I Build My Entire Year Around One Word — Here's Why You Should Too

Opinions expressed by Entrepreneur contributors are their own.

Here's one thing no one tells you: You don't need a list of resolutions to change your life. You just need one word.

As I write this, we're almost exactly halfway through the year. 2026 is right in front of us. This is when most people forget what they said they'd focus on. I double down.

Every January, I pick a word. One word to carry with me through the chaos, wins, losses and curveballs of the year. It becomes a filter for everything I do.

I keep it simple and intentional. And it works.

My focus filter

I started doing this when I realized that goal-setting had become a check-the-box exercise. You write a list. You feel good for a week. Then life gets busy, and that list turns into clutter.

Picking one word cuts through the noise.

My word this year is **WIN**.

That word shows up everywhere. It reminds me to focus. To move with urgency. To focus on results without losing my grip on what matters.

WIN isn’t about beating someone else. It’s about being relentless with follow-through. Showing up when it counts. Pushing the needle. Owning the outcome. Making the decision, not waiting for permission.

Winning doesn’t always look like a trophy. Sometimes it looks like saying no. Sometimes it looks like trying again. This word calls me to ask: Is this a win? Not just for business, but for my mindset, my family, my team and my time.

That’s what makes it powerful. It’s a word that checks me. It sharpens me. It stretches me. This is what I mean when I say bring meaning to the word. It starts as a guidepost. It becomes part of how you show up.

Related: Are You a Winner? How to Truly Define Winning in Your Business

One word. Many contexts.

Some years the word is loud. Other years, it’s quiet. Sometimes it lives in your head. Other times, it lands in a conversation that sticks with you.

Your word shifts as you grow. A single word can carry weight across your business, your relationships, your faith and your mindset.

This works because it stays flexible. It works because it fits real life.

Forget the overhead

You don’t need a new app. You don’t need a template, a whiteboard or a checklist.

You just need one word. One word that makes you sit up a little straighter. One word that reminds you when you forget.

One word that holds up when everything else starts slipping.

This isn’t about optimization. It’s about clarity. It is also easy to remember. Don’t underestimate processes that make your life easier. Sometimes, those are the best ones.

I don’t track my word in a spreadsheet. I don’t write it on my mirror. I just keep it with me. It becomes part of how I move through the world.

Related: 8 Winning Strategies for Succeeding in a Hyper-Competitive Market

Words give direction

Let me tell you something else I’ve learned.

The word you choose will challenge you. It’ll show up in places you didn’t expect. It might frustrate you, hold up a mirror, or push you out of autopilot. That’s not a flaw in the system. That’s the whole point.

You’re not choosing a mascot. You’re choosing a message. One that lives with you for 365 days. One that asks you questions and doesn’t always give easy answers.

This isn’t about buzzwords or branding. This is about accountability. A good word builds tension. The kind that moves you forward.

A strong word points you forward. The word brings clarity. It gives language to your process. It helps you measure decisions.

Should I take that deal? Should I say yes to that partnership? Should I spend my time here?

Run it through the word.

You filter food through your diet. You filter money through

your budget. You can filter your choices through one clear idea.

Let that word lead.

Let it guide how you show up, how you speak, how you recover and how you grow.

Related: How I Turned My Learning Disabilities Into a Superpower

What's your word?

If this is your first time hearing about choosing a word of the year, consider this your invitation. You don't need a strategy or a system. You just need the willingness to try something new.

You've got six months left in this year. That's plenty of time to bring focus to the second half. Or you can bank this idea and start fresh in January. There's nothing wrong with a word (of the second half) of the year.

Pick a word that fits where you're headed. A word that you want to grow into. A word that reflects the kind of person you want to be when the year ends.

Let it challenge you. Let it check you. Let it shape you.

You don't have to overthink it. You just have to commit to it.

Try it next year. See what happens when your entire year is guided by one word with real meaning.

One word. One year. Try it.

Here's one thing no one tells you: You don't need a list of resolutions to change your life. You just need one word.

As I write this, we're almost exactly halfway through the

year. 2026 is right in front of us. This is when most people forget what they said they'd focus on. I double down.

Every January, I pick a word. One word to carry with me through the chaos, wins, losses and curveballs of the year. It becomes a filter for everything I do.

The rest of this article is locked.

Join Entrepreneur+ today for access.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/living/i-build-my-year-with-one-word-why-you-should-too/493614

I Got a Prenup to Protect My Business and My Marriage — Here's Why You Should Too

Opinions expressed by Entrepreneur contributors are their own.

