Here’s What It’s Like to Work at OpenAI, According to an Employee Who Quit 3 Weeks Ago

When engineer and MIT graduate Calvin French-Owen joined OpenAI in May 2024, the startup had around 1,000 employees. A year later, OpenAI’s workforce had tripled to 3,000 employees, and French-Owen was in the top 30% by tenure.

In a blog post published Tuesday, French-Owen detailed what it was like to work for the ChatGPT-maker for a little over a year, from May 2024 to June 2025. He quit OpenAI three weeks ago, stating that there was no “personal drama” behind his decision, but that he was simply “craving a fresh start.”

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

While at OpenAI, French-Owen worked on Codex, a coding assistant released in May that competes with AI coding tools like Cursor and Anthropic’s Claude Code. He described in his blog post that his team of eight engineers, four researchers, two designers, two go-to-market managers, and one project manager created Codex in just seven weeks. They worked most nights until 11 p.m. or midnight and came into the office on weekends to complete the project.

“It’s hard to overstate how incredible this level of pace was,” French-Owen wrote. “I haven’t seen organizations large or small go from an idea to a fully launched + freely available product in such a short window.”

He added later that Codex had reached 630,000 engineers in less than two months since launch.

“I’m not sure I’ve ever worked on something so impactful in my

life," French-Owen wrote.



Calvin French-Owen. Photo By Harry Murphy/Sportsfile for Web Summit via Getty Images

One "unusual" aspect of OpenAI, which French-Owen emphasized in his blog post, was that "there is no email," and nearly all communication happens on the workplace messaging platform Slack. He estimated that he received about 10 emails in his entire time at the company.

Related: OpenAI Executives Look For These 3 Key Traits in New Hires: 'It's Actually My Advice to Students'

French-Owen also stated that there's a strong bias for action at OpenAI, meaning that staff are encouraged to have good ideas and act on them. He characterized the startup as extremely meritocratic, promoting employees based on their ability to have the best ideas instead of their ability to present at meetings or play political games.

French-Owen found OpenAI to be “a very secretive place” as well as “a more serious place than you might expect.” The startup prohibited him from telling anyone what he was working on in detail, and it felt as though the stakes were high for the company to build a product used by 500 million global weekly users.

French-Owen also wrote that when it comes to engineering personnel, there is a “very significant” Meta to OpenAI pipeline. He pointed out that OpenAI is similar to Meta in its early days, with a top-performing consumer app and “a desire to move really quickly.”

Before joining OpenAI, French-Owen was previously a co-founder of data startup Segment, which Twilio bought for $3.2 billion in 2020.

Related: ‘I’ll Fight to Keep Every One of You’: OpenAI Responds to Meta Poaching Talent, Says It Is ‘Recalibrating’ Pay

Meta has been hiring talent from OpenAI, too. Meta recently poached top OpenAI researchers, including ChatGPT co-creator Shengjia Zhao and ChatGPT voice mode co-creator Shuchao Bi, with pay packages reportedly in the nine figures. OpenAI Chief Research Officer Mark Chen indicated last month in a leaked Slack message that the company is rethinking compensation in response to the poaching.

OpenAI raised $40 billion in March at a valuation of $300 billion, the biggest private tech deal ever recorded.

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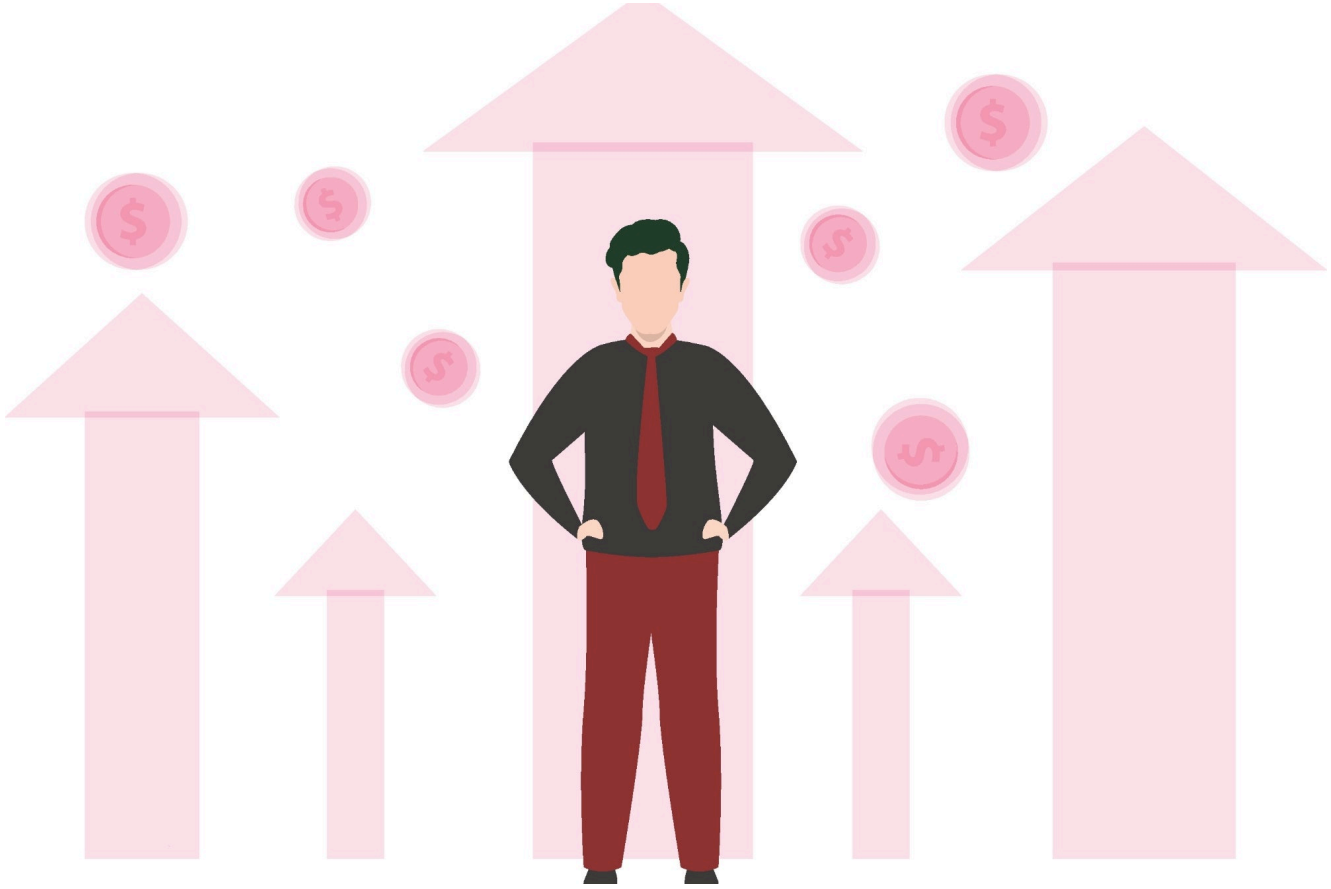
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5 Things People Don’t Tell You About Being a High-Growth Entrepreneur



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If you spend five minutes on LinkedIn or Instagram, you'd think being a high-growth entrepreneur is nothing but private jets, roundtables at Davos and "crushing it." I should know. I've built multiple businesses, advised countless founders and worked in industries where appearances are currency.

