What Makes You a Unicorn in Your Industry? Start by Mastering These 4 Pillars

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If you’re a business owner like me, one of the things we all share is the desire to be the best in our line of work. Correction: the best of the best. You want to be a truly exceptional company in your industry, one that outperforms, outdelivers and outshines your competition, winning the race not just because you’ve trained and prepared for it, but because you genuinely stand out from the crowd.

In other words, you want to be the unicorn (in the figurative, not the financial, sense) among all the other horses, ponies and zebras running in your field.

That’s a big ask. Becoming an exemplary example — the ideal prototype — of what a business like yours should be seems like a pretty tall order. But what if I told you that the question of how to achieve unicorn status actually has a short answer?

I’ve been working in the public relations space for close to two decades now, and in that time of representing countless clients and receiving feedback from them as to why they keep coming back to my PR firm, here’s what I’ve come up with: To become a unicorn in your industry, do one thing really, really well.

Applying Occam’s Razor

My theory seems simplistic, I know. But the principle of parsimony (aka Occam’s Razor) tells us that oftentimes, the simplest answer is the likeliest to be true, that the simplest route is the best way there. Picking one thing to excel at and then doing it spectacularly well might seem easy, but it requires a lot of effort.

First, you have to have the capacity, the skill, to excel in that area. Additionally, you have to learn how to leverage that standout aspect to make it work for you in the marketplace — incorporating it into your branding, spotlighting it in your messaging, maybe even including it in your name. Concise as the notion is, there’s actually a lot of breadth and flexibility in it, for when it comes to selecting what you want to do better than anyone else is doing it, your choices are boundless.

For example, you could strive for superiority in the area of cleanliness, turnaround time, precision or home delivery. Your unicorn horn could be defined by the diversity of your staff, your concentration on inclusivity or your commitment to the environment. Honestly, the one thing you do really, really well could be just about anything… so long as it’s the primary thing that makes your business your own, something you can embrace without qualification and stay loyal to down the line. Here are some of my personal favorites.

Related: Stop Trying to Be the Next Unicorn — and Start Doing This

Unicorn pillar #1: Create a niche

There are lots of companies out there that, like yours, make candles. But not all of them source their materials from a specific African village or use hypoallergenic ingredients or

are named after ancient goddesses. Your products? Incarcerated prisoners package them — they're not just a source of light, they light a way forward for others. That's called having a niche, and to create one of your own, you need to research what your competitors are doing — and then do something no one else is.

Even then, amid our vast and variegated business landscape, you're likely to find overlap with others in your sector. Consider the recent addition of Poppi and Olipop to the soda market. Both have set themselves apart from the mainstream by being prebiotic options that offer a far greater health bang for your buck, but they've both successfully set themselves apart from each other as well along such lines as scientific research, specific ingredients, visual strategies and target audience.

Say what you will about the post-2025 Super Bowl controversy, these two companies not only illustrate the power of niche branding (particularly on social media) but also how similar brands can still clearly differentiate themselves from one another within the same market.

Related: **The End of the Unicorn Dream**

Unicorn pillar #2: Be kind

This might seem like another overly simplistic concept, but kindness has too often been supplanted by the perpetual quest for increased profits and presence, making it all the more valuable today. Consumers have gotten quite savvy at sniffing out false sincerity, so when they come across the real thing, they're much more prone to give you their business. Basically, when your client base believes you prioritize your vision, your team and creating an incredible product or service over financial gain, they want to work with you.

Chewy.com is a business known for being kind. When it learns

of a customer's pet passing, it sends a sympathy card and flowers. And it almost goes without saying that KIND Snacks didn't just build its brand on the basis of products that are kind to the body; it's far more widely known as an entity committed to international peace, cooperation and understanding.

Related: Unicorn Founders Have Three Simple Things in Common: Study

Unicorn pillar #3: Organizational efficiency

I call this outstanding quality "having your ducks in a row," and when a business excels in this area, it will rise to the top of its trade. I'm talking about having an on-the-ball accounting team that pays your bills on time, a crack legal team that prepares fair and clear contracts, an accessible and attentive HR department and sound business practices and processes. It's what goes on behind the scenes of your business that will determine what appears on the public side of your business, so you can't go wrong adopting company-wide efficacy as your unicorn model. With it, you build a house of bricks, as opposed to a house of straw.

