The CFO Agenda for 2026: How Finance Leaders Win the Efficiency War with AI

For Chief Financial Officers (CFOs) and other finance leaders, 2026 won’t be defined by a single strategic priority—it will be defined by tension. Cost control and growth. Risk management and innovation. Discipline and speed. CFO priorities are tightly clustered, and that’s not a failure of focus—it’s a reflection of reality. Finance leaders aren’t choosing one path forward; they’re expected to execute across all of them at once.

For a deep dive on what’s to come this year, join us for a free webinar, *The CFO Agenda for 2026: How Finance Leaders Win the Efficiency War with AI,* presented by Oracle NetSuite and *Entrepreneur*.

In this webinar, moderated by Dr. Jill Schiefelbein, business and finance leaders will hear from Tom Kelly, Senior Director of Product Marketing and Management for the Oracle NetSuite Global Business Unit. Drawing from NetSuite’s *CFO Agenda 2026* insights and real-world customer data, Kelly explores how CFOs can turn competing priorities into competitive advantage by reimagining how finance work gets done.

As Kelly will explain, the mistake many organizations make is trying to manage this complexity with better planning or tighter sequencing. CFOs don’t need better tradeoffs—they need leverage. Automation and AI provide that leverage by accelerating analysis, surfacing insight, and orchestrating workflows, enabling finance teams to move faster without sacrificing control or governance.

In this session, you'll explore how today's most effective CFOs are using AI not as a future experiment, but as a practical execution engine.

What you'll learn:

- How CFOs can execute multiple competing priorities at once by using AI and automation as strategic leverage—not tradeoffs
- Why AI investment has become a near-term necessity, driven by competitive pressure, rapid ROI, and growing talent constraints
- How modern ERP systems and agentic AI make the Zero Day Close achievable, enabling faster, higher-quality financial insights
- How AI elevates finance talent by shifting teams from manual work to judgment, orchestration, governance, and strategic partnership

The CFO Agenda for 2026: How Finance Leaders Win the Efficiency War with AI webinar will take place live on Tuesday February 24 at 12 p.m. ET | 9 a.m. PT.

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https://www.entrepreneur.com/money-finance/the-cfo-agenda-for-2026-how-finance-leaders-win-the/502124

I Walked Away From Hustle Culture. Niching Down Changed My Business

Opinions expressed by Entrepreneur contributors are their own.

Key Takeaways

- Busy schedules can hide broken economics; profitability comes from leverage, focus and aligned customers.
- Niching down sharpens value, accelerates growth and turns demand into sustainable, enjoyable work.

Entrepreneurs love to talk about being busy. I used to be one of them.

In 2015, my production company was filming close to one hundred weddings a year. We were booked every weekend, answering emails nonstop and constantly "in demand." From the outside, it looked like a thriving business.

Inside, it was something else entirely.

I remember telling my mentor how slammed we were, almost

bragging about it. Then I casually mentioned that I was paying myself about $2,000 a month.

He paused and asked a question that completely reframed how I thought about my business: “How are you eating?”

That moment forced me to confront a hard truth many entrepreneurs avoid. Hustle had convinced me I was successful when, in reality, I had built a high-stress job with thin margins and no leverage. I wasn’t running a business. I was trapped inside one.

Busy is not the same as profitable

At the time, weddings made sense. They were abundant, emotionally rewarding and easy to say yes to. But they were also underpriced, labor-intensive and difficult to scale. Each project required the same amount of effort regardless of how much experience we gained.

The more we worked, the more exhausted we became — and the numbers didn’t improve.

That’s when I made the first major pivot. I launched a separate brand focused on business video production and began taking on corporate clients. Almost immediately, the economics changed. Corporate projects paid dramatically more, required fewer revisions and wrapped faster.

Within a few years, the company had become an even split between weddings and corporate work. For the first time, effort and reward felt aligned.

But the biggest shift was still ahead.

Discovering the power of focus

In 2020, I was introduced to the franchising space. Around the

same time, I read *Focus* by Al Ries, a book that would fundamentally change how I viewed positioning and growth.

The premise is simple but uncomfortable: the more you try to appeal to everyone, the less memorable you become.

That idea explained almost every struggle I had experienced up to that point. We were talented, reliable and experienced – but we were also generic. When prospects compared options, there was nothing specific anchoring us in their minds.

Three lessons from that book directly shaped what came next.

