It’s Time to Break the Cycle of Cheap, Disposable Junk — Here’s How Entrepreneurs Can Lead the Way

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In an era of throwaway culture, products built to fail are costing us trust, money and something often overlooked — mental health.

As *The Wall Street Journal* recently discussed, consumers are addicted to cheap goods that they don’t need and are engineered to fail. With every purchase of another low-quality disposable product, there’s a growing cognitive dissonance: We know our choices are contributing to something harmful — to ourselves, our finances and our environment — but we can’t seem to help ourselves.

This ongoing struggle is taking a toll. A 2023 study published by *Frontiers in Psychology* found that materialism is consistently associated with mental health problems like depression and anxiety and contributes to an overall decline in well-being. In other words, buying more is not making us feel better — it’s making us feel worse.

This phenomenon contributes to another worrying trend — our eroding trust in institutions, and big businesses in particular. According to the 2025 Edelman Trust Barometer, trust in U.S. businesses runs at just 47%, well below the global average of 56% and lags behind countries like China (77%) and India (75%).

Related: Stop Blindly Following 'the Customer Is Always Right'

We don't just feel annoyed by broken items; we feel betrayed. Low-quality, unreliable products lead to a deeper emotional turmoil in which we begin to question the integrity of the marketplace, of brands, and even our judgment.

In my last article, I argued that as entrepreneurs, we have a responsibility and the power to reverse the destructive advertising and business trends that are fueling society's need for products they don't need or cannot afford. But fixing *how* we sell is only part of the solution. We also need to focus on *what* we sell.

Entrepreneurs do not have to sacrifice their businesses' growth and reputation to improve the situation. By focusing on creating high-quality, durable products, we can build customer loyalty and grow responsibly. Build less and build better.

Many brands have proven it's possible to prioritize product quality by offering lifetime warranties, repair programs or simply building products that last. As a result, they are forging trust and long-term loyalty that keeps customers coming back. Here are a few that stand out.

- **Apple — Quality and durability**: Apple did not become the biggest company in the world by building junk. Its products are expensive relative to most competitors, but they are also high quality and built to last. Apple also benefits from the power of the Halo effect — confidence in one product encourages customers to buy more from the same brand. Higher prices become less of an issue when consumers know Apple's products will perform for years.
- **Briggs & Riley's lifetime warranty:** The luggage maker produces high-quality luggage that's backed by a lifetime warranty. I've sent my suitcase back four times since I bought it over a decade ago, including after it fell off the back of a pick-up truck in Ecuador. Each

time, they have repaired it. As a result, I've recommended this company to everyone I know. That kind of service builds loyalty.

- **Hyundai changed the market and its reputation with a 10-year warranty**: After launching into the American market in the 1980s with inexpensive yet low-quality vehicles, Hyundai reinvented itself by offering good-quality, durable vehicles and "America's Best Warranty" through an unprecedented 10-year/100,000-mile comprehensive plan. While most competitors' warranties maxed out at 5 years or 60,000 miles, Hyundai's move completely changed its reputation and helped it become the number three automaker in the world.

More and more people want to buy from brands that are honest, sustainable and sell products that are built to last. Entrepreneurs just need to give them the opportunity to make the responsible choice.

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Three shifts for entrepreneurs who want to build better

- **Start with one, high-quality product**: Instead of revamping your entire product line, focus on making one item truly exceptional. Emphasize quality craftsmanship, offer extended support and let that product become your calling card. Use the Halo effect that Apple and others leverage for growth.
- **Be transparent about lifespan and use**: Instead of pretending that your product is eternal, tell the truth about its expected lifespan. And if the life span is designed to barely outlive its warranty, invest in ways to make it more durable and able to live up to your sales pitch.

Conversely, if you build a product that is designed to fail earlier than it should, at least be transparent about it. While I certainly don't endorse planned obsolescence for any product, your customers deserve to know that the product may not last as long as others, but it is (hopefully) priced accordingly.

- **Offer free replacement or repair:** As you transition your brand's reputation to one known for high quality and long-term value, you'll need to convince consumers that your claims are legitimate. There's no better way than to stand behind what you sell with a long-term warranty that includes a commitment to repair or replace.

It's time to redefine success

For too long, entrepreneurs have been conditioned to sell as much as possible at the highest price possible. This has led to most consumers conflating volume with value.

However, there is an opportunity to shift toward a different paradigm anchored in selling fewer items in order to generate higher returns in terms of brand value and customer retention.

I'm calling on my fellow entrepreneurs to embrace this opportunity and put an end to the constant strain on our collective mental health that's been created by the phenomenon of planned obsolescence.

After all, real innovation isn't about making and selling more and more products. It's about making *better* products that don't need to be replaced. Innovation is about giving people real value in exchange for their hard-earned money, and not just more stuff.

