public support programs might evolve to meet today's financial realities – continuing to empower entrepreneurs and build our economy, but on its own terms.

This is not just a story about funding cuts; it’s about resilience, reinvention and the future of small business support in America.

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How I Quietly Secured the Perfect Domain Name — Without Overpaying

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When I set out to build my company, I knew that acquiring the right domain name wasn’t just a detail — it was foundational. A domain signals professionalism, sets the tone for your brand, and can shape first impressions. But I quickly learned a hard truth: openly chasing a premium domain is risky. The smarter move? A stealth acquisition strategy — one that protected my positioning, saved me money, and helped me land the perfect name.

Why transparency can backfire

I’ve seen it happen more than once: A founder reaches out

directly to a domain owner and explains they're launching a new product. The seller does a quick Google search, spots big-name investors or a fast-growing company — and suddenly, the asking price triples. Once the seller knows who's behind the inquiry, everything changes. That's where stealth strategy comes in. It keeps the negotiation focused on the domain's value — not on your perceived ability to pay.

Avoiding launch-day regret

Too many founders wait until launch day to secure their domain. By that point, they've built a brand around a name they're emotionally attached to — only to find out the .com is taken or priced outrageously. I made a conscious choice to lock in the domain early, before any public development began. That gave me the freedom to walk away, negotiate confidently, or pivot if needed. It was about having control, not scrambling at the last minute.

Related: 5 Unforgettable Lessons I Learned Spending $1 Million on a Domain Name

Working with a broker made all the difference

I didn't go it alone. I partnered with a domain broker who kept my identity confidential and managed the process end to end. What impressed me most was their understanding of the psychology behind negotiations — they didn't just pass messages back and forth. They kept the conversation grounded, even when tensions rose, and ensured the deal stayed on track.

Without that structure, I might've overpaid, or walked away too early.

Don’t get trigger-happy

I didn’t chase the flashiest or most keyword-rich domain. I chose the one that fit my brand voice — something memorable, aligned, and meaningful. While SEO mattered, brand clarity mattered more. There’s a difference between a good domain and the right domain. That was a lesson I had to learn the hard way.

Protect the process — then go public

Once we agreed on a price, the transaction was handled through escrow, the domain was transferred, and everything was locked in without a hitch. Only then did I begin building the public-facing brand. I didn’t want to tip my hand to competitors, curious investors, or anyone else until the name was secured.

Related: The Best Domains Are Gone — But Here’s How Savvy Founders Still Snag Them

Have a plan — and stay quiet

Acquiring a great domain doesn’t start with a budget. It starts with a plan. Stirring up attention too soon can cost you. But when you move quietly, think strategically, and work with the right partners, you stay in control.

That’s the lesson I learned. That’s how I secured the name I wanted — without anyone knowing I was behind the deal.

Ready to break through your revenue ceiling? Join us at Level Up, a conference for ambitious business leaders to unlock new growth opportunities.

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Why Predictive Service Is the Next Big Thing For Your Customer Service

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For decades, customer support has been treated as a defensive necessity — a cost center designed solely to resolve issues after they arise. In today's landscape, that paradigm is obsolete. Your customers are no longer benchmarking you against your direct competitors; they are benchmarking you against the best, most intuitive digital experiences in the world.

This shift has paved the way for a new model of value creation: transforming customer experience from a cost center into an offensive growth lever. Unlocking this growth, however, requires moving beyond simply resolving issues faster and instead developing genuine foresight — a transition from a reactive to a predictive service model.

The critical shift from reactive to predictive

Customer expectations have permanently changed. The new standard set by digital leaders has created a powerful demand for proactive personalization. This reality forces a change in business posture. A reactive model is inherently defensive, waiting for a customer to raise a flag that signals a problem.

A predictive model, in contrast, is offensive.

It uses data to see that flag coming *before* it's ever raised, allowing a business to anticipate needs and resolve friction points before the customer even feels the pain — a feat that hinges on one critical element: the *right* kind of data.

Related: A Complete Guide to Using Predictive Analytics in Your Business

Earning the data that fuels prediction

While predictive service runs on data, its true power comes from the “Golden Nugget” of behavioral data — usage patterns, sentiment signals and key lifecycle events.