I'm a business owner. I know what it feels like to want to protect your "baby" — your business — while also committing fully to a marriage. When I got engaged, my company was growing fast and I knew I needed to protect it. So I got a prenup.

Spoiler alert: you can absolutely have both — a happy, healthy marriage *and* a secure, thriving business.

And for the skeptics out there: no, a prenup isn't a bad omen for your relationship. It's no different than getting health

insurance — it's not because you expect something bad to happen, but because you're being smart and prepared. Here's why every entrepreneur should seriously consider a prenup:

1. Protect your business from becoming marital property

When you get married, your spouse may automatically gain rights to certain assets — including your business — even if they weren't involved in building it. A prenup allows you to designate your business as separate property, keeping it out of the marital estate and protected in case of divorce.

Related: 4 Truths Married Entrepreneurs Need to Believe in Order to Build Success at Work

2. You decide what happens — not the state

Without a prenup, state laws determine how your assets are divided if your marriage ends. That includes your business. A prenup gives *you* the power to decide how your business is treated — not the state legislature or a judge.

3. Clarify ownership and income

A strong prenup can outline not just ownership of your business, but also how income from the business is treated. Without that clarity, income generated during the marriage could be seen as joint property — and subject to division. You've worked too hard to let that happen.

4. Structure your business to limit

future claims

A prenup is one layer of protection, but a smart business structure is another. Forming an LLC or corporation and having an operating or shareholder agreement in place can help define ownership, restrict transfers and limit exposure if a divorce ever becomes part of the equation.

Related: Being an Entrepreneur Almost Broke My Marriage. Here are 4 Ways Your Relationship Can Succeed Through Entrepreneurship

5. Keep finances separate

One of the biggest mistakes entrepreneurs make? Mixing business and personal funds. If you use marital money to grow your business, your spouse could claim a share. Keep business finances separate, pay yourself a fair salary, and document everything — it matters more than you think.

6. Handle it early

The best time to protect your business is before the wedding. It's not romantic, but it's realistic. Having these conversations early not only protects you legally, it gives you peace of mind so you can focus on what really matters: building your future together.

7. It actually promotes marital harmony

Believe it or not, a prenup isn't just about protecting assets — it can actually strengthen your relationship. It requires honest conversations about money, priorities, family and long-term goals. In fact, 83% of couples who completed a prenup reported feeling *closer* afterward.

Final thoughts

A prenup isn’t about planning for failure — it’s about planning for clarity, protection and long-term success. For entrepreneurs, it’s one of the smartest moves you can make. I did it, and I’ve never regretted it. You don’t have to choose between your business and your marriage. With a thoughtful prenup, you can protect both.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/money-finance/i-got-a-prenup-to-protect-my-business-and-my-marriage/483379

Today’s Top CEOs Share These 4 Traits

Opinions expressed by Entrepreneur contributors are their own.

The business landscape has shifted significantly in recent years, and as a result, the meaning of leadership has evolved. Amid volatility and uncertainty, today’s leaders are increasingly focused on productivity and results.

What previously made a CEO successful may not be what allows their business to thrive in 2025 and beyond. The following are the four traits shared by today’s most successful CEOs, rewriting the script of what great leadership looks like in the modern business world.

1. They are embracing artificial intelligence

There is a big panic across industries to understand AI. Many CEOs are trying to grasp whether AI is a productivity driver or a people replacer and if it will put their core business at risk. It’s hard to inspire employees if they expect AI will eventually take their jobs.

Instead, top leaders are embracing AI as a tool and resource for improving the employee experience and organizational success. They are exploring how AI can help employees enhance their skill sets, make better decisions more quickly and unlock new levels of creativity by opening up new possibilities.

2. They are subject-matter experts

The current landscape requires CEOs to be subject-matter experts in their industry. Coworkers, board members, investors and even customers are looking to leaders for the expertise to navigate change and disruption. Today’s most successful business leaders are specialists in their respective businesses. They are willing to put themselves in the trenches to make sure they know what’s really going on. By staying close to customers, leaders can keep a finger on the pulse of what matters.

3. They are action-oriented

CEOs have always been in the business of making decisions, with their organization’s success or failure resting on how effectively they do so. However, it has never been more important for leaders to act swiftly and decisively. Increasingly, the best leaders are those who take action rather than directing from a distance or waiting for change.