Yet the truth is far messier, and far more valuable, than the highlight reel we're often shown.

As the founder of Digital24, where we help entrepreneurs and businesses shape their online presence and reputation, I've navigated the highs and lows of fast-scaling ventures across digital PR, brand building and luxury services. Over the years, I've learned there are crucial realities that rarely make it into glossy articles or podcasts. Here are five things people don't tell you about being a high-growth entrepreneur, and why knowing them might save your sanity, your business and perhaps your health.

Related: Rapid Business Expansion Can Be a Good Thing — But It Comes With Challenges. Here's How to Make This Growth Sustainable.

1. Growth magnifies every flaw

In the early days, you can skate by on hustle and charm. But as your business scales, tiny cracks in your processes, team culture or product become glaring fault lines. Growth doesn't just amplify revenue. It amplifies everything, good and bad.

> *"Growing fast is like turning up the volume on your business. If the music is beautiful, it's incredible. But if there's static in the system, it's suddenly deafening." — Steve Laidlaw*

At Digital24, I've worked with companies where a lack of clear communication or weak middle management didn't seem critical at 10 people but became existential threats at 50.

One of the biggest myths in entrepreneurship is that growth automatically fixes problems. It doesn't. It exposes them. If you're planning for fast growth, spend as much time strengthening your foundations as you do chasing new customers.

2. You'll outgrow relationships, and that's painful

No one talks about the emotional casualties of scaling a business. As you evolve, some friendships, partnerships or early team dynamics won't survive the journey.

> *"Entrepreneurship is personal growth on steroids. And sometimes the people who helped you start can't help you scale." — Steve Laidlaw*

Early hires might be incredible generalists, but eventually you'll need specialists who've seen the scale you're chasing. Trusted suppliers may not be able to keep up with rising standards or volumes. Even friendships outside your business can feel strained if people don't understand the pressures you're under.

That's not arrogance; it's reality. Your orbit will change as your business does. A high-growth founder's journey often feels lonely precisely because it requires constant adaptation.

3. Cash flow stress doesn't disappear with bigger numbers

I've seen founders assume that once they hit, say, £5 million or £10 million in revenue, the sleepless nights will vanish. Here's the reality: Bigger numbers often come with bigger risks.

> *"The zeros change. The anxiety often doesn't." — Steve Laidlaw*

You'll have larger payrolls, bigger contracts and more complex cash flow timing. One delayed payment from a major client can ripple through your entire operation. And in high-growth businesses, you're usually reinvesting profits into further growth, marketing, talent and product development, which means your bank account rarely feels as comfortable as outsiders assume.

At Digital24, we've seen how rapid expansion can strain even the healthiest businesses. If you're scaling fast, prepare for a balancing act between aggressive growth and cash preservation. It's an invisible tightrope that few outsiders appreciate.

Related: The Inevitable Challenges You'll Face as Your Business Grows — and How to Handle Them

4. Visibility is a double-edged sword

Everyone wants publicity, right? Coverage in high-profile publications, podcasts and speaking gigs. It all sounds great. And it is, until it's not.

In a high-growth business, visibility brings opportunities and scrutiny. As your profile rises, your reputation becomes both your strongest asset and your biggest vulnerability.

> *"When you're invisible, mistakes stay private. When you're visible, mistakes become headlines." — Steve Laidlaw*

We often work with founders whose social media posts, once casual, suddenly triggered PR crises because they were now seen as brand representatives. Media attention is powerful for fundraising, recruiting and credibility, but it requires discipline. Every word you say, every online footprint, every casual comment carries weight.

High-growth founders need to think like public figures long before they feel like one. That means professionalizing your personal brand, monitoring your digital presence and sometimes learning to say less.

5. Success brings an identity crisis

Here's the strangest secret of all: Achieving your growth goals can leave you feeling lost.

Entrepreneurs are builders by nature. The adrenaline of

problem solving, pivoting and creating is addictive. But high growth eventually demands a shift from scrappy founder to structured CEO, and not everyone wants that role.

> *"There's a moment every founder faces where you realize the job you've built for yourself isn't the one you want anymore." — Steve Laidlaw*

Some entrepreneurs thrive as visionaries but struggle with the operational discipline required to scale. Others miss the personal connections with customers that get diluted in a bigger company. I've seen founders sell businesses not for the money, but to escape the role their own success trapped them in.

If you're pursuing rapid growth, check in with yourself regularly. What do you actually want your day-to-day life to look like? The cost of ignoring that question is burnout, or worse, building a business you no longer love.

Related: The Truth About Achieving Exponential Growth in Business, Exposed

My hard-earned conclusion

Being a high-growth entrepreneur is extraordinary. It's a privilege to create jobs, build products and chase your vision. But it's not the fantasy often portrayed in social media highlight reels.

If I could give one piece of advice to any ambitious founder, it would be this:

> *"Treat your business like a machine and your reputation like an asset. But treat yourself like a human being." — Steve Laidlaw*

Growth is thrilling. But it's also relentless, exposing every

weakness and forcing you to evolve constantly. Knowing the hidden realities doesn't make the journey less exciting. It makes it survivable, sustainable and ultimately more rewarding.

So here's to the founders building high-growth companies. May you grow wisely, and may you always remember there's a real human behind the brand.

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How Yankees Star Anthony Volpe Turned a Recovery Drink Into a Business Opportunity



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At some point in elementary school, you were probably asked what you wanted to be when you grew up. If you were a kid in New York or New Jersey, odds are someone in that classroom wrote down shortstop for the New York Yankees.

Most people never reach the heights their childhood selves aspired to.

But Anthony Volpe isn't *most people.*

Fueled by years of preparation, passion and patience, Volpe made his major league debut for his beloved Yankees in 2023, just four years after being drafted. Today, he's living his dream — starting at shortstop for the team he grew up idolizing, following in the footsteps of Derek Jeter.

Now in his third MLB season, the 24-year-old is taking the next big step in his career — not just on the field, but off it.

"I grew up dreaming of being a baseball player," Volpe says. "As a kid, you don't consider all the opportunities that come with it."

Nevertheless, in his relentless pursuit of a competitive edge, Volpe found a natural partner in Recover 180, an organic sports drink that aligns with both his performance needs and personal values.