This information provides the clues to future needs, but it presents a profound ethical challenge. In an era of heightened privacy concerns, this data cannot be taken; it must be *earned* through unwavering transparency and trust. This is achieved by building a relationship, not just executing a transaction.

When customers understand how their data will be used to create a better experience, they are far more willing to share it. This approach ensures your service feels like a trusted concierge providing personalized guidance, not an invasive tracker.

Related: 3 Tips for Using Consumer Data to Create More Personalized Experiences

How predictive service turns disruption into loyalty

To see this in practice, consider the masterclass in execution from Delta Air Lines.

Instead of allowing travelers to experience that sinking feeling of a flight or baggage delay, Delta’s predictive models get ahead of the disruption. They proactively reroute baggage and notify travelers of the new plan, often before the traveler even realizes a problem has occurred. The result is a brilliant strategic reversal.

Delta tries to transform a moment of high frustration into an opportunity to build deep trust and loyalty, elevating its

role from a simple service provider to a truly valued travel partner.

Overcoming the human barrier to prediction

Given the power of this model, why haven't more companies made the shift? I've found the deepest gap is not in the technology, but in the organizational mindset. Most support teams are still structured for triage, not foresight; their success is measured by legacy KPIs, like reaction time, that inherently reward a defensive posture. This, combined with fragmented data and a natural cultural resistance to change, creates powerful internal friction.

Overcoming these barriers requires a genuine commitment to breaking down silos, realigning incentives toward prevention and building cross-functional teams that are empowered to think proactively.

Preparing for the next frontier

Going forward, this trend will only accelerate toward what I call "agentic ecosystems," where integrated AIs don't just send alerts but autonomously manage complex processes. For any forward-thinking leader, preparing for this future must begin now, and it rests upon two foundational pillars.

First, invest in a unified data infrastructure — the unglamorous but essential foundation for everything that follows. Predictive models are only as good as the data they can access, so ensuring your data is clean and unified is the non-negotiable first step. Second, begin rethinking your customer experience roles. The future of CX is not about designing a single customer journey; it's about developing teams of strategic problem-solvers capable of managing hundreds of thousands of unique, hyper-personalized

experiences at scale.

Related: Why Generative AI is the Secret Sauce for Good Customer Experiences

A new definition of service

The organizations that build these pillars today will do more than just meet future customer expectations; they will be the ones who redefine them.

This is the true promise of the predictive model. It is more than a new methodology — it is a fundamental redefinition of the relationship between a company and its customers, a final evolution from transactional problem-solving to proactive partnership.

And it's how customer experience will become your most powerful and durable engine for growth.

For decades, customer support has been treated as a defensive necessity — a cost center designed solely to resolve issues after they arise. In today's landscape, that paradigm is obsolete. Your customers are no longer benchmarking you against your direct competitors; they are benchmarking you against the best, most intuitive digital experiences in the world.

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The critical shift from reactive to

predictive

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4 Emerging Tech Hubs That Are Challenging Silicon Valley's Dominance

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For five decades, Silicon Valley has been the hub of the tech world. Starting with tech giants like Microsoft, Apple and Atari and continuing with startups looking to attract unparalleled funding, having an address in this part of California seemed mandatory.

For the first time, however, Silicon Valley faces competition. Emerging global tech hubs in India, Kenya, Estonia and Brazil are growing in importance.

Is Silicon Valley facing serious

competition?

Comparing Silicon Valley with emerging tech hubs like Bangalore, Nairobi, Tallinn and São Paulo reveals distinct strengths and challenges of each area. Silicon Valley retains its position as the global leader in venture capital investment as of 2024, but the new destinations are starting to attract the interest of venture capitalists due to easier access to talent and lower overall costs.

While Silicon Valley continued to attract more than 50% of all global VC funding over the past year, its dominance is largely driven by big-name startups like OpenAI and Databricks. At the same time, global tech hubs are increasingly catching the eye of investors, shifting interest and financial commitment to other areas.

Cities like Bangalore, Nairobi, Tallinn, and Sao Paulo offer easy access to growing talent pools, supportive policies and government initiatives, as well as strong tech-friendly ecosystems and startup cultures.