All risk comes with an openness to fail. But there is a significant distinction between taking calculated risks that align with their business purpose, vision and values and taking a gamble. When team members are clear on the vision, they can be empowered to execute quickly and proactively rather than waiting for step-by-step instructions.

The best CEOs know they can't always wait to have all the information to make a decision. Deciding when there is *enough* information to make a decision can be the hardest part. If leaders decide too early, based on just their instincts, they may fail to anticipate roadblocks. In today's data-rich environment, waiting for *all* the information may cause leaders to miss the opportunity altogether. The best path toward making these tough decisions at the right time is through hearing the perspectives of other trusted leaders. Conversations with a group of CEO peers always spark action. Diverse perspectives also help leaders battle confirmation bias and ensure they approach challenges with an open mind.

4. They create the culture

A company's culture is a direct reflection of its CEO. If an organization lacks accountability, that's what leadership has tolerated. The best cultures start with a culture of respect where all employees can openly share their ideas. This gives CEOs direct access to the front lines. Respecting each employee's contribution also means celebrating their successes, fostering loyalty and improving motivation. Creating a culture that welcomes and embraces new ideas from the team can almost feel like magic.

Great cultures rely on a foundation of transparency and open communication. Today's CEOs know it takes courage to give people the facts. An all-too-common CEO fallacy is the idea that CEOs must have everything fully figured out before involving others in their strategy or gaining outside

insights. But communicating the challenges out loud actually harnesses the collective knowledge of the team and allows others to contribute to the solution. Employees are empowered and motivated when they are trusted. A culture of transparency creates the top-down accountability that great business leaders strive for.

In today’s business landscape, the best business leaders are masters of selling. Not just selling their services or products in the traditional sense, but more importantly, they are selling their vision. They are creating something both customers and talent want to be a part of. Today’s most successful leaders are not watching change from a distance — they are driving transformation.

The business landscape has shifted significantly in recent years, and as a result, the meaning of leadership has evolved. Amid volatility and uncertainty, today’s leaders are increasingly focused on productivity and results.

What previously made a CEO successful may not be what allows their business to thrive in 2025 and beyond. The following are the four traits shared by today’s most successful CEOs, rewriting the script of what great leadership looks like in the modern business world.

1. They are embracing artificial intelligence

The rest of this article is locked.

Join Entrepreneur+ today for access.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/leadership/todays-top-ceos-share-these-4-traits/493682

Outsmart the Job Hunt with a Lifetime AI Assistant

Disclosure: Our goal is to feature products and services that we think you'll find interesting and useful. If you purchase them, Entrepreneur may get a small share of the revenue from the sale from our commerce partners.

If you've ever opened a blank Google Doc and stared at it like it owed you money, this one's for you.

MyCVBot Pro is the AI-powered career assistant you wish you had during your last job hunt. It takes your current résumé (yes, even if it's a mess), scans a job listing, and then actually tailors your entire application — résumé, cover letter, recruiter message, even interview prep questions — so you stand out like a highlighter in a sea of grayscale PDFs.

It's fast, intuitive, and best of all, it doesn't roll its eyes when you misspell "organized." You upload your docs, pick a job, and boom — your personalized application is ready in minutes. This isn't just a basic copy-paste tool, either. MyCVBot Pro uses advanced AI models and actual job market insight to help you present yourself like a pro, even if your last gig only involved spreadsheets and sadness.

And you're not just getting a résumé fixer. You get a full suite of career tools, including a freelance proposal generator, a digital profile picture designer, skills tests with verifiable badges, and even a simulator to help you practice interviews (no awkward mirror pep talks required).

Oh, and did we mention it’s a lifetime license? Pay once, optimize forever.

For job switchers, freelancers, college grads, and even seasoned pros looking to level up, MyCVBot Pro gives you 500 application credits and unlimited access to all premium tools. No subscriptions, no hidden fees, and your credits never expire.

In other words, it’s like hiring a career coach, résumé writer, and life coach…but way cheaper.

So if you’ve been putting off your job hunt because, well, writing cover letters is the worst, this is your shortcut.

Grab lifetime MyCVBot Pro Plan access for just $59.99 (reg. $299).

MyCVBot Pro Plan: Lifetime Subscription

See Deal

StackSocial prices subject to change.

If you’ve ever opened a blank Google Doc and stared at it like it owed you money, this one’s for you.