Related: 'Nobody's Ever Seen This Before': How These 2 NYC Sports Icons Are Infusing Swagger into Next-Gen Eyewear

Real relationships, real ingredients

Unlike many athlete partnerships, where a brand seeks out an athlete to promote its product, Volpe was already a consumer of Recover 180 before any formal relationship began.

After researching the company and trying the product himself, the 24-year-old took the initiative to get involved with the business, much to the delight of Recover 180 VP of Marketing Jonny Hochschild.

"It's really about authenticity," Hochschild says. "We want athletes and partners who genuinely resonate with the brand, people who are actual consumers of it."

Volpe fits that description to a tee, incorporating Recover 180 into his workout regiment before he ever joined forces with the company.

“Baseball season is as crazy as a sports season gets,” the young shortstop shares. “So recovery is huge for me.”

As the name suggests, Recover 180 is built with recovery in mind. The drink features a coconut water base and contains no artificial flavoring, aiming to deliver maximum hydration, hence the tagline: *Better Hydration*.

“Sugary traditional sports drinks are fine in the moment,” Volpe says, “but you shouldn’t really drink them if you’re not actually playing and sweating.”

Recover 180, on the other hand, is USDA organic certified and made with a mix of clean, functional ingredients like coconut water, elderberries, added vitamins and antioxidants.

“If you look at other sports drinks out there, most don’t have that USDA organic certification, and they definitely don’t have the low calories like we do,” says Hochschild. “A lot of them even use red dye.”

Of course, no matter how healthy a product is, people won’t drink it if it doesn’t taste good. Fortunately, Recover 180 has received strong feedback on that front.

“We handed out tens of thousands of samples at Fanatics Fest, and everyone loved it,” says Hochschild. “In my first beverage job, about 60% of people would spit it out. So, having a product people actually enjoy drinking is a game-changer.”

Related: 5 Lessons I Wish I Didn’t Learn the Hard Way During My 20 Years in Business

Beyond the ballpark

For Volpe, partnering with Recover 180 marks a new stage in his growth off the field, as the young star begins learning to navigate the boardroom with the same confidence he has on the baseball diamond.

“One of the biggest things I’ve learned through this whole process is how important it is to find balance,” he says. “Being in New York, you could take on a new opportunity every single day if you wanted to. But I’ve learned to focus on partnerships that are truly worth my time and have the potential to succeed.”

Recover 180 has already built a strong presence among professional athletes, partnering with stars like Cardinals quarterback Kyler Murray and Lakers guard Austin Reaves. Now, with Anthony Volpe on board, the brand has a footprint across all major U.S. sports leagues — and a valuable connection to one of the most prestigious franchises in American sports: the New York Yankees.

“I’m very fortunate to play on a stage as big as the Yankees,” Volpe says. “Even on the road, it’s wild to see how many of our fans show up compared to the home team.”

That kind of visibility extends off the field as well, opening doors for brand partnerships and business opportunities. But Volpe is selective about where he puts his name.

“You have to be intentional about what you do,” the 24-year-old says. “It’s a good problem to have, but it means picking and choosing what you really want to pursue.”

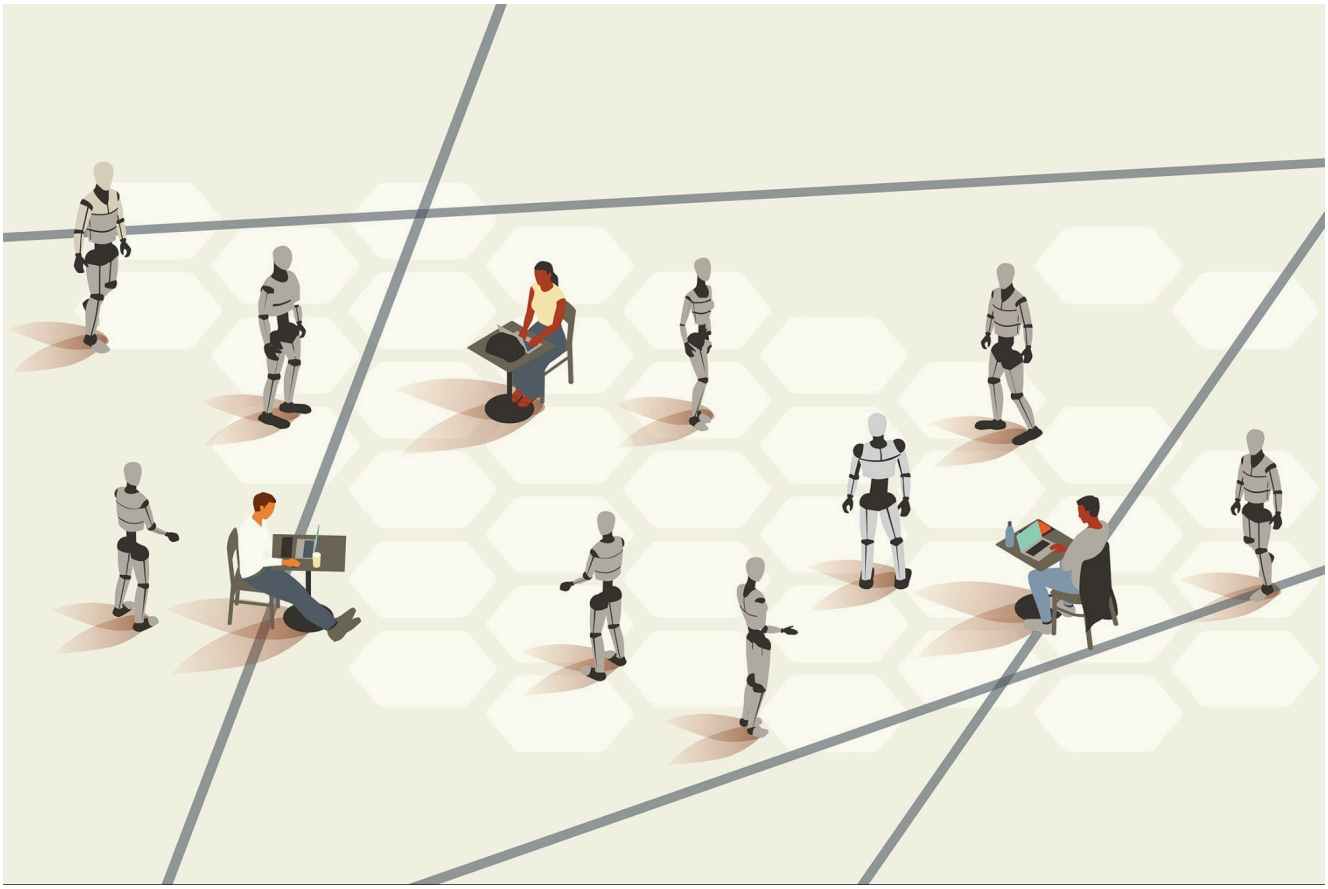
Finding that balance can be challenging for a young player, but Volpe is fortunate to be surrounded by seasoned MLB veterans he can lean on for guidance. He says his biggest takeaway from them has been the importance of authenticity.