Related: Global Startup Hubs Where Innovation is Thriving

Why Bangalore is on the rise

Bangalore has become known as the “Silicon Valley of India,” with over 40 unicorn startups having attracted more than $1 million in funding. The city’s startup ecosystem is currently worth over $150 billion.

One of the city’s biggest advantages is a sheer endless talent pool. In Bangalore alone, 90,000 people graduate annually with an engineering degree. The current tech workforce is made up of more than two million tech professionals. To support the growth of the tech industry in the area, the government of the Indian state of Karnataka has implemented several initiatives aimed at preparing even more people for jobs in the emerging

technologies sector.

America’s Silicon Valley has traditionally attracted students and tech professionals from around the world. However, restrictive immigration policies have slowed down the influx of talent somewhat.

How Nairobi became the “Silicon Savannah”

Like its Indian counterpart, the Kenyan government has made serious investments in its tech startup sector. Through agencies like the Kenya National Innovation Agency (KeNIA) and the ICT Authority, the government has provided resources and support to entrepreneurs.

Startups in the Nairobi area especially have focused on developing solutions for local issues, growing the fintech, healthtech and agritech sectors in the process. As the sector has grown, universities have doubled down to answer its need for skilled professionals by offering a larger number of relevant courses and tech-focused training programs.

Compared to Nairobi, Kenya, Silicon Valley may still have access to bigger-name universities such as Stanford and UC Berkeley. However, Kenyan graduates in Kenya are likely to have a greater understanding of local issues, giving them an edge in their own country.

Still, some of Kenya’s startups have had a global impact. Ushaidi, a tech non-profit, created a platform for crowdsourcing crisis information. First launched in 2008, it’s now being used for disaster response and election monitoring.

Related: How Tech Entrepreneurs Can Excel Outside Silicon Valley

Estonia – innovation on the edge of Europe

Tallinn, the capital of tiny Estonia on the shores of the Baltic Sea, has become a tech hub of global influence and reputation. Skype, one of the first global internet communication giants, was founded in Estonia in 2003.

One of Skype's first employees later went on to found online bank Wise (formerly Transferwise) with a fellow Estonian. While Skype is set to be discontinued in May 2025, Wise continues to go from strength to strength.

Estonia may not rival India, Kenya or the United States in population size, but its government recognized the potential of the sector early on and launched robust support programs like the e-Residency initiative. The government also made sure that tech startups could operate within a favorable regulatory environment.

Add to that a serious commitment to digital education, and the result is a highly skilled tech workforce ready to bolster the growth of the sector.

How São Paulo became Brazil's tech capital

São Paulo has long been the financial capital of Brazil. In recent years, the city has also become a hub for tech startups, thanks to a relatively large pool of skilled tech professionals and significant investment.

However, despite top universities offering relevant courses and government programs to support startups, growth has been slower than in other locations. Some of the biggest challenges São Paulo has been facing have included a volatile economy, regulatory problems and other bureaucratic hurdles. Still,

there is a large market, and funds are readily available, making the city attractive to startup founders.

Nubank is an example of a success story. Founded in 2013, the digital bank now serves millions of customers across Latin America. The bank went public on the New York Stock Exchange in 2021 and reported a revenue of $11.51 billion in 2024, nearly two-thirds more than in 2023.

Related: Silicon Valley? Try Silicon Worldwide.

At the time of writing, Silicon Valley remains a dominant force in the tech world, largely due to its access to capital and established ecosystem. However, cities like Bangalore, Nairobi, Tallinn and São Paulo are rapidly gaining ground — attracting both investors and top talent through strong educational institutions, government support and thriving startup cultures.

For founders, these emerging hubs offer compelling alternatives. While they may not yet rival Silicon Valley in scale, they're carving out unique identities on the global stage — and their momentum is impossible to ignore.

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This Former Rap Star Is Making $20 Million a Year With Podcasting: 'Maintaining

Independence as Creators’

A *New York Times* profile of former rap star Joe Budden breaks down the eye-popping figures he’s pulling in by connecting with his vast audience’s ears.

Budden gained acclaim with his 2003 hit “Pump It Up,” and went on to become a TV and media personality. Now dubbed “Howard Stern of hip-hop,” Budden has amassed millions of listeners to his Joe Budden Network and self-titled show. The show mostly involves Budden and his friends opining on the latest pop culture news.