MyCVBot Pro is the AI-powered career assistant you wish you had during your last job hunt. It takes your current résumé (yes, even if it’s a mess), scans a job listing, and then actually tailors your entire application — résumé, cover letter, recruiter message, even interview prep questions — so you stand out like a highlighter in a sea of grayscale PDFs.

It’s fast, intuitive, and best of all, it doesn’t roll its eyes when you misspell “organized.” You upload your docs, pick a job, and boom — your personalized application is ready in minutes. This isn’t just a basic copy-paste tool, either. MyCVBot Pro uses advanced AI models and actual job market insight to help you present yourself like a pro, even if your

last gig only involved spreadsheets and sadness.

The rest of this article is locked.

Join Entrepreneur+ today for access.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/living/outsmart-the-job-hunt-with-a-lifetime-ai-assistant/493937

‘Nourished Families for Nearly 140 Years’: Century-Old Canned Food Company Files for Bankruptcy

The 138-year-old company, Del Monte Foods, has filed for bankruptcy, the company said in a statement.

“After a thorough evaluation of all available options, we determined a court-supervised sale process is the most effective way to accelerate our turnaround and create a stronger and enduring Del Monte Foods,” said President and CEO Greg Longstreet.

Related: This Pricey Pineapple Costs Nearly $400 — And It’s Already Selling Out

Del Monte is entering Chapter 11 and is looking for a buyer to acquire its assets. The company calls itself “The Original Plant-Based Food Company” and makes a variety of canned fruits

and vegetables. In addition to the name brand Del Monte, the company produces Contadina canned tomatoes and broths from College Inn.

“While we have faced challenges intensified by a dynamic macroeconomic environment, Del Monte Foods has nourished families for nearly 140 years, and we remain committed to our mission of expanding access to nutritious, great-tasting food for all,” Longstreet said.

Del Monte is based in Walnut Creek, California. The company noted in the statement that it secured $912.5 million from its lenders to fund its operations while the company is being sold.

“I am deeply grateful to our employees, growers, customers and vendors, as well as our lenders for their support in helping us achieve our long-term goals,” Longstreet said.

Related: Job Search Pioneers CareerBuilder and Monster File for Bankruptcy Less than a Year After Merger

The 138-year-old company, Del Monte Foods, has filed for bankruptcy, the company said in a statement.

“After a thorough evaluation of all available options, we determined a court-supervised sale process is the most effective way to accelerate our turnaround and create a stronger and enduring Del Monte Foods,” said President and CEO Greg Longstreet.

Related: This Pricey Pineapple Costs Nearly $400 — And It’s Already Selling Out

The rest of this article is locked.

Join Entrepreneur+ today for access.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/business-news/canned-food-company-del-monte-foods-files-for-bankruptcy/494151

This Founder Hit Rock Bottom. Now His Company Is Helping People Slow Down Aging.

Opinions expressed by Entrepreneur contributors are their own.

Chris Mirabile used to wear burnout like a badge of honor. He drank hard, worked crazy hours, and sometimes slept under his desk.

“I’d sleep at the office, wake up, and work all day. It was a very unhealthy lifestyle,” he says.

But Mirabile got a harsh wake-up call when his startup failed. That same year, Hurricane Sandy destroyed his apartment, and thieves robbed him blind.

The sudden stroke of bad fortune hit him hard. “I was depressed for about a year,” he says.

But instead of checking out, Mirabile checked in to his health. He began meditating, reevaluating his lifestyle, and researching how the body ages. What he learned became the foundation for **NOVOS**, a longevity-focused supplement startup that’s now backed by researchers from Harvard, MIT, and beyond.

You can hear the whole story in the latest episode of *One Day with Jon Bier*. Mirabile breaks down his journey from burnout to bio-age breakthrough and offers tips on what people can do to live longer.

Sleep changes everything

Forget cryo, red light, and nootropics—if your sleep is garbage, none of it matters. According to Mirabile, better sleep improves nearly every marker of health: blood sugar regulation, stress response, willpower, mood, and recovery.

Mirabile aims for nine hours of sleep a night and treats it like a non-negotiable. “Everything else starts to fall in line when you fix your sleep,” he says.

Related: You Might Be Sabotaging Your Sleep (And Your Work) Without Realizing It

Simplicity beats the biohacks

Mirabile is skeptical of the more Instagramable side of the longevity movement. He’s not interested in tracking every metric or micromanaging every breath. Instead, he swears by a few simple habits, including:

- Mediterranean-style eating
- Short fasting windows to mimic feast/famine cycles
- Staying hydrated—with electrolytes, not just water

“About 90% of longevity is free,” he says. “You just need the discipline to do it.”