“My main thing is avoiding the corny deals that don’t make sense or serve a real purpose,” he explains. “I’m not the most outgoing person when it comes to promoting myself or posting, even though I know that’s important to brands. But when a partnership is genuine, when the brand uses its platform to help share my story and vision, it feels natural.”

Volpe is still in the early stages of his career, both on and off the field. But if his partnership with Recover 180 is any indication, he’s already knocking it out of the park in both arenas.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/growing-a-business/how-anthony-volpe-turned-a-recovery-drink-into-a-business/494383

Your AI Initiatives Will Fail If You Don’t Address This Crucial Component First



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The conversations I am having with CIOs have changed dramatically over the past year. The conversation used to center around digital transformation milestones and cloud migration timelines. Now it's about agents, multi-agent workflows and how to scale AI initiatives beyond proof-of-concept demos. But here's what's becoming painfully clear: Most organizations are trying to build the future of work on infrastructure that was barely able to accommodate yesterday's demands, let alone tomorrow's.

As a Field CTO working with organizations at various stages of their AI journey, I'm seeing a troubling pattern. Mature companies rush to implement new agentic technologies, only to discover their underlying systems were never engineered to support the data, velocity, processing requirements or security governance that agentic workflows demand. The results aren't just failed pilots — it's cost, risk and operational drag that compounds over time.

Related: Outdated Systems Are Harming Your Business More Than You Realize. Here's How to Modernize Before Disaster Strikes.

The agent infrastructure reality

Agents and models are fed on data, and without the right structure, network topology and foundational building blocks in place, agents sit around idle, waiting for information. We're not just talking about having data — we're talking about having it in the right format, at the right time, with the right security, transparency and governance wrapped around it.

The demands of globalization make this even more complex. When scaling across geographies with bespoke data sovereignty requirements, how is repeatability and consistency ensured when data cannot leave certain jurisdictions? Organizations that put modern infrastructure pieces in place with the goal of facilitating easy scale suddenly find they can onboard customers, move into new markets and launch new product offerings at a fraction of the cost and effort that they used to.

Inaction or embracing the status quo leads to what I call infrastructure debt, and it accumulates interest faster than most CIOs anticipate.

The operational health diagnostic

I use a simple framework to assess organizational readiness: the 60-30-10 model for engineering and software development. In a healthy IT organization, around 60% of resources should focus on "move-forward" incremental feature adds and improved user experience that respond to business unit requirements and customer requests. About 30% is devoted to maintaining current operations in areas like support, bug fixes and keeping existing systems functional. The last 10% needs to be reserved for the huge transformation initiatives that have the

potential to 10x the impact of the organization.

When I see these ratios skew, particularly when maintenance climbs to 40 or 50% of resources, that is often a systems architecture problem masquerading as an operational issue. You may not be spending more time on maintenance because your code is poorly written, but rather because the underlying infrastructure was never designed to support the current needs, let alone future ones. The systems are getting stressed, things break, shortcuts are taken, and debt just accumulates.

If you find yourself climbing the same hill every time you create a new capability — doing the same data transformations, rebuilding the same integrations, explaining why this application can't leverage what you built for that one — it's likely your foundation that needs attention.

The multi-cloud strategy evolution

Your cloud needs will change as your capabilities mature. You might use amazing AI tools in one cloud while leveraging the partnership ecosystem in another. You may go multi-cloud because different product lines have different performance requirements or because different teams have different expertise.

The key is maintaining technology alignment with more open, portable approaches. This gives you the flexibility to move between clouds as requirements change. Sometimes, there's a proprietary technology that's core to what you do, and you accept that as the price of doing business. But wherever possible, avoid lock-in that constrains future decisions.

Know who you are as an organization. If you have amazing data scientists but limited Kubernetes expertise, gravitate toward managed services that let your data scientists focus on models rather than infrastructure. If your team wants to optimize

every dial and parameter, choose platforms that provide that level of control. Align your cloud strategy with your internal capabilities, not with what looks impressive in vendor demos.

Related: How Multi-Cloud Could Be the Growth Catalyst Your Business Needs

The data architecture imperative

Before implementing any AI initiative, you need to answer fundamental questions about your data landscape. Where does your data reside? What regulatory constraints govern its use? What security policies surround it? How difficult would it be to normalize it into a unified data platform?

Historically, data has been sawdust – the inevitable byproduct of work being performed – that then becomes a cost center where you need to pay an ever-increasing amount to store and protect data that becomes increasingly less irrelevant the further you move away from its time of creation. Organizations often discover they've accumulated data over decades without considering its structure or accessibility. That's acceptable when humans are processing information manually, but agents need structured, governed and accessible data streams. Now, data may be an organization's most valuable resource – the more unique or more specialized, the better. The time investment required to prepare your data architecture pays dividends across every subsequent AI initiative.

This isn't just about technical capabilities – it's about governance maturity. Can you ensure data flows seamlessly where it needs to go while maintaining security boundaries? Can you coordinate multiple agents accessing different data sources and applications without creating compliance risks? Can you even pull disparate kinds of data from all the file systems, databases and object stores into a single view?

Legacy system assessment signals

Several indicators suggest your current infrastructure won't support AI ambitions. If you're spending increasing resources maintaining existing systems rather than building new capabilities, that's a structural issue. If every new project requires extensive custom integration work that can't be reused, your architecture lacks modularity.

When your sales team loses opportunities because features are "on the roadmap for next year" rather than available now, you're paying opportunity costs for technical limitations. Jeff Bezos once said, "When the anecdotes and the data disagree, the anecdotes are usually right." If you're hearing stories about excessive resource allocation, missed opportunities or customer churn due to system limitations, pay attention to those signals regardless of what your dashboards indicate.

The infrastructure transformation approach

The rip-and-replace approach has burned many organizations because it assumes everything old lacks value. Modern approaches focus on componentization — addressing system elements individually while maintaining operational continuity. You can migrate functionality without losing capabilities, transitioning from old to new without creating a net loss in what you can deliver to customers.

This requires change management discipline and a graceful transition strategy. You're balancing the introduction of new capabilities with maintaining what has been successful. Sometimes, that means a complete rewrite to take advantage of cloud-native technologies, but it requires architected migration of functionality rather than wholesale application

replacement.

Preparing for agentic scale

The organizations that will succeed in the agentic era are those positioning themselves for speed, data accessibility and security without compromising any of these elements. As we move from individual models to agents to multi-agent workflows, the coordination requirements become exponentially more complex.

Having data flow seamlessly in the right format at the right time becomes a showstopper requirement. Everything needs integration with the lowest possible latency while maintaining security and compliance boundaries. Cloud platforms that can wrap governance envelopes around everything you're doing help diminish the risk of human error as complexity scales. Organizations that can really excel at this don't just keep up with the Joneses; they are the Joneses.