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Walmart Is Raising Prices, According to the Company's CEO. Here's When.

Walmart reported solid quarterly results on Thursday, but noted that it would soon have to start raising prices. The retailer is the biggest in the U.S. with over 4,600 locations.

Walmart CEO Doug McMillon said on a Thursday earnings call that Walmart wasn't able to "absorb" higher costs "given the reality of narrow retail margins."

“Even at the reduced levels, the higher tariffs will result in higher prices,” McMillon said on the call.

In response, Walmart’s Chief Financial Officer John David Rainey told *CNBC* in an interview Thursday that tariffs were “still too high” for the company to absorb the cost. Rainey cautioned that Walmart shoppers could begin seeing higher prices on some goods towards the end of the month, and higher prices on a broader scale starting next month.

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“We’re wired for everyday low prices, but the magnitude of these increases is more than any retailer can absorb,” Rainey told *CNBC*. “So I’m concerned that the consumer is going to start seeing higher prices. You’ll begin to see that, likely towards the tail end of this month, and then certainly more in June.”

Earlier this week, the U.S. agreed this week to lower its maximum tariff rate on China from 145% to 30% for the next 90 days. China is reducing its 125% tariff on American products to 10% for the same time period. Meanwhile, the U.S. has levied a 10% universal tariff on nearly all imports.

Walmart executives stated at an investor event in April that two-thirds of the retailer’s goods in the U.S., including groceries, were made, grown, or manufactured domestically. The remaining third of Walmart’s products come from other countries, especially China and Mexico.

Rainey told *CNBC* on Thursday that Walmart is still collaborating with vendors to keep prices low. He added that Walmart has not yet canceled any orders from suppliers, but has downsized some in response to trade policies.

Walmart CEO Doug McMillon. Photo by Ethan Miller/Getty Images

Walmart isn’t the only major retailer to recently warn customers about price hikes. Target CEO Brian Cornell told shoppers in March that food prices could increase, especially on produce from Mexico. Costco CEO Ron Vachris said last month that the retailer was working to minimize the impact of tariffs on customers and that one-third of its sales in the U.S. are imported from other countries.

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Walmart released its first-quarter earnings on Thursday, reporting that U.S. store sales rose 3.2% year-over-year to reach $112.2 billion. Walmart’s overall global revenue hit

$165.6 billion in its first quarter, up 2.5% from the same time last year. The retail giant reported that health and wellness products and grocery items drove its sales strength.

The company’s U.S. e-commerce business notably grew 21% compared to the same time last year and achieved profitability for the first time.

Walmart made $681 billion in 2024, making it the largest retailer in the world based on revenue. It expects to grow revenue by 3% to 4% this year.

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Microsoft’s Mass Layoffs Affected at Least 800 in

Software Engineering, According to New Documents

Microsoft began laying off around 3% of its workforce on Tuesday, cutting more than 6,000 roles. The tech giant reportedly said the new cuts would affect all locations and levels, including LinkedIn and Xbox, but the focus was on reducing managers.

Now, documents seen by *Bloomberg* suggest that about one-third of the total roles cut were at Microsoft HQ in Redmond, Washington, and of the roughly 2,000 layoffs there, the most eliminations (817) were in the software engineering job category. It's more than double the cuts of the next category, product management (373).

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

This week's layoffs at Microsoft are the largest for the company since 2023, when it cut 10,000 jobs and froze salaries for full-time employees. (It restarted salary raises based on performance in 2024.)

"We continue to implement organizational changes necessary to best position the company for success in a dynamic marketplace," a Microsoft spokesperson told CNBC about the initial layoff news.

AI has been writing code at many big tech companies for years, and the technology is improving.

Related: Microsoft Employees Are Banned From Using This Popular AI App

In April, Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella said engineers are using AI to write 20% to 30% of the code for company projects. Earlier that month, Google CEO Sundar Pichai said on an earnings call that the company was using AI to write “well over 30%” of new code, up from 25% in October.

Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg, meanwhile, told Joe Rogan in January that the company is developing AI that can write code at the level of a mid-level engineer, and “a lot” of its code this year will be “built by AI engineers instead of people engineers.”

Microsoft is currently the most valuable company in the world, with a market cap of $3.337 trillion at press time.

Related: One of Microsoft’s Most Popular Products Is About to Skyrocket in Price

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How This Tech Startup Is Fixing the $1.14 Trillion Live Event Industry's Biggest Problem

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When the band Oasis announced their reunion tour in early 2025, millions of fans rushed to secure tickets—only to have their dreams crushed by cancellations, inflated prices, and scams. Oasis fans lost an estimated £1.6 million ($2 million) to ticket scams in the first few weeks after tickets went on sale, according to recent reports. Meanwhile, a sophisticated cybercrime crew stole and resold hundreds of tickets to Taylor Swift's Eras Tour using stolen credit cards and automated bots.