Lesson one: Don’t be everything to everyone

Broad positioning feels safe. You don’t want to turn potential customers away, so you keep your messaging wide and flexible.

The problem is that flexibility kills clarity.

When your positioning is vague, prospects have to work harder to understand why you’re different. Most won’t bother. Narrow positioning, on the other hand, makes your value immediately obvious to the right people.

Being clear about who you serve also clarifies who you don’t – and that’s a strength, not a weakness.

Lesson two: Be the shiny fish in a small pond

Competing in crowded markets forces businesses into constant price pressure and comparison. Dominating a niche creates authority.

When someone has a specific problem and you are known for solving that exact problem, the decision becomes easier. Trust

builds faster. Sales cycles shorten. Referrals improve because people know exactly when to recommend you.

It is far better to be the obvious choice for a small audience than an optional one for a large one.

Lesson three: Focus creates leverage

Once you commit to a single audience, everything compounds.

Marketing becomes more efficient because your message resonates. Sales conversations improve because you understand objections before they're raised. Operations tighten because you're solving similar problems repeatedly instead of reinventing the wheel every time.

Focus doesn't limit growth. It accelerates it.

What happened when we committed

When we fully committed to franchising, the impact was immediate and measurable. Revenue tripled. We built better systems. We hired with intention instead of urgency. Most importantly, the work became more enjoyable because we were no longer stretched across incompatible markets.

Instead of chasing volume, we built depth.

The irony is that niching down didn't shrink our opportunities. It clarified them. By saying no more often, we created space to say yes to the right work — at the right price — with the right clients.

Many entrepreneurs confuse momentum with progress. Calendars fill up. Notifications pile on. Activity becomes a proxy for success.

But busy does not mean profitable.

Focus does.

If your business feels exhausting despite strong demand, it may not need more leads, more services or more hustle. It may need fewer, better-aligned customers — and the courage to commit to them fully.

Sometimes the most powerful growth strategy isn't expansion. It's precision.

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https://www.entrepreneur.com/growing-a-business/why-hustle-lied-to-me-about-what-success-actually-looks-like/501784

Busy Entrepreneurs are

Turning Screen Time Into Learning Time With This Streaming Service

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Some early-stage entrepreneurs are working upwards of 60 hours to 80 hours a week, according to data from ERP platform Barawave. That doesn't leave much leisure time. If you'd like to fill your spare moments with something that's both educational and entertaining, there's now a streaming service ready to help.

Curiosity Stream gives you access to thousands of documentaries, so your downtime can still feel productive. Right now, you can secure a lifetime subscription to Curiosity Stream's Standard Plan for just $149.99 (MSRP $399.99), with no coupon code required.

Turn limited free time into learning with Curiosity Stream's lifetime plan

If you want to keep your brain sharp as an entrepreneur, Curiosity Stream helps you learn even while you relax. This unique streaming service is packed with top-quality documentaries on subjects ranging from science and technology to history and art, so you can binge-watch something good for

your brain.

Curiosity Stream was created by John Hendricks, the mastermind behind Discovery Communications, so you can rest easy knowing you'll be enjoying amazing entertainment. Its series "Stephen Hawking's Favorite Places" has even won an Emmy Award. You'll be able to watch it all in high-definition 1920×1080, too.

New content is added every week, or you can catch up on popular series like "Planet of Treasures," "The History of Home," and "Deep Time History." There are different ways to search for the right content, along with options to bookmark or download shows to watch later.

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StackSocial prices subject to change.

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https://www.entrepreneur.com/living/busy-entrepreneurs-are-turning-screen-time-into-learning/502089

How Frustrated Customers Shaped the Way I Run My Business

Opinions expressed by Entrepreneur contributors are their own.

Key Takeaways

- A first-hand experience with frustrated customers revealed how critical every interaction is in shaping a business's reputation.
- Early career challenges can influence how leaders design systems, processes and experiences for long-term success.

I still remember the sound of that phone. It was my first day

at my first real job, and the office was so quiet that the ring made me jump. I had just been hired as VP of Operations. I was 22, sitting behind a desk that looked far more official than I felt.

Ten minutes in, the landline rang. I straightened up and answered: “Hi, this is Trevor with the company. How can I help you?”

There was a pause. Then a burst of relief: “Oh my god. I finally reached someone. Where is my wedding video?”