Related: The AI Shift: Moving Beyond Models Toward Intelligent Agents

Build for agents, not just apps

Your staff are already using AI tools whether your organization has sanctioned them or not. They're uploading data to external services, using models for work tasks and finding ways to be more productive. The faster you can provide them with governed, secure alternatives, the faster you can put appropriate boundaries around how these tools get used.

Don't implement AI for the sake of having AI initiatives. Focus on the problems you're trying to solve and the goals you need to achieve. AI is a powerful tool, but it should be applied to address real business challenges, not to check a box for your board.

The infrastructure decisions you make today determine whether your AI initiatives will scale or stall. In the agentic era, there’s no middle ground between having the right foundation and having a very expensive pile of proofs-of-concept that never delivered business value.

Speed, data and security will be the neural system of successful AI implementations. Getting that balance right isn’t just a technical challenge — it’s a competitive requirement.

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https://www.entrepreneur.com/science-technology/your-ai-initiatives-will-fail-if-you-overlook-this-component/493948

Why the Future of Business Runs on Invisible AI Infrastructure



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Artificial intelligence has long been seen as a tool for prediction or automation, a forward-looking technology rather than foundational infrastructure. But its deepest impact may not be in doing new things, but in doing old things better: bringing structure where there was once inconsistency.

In industries ranging from automotive manufacturing to healthcare, from retail returns to pharmaceutical research, AI is quietly reshaping how work gets done. It standardizes processes that used to rely on human judgment, introduces repeatability where variability once reigned and scales precision across thousands of decisions per day.

By turning inconsistent inputs into consistent outputs, AI allows companies to operate with clarity and scale. It often enhances human work, making previously unmanageable processes fully operational.

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Structuring quality where inputs vary

Automakers contend with supplier variability in parts, while retailers manage diverse product returns; machine learning systems analyze sensor data or images to define consistent, objective standards.

BMW's use of AI in its iFACTORY illustrates this shift. By integrating image and acoustic inspection during assembly, they achieve consistent quality among vehicles built with variable components. As structured evaluation replaces reliance on individual judgment, rejection rates decline while overall throughput rises.

A similar transformation is happening in the secondhand industry. My company, ATRenew, processes over 90,000 secondhand smartphones daily — highly non-standardized products with diverse conditions. Using this massive volume of real-world data, the company has developed the Matrix Automated Quality Inspection System, which uses computer vision and AI to perform precise, standardized inspections at scale.

With over 99% accuracy and labor cost reductions of up to 83%, it brings structure to variability and makes quality assurance repeatable and efficient.

This kind of transformation is not limited to manufacturing. In healthcare, AI helps standardize diagnostic imaging interpretations. In agriculture, it evaluates crop conditions from drone footage. The common thread is that AI brings order to complexity. It makes quality assurance scalable, repeatable and reliable.

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Accelerating R&D through structural intelligence

In sectors that rely on creativity, structure and scale seem at odds. Yet companies like Unilever are bridging that divide. They build AI digital twins of products and feed them into generative content platforms. These platforms produce personalized visuals and copy for global campaigns.

Meanwhile, McKinsey research documents a reduction of up to seventy percent in product development lead times when structured AI methods guide concept iteration. What once required months of testing now completes in weeks. The structure AI brings enables creativity to move faster without compromising coherence.

Beyond marketing, structural AI is also reshaping pharmaceutical R&D. By simulating molecular interactions and predicting drug efficacy, AI accelerates discovery cycles while reducing costly trial-and-error approaches. This allows researchers to focus on high-potential compounds and streamline clinical trials.

The result is a dramatic increase in innovation velocity, without sacrificing scientific rigor. AI does not replace human creativity. It amplifies it, making experimentation more efficient and scalable.

Improving risk and compliance with predictive order

Structured insight matters even more in sectors where oversight and trust are paramount. JPMorgan Chase exemplifies

this principle through its comprehensive AI strategy. The bank has embedded AI into trading, fraud detection and customer personalization and estimates that these initiatives have the potential to unlock up to $1.5 billion in value. Tools like ChatCFO support finance teams with real-time decision-making, while AI systems simulate the expertise of senior executives to guide internal strategy.

Simultaneously, AI tools for risk management and fraud detection operate continuously and at scale. They protect client relationships while supporting regulatory commitments. In retail, Amazon applies similar AI logic to dynamic pricing, adjusting millions of product prices in real time based on demand, inventory and competitor behavior. The result is a financial institution anchored by an algorithmic structure rather than reactive review.

Beyond banking, AI-driven compliance solutions are being deployed in healthcare, manufacturing and government. These systems monitor transactions, flag suspicious activity and generate audit trails in real time. They provide transparency, reduce human bias and ensure adherence to evolving regulations.

By embedding predictive logic into governance frameworks, AI ensures that organizations stay compliant by anticipating issues before they arise, rather than simply reacting to them after the fact.

Optimizing global logistics and resource flow

Global logistics is complicated and often unpredictable, but adding structure helps manage that complexity. AI supports smarter planning, quicker responses and better overall performance. It improves route planning, warehouse coordination and last-mile delivery, making supply chains more

efficient and dependable.

DHL is an example of this change. They're experimenting with all kinds of AI – from self-driving trucks and delivery drones reaching remote spots to smart warehouses that sort and pack stuff faster and with fewer mistakes. They also use AI to predict when machines might break down, so they can fix things before they cause problems.

Ultimately, AI transforms a complex, chaotic system into a manageable, scalable network. It helps companies control unpredictability and optimize the flow of goods and resources worldwide with greater precision.

Conclusion

AI's real promise is not dazzling speed or flashy capability. It is discipline. By transforming fragmented inputs into structured outcomes, AI becomes the backbone that supports every stage of value creation – from inspection to decision to execution.

Businesses that see AI as organizational architecture rather than point solutions gain a sustainable advantage. They turn variability into repeatability, complexity into clarity and scattered potential into reliable performance.

Leaders aiming to embed AI into operations should start by identifying fragmented workflows. They should apply structural AI to formalize decision logic and scale across functions once early wins are demonstrated. When done correctly, AI becomes part of the enterprise's operating model. It aligns technology with strategy and drives long-term transformation.

In that sense, AI shifts from a mere tool to essential infrastructure. Quietly, it rebuilds the core of global operations. As more industries adopt this structural mindset, AI will no longer be seen as a luxury add-on. It will become a

foundational element of modern business.

Artificial intelligence has long been seen as a tool for prediction or automation, a forward-looking technology rather than foundational infrastructure. But its deepest impact may not be in doing new things, but in doing old things better: bringing structure where there was once inconsistency.