Think of the companies Americans trust to come through for them. When Amazon says your package will be on your doorstep by 5:00 pm tomorrow, it's there, thanks to an amazingly well-oiled machine working nonstop to fulfill orders.

When PODS says it will deliver your belongings to your new driveway on Tuesday, it'll go out of business if that container doesn't arrive. And I'm not quite sure how Chick-fil-A manages to keep so many cars in so many take-out lines happy, but day in and day out, it does.

Being more efficient than any of your competitors may not be

“sexy,” but it assures lasting success.

Unicorn pillar #4: Invest in your people

Building and maintaining a remarkable “company culture” can just be a buzzword to you, or you can bring it to life. I can’t think of any single factor that makes my company more valuable to my clients than the value I place on my people and the experience I endeavor to provide them by working for me. When my staff feels openly recognized, wholly supported and vitally important to achieving our shared outcomes, we’re truly unstoppable. So keep in mind that your unicorn focus can be internal, not necessarily client-facing.

How about you? Where do you want to shine? More to the point, where do you already shine? Sure, all of the above examples are nationally, if not internationally, known, with tremendous resources and budgets at their disposal, so you’re not expected to achieve outcomes of the same size and scale. But the good news here is that you are smaller and more self-contained, so you don’t have to appeal to as many people or make as big an impact. On the contrary, you can make a bigger splash in a smaller pool!

To ride heads and tails above the rest, then, pick one lane, steadfastly stick to that lane, travel it with as much drive and dedication as you can — and then watch as you pass all the others on the track, crossing the finish line in first place!

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Last Chance to Get Windows 11 Pro at an All-Time Low Price

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The majority of Windows users still haven't upgraded to Windows 11, according to TechSpot. With the clock ticking on support for Windows 10, if you keep waiting to upgrade, you may be stuck without security fixes, technical assistance, or free software updates if you don't upgrade to Windows 11 Pro ahead of the discontinuation.

To ease the blow, we've been selling Windows 11 Pro license keys at an all-time low price of $14.97, but today, April 27, is the last day to get this price (reg. $199).

Up your workday productivity

The changes to Windows 11 Pro include a seamless interface to help you tackle your to-do list more conveniently. Support for biometric login, encrypted authentication, and advanced antivirus defenses are just a few of the features that boost your online security. And improved voice typing and a better search experience aim to save you time and increase your productivity.

With Windows 11 Pro, Microsoft Teams and Widgets capabilities are all built-in. There's also the addition of Copilot, Windows 11's AI-powered assistant that answers your questions and serves as your own (unpaid!) personal assistant.

Since you’re always working so hard, you need to make sure you’re playing hard, too. Windows 11 Pro offers unprecedented gaming advantages, with DirectX 12 Ultimate providing incredible graphics so you can play your favorite games in all their splendor.

Before purchasing, make sure this license is the right fit for your computer. This particular Microsoft Windows 11 Pro license requires your device to be running Windows 10 or higher, with a processor of 1GHz or faster, 4GB of RAM and 64GB of storage or larger.

Why this deal is worth it

Upgrading to Windows 11 Pro isn’t just about staying current, it’s about working smarter. With new productivity tools like Snap Layouts for better multitasking, deeper Teams integration for faster communication, and support for multiple virtual desktops, this upgrade can genuinely streamline your day. If your PC is still running Windows 10, you’re not just behind on security, you’re missing out on built-in features designed to help you move faster, focus better, and get more done.

Get Microsoft Windows 11 Pro for just $14.97 through April 27 at 11:59 p.m. PT with no coupon needed.

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This is How So Many Business Owners Learned to Use AI for Automation

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AI tools are rapidly changing how businesses across industries operate. Whether you're a business owner juggling a dozen responsibilities, a marketer trying to stay relevant, or a team lead looking for an edge, mastering tools like ChatGPT and automation is an essential skill.

The ChatGPT & Automation E-Degree Bundle can seriously help you amp up that skillset, and it's only $29.99 (reg. $790).

Automate repetitive tasks with AI

This online learning bundle includes 12 courses and 25+ hours of content that break down everything from the basics of ChatGPT to real-world applications of over 20 top AI tools. You'll learn how to customize and use AI to streamline business tasks, automate repetitive processes, improve team communication, and boost your productivity without needing to be a developer.

Courses cover a range of in-demand topics like data visualization, AI-enhanced creativity, automated marketing, chatbot design, and business process optimization. Instead of general concepts, the content focuses on how to apply AI in everyday work scenarios. Think: writing better proposals,

creating engaging content faster, or building smart workflows that free up your time.