Related: Guy Fieri Teaches His Team This Customer Service Secret – And It Can Unlock Unexpected Success For Your Business Too

Budden and his network’s Chief Executive, Ian Schwartzman, shared some of the incredible numbers behind their endeavor with *The Times*, stating that they “want to make a broader argument for maintaining independence as creators.” They spent two years being available exclusively on Spotify, but otherwise are unattached to any media companies.

Here’s a look at the numbers:

- The Joe Budden Network averages $1.04 million per month on Patreon thanks to its 70,000 paid subscribers. Subscribers can choose tiers that range from $5 to $50 per month. The more expensive tiers come with extras like bonus episodes.
- Two free episodes are available each week to unpaid listeners.
- 2025 subscription revenue is expected to be more than $12 million.

- Advertising (all conducted through their own in-house department) makes up a significant part of the company's revenue.
- The Joe Budden Network employs more than 30 independent contractors.

While Budden and Schwartzman say it might seem like a "flex" to be so open about their finances, they are trying to inform up-and-comers who might have their eyes set on a big network deal like Joe Rogan has.

"[It's] uncomfortable to put any money situation out there for the public and competitors to see," Schwartzman told the *Times,* but added, "How else will they know they can do it this way?"

Related: 'I Lost My Mind': Erin Andrews Explains What It's Like to Be in the Middle of the Taylor Swift Effect

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'Astonishing': AI Models From Google, OpenAI Win Gold Medals in an International Math Competition

AI just scored a major win at an international math competition.

For the first time, AI models from Google DeepMind and OpenAI achieved gold medal status at the 2025 International Math Olympiad (IMO), a challenging math contest for high school students that has been held annually since 1959. The competition involves two 4.5-hour exams to solve six total problems, without the help of the Internet or external tools.

Related: The CEO of Google's AI Initiative Is Worried About 2 Things, and Neither Is AI Replacing Jobs

The New York Times reports that OpenAI and Google's AI models responded to questions using natural language with no human intervention. Both models were able to solve five of the six problems presented at the 2025 competition within the contest's time restraints, marking the first time AI models have achieved such a level of success.

The two models tied in score, with each earning 35 points out of a possible 42 points on the IMO, exactly at the cutoff point for a gold medal. OpenAI announced the results on Saturday while Google waited until Monday.

Google DeepMind worked with IMO to have its AI system's performance graded and certified by the committee this year, while OpenAI did not formally enter the competition. Instead, OpenAI asked three former IMO medalists to independently grade its AI model's answers to each question, finalizing scores after "unanimous consensus."

According to the Google announcement, only 8% of the high school students who compete in IMO typically receive a gold medal. Google's gold-medal performance this year was one step above its results last year, when its AI received a silver medal, solving four out of the six problems presented in the competition.

Related: How a Love of Chess Led the CEO of Google's DeepMind to a Career in AI — and a Nobel Prize

IMO's President, Dr. Gregor Dolinar, called Google DeepMind's solutions this year "astonishing in many respects," while IMO graders found [the solutions] to be "clear, precise, and most of them easy to follow," Dolinar stated.

OpenAI CEO Sam Altman said in a post on X on Saturday that while OpenAI does not plan to release an AI model with IMO gold capabilities "for many months," the gold medal was "a significant marker of how far AI has come over the past decade." OpenAI used a general-purpose reasoning system to tackle the competition, not a specialized math system, as the company works towards general intelligence.

> *we achieved gold medal level performance on the 2025 IMO competition with a general-purpose reasoning system! to emphasize, this is an LLM doing math and not a specific formal math system; it is part of our main push towards general intelligence.*
>
> *when we first started openai,… https://t.co/X46rspI4l6*
>
> *— Sam Altman (@sama) July 19, 2025*

Meanwhile, Google DeepMind CEO Demis Hassabis wrote in a post on X on Monday that Google also used an advanced version of its general-purpose Gemini reasoning model, which will be available "to a set of trusted testers" before rolling it out to Google AI Ultra subscribers, who pay $250 per month for advanced capabilities and 30 TB of storage.