Joy is the metric that most matters

Mirabile isn’t interested in mimicking the rigidity of people like Bryan Johnson. In fact, he says that approach misses the point entirely.

“What’s the point of extending lifespan if you’re eliminating everything that brings joy?” he says. “Sleeping alone, skipping meals with friends, chasing a metric at the cost of your relationships — that’s not living longer, that’s living

less.”

He’ll still have wine on a family trip or party until sunrise with friends, just without alcohol. He says he’s learned to “let loose without needing a chemical to do it.”

Related: I Turned My Passion Into a Multi-Million Dollar Business — These 4 Hacks Helped Keep My Joy Alive

Movement is medicine

You don’t need a personal trainer or a fancy fitness tracker. Just 21 minutes of moderate cardio a day can make a big difference, says Mirabile — especially if it gets you into “zone 2,” the heart rate range where fat burning and endurance improvements happen.

“Walking briskly on an incline or rucking with a backpack is enough,” he says. “You should be able to talk, but barely.”

According to Mirabile, consistent daily movement improves metabolic health, mental clarity, and cardiovascular resilience.

A supplement designed to slow down aging

Mirabile set out to slow the pace of biological aging by targeting its 12 root causes. But he also knew people wouldn’t stay on it unless they felt a difference.

The NOVOS core formula was designed to offer short-term benefits, such as better sleep, improved energy, and healthier skin, alongside the longer-term goal of extending lifespan.

“Most supplements, people try for a month and forget,” he says. “This one’s built to show you it’s working.”

Mirabile isn’t trying to cheat death. He’s aiming for more good years. His biological age, measured through epigenetic testing, clocks in more than a decade younger than his actual age. “I’m 40, but biologically I’m in my late twenties,” he says. “That means a lower risk for things like heart disease or Alzheimer’s — and more years doing what I love.”

Related: This Former Tech Executive Was Ready to Retire. Then an Obscure Molecule Gave Him a New Mission.

Chris Mirabile used to wear burnout like a badge of honor. He drank hard, worked crazy hours, and sometimes slept under his desk.

“I’d sleep at the office, wake up, and work all day. It was a very unhealthy lifestyle,” he says.

But Mirabile got a harsh wake-up call when his startup failed. That same year, Hurricane Sandy destroyed his apartment, and thieves robbed him blind.

The rest of this article is locked.

Join Entrepreneur+ today for access.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/living/how-one-founders-lowest-point-launched-a-wellness-brand/494104

This New AI Startup Led By a Former OpenAI Exec Is

Offering $500,000 Salaries

The $10 billion AI startup Thinking Machines Lab (TML), which was founded by former OpenAI Chief Technology Officer Mira Murati in February, is paying its technical talent up to half a million dollars in salary, according to federal data obtained by Business Insider.

The federal filings, which show how much TML's hires on H-1B visas were being paid, showed that the company paid three technical staffers $450,000 each, while a fourth received $500,000 in compensation. The figures were from the first quarter of this year and just included salary, not added sign-on bonuses and equity awards. The H-1B allows U.S. employers to hire non-U.S. residents to work in specialty occupations.

Related: Here's How Much a Typical Salesforce Employee Makes in a Year

The compensation is more than some major players, including Murati's former company, OpenAI, which reported paying an average salary of $292,115 to 29 technical employees. Anthropic, meanwhile, paid an average salary of $387,500 to 14 employees.

Murati spent six and a half years at OpenAI before stepping down as CTO in September.

TML has yet to launch any public-facing products, though the secretive startup raised $2 billion in seed funding last month at a $10 billion valuation. Its website says that the startup is working "to make AI systems more widely understood, customizable, and generally capable."

TML CEO Mira Murati. Photo by Patrick T. Fallon / AFP

High salaries are just one tactic in Silicon Valley's AI talent wars. Last month, OpenAI CEO Sam Altman said that Meta was trying to poach OpenAI researchers with "giant" signing bonuses of "$100 million" and "even more than that" in compensation.

Related: Here's How Much a Typical Google Employee Makes in a Year

In fact, six top OpenAI researchers have joined Meta in the past few weeks as part of its new superintelligence team. The group included Shuchao Bi, co-creator of ChatGPT voice mode, and Shengjia Zhao, who co-created ChatGPT and previously led synthetic data at OpenAI.