And if you've ever been overwhelmed by the number of new tools out there, this bundle is a curated introduction to what's actually useful and how to use it without drowning in tutorials or tech jargon. It's beginner-friendly, available 24/7, and optimized for desktop or mobile.

You'll also walk away with a Certificate of Completion, which is great for your resume, portfolio, or just letting clients know you're not winging it.

Why this deal is worth it

At just $29.99, you're getting lifetime access to a course bundle originally priced at $790. That's a serious return on investment for professionals who want to future-proof their skills and stay ahead of the curve. With practical lessons, expert instruction, and no subscriptions or surprise fees, this deal delivers real value for anyone ready to embrace the AI-powered workplace. It's not just about learning how to use AI; it's about using it to work smarter.

It's only $29.99 to get the ChatGPT and Automation E-Degree.

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Develop a Lifetime of New Skills for Only $20

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Whether you obtained a college degree or not, training programs can be a great way to qualify for a new career or advance in the one you have. Best yet, developing new skills is now convenient and affordable. You can get lifetime access to EDU Unlimited by StackSkills for just $19.97 while the price has dropped from the regular $49.99 sale price.

StackSkills is the premier online platform offering the most in-demand skills today and this exclusive limited-time promotion provides lifetime access to more than 1,000 pre-selected StackSkills courses. Elite, highly rated expert instructors share important lessons learned from both their successes and failures.

From iOS development to growth hacking, blockchain, more than 350 of the web's best teachers cover skills of all levels, beginner to advanced. New courses are added every month, so you can choose from business, finance, marketing, IT, graphic design and so much more. Course certifications and premium customer support are included.

There's no longer any need to add another commute to your day, squeeze in classes at inconvenient times or take classes you don't want or need. Whether you're a professional, freelancer, parent or student, you'll love the flexibility of being able to train at your own pace and focus on just the specific

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It’s no wonder StackSkills has an impressive Trustpilot rating of 4.6 stars out of 5. As PCWorld noted:

“StackSkills Unlimited gives you a lifetime of professional training for one low price.”

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Defining Your Values Is the Most Important Decision You Can Make — and One AI Can’t Make For You

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We live in a time of answers. Type your question into a search

engine or AI chatbot and you'll receive an instant, logical, high-quality response. But there is one question no technology can answer for you: What is the meaning of life? And the answer, oddly enough, is simple. I once saw it on a postcard in a café in Kathmandu: The meaning of life is whatever you want it to be.

Since then, I've dedicated myself to unpacking the science of meaning – trying to understand where it truly comes from. Is it flow state? Well-being? Habits? Goals? Failure? Resilience? Fun?

What do we regret most?

Maybe a better starting point is to ask: What compromises meaning?

In the book *Top 5 Regrets of the Dying*, palliative nurse Bronnie Ware captures the reflections of people in their final days – when the truth can no longer be hidden. The top regrets:

1. I wish I'd had the courage to live a life true to myself, not the life others expected of me.
2. I wish I hadn't worked so hard.
3. I wish I'd had the courage to express my feelings.
4. I wish I had stayed in touch with my friends.
5. I wish I had let myself be happier.

Regret, I believe, lives at one end of an emotional spectrum. At the other end is fulfillment – the sense that life is meaningful, resonant and coherent. Regret is pain from the past, reheated for the present. To reduce it, can we outsource work, courage and happiness to AI?

Related: 9 Tips for Finding Your Life Purpose

Will abundance lead to emptiness?

Can AI and robotics automate the mundane so that hard work becomes optional? Elon Musk thinks so. He predicts that our future challenge won't be productivity, but human fulfillment. Without adversity and longing, will an abundance of everything drive us into emotional collapse – or worse, trap us in echo chambers of narcissistic pleasure, the stars of our own digital realities?

Or will we do what humans always do – manufacture challenge, strive, compete and dream big? Even if we're monkeys in glass cages, under the watchful gaze of a superintelligent "god" that punishes misbehavior, rewards effort and medicates us with algorithmic precision? Well, many of us do like rules and boundaries. Would I prefer an AI overlord to flawed human governance? Maybe. Could AI usher in a great reset, reallocating wealth and distributing resources more efficiently? Quite possibly. Will it honor merit – or invite, even compel, everyone to contribute meaningfully? *(I asked ChatGPT, which answered that compulsion would only be required if we face existential threats.)*

What makes the journey worthwhile?