> *We achieved this year's impressive result using an advanced version of Gemini Deep Think (an enhanced reasoning mode for complex problems). Our model operated end-to-end in natural language, producing rigorous mathematical proofs directly from the official problem descriptions —…*
>
> *— Demis Hassabis (@demishassabis) July 21, 2025*

This year, 630 high school students participated in IMO in Queensland, Australia, with 67 students achieving gold medals, per *Reuters*.

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https://www.entrepreneur.com/business-news/google-openai-models-win-gold-at-high-school-math-contest/494914

‘Thousands of Dollars in Minutes’: The Side Hustle She Started in High School Should Sell Over 30,000 Products This Year — and Hit 7 Figures in 2026

This Side Hustle Spotlight Q&A features Leila Quraishi, 27, of Los Angeles, California. Quraishi’s sock business Nudesox is targeting seven-figure revenue across all sales channels next year. Responses have been edited for length and clarity.

Image Credit: Dan Simantov. Leila Quraishi.

Want to read more stories like this? *Subscribe to* Money Makers*, our free newsletter packed with creative side hustle ideas and successful strategies. Sign up here.*

What was your day job or primary occupation when you started your side hustle?

I was a senior in high school when I started Nudesox. Growing up, I was always entrepreneurial and loved creating and taking on leadership roles. In eighth grade, I became a licensed children's yoga instructor and taught private lessons throughout high school, designing class flows and workout gear — now I make grip socks.

Related: **I Took My Side Hustle Full-Time and Made $222,000**

Last Year. Here’s How — and Why Sometimes I Work Just 10 Hours a Week.

When did you start your side hustle, and where did you find the inspiration for it?

I came up with the concept for Nudesox in 2015. As soon as I turned 18, I bought the domain name for Nudesox and legally filed the business soon after. I’ve always loved putting outfits together and dressing up, but I also value my comfort. At the time, I couldn’t find the ideal no-show sock. They were uncomfortable, slipped off, weren’t cushioned and didn’t even cover my whole foot. I was never a fan of colorful, visible socks and thought there were probably so many people who felt the same way, but still want coverage and comfort. That was the moment I thought to myself, *Why has no one ever created athleisure socks in skin tones?*

Image Credit: Greyson Tarantino

What were some of the first steps you took to get your side hustle off the ground? How much money/investment did it take to launch?

I grew up studying successful entrepreneurs for fun and would spend hours dissecting how they got to where they were: I'd read articles and watch interviews and, of course, lots of *Shark Tank*. I was always fascinated by business and innovation. When I started Nudesox, it was a new category, so it was difficult to find a manufacturer that understood the concept. It took me two full years to nail down a manufacturer and get proper samples. I started the brand with $10,000, and to this day, Nudesox is fully bootstrapped with no outside funding. Every dollar I ever made went back into the business

for it to grow.

I would DM or email influencers asking if they wanted to try the brand, and it was well-received; many posted themselves wearing the socks on their Instagram stories. Given it was a novel product, multiple publications wrote about the company, which helped spread the word. I studied entrepreneurship at the University of Southern California, where I learned how to create succinct pitch decks and presentations, as well as the importance of KPIs and proper business management. Combining my studies with Nudesox really helped progress the business and introduced me to a network of people who still support me and the brand today.

Are there any free or paid resources that have been especially helpful for you in starting and running this business?
When I started Nudesox, I relied heavily on connecting with role models in the fashion industry. I would LinkedIn message and email executives at top fashion and shoe brands to learn about their processes and trajectory. Networking is important, but there is an art to it. I always try to find synergies with people before I reach out to them to make sure the conversation makes sense. If you reach out to people aimlessly just to cast a wide net, you won't necessarily get much value or substance. It's important to be intentional with your outreach and show that you care and have done your research. I also listen to a lot of podcasts. I especially love NPR's *How I Built This* with Guy Raz. I highly recommend it to anyone looking to start a business or just for some inspiration.

Related: This 29-Year-Old's Side Hustle Brought People 'to the Dark Green Side.' It Made $10,000 Within 2 Days and Sees 6 Figures a Month.