These high-profile cases highlight a pervasive problem plaguing the $1.14 trillion live event industry: Ticket bots and scalpers are stealing the joy of live experiences from real fans.

Despite legislation in the U.S. and EU making ticket bots illegal, enforcement has remained nearly impossible. The problem has become so severe that bipartisan initiatives such as the TICKET Act recently passed unanimously through the U.S.

House Committee, and even President Trump issued executive orders targeting ticket scalping.

Alan Gelfand, founder and CEO of IdBase, realized everyone in the industry was overlooking a simple answer to this complex problem.

“Everyone’s trying to solve the problem by detecting bots. It’s a losing battle. As tech gets more sophisticated, so do the bots,” Gelfand says. “We flipped the problem on its head and said, what if instead of trying to identify bots, we just verify that someone is human instead?”

By leveraging proven biometric identity verification technology (the same governments use), he built a team at IdBase to create a platform that promises not only to eliminate ticket bots but also to enhance security and improve the overall fan experience at live events.

IdBase’s technology, called authenTICKET™, creates a seamless verification process that it says confirms a ticket buyer’s identity through government ID scanning and biometric verification (either facial or voice recognition). Their approach is revolutionary because it works with all ticket formats—not just mobile tickets—and integrates directly with existing venue and ticketing infrastructures, which could lead to significant savings for the venues.

The true cost of ticket bots

The scale of the problem is staggering. According to industry data, up to 40% of ticket website traffic comes from bots, with some events seeing as much as 95% of their traffic from these automated programs.

Tickets for popular shows are frequently resold at 300% to 700% of face value, with some cases seeing markups as high as 7,000%. What originally cost $100 can suddenly cost fans

thousands of dollars on secondary markets.

But this isn’t just about inflated prices. Venues lose valuable customer data and security control, artists perform to empty seats when scalped tickets don’t sell, and credit card and ticketing companies face massive fraud and chargeback costs. The industry as a whole loses significant revenue that could be reinvested in better experiences for fans.

Dr. Timothy Kay, IdBase’s CTO and a highly regarded technologist who built a precursor to Apple’s Siri, explains their technical approach: “We’re not storing actual biometric data—just secure templates that cannot be reverse-engineered. Our one-to-one matching process is significantly more secure and reliable than competitors who try to use biometrics as the ticket itself, which we believe is a very costly and risky approach.”

A different approach to solving the problem

IdBase stands apart from competitors in several key ways. While many companies focus solely on bot detection, IdBase has built an identity verification infrastructure that makes bot purchases impossible from the start.

“Identity Authorization Networks” like IdBase represent the future of digital transactions, creating secure ecosystems where identity can be verified once and used across multiple platforms, according to a recent market report by Liminal. This approach solves a fundamental issue in the ticketing ecosystem: establishing trust at the point of purchase.

“We’re not just another ticketing app,” says Kieron O’Shea, IdBase’s Chief Strategy Officer. “We’re the identity layer of the live event industry. Think of us as the Visa of ticketing—the company that built the payment network and gets

a small piece of each transaction.”

The company has already completed successful technology pilots and is now partnered with Tickets.com, a subsidiary of Major League Baseball that facilitates more than 60 million ticket sales annually. They’re in discussions with multiple ticketing providers in North America and Europe for upcoming infrastructure experiments.

Their business model is straightforward: IdBase charges a 1% service fee (capped at $1 per ticket) on tickets sold through partner platforms. A small portion goes to biometrics partners, ticketing companies, and the venues themselves, with IdBase retaining 80% of the fee. With the global events market valued at more than $1.14 trillion, the total addressable market is enormous.

Benefits beyond bot prevention

While eliminating bots is their primary focus, IdBase’s technology provides additional benefits to the entire live event ecosystem.

For fans, the platform means no more frustration trying to buy tickets only to find events sold out in seconds because bots snatched up the tickets, the company says. It also reduces the risk of purchasing fraudulent tickets, which affects approximately 12% of ticket buyers.

For venues, the technology provides enhanced security by knowing exactly who is in the building, valuable customer data for improved experiences, and reduced staff costs through more efficient entry processes, the company says.

For artists and teams, IdBase says it ensures tickets get into the hands of real fans at the prices they intended, rather than seeing their fans gouged by scalpers on secondary markets.

Rob Williams, IdBase's Chief Product Officer who previously served as CPO at AudienceView and Director of Technology at the NEC Group, emphasizes the company's focus on user experience: "We've designed this to be completely frictionless. Fans have the option to check in via geofence proximity notifications on their phone before they even reach the gate, similar to how TSA PreCheck works at airports. This means no waiting in ID check lines."