Whatever the future holds, the central challenge remains: making the journey feel worthwhile. Ensuring what we do matters – if only to ourselves.

For much of history, religion, kings, nations, communities and families prescribed our values. There was no need to ask deep questions, especially when the primary value was survival. But now we must ask questions like: What is important to me? What brings me fulfillment? What legacy do I want to leave?

Purpose can feel grandiose, but values are ingrained – often diffracted beneath the surface of our awareness, revealed in

moments of stress or joy. When you clarify your values, you can begin to create your own spiritual practice.

How do you put values into practice?

Love fitness? Stretch at dawn, run at sunset and build your life around it. Value kindness? Serve others, act with compassion and volunteer weekly. Value peace? Meditate, teach yoga and campaign to end wars.

Living in alignment with your values creates meaning, especially when it’s hard. We need resistance. We need positive stress. Nothing is more satisfying than seeing how far we’ve come: how we now handle pressure better than a younger version of ourselves, or how we’ve restored balance after chaos and disruption.

In my workshops, I ask people what they’re most proud of achieving in the past year. The answers are never about ease. They’re about resilience – overcoming illness, supporting loved ones, pushing through stretch goals or simply refusing to give up.

What is the hero’s journey today?

We don’t have to be perfect. But we do need to try, fail and try again. That’s the hero’s journey: leave the comfort zone, gather allies, gain skills, get knocked down and rise again. We conquer the dragon and return home changed. That journey is what creates meaning.

AI can’t give us *that*. It can be a tool, but we still need mastery, growth, community and courage.

Yes, some may get left behind – immersed in virtual realities, fed by robots, existing in gamified, plasma dreams. A real-

life Matrix. But there’s another possibility: We define our values, and AI helps us find challenges where we can still make a difference. It suggests allies. It nudges us toward purpose. And like any good guide, it lets us stumble.

Related: Want to Find Your Purpose? Stop Looking for It. Start Living With It.

Where do we begin?

We do something worthwhile — whether it’s achieving a goal, being of service or loving someone.

We work less. We live authentically. We stay connected to friends. We speak our truth. We allow happiness, but it starts with values. Because if you don’t choose them consciously, you’ll absorb them unconsciously, whether it’s from consumer culture, influencers or convenience — and you’ll feel empty.

So, unearth your values. Practice them. Build resilience. Dream big. Aim for the stars — and with the help of superintelligence, you just might get there.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/living/this-is-the-one-question-ai-cant-answer-for-you/488992

Boost Productivity With This Adjustable Stand With Port Hub for Just $100

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The biggest cost for businesses is labor, which accounts for around 70% of a company's budget, according to data from business banking specialist North One. If you're running everything alone or with a skeleton staff, then you need every tool that can help you save the most time, and the Adam Elements CASA HUB 360 8-in-1 Aluminum Foldable USB-C Hub Stand for laptops and tablets definitely qualifies. Best of all, you can get it for just $99.99, a 22% discount off the regular retail price of $129.

Entrepreneurs typically put in long hours, and this lightweight, all-aluminum stand is designed for optimal viewing and comfort, making it both functional and convenient. This allows you to work comfortably and productively for as long as you need to. The adjustable mechanism makes setup easy, requiring no tools. Rubber pads enhance the design to provide stability, along with braided cables and strengthened connectors, ensuring long-lasting durability.

[embedded content]

An L-shaped nylon braided USB-C to USB-C cable is included to connect your device to the stand. You can also connect additional devices to the stand via its several integrated ports. These include two 3.2 Gen 1 5 Gbps USB-A ports, plus a USB-C Host port; a USB-C PD 3.0 port with 100W, 20V, and 5A; an HDMI port that supports up to 4K at 60Hz; and a 3.5mm audio jack for 32-bit stereo input and output at up to 384 kHz. Additional storage options include an SD 3.0 port and a microSD 3.0 port.

The wide range of adjustments means you'll never worry about neck strain again while working or watching videos. In

addition to work and entertainment, you'll find this versatile stand ideal for writing, cooking, painting, and more. At 2″ x 11″ x 8″ and weighing just 36 oz, you can easily move it around to wherever it's most convenient for you.

The Casa Hub works seamlessly with iPads and MacBook models M1, M2, M3, and M4. It's also compatible with Windows and Chrome OS. A three-year manufacturer's warranty covers the stand.