Before I could hang up, it rang again: “Hi, this is Trevor. My wedding was a year ago. Have you guys made the video or not?”

Two calls. Two frustrated brides. Both had trusted us with one of the biggest moments of their lives — and both were wondering if we would ever deliver.

The harsh truth

Over the next three months, I learned the company wasn’t behind. It wasn’t overwhelmed. It was failing. About 50 brides never received what they paid for, and the owner eventually disappeared, still owing me three thousand dollars.

It was messy. It was painful. And it taught me something I’ve never forgotten:

You cannot play around with customer experience. Not in weddings. Not in franchising. Not in anything.

Trust is fragile. It can take years to earn and minutes to destroy.

The lesson from experience

Later in my career, I read Jeffrey Gitomer’s *Customer Satisfaction Is Worthless, Customer Loyalty Is Priceless*. It

connected immediately with what I had lived:

- If you wow someone, they tell 25 people.
- If you only do the job, they tell no one.
- If they have a negative experience, they tell ten people.

That ladder is real. I had stood at the bottom of it — and promised myself I would never build a business that left customers feeling that way.

Building the right experience

Years later, when I started my own company, I went the opposite direction. I wanted everything to feel clear, calm, predictable, and human. I wanted customers to say: "That was the easiest filming day ever."

We built the experience intentionally — not just the product, but the entire journey:

- We show up early and bring coffee.
- We check in consistently, so no one wonders what's happening.
- We send a postcard with a selfie from the shoot.
- We edit the first video in ten days to keep momentum.
- We manage scheduling so clients don't have to.
- We manage franchisees so customers don't have to.
- We solve problems before clients even know they exist.

Because experience matters as much as delivery — sometimes more.

Doubling down on loyalty

Over the last year, we created a texting line for fast communication, built a client dashboard so no one wonders where their project stands, and tightened every system to

remove stress.

Loyalty isn’t built in the final product. It happens in the middle — the everyday moments, the check-ins, the clarity, and the feeling of:

“They really have this handled.”

The bottom line

If customers aren’t talking about you, they probably received the bare minimum. And no one talks about the bare minimum. People talk when they’re wowed or burned. Everything else fades away.

So the question is simple:

Are you building a company people talk about for the right reasons?

Because the feeling you create during the experience determines whether customers move up the ladder or fall off completely.

This is leadership. This is the work. This is where loyalty comes from.

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https://www.entrepreneur.com/growing-a-business/how-frustrated-customers-shaped-the-way-i-run-my-business/500382

This Belief Has Shaped Every Major Decision I’ve Made Since Founding My Company in 2016

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Key Takeaways

- How one guiding principle has quietly shaped every major choice in my company since day one.
- The unconventional approach that’s influenced leadership, growth and impact — without following the usual rules.

Entrepreneurship is often portrayed as a race – toward scale, valuation and visibility. Founders are encouraged to move fast, raise early and celebrate milestones that look good from the outside.

Those moments can be exciting. But they're not what entrepreneurship is really about.

At its core, entrepreneurship is about ownership – taking responsibility for what you build, how you build it and the impact it creates along the way.

That belief has shaped every major decision I've made since founding my company in 2016.

Ownership in how you fund

When we started Soft2Bet, I made one defining decision early on: we would grow without external investors. We chose to build steadily, reinvesting our own revenue instead of raising capital.

It wasn't the easiest path. But it gave us something more valuable than funding: freedom.

By remaining independent, we retained full ownership over our decisions. We weren't building toward a funding cycle or optimizing for short-term optics. We were building for customers.

That freedom meant:

- Shipping products when they were ready – not when they fit a pitch deck.
- Taking long-term risks without quarterly pressure.
- Shaping the company around our values, not investor expectations.

Independence didn't just influence how we grew – it became our

business model and our culture.

This path demands discipline. Without an external funding cushion, there’s no room for distraction. Every hire, every tool and every feature has to earn its place.

Constraints sharpen focus. They force clarity. And they create real ownership – because when everything is on you, outcomes matter more than appearances.

When you’re not fundraising, you can focus on meaning. On building systems that generate growth from within. On asking not just what you’re building, but why.

Ownership in how you lead

Over the last few years, the way companies work has changed dramatically. Remote and hybrid models have expanded flexibility and access to talent – and in many cases, they work.

But I’ve also seen what happens when leaders aren’t physically present.