Still, according to a leaked memo sent by OpenAI's Chief Research Officer Mark Chen on Saturday to staff, the company isn't "sitting idly by." Top OpenAI leaders, including CEO Sam Altman, are "recalibrating" compensation and finding "creative ways" to reward talent, Chen noted.

The $10 billion AI startup Thinking Machines Lab (TML), which was founded by former OpenAI Chief Technology Officer Mira Murati in February, is paying its technical talent up to half a million dollars in salary, according to federal data obtained by Business Insider.

The federal filings, which show how much TML's hires on H-1B visas were being paid, showed that the company paid three technical staffers $450,000 each, while a fourth received $500,000 in compensation. The figures were from the first quarter of this year and just included salary, not added sign-on bonuses and equity awards. The H-1B allows U.S. employers to hire non-U.S. residents to work in specialty occupations.

Related: Here's How Much a Typical Salesforce Employee Makes in a Year

The rest of this article is locked.

Join Entrepreneur+ today for access.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/business-news/ai-startup-tml-from-ex-openai-exec-mira-murati-pays-500000/494108

Why Your Finance Team Needs

an AI Strategy, Now



The finance function is evolving fast. Whether it's streamlining close processes or spotting anomalies before they become real problems, artificial intelligence (AI) is no longer just a buzzword. It's a real capability that businesses are expecting finance leaders to adopt.

And that expectation extends to the teams they lead.

Yet there's one big challenge: most finance departments weren't built for this shift. Talent shortages are already stretching departments thin, and many current employees lack the tools—or the training—to capitalize on what AI has to offer.

So how do you build a finance team that's not only prepared for AI but empowered by it? Find out by joining us for our free webinar, *Why Your Finance Team Needs an AI Strategy, Now,* powered by Oracle NetSuite and *Entrepreneur*.

Dr. Jill Schiefelbein, AI strategist and host of the *Humanize Automation* podcast, will moderate a conversation with Rebeca Bichachi, CPA and Product Marketing Director for Oracle NetSuite. Together, they'll walk through six specific strategies to build a finance department that's truly future-ready.

From reevaluating your hiring criteria to eliminating unfulfilling tasks with smart automation, this session goes beyond theory and offers practical, scalable action steps. Attendees of this webinar will learn:

- Why "intentional experimentation" is your best on-ramp to AI integration
- How to expand your talent pool by looking outside traditional finance roles
- Ways to reskill current team members—without overwhelming them
- Where to deploy AI tools to free up time for strategic, high-impact work
- How to spot (and reward) your early adopters and AI champions
- What today's "ideal candidate" for finance looks like—and why that definition is shifting fast

Whether you're a CFO, controller, or finance leader at a growing business, this session will help you align your AI ambitions with your most valuable resource: your people.

The *Why Your Finance Team Needs an AI Strategy, Now* webinar will take place live on Thursday August 28 at 12 p.m. ET | 9 a.m. PT.

The finance function is evolving fast. Whether it's streamlining close processes or spotting anomalies before they become real problems, artificial intelligence (AI) is no longer just a buzzword. It's a real capability that businesses are expecting finance leaders to adopt.

And that expectation extends to the teams they lead.

Yet there’s one big challenge: most finance departments weren’t built for this shift. Talent shortages are already stretching departments thin, and many current employees lack the tools—or the training—to capitalize on what AI has to offer.

The rest of this article is locked.

Join Entrepreneur+ today for access.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/money-finance/why-your-finance-team-needs-an-ai-strategy-now/494027

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.





Opinions expressed by Entrepreneur contributors are their own.

Joe Crisara didn’t set out to be a business coach. Like most tradespeople, he started with a toolbox, some hands-on skills and the dream of working for himself. But six years into running his own company, he found himself $471,000 in debt and on the brink of bankruptcy. That’s when a loyal customer — someone who’d seen how the stress took a toll on Crisara — finally asked, “How’s it really going?”

That simple, gut-punch of a question became a turning point.

Crisara realized he wasn’t just selling parts or labor. He was in the business of trust, confidence and peace of mind. Once he owned his mistakes, Crisara spent decades learning how to fix them — not just for himself, but for thousands of other service providers across the country. He founded Service MVP, a podcast and membership community, to provide contractors with the sales training and support he wished he had when he was first starting out.