Looking to the future

As *The Verge* recently reported, the future of online ticketing is at a critical inflection point, with both regulators and consumers demanding change. Unlike many startups entering regulated industries, IdBase is uniquely positioned to benefit from increased regulation, as their technology enables compliance with existing and forthcoming anti-bot legislation.

IdBase is raising capital to rapidly scale up product development and meet growing demand. With an experienced leadership team that includes former executives from industries like sports, entertainment, finance, and technology, they're well-positioned to be first to market with this proprietary technology, creating barriers for others to copy or follow.

Their advisory board includes high-profile industry veterans such as Greg Saretsky (former WestJet CEO), Robert DuPuy (former MLB president and COO), and William Jones (former head of legal at Goldman Sachs Intl.).

"We're not just focusing on the technology," Gelfand says. "We're building a platform that aligns with existing and upcoming legislation. Laws like the BOTS Act in the U.S. have been difficult to enforce, and new proposals like the BOSS and SWIFT Act aim to address these limitations. As more countries such as the UK move towards nationally capping resale, the need for enforcement becomes even more critical. IdBase

provides the technological infrastructure to make those laws actually work.”

By helping venues and ticketing companies adopt concepts like identity verification and secure check-in processes, Gelfand and IdBase are bringing the live event industry into a new era. Combining technological innovation with practical solutions, they’re paving the way for a fairer, more secure future for live events.

In ten years, IdBase aims to be more than just a technology company—they want to become the global identification backbone of the live event industry, fostering trust and connection universally. The opportunity to eliminate ticket bots completely from the industry and return billions in value to fans, artists, and venues is within reach.

If you’d like to be a part of the IdBase mission and learn more about their investment opportunity, visit their website to learn more: invest.idbase.com

Disclaimer: In making an investment decision, investors must rely on their own examination of the issuer and the terms of the offering, including the merits and risks involved. IdBase has filed a Form C with the Securities and Exchange Commission in connection with its offering, a copy of which may be obtained through their website: invest.idbase.com. This article is a paid promotion for IdBase’s Reg CF offering.

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How to Quit Your Job With Confidence and Go All In on Your Side Hustle

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Many entrepreneurs start their business journey while working a day job. And it’s no wonder, since having a steady income provides security while you build something on the side. But what happens when your side gig begins to take off? That moment when you realize your passion project is making real money can be both exciting and terrifying.

Sometimes, even when the numbers look good, leaving the safety of a regular paycheck feels impossible, for whatever reason. And, often, the reason isn’t that you don’t believe in your business; it’s simply that change is scary. Here are seven ways to navigate this tricky transition period.

Related: Job Security Is an Illusion — Here’s How to Leave Your 9-5 and Be More Successful, From 4 People Who Did It

1. Know your numbers inside and out

Your side hustle might seem successful because orders are coming in or clients are calling. One way to truly gauge its potential is to track everything meticulously. Look at your profit (not just revenue), growth rate over time and recurring versus one-time income.

You need clear evidence before making big decisions. Create a spreadsheet that shows at least six months of data, then use this information to project what full-time income might look

like. Numbers don’t lie, and they’ll either support your leap or tell you to wait a bit longer.

2. Build a six-month emergency fund

There’s nothing wrong with being cautious when it comes to your financial future. In fact, when you’re considering leaving steady employment … well, it serves you to prepare for the unexpected.

Put away enough money to cover six months of expenses before quitting. Talk about how much security this provides when your business hits inevitable slow periods or when you need to reinvest profits instead of paying yourself. This cushion helps you make decisions from a place of strategy rather than panic.

3. Test drive your business full-time during vacation

Sometimes, one of the concerns about going all-in is wondering if you’ll enjoy running your business every day. Let your paid time off work for you by taking a week or two to operate your side hustle as if it were your full-time job.

Wake up at your normal time, work regular business hours and handle all aspects of your operation. This trial period shows you what the day-to-day reality might feel like and helps identify gaps in your systems before you commit completely.

4. Reduce your risk with a phased approach

If all your instincts tell you to proceed with caution, listen to them. If possible, consider negotiating reduced hours at your current job before quitting outright. I believe that this

way, you can dedicate more time to your business while maintaining some income stability.

Many employers now offer flexible arrangements, especially for valued team members. Even dropping to four days a week gives you 20% more time for your business without the stress of zero employment income. Stop seeing it as “all or nothing” and create a transition plan that works for your comfort level.

Related: Make These Smart Moves to Turn Your Side Hustle Into a 6-Figure Business (Without Burning Out)

5. Find a bridge person who’s done it successfully

Whatever they say, your journey isn’t unique, and that’s actually good news. What I mean is, someone else has stood exactly where you are now, feeling the same mixture of hope and fear. If possible, find that person and learn from their experience.

You can do some research and seek out entrepreneurs in similar fields who successfully made this same leap. Ask specific questions about their timeline, how they knew it was time and what they wish they’d done differently.