They become disconnected from the business – and the team feels it. Energy fades. Culture flattens into transactions. Decisions move from conversations to email threads.

You can manage people remotely. But leadership requires something more.

For me, leadership is physical. It’s about being in the room – feeling the tension of a tough decision, catching the rhythm of collaboration or sharing a late-night pizza while brainstorming ideas.

Those moments build trust. They create alignment. And they can’t be delegated or replicated in isolation.

That’s why at my company, we believe in working together in

person. Not for control – but for connection. Innovation thrives on shared energy and purpose.

Showing up is a form of ownership. When leaders are present, they take responsibility for culture, momentum and morale – not just outcomes.

Ownership in why you grow

Many people view philanthropy as something you do after success – once the business is stable and the pressure is gone.

I believe that mindset misunderstands both business and responsibility.

Philanthropy is embedded into how we build, not added later. We run charitable initiatives within the company, from education support for employees' children to community partnerships. Our team doesn't just support these efforts – they participate in them.

This belief also led my wife, Yael, and me to establish the Yael Foundation, focused on expanding access to education. Today, the Foundation operates in 45 countries, supports 132 educational institutions and reaches more than 19,000 children worldwide.

What matters most isn't scale – it's integration.

When philanthropy is part of the business from the start, it changes how decisions are made. It raises standards. It attracts people who want their work to matter. And it reframes growth not as an end goal, but as a means to create wider impact.

Business becomes the engine. Purpose becomes the direction.

Owning growth also means owning its consequences – for

employees, communities and the world your company touches.

The real measure of entrepreneurship

Looking back, the lessons that have mattered most all come back to ownership:

Courage can matter as much as capital.
Ownership begins with believing in your ability to build before asking others to believe in it.

Leadership requires presence.
You can’t outsource culture or inspire from a distance.

Purpose defines success.
Philanthropy doesn’t follow achievement; it shapes what achievement means.

Entrepreneurship isn’t a title. It’s a mindset.

It’s the willingness to take responsibility — not just for results, but for the environment you create and the impact you leave behind.

Build things that matter.
Own them fully.
And do it now.

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6 Daily Rituals to Help You Stay Human in an AI-Driven World

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Key Takeaways

- AI can supercharge your productivity — but it can also quietly drain your focus, creativity and humanity.
- To find the balance between analog and automation, you should create input-free mornings, go on brainstorming walks and implement empathy audits.
- You should also schedule a technology delegation hour, leverage technology for reflection and prioritize

champagne moment check-ins.

It’s 6:00 a.m. Your day starts with a scene that feels all too familiar. You roll over and find your AI assistant hard at work. It’s already drafted three urgent emails, summarized a newly released whitepaper on trends in your market and rearranged your calendar based on a meeting that was cancelled while you slept.

In a split second, a sense of productivity is drowned out by a wave of technology overload, leaving you feeling overwhelmed and stressed. In this moment, you’re faced with a choice. You can either let the algorithm dictate the frantic tempo of your day or put the phone face down and decide to take back control of your time and dopamine.

Unfortunately, we’ve spent countless hours training AI models in hopes of finding maximum efficiency, speed and output, but we rarely stop to think about how these same models are training us to be chronically reactive, anxious and constantly distracted. The solution isn’t to abandon technology, but to find ways to remain grounded, clear-headed and competitive in a tech-driven world through habit stacking.

Popularized by author James Clear, habit stacking is the practice of adding a new habit to an existing one. AI-centric leaders can build on this approach by stacking analog, human rituals onto every high-speed AI interaction to find the perfect balance.

1. Create input-free mornings

The way you start your day is typically an indication of how your remaining waking hours will go. From the moment they open their eyes, most people immediately start consuming synthetic content curated by AI and delivered via social media algorithms or news summaries.

Flooding your brain with this volume of external information forces you into a state of triage and reaction. This leads to unhealthy spikes in cortisol. Instead of scrolling while your coffee brews, stack 15 minutes of silence or reading a physical book or newspaper. This simple ritual helps delay the onset of decision fatigue and reserves your precious morning cognitive energy.

2. Go on a brainstorming walk

We've all stared at the blinking cursor or an empty prompt box waiting for inspiration to strike. One of the best ways that creatives get inspiration is to step away from their desk by going for a walk. The reason why this is so effective is that walking shifts your brain activity away from focused attention, allowing you to access bandwidth for novel problem-solving.