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

One of Crisara's biggest lessons is to stop thinking of your work as a line item. Customers assume they're paying for a part or a few hours of labor, but Crisara insists the parts are free: "I always tell people…100% of what you're putting out there is your service. That's the product. You are only providing service, and the parts are free."

Crisara encourages service providers to educate customers on their pricing structure. When done right, this kind of conversation doesn't feel like a sales pitch. It actually builds trust and often diffuses price objections before they even come up. "It's a burden that the service provider carries," he says. "It's your job to give that 30-second economics lesson to customers when they start to take you down a path that draws you into doing substandard work at a lower price."

When it comes to pricing, Crisara doesn't sugarcoat it. He breaks down the ideal service business like this:

- Labor: 20%
- Materials: 20%
- Overhead: 35%
- Profit: 25%

"Profit takes courage," he says. "If you're living paycheck to paycheck and you're waiting for the next thing to happen to make you successful, most likely it's not gonna come when you need it. It's very risky to operate that way."

Related: This Local Bakery Has Lines Out the Door. Here Are the Secrets to Its Success.

In Crisara's view, profit isn't about accumulating wealth. It's the fuel that powers everything else: better tools, better training, better service. "My advice [is] to reinvest

some of that profit into a better customer service experience that inspires customers to want to turn you into their champion so they can refer you to their friends and family."

Over his 48-year career, Crisara has learned that the customer experience is everything. He emphasizes that contractors need to invest in communication tools to make the experience seamless, from the first phone call to follow-up after a service. "When you answer the phone, you gotta make people smile," he says.

Crisara often answers the phone with, "It's a great day at Service MVP, how can I make you smile today?" It might feel small, but that first impression sets the tone.

Building trust starts long before you get to the job site. For Crisara, customer service begins with that very first phone call. When consulting with a client, he reminds himself of two goals: "One is that these people are gonna get care, respect and support. For me, that's my [first goal.] My second thing is, I don't need to be accepted. So if they don't want my [service], I'm not gonna be sad or let down or angry. They're not a good fit for me."

According to Crisara, this attitude allows you to focus on providing great service, rather than closing the sale. People can sense that level of confidence, which he believes is the key to successful customer interactions.

Related: Want to Work With Influencers? Here's What Small Business Owners Need to Know.

When it comes to expanding your business, Crisara says the first step is making your solo operation consistent, efficient and profitable. "You are the prototype for the customer service experience that you're gonna train other people to do. So number one, perfect the customer experience," he says.

Your first hire should be someone who can mirror your

standard, not just take tasks off your plate. Crisara believes this is where many small business owners stumble: They hire too early or without a plan, and suddenly they're training someone to follow a broken system.

"The bigger the staff you have, the higher the overhead that's gonna be in place, and the prices are gonna increase as soon as you hire more people," Crisara says. "Profit allows us the indulgence of hiring coworkers who can actually do the work instead of [you]."

Finally, Crisara emphasizes the value of customer feedback. Good reviews boost morale, but bad ones can be even more valuable if you're willing to listen. "One bad review can be worth $12,000 in free business consulting," he says. "Good reviews are for vanity…bad reviews are for sanity. They're there to help us improve."

Crisara encourages business owners to respond with sincerity: Thank the reviewer for taking the time, acknowledge how they felt and offer a path to resolution.

"Sometimes the bad reviews are a better way to help you respond," he says. "I'm not saying you want to get all bad reviews, but if you get a small percentage of bad reviews, take the opportunity to show what you're made of and what your value system is, and don't get into negativity."

Related: 5 Secrets to Success From a Sustainable Business That's Grown 95% in 3 Years

Crisara's advice boils down to a few simple but powerful truths:

- Make people smile from the first phone call
- Always ask for what you're worth
- You're providing a service, not parts
- Build your business like you're training a future team
- Don't fear your mistakes — learn from them

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

Editorial contributions by Jiah Choe and Emily Moon

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/he-went-from-471k-in-debt-to-teaching-others-how-to-succeed/493852

What This Founder Thinks Most Supplement Brands Get Wrong—and How He Fixed It With David Beckham



Opinions expressed by Entrepreneur contributors are their own.

When Danny Yeung sat down for dinner with soccer legend David Beckham, there was no agenda. No pitch deck. Just two guys talking health.

They met through a mutual friend in Hong Kong. Yeung, the CEO of Prenetics, a health tech company specializing in genomics and diagnostics, wanted to create a wellness brand rooted in science. Beckham wanted a product he could take every day without juggling a shelf full of pills.