6. Set clear success metrics for making the jump

Emotional decisions rarely lead to business success. Instead of quitting your job when you “feel ready,” you should form some benchmarks that signal it’s time to make your move.

Perhaps it’s when your side income consistently matches 75% of your current salary for three straight months. Maybe it is hitting a certain number of clients or developing a product that sells without your constant attention. Whatever you

choose, having predetermined triggers might remove some of the guesswork and will help you act decisively when the time comes.

7. Use tools that scale with your growing business

Managing growth often comes down to having the right systems in place. One way to prepare your business for full-time status is to invest in tools that can handle increased volume without requiring more of your time.

With features like inventory tracking, sales forecasting and customer management, you can have a manageable expansion. Many side hustlers put off these upgrades until they're already overwhelmed – don't make that mistake. Setting up professional systems now shows you're serious about your business and makes the eventual transition much smoother. Above all else, seeing your daily sales data might just give you the confidence boost you need to finally take the leap.

Related: This 54-Year-Old's Juicy Side Hustle – Which She Calls a 'Literal ATM' – Pulls Up to $50,000 a Month and Was Profitable Within 1 Week

8. Create a worst-case scenario plan (and realize it's not so bad)

What scares most aspiring full-time entrepreneurs isn't failure; it's fear of the unknown. Taking time to map out what would actually happen if your business struggled can be surprisingly comforting.

Could you return to your industry in a similar role? Do you have marketable skills that would help you land a new position? Would cutting certain expenses temporarily keep you

afloat during a transition? Stop letting vague fears hold you back and address specific concerns with specific solutions.

It might help if you connect with other entrepreneurs through local networking groups or online communities. I believe that helps eliminate the isolation factor, and you get access to advice, potential collaborations and emotional support – these are all crucial parts when you are making this life-changing decision.

Remember, the path from side hustle to successful business isn't about leaping blindly, you are also building a bridge and crossing it carefully.

Many entrepreneurs start their business journey while working a day job. And it's no wonder, since having a steady income provides security while you build something on the side. But what happens when your side gig begins to take off? That moment when you realize your passion project is making real money can be both exciting and terrifying.

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Barbara Corcoran Finds a Buyer in One Day for Her $12 Million ‘Palace in the Sky’ Penthouse

Longtime “Shark Tank” investor Barbara Corcoran, 76, announced last week that she was putting her beloved New York City penthouse on the market for $12 million — and the apartment almost immediately found a buyer.

According to the latest Olshan Luxury Market Report, Corcoran’s duplex penthouse at 1158 Fifth had multiple bidders and sold for over the asking price within 24 hours of being listed. The final price paid for the unit and the identity of the new owner are still unknown, but will be disclosed as soon as the deal closes.

The property was one of 36 contracts signed last week in Manhattan with a value of $4 million or more, per the Olshan report.

Related: Barbara Corcoran Says the Best Entrepreneurs Are Good at This One Thing

“Real estate is always emotional, but I never thought I’d say goodbye to this beautiful palace in the sky,” Corcoran wrote on Instagram last week. “I’m just hoping the special person who buys it cherishes it as much as I do!”

The 4,600-square-foot, 11-room co-op has four bedrooms, four full baths, and two half baths. Monthly maintenance fees are $11,693.32. Corcoran listed the property with The Corcoran Group, the real estate firm she founded in 1973 and sold in 2001 for $66 million.

Corcoran first spotted the penthouse in 1992, when she was delivering letters for a messenger service as a side hustle. She was impressed by the apartment's terrace with views of Central Park, and asked the home's then-owner to call if they ever thought about selling the unit.

Related: Barbara Corcoran Says This Is the One Question to Ask Before Selling Your Home

More than two decades went by without a phone call. Finally, in 2015, the owner was ready to sell. Corcoran bought the property for $10 million and spent an additional $2 million in renovations, designing the home exactly as she imagined it. She added a library with a fireplace, a full kitchen next to the terrace, and a butler's pantry.

Corcoran is moving out of the duplex penthouse and into a single-story one to save her and her husband, Bill Higgins, 80, the trip up and down the stairs. The duo has already found a single-story apartment in the same Carnegie Hill neighborhood.

Corcoran previously disclosed that she makes $300,000 as a "Shark Tank" investor, but usually invests over $1 million per year in startups that come on the show. She also stated that she makes $4.5 million annually from her stocks, bonds, and other investments.

Corcoran has been on "Shark Tank" for 16 years and has closed 650 deals on the show.

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You Can Now Order Food and Book a Massage on Airbnb. Here's How.

This year, AAA is predicting a new Memorial Day weekend travel record with an estimated 45.1 million people venturing at least 50 miles from their homes from Thursday, May 22, to Monday, May 26. That's an increase of 1.4 million travelers compared to last year. (The previous record was set in 2005 with 44 million people, the company notes.)