Get the Adam Elements CASA HUB 360 8-in-1 Aluminum Foldable USB-C Hub Stand for just $99.99, a 22% discount off the regular $129 retail price.

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7 AI Tools That Help You Build a One-Person Business — and Make Money While You Sleep

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Most entrepreneurs are still using AI like a sidekick, just scratching the surface with basic tools that save a few minutes here and there. But what if AI could run your business

for you while you sleep? This isn't about chatbots or rewriting blog posts. This is about building a lean, one-person business powered by automation, speed and strategy.

Inside this video, I'm revealing seven powerful AI tools from the "Black Book"— hand-picked for solo entrepreneurs who want to scale without a team and unlock true freedom.

- **Website conversion and sales amplifier:** Discover a free Google AI tool that audits your site like a conversion expert, spotting costly mistakes and giving you data-backed recommendations to boost leads and sales (no coding required).
- **Hidden market insights at your fingertips:** Uncover the AI research engine that reveals untapped market gaps and competitor weaknesses in seconds, without spending $200 per month on bloated SEO software.
- **No-code agent creation made simple:** Learn how to build your own AI agents to automate client onboarding, handle admin tasks, and even make smart decisions — freeing up your time for growth and strategy.
- **Instant presentation builder:** Turn any blog, transcript, or outline into a polished, professional deck in minutes—perfect for selling ideas, landing clients or creating lead magnets on autopilot.
- **Social media intelligence extractor:** Access a pre-trained AI bot that scrapes platforms for viral trends, top-performing posts, and competitor engagement data, giving you a content edge without guesswork.
- **Data reporting on autopilot:** Use the same AI analysis tool trusted by universities to transform raw numbers into smart, visual insights — ideal for optimizing campaigns, funnels, and offers.
- **The ultimate solo founder AI toolkit:** Explore the "app store of AI" where you can clone voices, analyze sentiment, and plug into hundreds of advanced tools that extend what one person can achieve.

I’ll walk you through each tool step-by-step, no tech background needed. If you’re ready to build a high-performance business that works while you sleep, this video is your blueprint.

Download the free “AI Success Kit” (limited time only). And you’ll also get a free chapter from my brand new book, “The Wolf is at The Door – How to Survive and Thrive in an AI-Driven World.”

https://www.entrepreneur.com/news-and-trends/7-ai-tools-to-build-a-profitable-one-person-business-that/490586

Microsoft Created an Ad Using AI and No One Picked Up On It: ‘Saved 90% of the Time and Cost’

Microsoft released a 56-second ad for the Surface laptop on January 30, and no one realized that it was partially AI-generated until Microsoft disclosed it on Wednesday.

The ad shows different people typing away on a Surface laptop in various locations. It emphasizes the Surface laptop’s standout features, like its touchscreen and battery life.

In the close to three months since the ad’s release, no one has picked up on its AI-generated roots, per *The Verge*. The ad has over 46,000 views on YouTube, and none of the top comments

suspect that the ad was partly AI-generated.

[embedded content]

According to a Microsoft Design blog post released Wednesday, Microsoft employees used generative AI tools to cut down the time and expense required to create the ad, putting it together in just a month.

“With a small budget and a tiny amount of time, we were able to accomplish in a month what would have traditionally required exponentially more resources,” Brian Townsend, visual designer on Microsoft’s Windows + Devices Visual Design team, stated in the blog post. “We probably saved 90% of the time and cost it would typically take.”

Related: Apple Issues Apology for iPad Pro ‘Crush!’ Ad and Pulls It from TV — Here’s Why

The team started the process by using unspecified AI tools to create a script, storyboards, and a pitch deck. AI helped expedite the process, allowing the team to get the materials ready in a matter of days instead of weeks.

The team then told an unnamed AI chatbot what they were looking for in the ad. They went through “thousands” of additional prompts to refine the AI output.

Because AI still has trouble generating details like human motion, the team decided to use some human-created shots to fill in the weaknesses of AI-generated shots. They determined that humans had to manually capture shots with “intricate movement,” like closeups of hands typing on keyboards, while AI generated quick cuts or shots with limited motion.

AI allowed the team to display different backgrounds in the ad without having to travel to the location. However, the team acknowledged in the blog post that from time to time, AI tools would experience hallucinations or generate inaccurate

responses. When hallucinations arose, the team would manually fix “any unnatural elements” that popped up.