That conversation led to the creation of IM8, a supplement powder designed to support energy, gut health, immunity, and focus. In five months, it has shipped more than 3 million servings to customers in 31 countries. The growth has been sizeable. In its first full quarter of sales, IM8 generated $5.7 million in revenue, helping Prenetics raise its full-year forecast to between $80 and $100 million.

Beckham’s endorsement helped, of course. But Yeung says the

goal wasn’t just to put a famous face on the box. It was to create something the founder and the athlete would both want to use. Beckham takes the product daily. His kids take it. His parents do, too.

“If this product didn’t work, David wouldn’t use it—and neither would I,” Yeung says. “We built it for ourselves first. Everything else came after.”

Here’s what Yeung learned in building the company.

Lesson 1: Start with science

Yeung says the vast majority of supplement companies work backward—designing the brand first and then sourcing ingredients to fit a specific price point. “They lead with a logo and build the formula later,” he says. “That’s not how it should work.”

IM8 reversed the process. Before a single package was designed, the company spent over a year developing the formula with scientists and doctors, many of whom had never partnered with a supplement brand before.

“We approached it like a biotech company,” Yeung says. “We had real clinical trials, real data. No fluff.”

Related: The Supplement Business Has a Trust Problem. This Tech Startup Wants to Fix That.

Lesson 2: Transparency isn’t optional

With more than 200,000 supplements on the market and little federal oversight, many consumers are understandably skeptical. “You can sell dust and call it protein. That’s legal. That’s the reality,” says Yeung.

IM8 tries to counter that with full transparency. The formula includes over 90 ingredients, including CoQ10, prebiotics, probiotics, and postbiotics. It's NSF Certified for Sport. Lab test results are published online. And the company publicly names its manufacturing partner.

Lesson 3: Keep it simple

Beckham wanted fewer pills in his daily routine. The idea behind IM8's *Daily Ultimate Essentials* was to simplify supplementation: one scoop, once a day, covering multiple health needs.

The brand has plans to expand, but only with a few highly vetted products per year. Yeung emphasizes quality over speed.

"We're not a company that wants to launch 50 different products. We want to focus on doing a few things very well. If we don't think something is best in class, we won't do it."

Yeung's taking that same mindset to the business side. Prenetics is in active discussions with crypto industry veterans to integrate Bitcoin into its treasury strategy.

Related: **Inside The New Era of Longevity Supplements**

Lesson 4: A celebrity partner can't fix a bad product

Yeung says too many founders look for celebrity partners to grab attention, not to build staying power. "I didn't want to be just another celebrity brand. We've seen too many of those," he says.

That's why he didn't pitch Beckham on a business. They met over dinner. Talked science. Swapped health routines. "It wasn't a transaction," Yeung says. "It was two people figuring out if they believed in the same thing."

Yeung believes Beckham didn’t just join because of a business opportunity, but because he believed in the science.

He has been involved in the process, reviewing product iterations, offering feedback on packaging, and flagging early customer reactions.

Lesson 5: Trust has to be earned

You can put a famous face on your brand, but if it doesn’t work, you’re not going to last. “People know when something’s real,” he says. “You can’t fake that.”

Yeung calls IM8 a “trust product.” Customers are putting it in their bodies every day, and that responsibility shapes how the business operates.

The brand’s 12-week clinical study showed that 95% of participants reported feeling more energized. Customer retention is strong. And feedback, Yeung says, has been more meaningful than any marketing metric.

“If people are putting this in their bodies every day, you better get it right.”

Related: Trust Is a Business Metric Now. Here’s How Leaders Can Earn It.

When Danny Yeung sat down for dinner with soccer legend David Beckham, there was no agenda. No pitch deck. Just two guys talking health.

They met through a mutual friend in Hong Kong. Yeung, the CEO of Prenetics, a health tech company specializing in genomics and diagnostics, wanted to create a wellness brand rooted in science. Beckham wanted a product he could take every day without juggling a shelf full of pills.

That conversation led to the creation of IM8, a supplement

powder designed to support energy, gut health, immunity, and focus. In five months, it has shipped more than 3 million servings to customers in 31 countries. The growth has been sizeable. In its first full quarter of sales, IM8 generated $5.7 million in revenue, helping Prenetics raise its full-year forecast to between $80 and $100 million.

The rest of this article is locked.

Join Entrepreneur+ today for access.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/living/how-one-founder-is-rethinking-supplements-with-david-beckham/494039