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Perplexity CEO Says AI Coding Tools Cut Work Time From ‘Four Days to Literally One

Hour’

AI search engine startup Perplexity internally mandated the use of AI coding tools — and says that its engineers have been noticeably more productive.

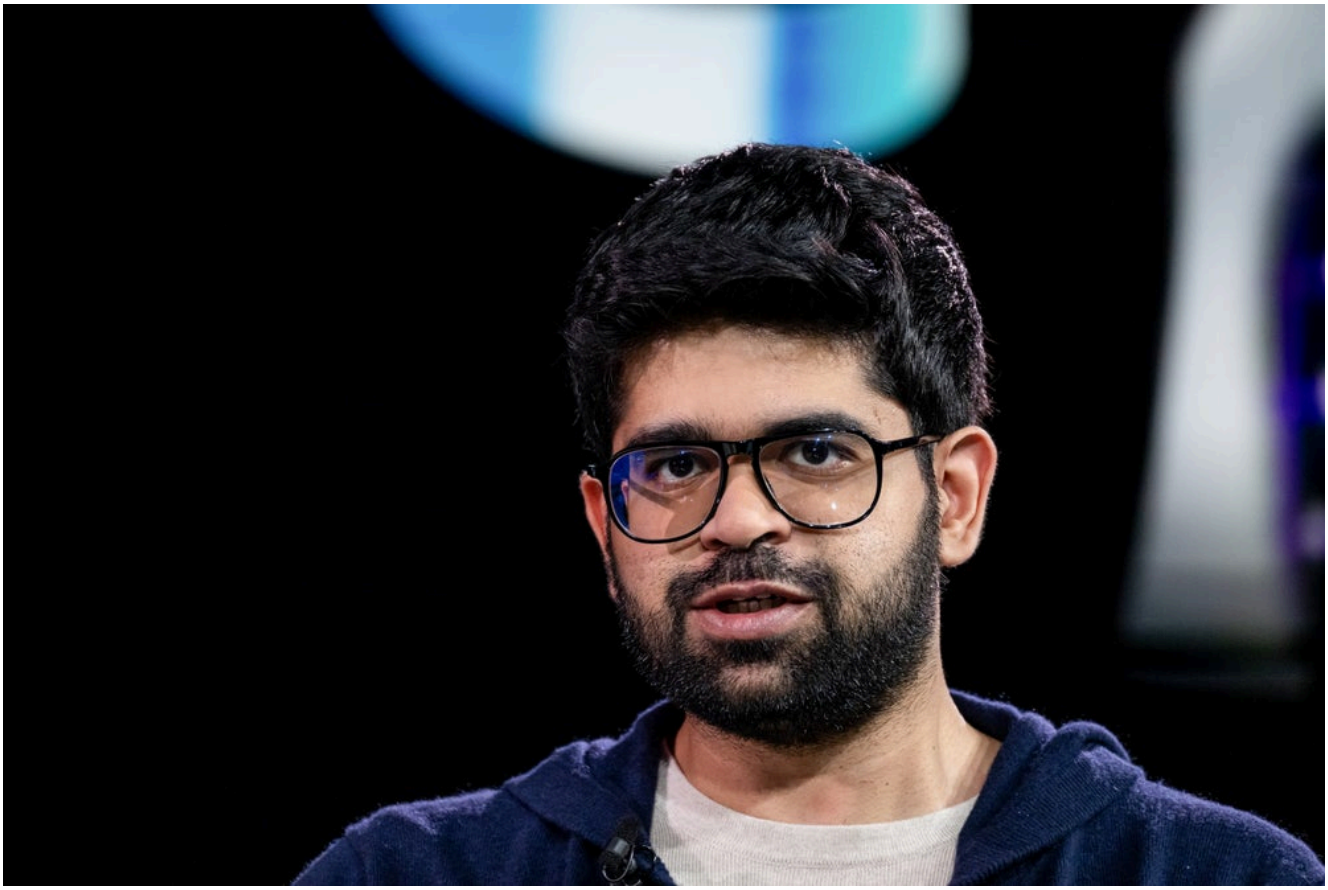
Perplexity CEO Aravind Srinivas told Y Combinator that the startup “made it compulsory” for its engineers to use AI coding tools such as Cursor or GitHub Copilot. These tools can generate blocks of code and debug programs.

Related: AI Is Already Writing About 30% of Code at Microsoft and Google. Here’s What It Means for Software Engineers.

Srinivas said that Perplexity engineers have seen measurable outcomes so far: Using the tools cuts down on “experimentation time” for new tasks from “three, four days to literally one hour,” he said.

“That level of change is incredible,” Srinivas stated. “The speed at which we can fix bugs and ship to production is crazy.”

Perplexity’s AI search engine reported a 20% month-over-month growth in May with 780 million queries.



Perplexity CEO Aravind Srinivas. Photographer: David Paul Morris/Bloomberg via Getty Images

Related: Google’s CEO Is Spending His Free Time ‘Vibe Coding’ a Webpage with AI: ‘I’ve Just Been Messing Around’

At Bloomberg’s Tech Summit in May, Srinivas predicted that within a year, Perplexity would be handling “a billion queries a week.” He pointed out that when the AI search engine first got started in 2022, it processed 3,000 queries a day, advancing to 30 million queries a day by May.

“It’s been phenomenal growth,” Srinivas stated at the event.

Still, there “are issues,” Srinivas said about using AI coding assistants, noting that the tools can introduce new bugs that software engineers aren’t familiar with and don’t know how to fix.

Last week, Perplexity introduced Comet, an AI-powered web browser that takes on Google Search and Google Chrome. Comet uses Perplexity’s AI search engine as its default tool, putting the company’s core product front and center for users.

In May, Perplexity was reportedly in late-stage talks for a $500 million funding round that would value the company at $14 billion.

Related: ‘Building It Ourselves’: Morgan Stanley Created an AI Tool to Fix the Most Annoying Part of Coding. Here’s How It Works.

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

https://www.entrepreneur.com/business-news/perplexity-ceo-ai-coding-tools-transformed-the-way-we-work/494663

Your PR Strategy Might Be the Reason People Don’t Trust Your Brand — Here’s How to Fix It



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It’s 2025, and the business landscape is more crowded than ever. In almost every industry, buyers have endless choices — and less patience for cold calls, generic email blasts or outdated lead forms. Traditional lead generation isn’t just ineffective—it’s being ignored.

Instead, organic marketing has taken center stage. In fact, up to 27% of businesses now say the majority of their leads come from organic search. It’s no surprise that more companies are shifting away from interruption-based strategies and leaning into credibility-driven approaches, especially through thought leadership PR.

Related: 5 Effective Thought Leadership PR Tactics for Your Startup

What is thought leadership PR – and why should you care?

Thought leadership PR isn't about blanketing your brand name across every outlet or going viral on social media. It's about positioning you – the founder, executive or expert – as a trusted authority in your space.