If that gives you pause to hit the road, Airbnb wants to make things easier by being your own personal concierge when traveling (or deciding to hang out at home).

Related: ‘I Can’t Get Everyone to Move Here’: Why Airbnb’s CEO Is Sticking With a Once-a-Month Hybrid Schedule

On Tuesday, the company announced a redesigned app with a spate of new features, including one called “Services.”

“Hotels do have one thing that we don’t have, and those are services,” CEO and Cofounder Brian Chesky, 43, said at the launch event in Los Angeles on Tuesday.

Now, Airbnb users in 260 cities can book things like food (in-home and ready-to-eat meals from professional chefs or full-service catering); photography sessions; massages and spa treatments (Swedish, deep tissue, reflexology, facials, microdermabrasion, body scrubs); personal training (yoga, strength training, HIIT); and beauty services (hair, makeup, nails).

Chesky told the New York Times the company was always “destined to do more” than just be an app to book or offer a place to stay.

Airbnb

Airbnb says that all service professionals are “vetted for quality,” have an “average of 10 years of experience, completed Airbnb’s identity verification process, and are required to submit relevant licenses and certifications.”

It’s not Joe-from-down-the-block who’s coming to cook your meal (no disrespect to Joe). Airbnb is touting its connections and offering “chefs from Michelin-starred restaurants, award-winning photographers, and elite trainers.”

Related: People Are Making Tons of Money With Airbnb and They Don’t Even Own Property. Here’s How.

But even though that may sound expensive, the company says

there are services at all price points, with many below $50.

“Airbnb is currently used as a noun and a verb, and it means a place to stay,” Chesky told the *New York Times*. “The question we then asked was what if you could Airbnb more than an Airbnb and essentially monetize the biggest asset in your life, which is probably not your home but your time, passion, and skill set.”

This year, AAA is predicting a new Memorial Day weekend travel record with an estimated 45.1 million people venturing at least 50 miles from their homes from Thursday, May 22, to Monday, May 26. That’s an increase of 1.4 million travelers compared to last year. (The previous record was set in 2005 with 44 million people, the company notes.)

If that gives you pause to hit the road, Airbnb wants to make things easier by being your own personal concierge when traveling (or deciding to hang out at home).

Related: ‘I Can’t Get Everyone to Move Here’: Why Airbnb’s CEO Is Sticking With a Once-a-Month Hybrid Schedule

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Is It Time to Pivot Your

Business? 3 Clear Signs You Shouldn’t Ignore

Opinions expressed by Entrepreneur contributors are their own.

Many business leaders still see a pivot as a sign of failure. That mindset is not only outdated — it’s dangerous. In fast-moving markets driven by rapid technological change, staying the course can be riskier than changing direction. Persistence is admirable, but inflexibility is costly.

Think of the industry giants that missed their moment to adapt: Kodak, Blockbuster, Xerox, Tower Records. All were dominant in their time. All ignored shifts in consumer behavior and emerging competition. The result? Obsolescence.

Contrast that with companies like Toyota, which began as a loom manufacturer before becoming a global car brand. Or Nokia, which started as a paper mill. Some of today’s most iconic brands didn’t just survive change— they were born from it.

Related: Navigating Crucial Business Decisions — How to Know When to Pivot and When to Persevere

A pivot isn’t a setback — it’s a strategic move

A well-timed pivot can mean the difference between stagnation and long-term success. It may involve changing your product focus, redefining your mission, or overhauling your operations to meet a new opportunity.

Amazon is a textbook case. It launched as an online bookstore.

Today, a significant portion of its profits comes not from retail, but from Amazon Web Services – its cloud computing business. Likewise, Facebook saw the writing on the wall and acquired Instagram, capturing a new generation of users and extending its dominance.

Pivots can be uncomfortable, even scary. But they're often necessary for survival. The key is knowing when and how to do it right.

Step 1: Let customers tell you what they really need

The clearest signal it's time to pivot? Customers want something you're not offering.

My company, FORE Enterprise, started by helping businesses predict employee turnover. But we quickly realized our clients lacked the infrastructure to implement our insights. Over 90% asked for help building the data pipelines required for AI analysis. So, we expanded our mission and team to deliver full-service AI solutions – from infrastructure to insight. That shift opened new revenue streams and made our product significantly more valuable.

Listen to the market. Often, customers will ask for the pivot before you even realize you need one.

Step 2: Define the market – or it will define you

Large companies may have the weight to shape the market. Apple did this masterfully, evolving from the iPod to the iPhone and fundamentally changing how we interact with technology.

Startups don't have that luxury. They need to discover their product-market fit through rapid iteration and customer

feedback. Market research can point you in the right direction – but only real usage will reveal whether you're truly solving a problem worth paying for.