“However, as with all things created using AI, the occasional AI hallucination would rear its head,” the blog post stated. “To combat this, the team employed a blend of AI and traditional video production tools to meticulously compose frames and correct any unnatural elements.”

Related: Google Pulls Gemini AI Olympics Commercial After Backlash

Microsoft emphasized in the blog post that AI democratizes filmmaking and allows anyone to create their own ad or video.

“All it takes is imagination and the curiosity to explore the myriad of tools available,” the blog post reads.

Microsoft did not specify which AI tools they used to generate the ad, though the company’s own tool, Microsoft Copilot, is capable of creating a script, footage, and a video project from a single prompt. https://www.entrepreneur.com/business-news/microsoft-surface-ad-is-ai-generated-no-one-picked-up-on-it/490655

This Quiet Shift Is Helping Founders Build Fierce Customer Loyalty

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Earlier this year, I asked a flight attendant for an extra graham cracker. She came back with three. A small, inexpensive gesture for the airline, but one that stuck with me.

A few weeks later, at my local grocery store, I asked where to find Dijon mustard. Instead of pointing, the employee walked me to the aisle and helped me find the brand I wanted. (Okay, the brand my wife wanted. I'm a yellow mustard guy.) No checklist, no script – just a genuinely helpful human moment.

At a neighborhood body shop, the waiting room was stocked with snacks, drinks and a note on the wall: the owner's personal cell number, with an invitation to call anytime with questions or concerns. Who does that?

These moments, across totally different industries, had one thing in common: they made me feel something. Valued. Seen. Cared for. That's not service. That's hospitality.

Service is what people get. Hospitality is how you make them feel.

As a hospitality speaker, I've seen it everywhere – businesses nailing service but missing hospitality. Service is the transaction. Hospitality is the connection.

I've checked into hotels where the front desk agent greeted me with overly rehearsed cheer that felt more like theater than welcome. I've flown airlines where crews chirp slogans like "You're the reason we fly!" in the most robotic tone imaginable. And I've walked into quick-service restaurants and been greeted with "Next customer in line!"– when I was the only customer there.

That's what happens when we confuse process with presence. You can check all the boxes and still make people feel like just

another number.

True hospitality isn't scripted. It's empathetic. It's human. It's the difference between being served and being seen.

Related: How These Entrepreneurs Turned a Seasonal Venue Into a Nightlife Powerhouse

Hospitality isn't industry-specific. It's intent-specific.

Hospitality is a mindset. It applies whether you're running a tech startup, a boutique, or a landscaping company.

On a recent cruise, our server didn't just remember our names — he remembered our preferences, asked about our day, and even shared a little about himself. Every meal felt personal, like we were more than just table 12. That connection? It elevated the whole experience.

You don't need to be loud or extroverted to deliver hospitality. Some of the most powerful connections I've felt came from people who were quiet but deeply present. It's not about personality — it's about intention.

The best businesses don't just sell — they make you feel something

When I ran Edible Arrangements franchises, I thought we were in the fruit basket business. Turns out, we were in the joy delivery business. The moment I realized that, everything changed.

Drivers became ambassadors of celebration. They didn't just hand over a product — they created an experience. They smiled, engaged and adapted to the moment. That energy mattered as much as the arrangement itself.

In-store, we trained our team to surprise and delight. A warm welcome. A helpful suggestion. Reassurance that this gift would land exactly the way the sender intended. Those were the magic moments people remembered — and returned for.

Related: Why Customer Service Is Your Get Out Of Jail Free Card For Business Success

Want to be memorable? Be more human.

People don't stay loyal to brands. They stay loyal to how brands make them feel.

And here's the best part: hospitality isn't expensive. It doesn't take flashy marketing or big budgets. It takes:

- Hiring people who care
- Empowering them to act on that care
- Building a culture that rewards empathy and presence
- Encouraging the small, unscalable touches that build loyalty

If you're a business owner or leader, ask yourself: when was the last time a customer interaction made someone feel surprised — in a good way? When was the last time someone walked away smiling because of the way you engaged with them, not just what you sold them?

It's not always easy — especially in busy environments. But the companies that do it well are the ones people remember. And return to.

So yes, I speak and write about this. I coach on it. But it's not just because I love a good guest experience. It's because I believe hospitality is the most scalable, transferable business skill we're still underestimating.