When someone Googles a question related to your industry, do they find your voice offering insight, or someone else's? Thought leadership puts you at the center of that conversation. It builds a digital footprint that not only earns trust but also turns you into the go-to source when prospects are looking for solutions.

Three ways to build thought leadership authority

You don't need a PR team or a massive media budget to get started. Here are three powerful ways to establish yourself as a thought leader:

- **Content marketing and media coverage**: Publish insightful blog posts, LinkedIn articles and industry op-eds that show your depth of thinking. Contribute to relevant media outlets. When others cite your expertise, your credibility grows.
- **Podcasts**: Tap into loyal, niche audiences by appearing on podcasts or launching your own. Podcast listeners are high-intent and tend to view guests as trusted guides.
- **Social media**: Share behind-the-scenes knowledge, timely takes and actionable insights on platforms like LinkedIn, Instagram or TikTok. Informative content – not flashy branding – is what earns trust.

Why thought leadership wins in today's market

Modern buyers – especially in B2B – are savvier than ever. They're not waiting to be sold to; they're researching before you even know they exist. One study found that 70% of the B2B buying process happens before a prospect reaches out.

That means your public presence matters. When potential clients search for answers and consistently find you offering them, you've already earned their trust before the first call.

And that trust accelerates everything – your credibility, your sales process, and your word-of-mouth momentum. Thought leadership turns your name into a shortcut for quality.

Even more: it builds long-term loyalty. When customers see you not just as a vendor but as a trusted advisor, your value increases and your relationships become stickier.

What real thought leadership looks like

To be clear, thought leadership isn't just about posting content. It's about being relevant, helpful and authentic.

Here's what works:

- **Speak from experience**. Share stories and lessons – not just facts. Talk about challenges you've faced or trends you've navigated.
- **Offer guidance, not self-promotion**. No one wants a sales pitch masked as content. Give people ideas they can use, even if they never buy from you.
- **Pick a niche and go deep**. You don't need to be everywhere. You need to be clear about who you serve and what you stand for. This clarity helps the right people

find you — and follow you.

For example, if you run a wellness brand, talk about how your approach to stress management helped a client avoid burnout. If you run a PR firm, break down real-world strategies that helped a small brand punch above its weight.

Related: Own Your Expertise — 13 Ways to Elevate Your Thought Leadership

Choosing the right platform and strategy

Where you show up matters as much as what you say. Align your thought leadership strategy with where your audience actually spends time:

- **LinkedIn**: Ideal for B2B leaders, consultants and service providers.
- **Instagram and TikTok**: Better for consumer-facing experts and brands.
- **YouTube or Substack**: Great for deep dives and long-form storytelling.

Don't try to be everywhere — pick one or two platforms where you can consistently show up with substance.

The long-term power of evergreen authority

Unlike cold outreach or paid ads that stop working the moment you pause spending, thought leadership is a compounding asset. Blog posts, podcast interviews and articles keep working for you long after they're published. They show up in search results, circulate among peers and reinforce your credibility over time.

Yes, it takes consistency and intention. But for entrepreneurs who want to build a trusted name and attract ideal clients without chasing them, it’s one of the most effective moves you can make.

In a market full of noise, be the signal

Today’s buyers don’t just want to know what you sell — they want to know what you stand for. Thought leadership PR helps you rise above the noise, become known for your expertise and create inbound momentum that feels effortless — because it’s built on earned trust, not constant pitching.

Your next customer is already searching for answers. Thought leadership makes sure you’re the one they find.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/growing-a-business/your-brand-isnt-broken-your-pr-strategy-is-heres/492686

Why Skipping This One PR Move Could Stall Your Startup’s Growth Before It Even Begins



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Startups often spend months perfecting their product, but forget to tell the world it exists.

That’s a costly mistake.

A classic study in the Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science found that public relations is nearly three times more effective than advertising when it comes to launching new products. PR doesn’t just promote — it positions, builds credibility, and creates the kind of buzz money can’t buy.

But here’s the catch: you only get one shot at being “new.” If you miss the PR window during your launch, the opportunity doesn’t come back. That’s why timing and strategy are everything.

Related: 11 Effective Marketing Strategies to Help Streamline Your Startup

Why the media cares about your launch (but only once)

Journalists are wired to cover what’s new. New company. New product. New idea. But only *while* it’s new. Once your startup is live and quietly running in the background, it’s no longer a story – no matter how brilliant it is.

That makes the months leading up to your launch critical. PR isn’t something you add after you go live – it’s something you bake in beforehand.

Startups that treat PR as an afterthought don’t just lose media opportunities. They lose credibility, visibility and momentum right out of the gate.

A smarter launch: Build buzz before you go public

Think of PR as your soft opening. Reporters love early access. Just like music journalists get advance streams and book reviewers receive early copies, your product should be previewed by media insiders before the public sees it.

Offer select journalists early access. Create an experience that makes them feel included and excited, not just informed.

Ideally, set aside at least three to six months before launch to focus exclusively on PR. If that time’s not built into your plan, consider delaying the launch. Seriously. The lost attention from skipping PR often costs far more than a postponed release.

Step-by-step: Laying the foundation

for a successful PR launch

Here’s how to start building your PR momentum now:

1. Identify the right journalists

Look for reporters who already cover your space. Study what they write about. Note which ones your target audience follows. Then gather their contact details – Twitter, LinkedIn, email – and track everything in a media list spreadsheet.

2. Build relationships before you pitch

Start engaging now. Comment on their articles. Share their stories. Send a quick message of appreciation. Do **not** pitch your company yet – the goal is simply to get on their radar in a genuine way.

3. Develop a clear PR strategy (not just a press release)

PR isn’t marketing. Your goal is to help journalists tell a story that matters to *their* readers. Ask yourself: What’s the angle here? Why would this audience care?

In addition to press releases, consider:

- Hosting a pre-launch event or virtual demo
- Sending out early access or product samples
- Creating a media advisory (not just a press release)
- Developing unique story pitches for different outlets

Start with broad business outlets. Then move to trade publications. Then niche verticals. This staggered strategy

protects your team from being overwhelmed and keeps your brand in the spotlight longer.

Don’t have time? Outsource to experts who do

Yes, this takes real effort. But you don’t have to do it all yourself.

Some PR agencies now specialize in short-term launch campaigns — no expensive retainer required. These firms often have pre-existing media relationships and know exactly how to turn your launch into a headline.

This approach also avoids the cost and complexity of hiring full-time, in-house PR staff.

Even if your business is already live, bringing in trusted PR professionals can help you recover momentum. Journalists are far more likely to respond to a pitch from someone they already know.

Related: Four Tried-and-True Ways to Better Market Your Business

You only launch once — make it count

You can always tweak your product or adjust your marketing. But you only get one shot at a first impression — and that’s what PR is built for.

Whether you run your own campaign or hire an expert team, don’t waste your “new” status. The right PR strategy at launch can earn the visibility, trust, and authority that advertising

can’t match.