Case in point: I launched Vella as a dating app based on personality matching. But we quickly saw that the market was saturated. What stood out was our profiling technology. So, we pivoted to focus on wellness and personal development, where the tech had more traction and a less crowded playing field.

The lesson? Pay attention to how your product is actually being used, not just how you imagined it would be.

Related: Knowing When – and How – to Pivot Is Key to Your Business' Survival. Here's What You Need to Do.

Step 3: Adapt or die

Entrepreneurship rewards speed, decisiveness and flexibility. The best founders move like sharks – always forward, always adjusting. They don't fall in love with their first idea. They fall in love with solving real problems.

That doesn't mean abandoning your core competency. The smartest pivots are evolutionary, not revolutionary. They take what you're already good at and apply it in a more valuable, scalable, or sustainable direction.

So ask yourself:

- Are we still solving the right problem?
- Is our technology being used in the most valuable way?
- Is the market changing faster than we are?

If the answer to any of those raises a red flag, it might be time to pivot – before your competition forces you to.

Don’t fear the pivot – master it

A pivot isn’t an admission of failure. It’s a mark of strategic maturity. The best businesses aren’t the ones that get it right from day one. They’re the ones that learn, adapt and evolve ahead of the curve.

Don’t wait for declining sales or market irrelevance to force your hand. Listen to your customers. Watch the trends. Build for where the market is going – not where it’s been.

The pivot isn’t a detour. It’s the road to your company’s next stage of growth.

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College Professors Are Turning to ChatGPT to Generate Course Materials. One Student Noticed — and Asked for a Refund.

Ella Stapleton noticed in February that the lecture notes for her organizational behavior class at Northeastern University appeared to have been generated by ChatGPT. Midway through the document was the statement to "expand on all areas. Be more detailed and specific," which could have been a prompt directed to the AI chatbot.

Stapleton looked at other course materials from that class, including slide presentations, and detected AI use in the form of photos of people with extra limbs and misspelled text. She was taken aback, especially because the course syllabus distributed by her professor, Rick Arrowood, prohibited students from using AI.

"He's telling us not to use it and then he's using it himself," Stapleton told *The New York Times* in a report published on Wednesday.

Stapleton took the matter up with Northeastern's business school in a formal complaint, asking for her tuition for the class back. The total refund would be over $8,000 for the course.

Related: These 4 Words Make It Obvious You Used AI to Write a Paper, According to New Research

Northeastern denied Stapleton's request this month, the day after she graduated from the university.

Arrowood, an adjunct professor who has been an instructor at various colleges for over fifteen years, admitted to *The New York Times* that he had put his class files and documents through ChatGPT to refine them. He said that the situation made him approach AI more cautiously and tell students outright when he uses it.

Stapleton's situation highlights the growing use of AI in higher education. A survey conducted by consulting group Tyton Partners in 2023 found that 22% of higher-education teachers said they frequently utilized generative AI. The same survey conducted in 2024 found that the percentage had nearly doubled to close to 40% of instructors within the span of a year.

AI use is becoming more prevalent among students, too. OpenAI released a study in February showing that more than one-third of young adults in the U.S. ages 18 to 24 use ChatGPT, with 25% of their messages tied to learning and schoolwork. The top two use cases of ChatGPT among this demographic were tutoring and writing help.

Related: ChatGPT Is Writing Lots of Job Applications, But Companies Are Quickly Catching On. Here's How.

Tyton's 2024 survey found that faculty who use AI are tapping into the technology to create in-class activities, write syllabi, generate rubrics for grading student work, and churn out quizzes and tests.

Meanwhile, the study found that students are using AI to help answer homework questions, assist with writing assignments, and take lecture notes.

In response to student AI use, colleges have adapted and released guidelines for using ChatGPT and other generative AI. For example, Harvard University advises students to protect confidential data, such as non-public research, when using AI chatbots and ensure that AI-generated content is free from inaccuracies or hallucinations. NYU's policy mandates that students receive instructor approval before using ChatGPT.

Universities are also using software to uncover AI use in written materials, like essays. However, *New York Magazine* reported earlier this month that college students are getting around AI detectors by sprinkling typos into their ChatGPT-written papers.

Related: Using ChatGPT? AI Could Damage Your Critical Thinking Skills, According to a Microsoft Study

The trend of using AI in college could lead to less critical thinking. Researchers at Microsoft and Carnegie Mellon University published a study earlier this year that found that humans who used AI and were confident in its abilities used fewer critical thinking skills.

"Used improperly, technologies can and do result in the deterioration of cognitive faculties that ought to be preserved," the researchers wrote.

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How to Build a Resilient Team That Thrives in Uncertainty

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It’s easy to lead when things are going well. The real test? Leading when everything feels unstable: the market shifts, plans unravel, and nothing goes according to script.