Whatever industry you’re in, hospitality is your human edge. And in a world that increasingly feels automated, that edge matters more than ever.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/growing-a-business/this-quiet-shift-is-helping-founders-build-fierce-customer/490230

Want to Boost Your Profits by Up to 95%? Focus on This Underrated Metric.

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Consumer spending is one of the most important metrics for any industry — yet all too often, businesses fail to track it effectively. But understanding how your target audience is spending their money and why can be critical for your business planning and activities.

Tracking consumer spending habits can provide a wide range of critical insights that will enable you to increase your own profit margins and ensure that your brand is positioned to best appeal to its audience.

Related: How to Grow Your Business When Customer Behaviors Change

1. Understand customer preferences

At the foundational level, tracking consumer spending is essential if you wish to have a better understanding of your customers' shopping preferences and behaviors. What is the average number of items customers purchase in a single transaction? What is the average value of each order? What products are bought together?

Consistently analyzing these and other spending trends among your customer base can help you identify more effective strategies for marketing, such as offering complementary products.

Amazon is perhaps the ultimate case study of leveraging consumer spending habits to fully understand – and capitalize on – customer preferences. The company's algorithms notably draw on data points like the products a customer has purchased and rated, and then use that information to recommend similar or complementary products. By leveraging data to gain an in-depth understanding of customer preferences, Amazon has become the retail giant it is today.

2. Personalize your marketing

Tracking customer spending habits can be a valuable resource for personalizing your marketing efforts. The rise of generative AI, in particular, is believed to have significant potential in streamlining marketing personalization for brands big and small – but for this personalization to be effective, you need to supply it with good data.

Tracking individual customer spending helps you identify what types of products a particular customer likes and which related products or services would be the most appealing to them. According to McKinsey, 71% of customers now expect personalized interactions based on this type of information –

and even more telling, 76% are disappointed when they don’t get it.

Tracking spending provides the information you need to ensure personalized messaging hits the mark. In fact, 70% of companies with an advanced personalization strategy report a return on investment of 200% or more.

Related: 3 Ways to Personalize Your Marketing for Higher Engagement

3. Predict and prepare for market trends

In addition to improving marketing outcomes on an individual level, looking at the big picture of customer spending can also help your business prepare for and adapt to wider market trends.

For example, according to research conducted by Faye, the top travel trends that Americans plan to spend money on in 2025 include solo traveling (26%), “low season” or off-peak travel (24%), destination “dupes” that are similar to but cheaper than larger tourist destinations (20%) and sports tourism (15%).

For Faye, as a travel-related business, understanding how customers plan to spend money regarding their travel plans can provide critical information that can then influence marketing plans and timed service offerings. In any industry, becoming more aware of wider market trends is critical for staying ahead of competitors and avoiding major downturns.

4. Improve your products or

services

Customer feedback is one of the best ways that businesses can get insights into how their target audience views their products or services. While customers may sometimes be willing to write a review or contact customer support, their spending data can also give your team crucial insights into the appeal and viability of a particular product or service.

For example, you might discover that a product that was once a major sales driver for your brand has seen significant declines over time. This data doesn't exist in a vacuum – it could stem from seasonal or macroeconomic trends. But it could also serve as an indicator that your competitors have begun to offer something more appealing.

Tracking customer spending can become an important first step in identifying when there is a need (or opportunity) to make adjustments and improvements to your existing products and services.

5. Improve retention rates

It's one of the most commonly repeated data points in all of business – increasing customer retention by just 5% can increase your company's profits by 25% to 95%. This is largely because it can cost five to 25 times more to acquire a new customer than to retain an existing customer.

Each of the previously mentioned reasons to track customer spending will have a significant impact on your customer retention rates. By better understanding overarching preferences, personalizing marketing to individual customers, gaining insights into market trends and optimizing your products, you create an environment where customers are more likely to stick with you in the long run.

As you make the most of spending insights to optimize your

operations and increase your efficiency, you'll improve customer satisfaction and retention, which will also give your profit margin a much-needed boost.

Related: 3 Pillars of Client Retention Every Brand Needs to Implement

There are many ways you can gain greater insights into customer spending habits. Whether leveraging readily available data from your own website and sales platforms, conducting surveys of your target audience or utilizing third-party data, you can gain the necessary insights to adjust your operations and become more profitable. Making the necessary investments to better track and analyze customer spending will more than pay for itself in the long run.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/growing-a-business/5-reasons-businesses-should-track-consumer-spending-habits/489868