If you could go back in your business journey and change one process or approach, what would it be, and how do you wish you'd done it differently?
Get your operations down and figure out which tools keep you

most organized and offer the best flow. For example, I've used multiple types of software for creating invoices, and it gets messy when you have documents in different places. Having a centralized database is so important for record-keeping.

Image Credit: Dan Simantov

When it comes to this specific business, what is something you've found particularly challenging and/or surprising that people who get into this type of work should be prepared for, but likely aren't?

When I started Nudesox, I was very young, and there was a lot that I didn't know about running a business or even the way retailers operate. It's tricky when you are learning, and when people know you're in the learning phase, oftentimes you can get taken advantage of. It's important to walk into every room

with confidence and certainty – do your research ahead of time, but don't necessarily share your doubts or questions with just anyone. Have a select few people that you really trust – this is why it's important to have mentors.

Can you recall a specific instance when something went very wrong? How did you fix it?

I had to pull my very first purchase order of socks in 2018 because they would "slip off." My mistake was that I didn't test the product in every circumstance and with different shoes to make sure they held up. Biggest mistake! Ever since that moment, every new SKU is worn, washed and tested many, many times with various shoes. I took that first loss and learned my lesson.

Related: They Started a Side Hustle Producing an 'Obvious' Food Item. It Hit $300,000 Monthly Revenue Fast – On Track for Over $20 Million in 2025.

How long did it take you to see consistent monthly revenue? How much did the side hustle earn?

Nudesox is a concept I never gave up on, and it just takes one big "yes" to propel you forward. That's the power of one. We often hear about overnight successes or venture-backed brands making it big quickly. I'd argue it's equally as impressive to pursue something for years before it hits – proof that the brand has a purpose and giving up is not in the equation. Persistence and resilience are two essential founder qualities. Throughout the journey of Nudesox, our retail pop-ups would see thousands of dollars in weeks, and now the brand sees thousands of dollars in minutes with more orders and customers. It's all about timing and product-market fit.

What does growth and revenue look like now?

Nudesox is on track to sell over 30,000 pairs of socks this year across all sales channels. Having strong partnerships and distribution is important for scaling. We launched with QVC this year, and in our first show, we sold over 500 pairs of

socks per minute – that’s about nine pairs per second! This was a partnership I had always dreamed of because it’s an opportunity to present the function of Nudesox visually and share how it makes getting dressed easier. Being on live TV and demonstrating Nudesox’s effectiveness increased sales and allowed me to connect with customers in real time. Creating a product that people wear every day and never knew they needed has boosted the brand, especially now that we have major distribution. Nudesox sees high returning customer rates and organic word of mouth, so we are excited about future growth.

Image Credit: Dan Simantov

How much time do you spend working on your business on a daily, weekly or monthly basis? How do you structure that time; what does a typical day or week of work look like for

you?

I work about 75 hours a week, including my weekends, and I start every day with an iced matcha! In addition to Nudesox, I also work for Shopify, helping brands to migrate and grow on our platform. During the day, you'll find me on the phone with merchants interested in growing with Shopify's platform. During the evening, you'll find me on the phone with my manufacturer discussing margins and retail partnerships. I find it fulfilling to have multiple things going on at once, and the more on my plate, the more I get done. Right now, I'm working on scaling Nudesox with more distribution channels and designing new styles. It's always been important for me to find synergies in my life. I chose to work for Shopify because Nudesox runs on Shopify, and I understand the platform and how it's personally helped me run the business. I love connecting with other business owners and being in that world.

What do you enjoy most about running this business?

I love watching each stage of its growth and seeing new opportunities arise. Getting to see something you've built reach new heights over time is rewarding. Running a business is dynamic and constantly evolving; there is never a dull moment. High highs and low lows, but it makes me so happy seeing the community of people who love and wear Nudesox daily. When people purchase socks from our retail pop-ups, I often see them come back days or weeks later wearing the Nudesox they bought. It's always such a good feeling to see people appreciating your product and knowing it's adding value to their lives. It's a personal reminder that what I've built matters.

Related: 'Absolute Freedom': Siblings Behind a Self-Funded 8-Figure Brand Reveal 3 Secrets Aspiring Entrepreneurs Should Know About Growth and Success

What is your best piece of specific, actionable business advice?