In my time leading ButterflyMX, I’ve learned that the true measure of a team isn’t how they perform when things go smoothly; it’s how they respond when everything goes sideways.

In those moments, your team doesn’t need perfection. They need resilience. Not just the grit to push through, but the agility to adapt, the clarity to stay grounded and the trust to speak up when it matters most.

Here’s how to create a team that doesn’t just survive

uncertainty but thrives in it.

Related: Builders and Boosters — A Leader's Guide to Forming a Resilient Team

Start with psychological safety

Resilience doesn't start with grit. It starts with safety. If your team is afraid to speak up, they won't problem-solve — they'll self-protect. And in moments of uncertainty, that silence is dangerous. One overlooked concern, one unasked question, and the whole plan can fall apart.

If people don't feel safe to be honest, they won't help you adapt; they'll just go quiet. And no team thrives in uncertainty by staying silent.

Model the behavior you want to see. Admit what you don't know. Ask open-ended questions. And when someone challenges an idea, say "thank you," not "prove it."

Hire (and promote) for adaptability

When everything's going according to plan, it's easy to look like a rockstar. However, the real test of talent is what someone does when the plan breaks down.

Resilient teams are made up of people who know how to pivot, not just power through. That's why adaptability needs to be a hiring and promotion filter, not just a "nice to have."

I've stopped asking interview questions like, "Tell me about your biggest success." Instead, I ask: "What's a time when everything went wrong, and how did you respond?" I'm not looking for perfection. I'm looking for composure, creativity and a bias toward action.

And it doesn't stop at hiring. Promoting the right people

matters just as much. I've seen high performers crumble when the environment shifts and quiet contributors shine when they're given space to lead through complexity. That's who I want at the helm when things get tough.

Related: From Passive to Resilient – These 7 Strategies Will Empower Your Team to Thrive Through Change

Create systems, then break them (on purpose)

Systems bring clarity, and they help teams move fast and stay aligned. But if you cling to them too tightly, they can become a liability, especially in moments of change.

I've made this mistake before. We had a workflow that hummed like a machine until the market shifted. Suddenly, that "efficient system" became red tape. No one wanted to deviate from the process, even when it wasn't working.

That's when I realized that resilient teams build systems with flexibility baked in. They know when to follow the playbook and when to discard it.

One simple fix? Run what we call "controlled disruptions." Every quarter, we test how the team handles curveballs: a last-minute priority shift, a change in tooling, a scenario where a key player is out. It's not about creating chaos. It's about building confidence that we can handle it.

Schedule a quarterly "system check" where your team audits processes and intentionally asks: "What's still serving us, and what's slowing us down?"

Normalize recovery, not burnout

Resilience isn't just about pushing through hard things; it's about recovering so you can keep going.

There’s a myth in leadership that mental toughness means working nonstop. But burning out your team doesn’t make them stronger. It just makes them quieter, less creative and eventually gone.

Resilient teams build endurance by taking care of their energy. That includes recovery. I’ve started treating rest like we treat deadlines: scheduled, protected and tracked. Leaders have to model that rest is part of performance.

And it works. I’ve seen teams rebound from stressful seasons faster and perform better when they feel they can breathe.

Add recovery rituals to your team rhythm. Try five-minute breathing breaks after intense meetings. Or start weekly check-ins with the question: “What do you need to reset this week?”

Stay grounded in purpose

When things get chaotic, purpose is the anchor. Metrics shift. Strategies pivot. Plans fall apart. But the *why* behind the work? That’s what keeps people going.

During a particularly rough quarter, when targets were moving and uncertainty was high, I stopped opening team meetings with dashboards. Instead, I shared stories. A customer who was impacted. A team member who went above and beyond. A small win that showed we were still making a difference.

Those stories did more to refocus and reenergize the team than any chart ever could. When people are reminded that their work matters, they’re far more likely to stay resilient, even when the road gets rocky.

Start your next team meeting with this prompt: “What moment this week reminded you why you do this work?” Keep the answers visible. That’s your team’s compass.

Related: 4 Ways to Build a More Adaptable, Resilient Culture at Your Organization

Resilience is a skill. Build it daily.

Resilient teams aren't built in a crisis. They're built in the small moments, the check-ins, the pivots, the space to breathe and the culture that rewards honesty over perfection.

And the same goes for you. As a leader, your own resilience sets the tone.

So, don't wait for the next wave of uncertainty to prepare your team. Start now. Make adaptability part of the culture. Celebrate recovery. Reinforce purpose. And above all, create the kind of environment where people don't just survive uncertainty — they grow because of it.

Choose one area — hiring, systems, recovery or purpose — and make a small shift this week. The best time to build resilience was yesterday. The second-best time is now.

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