And it all starts before anyone knows your name.

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

https://www.entrepreneur.com/growing-a-business/why-skipping-this-one-pr-move-could-stall-your-startups/492933

The Fyre Festival’s IP Just Sold on eBay, and Founder Billy McFarland Isn’t Pleased: ‘Damn’



Fyre Festival founder Billy McFarland, who was released from federal prison in 2022 after serving four years behind bars for crimes related to the event, watched his brand sell on eBay for $245,300.

“Damn,” McFarland said while streaming the bids. “This sucks, it’s so low.”

Related: Fyre Festival Founder Puts Infamous Brand Up for Sale

Bloomberg notes that the winning bid was only 0.9% of the $26 million McFarland has been ordered to pay in restitution.

The sale, which lasted a week, includes rights to the IP, trademarks, and social media accounts. There were 175 bids in total from 42 bidders, with the final bid coming just before 1 p.m. on Tuesday.

McFarland didn’t disclose who the buyer was, but laughed when he saw the name, per NBC News.

“It’s funny,” he said.

After the infamous Fyre Festival disaster in the Bahamas in 2017, McFarland tried to revive the brand with the Fyre Fest 2, which was supposed to take place from May 30 to June 2 in Mexico, but was canceled in April (or never scheduled in the first place).

Related: Fyre Festival 2 Has Been Postponed — Again

"I'm sure many people think I'm crazy for doing this again. But I feel I'd be crazy not to do it again," McFarland said when sales started.

McFarland tried to sell the brand through an email form with an offer sheet, before turning to eBay in July.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/business-news/fyre-festival-ip-assets-sell-on-ebay-for-250k-so-low/494662

She Went From Teacher to Owning a Business in an Unexpected Industry — And Wants Others to Do the Same: 'There Is So Much Opportunity'



Opinions expressed by Entrepreneur contributors are their own.

Angie Snow was a teacher and mom of three young children when her husband suggested buying an HVAC company together. Assuming she'd be playing a background role, she agreed.

"I thought, *Oh good, I can get out of the classroom, be at home. This will be a piece of cake! I just have to answer the phone and send out invoices, right? No big deal*," she says.

But what started as a small step into the trades industry quickly turned into a much bigger leap. Over the past 18 years, Snow and her husband grew Western Heating and Air Conditioning more than they ever could have imagined. Now an industry advisor, Snow also teaches business owners how to succeed with ServiceTitan, a leading home services software company.

"I thought teaching was for me, but it's been fun as I've built my business and been able to help other contractors along the way," she says. "I've been able to slide back into

that teaching seat, just in a different role."

Snow's transition into the trades wasn't always easy. As a woman stepping into a leadership role in a male-dominated industry, she struggled with impostor syndrome and finding her footing. Everything changed when she found community through Women in HVACR, an organization that promotes education, mentorship and support for women in the industry.

"I was like, 'I found my people,'" Snow says.

Related: He Went From Customer to CEO of a Rapidly-Expanding Dessert Chain By Following This Process

That moment sparked a deeper passion. Snow later served on the group's advisory board for six years and got involved with groups like Women in Plumbing and Piping and National Women in Roofing. "It's just so cool to see these organizations exist to support women, where a lot of times we just haven't felt or seen that in the trades," she says.

Building a place in the trades where everyone can feel seen and supported became Snow's goal, and part of her leadership philosophy centers on creating a workplace with a strong internal culture.

"Number one, you have to work on your leadership and always evolve as a leader – connecting with your people, helping your people feel like they matter and having a vision for them to look at and to follow. The foundational work has to be in place," she says. "They have to know that you care and you're a company and a brand worth working for."

One of the biggest hurdles today is attracting younger workers to the trades. Snow says it's not just about better recruiting, but rather about changing outdated perceptions of the industry.

"Something we're doing at ServiceTitan to change that stigma

is to show how home service companies are really the heroes," she says. "They're the ones showing up. You will have steady work, and these people are the heroes."

The Covid-19 pandemic helped prove that point. While other industries slowed down, essential home services stayed strong. "It brought a new light to how important the trades are and why we are so needed," Snow says.

Related: He Started a Business and Ended Up on the Brink of Bankruptcy. He Fixed His Mistakes — and Now Teaches Entrepreneurs What He Wishes He Knew When Starting Out.

Still, employee retention and morale require more than job security. Snow recognized that many employees, especially Gen Z workers, care deeply about balance and flexibility, which are things that don't always come naturally in a demanding industry like home services.

"That generation really values work-life balance. They value having time with their family and time off when they want it," Snow says. "We're a 24/7 industry, but to help them, I show that I care about them and honor that work-life balance. Because that's what I want in my life too."

True to her word, she reworked the team's schedule into four-day workweeks, which resulted in more engaged workers who take pride in each job.

Technology has also been a huge part of helping Snow deliver a high-level experience. Since switching to ServiceTitan in 2018, Western Heating and Air Conditioning has seen improvements in efficiency. Snow says artificial intelligence is further transforming the game. "It is just crazy how AI can analyze and do so many things so much faster," she says.

With AI tools, her team can automate dispatching, consolidate contacts, track sales calls and even help technicians perform better during service visits. It's a win-win: Smarter systems

empower her people to focus on serving customers.

Looking back, Snow never imagined where this journey would take her. But she hopes others, especially women and young people, realize the trades offer much more than people assume.

Related: Her Show Was Canceled — But the Setback Taught Busy Philipps a Powerful Lesson for Creators and Entrepreneurs

“There is a path for everyone in the trades, and there is so much opportunity [and] money to be made,” she says. “It’s a very nice industry that way, and it is a service that people need. I would definitely consider finding your own unique genius in where you shine and finding a path in the trades, because it won’t let you down. You’ll be surprised.”

After nearly two decades growing a successful HVAC company and helping shape the future of the trade industry, Snow’s advice to current and future business leaders is clear:

- **Lead with people in mind.** Whether it’s your technicians or customers, building a business rooted in care, connection and trust sets the foundation for long-term success.
- **Create an employee experience worth staying for.** From flexible schedules to a culture of belonging, investing in your team elevates every part of your business.
- **Embrace innovation early.** Tools like AI and integrated software platforms don’t just boost efficiency — they also free your team to focus on what matters most: serving customers.
- **Redefine what leadership looks like.** There’s space in the trades for every kind of strength and every kind of leader.
- **If there’s an open door, walk through it.** The trades are full of hidden opportunities. Whether you start in the field, the office or by someone else’s side, you might be surprised where you end up.

Watch the episode above to hear directly from Angie Snow, and subscribe to Behind the Review *for more from new business owners and reviewers every Tuesday.*

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

https://www.entrepreneur.com/growing-a-business/she-went-from-teacher-to-owning-a-business-in-an-unexpected/494611