My best piece of business advice is also personal advice. We

talk a lot about love languages and not enough about learning languages. It’s natural to think of how we like to “receive” from others, but it’s also important to know how to “give” to yourself from within. Spend quality time getting to know yourself and how you learn and absorb information. Think of how you best interact with people — is it a specific environment or state of mind? Where do you find inspiration, and how do you deal with tough situations? The common denominator of everything we do in life is ourselves, so having that self-awareness is what will make you successful. Once you’ve done the self-work, focus on solving real problems that people face. Is the market there? Have a clear vision on how you want to execute and show people you are willing to give your all before asking anything from them. Finally, make sure you have an X-factor. What makes your business stand out, and what makes you the right person for this? That’s how I started Nudesox.

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https://www.entrepreneur.com/starting-a-business/her-high-school-side-hustle-is-on-track-for-7-figure-revenue/494869

Here’s Why In-N-Out Heiress

Lynsi Snyder Is Moving Her Family from California to Tennessee: 'It Will Be Wonderful'

In-N-Out Burger's president and owner is moving her family out of the state where the burger chain began.

Lynsi Snyder, 43, who has been president of In-N-Out since 2010, sat down for an episode of the podcast "Relatable," and said that she and her family are moving from her home state of California to Tennessee, where In-N-Out is opening a new office.

"We're building an office, so I'm actually moving out there," Snyder said on the podcast that aired on Friday. "There [are] a lot of great things about California, but raising a family is not easy here. Doing business it's not easy here now."

Related: Forget the Six-Figure UPS Gig. You Can Make $180,000 at In-N-Out, Writes Burger Heiress Lynsi Snyder in Her New Book.

In January 2023, In-N-Out announced that it's opening its first East Coast restaurant in Nashville, Tennessee, and building its first East Coast headquarters about 20 miles away in Franklin, which will cost $125 million to construct. The burger chain plans to spread across Tennessee, expanding to Chattanooga, Knoxville, and Memphis, opening more than a dozen locations.

In-N-Out is also opening new locations in Arizona, California,

and Colorado this year and debuting its first location in Washington.

Snyder, who grew up in Northern California, said on the podcast that “the bulk” of In-N-Out stores are still going to be in the state, but that she is looking forward to having more of a footprint in Tennessee.

“It will be wonderful having an office out there, growing out there, and being able to have the family and other people’s families out there,” Snyder said on the podcast.

In-N-Out will also be consolidating its two existing California corporate offices, moving its Irvine headquarters to Baldwin Park, where the first In-N-Out location opened in the 1940s. Snyder disclosed on the podcast that the Irvine office will close by 2030 to complete the consolidation.

According to the California Department of Justice, the violent crime rate in the state increased 15.1% from 2018 to 2023. According to Statista, around 3,640 violent crimes per 100,000 residents were reported in Oakland, California, in 2023, making Oakland the most dangerous city in the U.S. that year. Snyder said last year that rising crime and “absolutely dangerous” conditions caused In-N-Out to shut down a restaurant in Oakland in March 2024, marking the first time in the burger chain’s 77-year history that it had to shutter a restaurant.

Snyder said that the company closed the profitable Oakland location “for the safety of our associates,” adding that “gunshots went through the store, there was a stabbing, there was a lot.”

Related: In-N-Out Burger Is Opening New Locations Outside of California — Here’s Where It’s Going Next

Snyder’s grandparents, Harry and Esther Snyder, founded In-N-Out in 1948 as a single drive-thru hamburger restaurant in

Baldwin Park, California. Today, the company has grown to more than 400 locations that bring in $2.1 billion a year, according to consulting firm Technomic.

Snyder took over In-N-Out in 2017 at age 35 when she received the final portion of her inheritance that gave her 97% ownership of the company. She became one of the world's youngest billionaires in the process.

In-N-Out differentiates itself from competitors by vowing to never freeze ingredients and crafting fresh-to-order burgers. The company has also never franchised, remaining privately owned.

According to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index, Snyder has a net worth of $7.32 billion, making her the 483rd richest person in the world.

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: In-N-Out Burger Is Moving East. Is It Coming to Your State?

In-N-Out Burger's president and owner is moving her family out of the state where the burger chain began.

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