The trick is to stack the voice-to-text feature of your AI with this physical activity. This allows you to ramble your unstructured thoughts to the AI as you move. Not only do you get the benefits of getting some fresh air and exercise, but you also let the AI handle the heavy lifting of organizing your thoughts and ideas into a structured outline by the time you return to your desk.

3. Implement an empathy audit

Speed is the currency of the AI world, but it often costs us connections with other people. While there is benefit in leveraging AI to quickly draft high-stakes emails and other communications, the results are often cold and impersonal. To counter this, stack an empathy audit onto your drafting process by simply inserting a follow-up prompt such as, "How would a human feel reading this email?"

If the AI flags the tone as cold, defensive or ambiguous, it

might be the signal to stop typing, pick up the phone and call the client. AI can’t replace human emotions such as empathy, but it can help you identify where you should invest real time and energy into analog conversations to maintain trust and sincerity.

4. Schedule a technology delegation hour

We each have our own biological peak hours where the creative juices are flowing, and the tasks get checked off effortlessly. Trying to force high-value activities into this window is a recipe for burnout and poor decision-making. Instead, reserve this time to delegate your low-value, repetitive tasks, such as data entry, drafting internal memos and summarizing long meeting transcripts to your AI tools.

The key here is to free up your time so that you can step away for a physical reset. This is the perfect opportunity to stretch, grab a water or coffee or do some light meditation. These activities are a much better use of your time during an afternoon slump, so you can come back to work recharged.

5. Leverage technology for reflection

Entrepreneurs often carry around mountains of stress, worry and anxiety. This is perfectly normal. The success of the company you have built rests on your shoulders. A great practice to blend technology with self-reflection is by using AI as a partner to work through your challenge.

By asking AI to act as a non-judgmental partner, you can describe your challenge and prompt the AI to probe further with some additional questions to help you understand why you might be stuck.

The goal here is to avoid letting AI just jump in and solve your problems for you. Instead, you're using the technology to treat both the symptom and the underlying cause of your stress.

6. Prioritize champagne moment check-ins

In the world of startups and entrepreneurs, there's always a new mission or goal. This endless ambition creates an environment where business owners often forget to stop and reflect on success. To break this cycle, stack a champagne moment check-in at the end of every workday where you write down a meaningful win in a journal.

These wins can be as small as signing a new client or fixing a broken process. Pairing this with technology can ensure you always complete this valuable activity. For example, you can train your AI assistant to remind you or verify that you've completed this task before sharing any outputs, metrics or review requests.

In a world where every entrepreneur and business has access to the same tools, the technology itself is no longer an advantage. The advantage is the way you enhance AI with your human attributes. By finding a perfect balance between analog and automation, you can amplify the benefits that your business gets from AI without sacrificing the distractions and chaos from a mind-numbing barrage of interaction with technology.

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Why Commodity Scarcity Is Becoming the Biggest

Bottleneck for Clean-Tech Entrepreneurs

Opinions expressed by Entrepreneur contributors are their own.

Key Takeaways

- The energy transition is industrial, not digital, and moves at the pace of physical supply.
- Just-in-time procurement fails when critical materials are scarce, slow and geopolitically constrained.

For the past decade, clean-tech entrepreneurship has been driven by a powerful assumption: that if the technology works and the capital is available, scale will follow. Better batteries, smarter grids, electric vehicles and cleaner power generation would naturally accelerate as innovation compounded.

What many founders are now discovering — often too late — is that the real constraint isn't software, funding or even regulation. It's materials.

The energy transition is not a digital transformation. It's an industrial one. And industrial systems move at the pace of geology, permitting and physical supply chains — not pitch decks and product roadmaps.

The transition was planned for demand, not supply

Global decarbonization targets assumed that critical

commodities — copper, lithium, nickel, graphite, rare earths, uranium — would simply be available when needed. That assumption shaped everything from EV adoption forecasts to grid-expansion plans.

But commodity supply does not respond like demand. You can't spin up a copper mine or a processing facility in 18 months. Most take a decade or more from discovery to production. Years of underinvestment, coupled with rising geopolitical friction and permitting complexity, have left supply structurally behind demand.

The result is a widening gap between climate ambition and physical reality.

For entrepreneurs building hardware-dependent businesses, this gap is no longer abstract. It shows up as delayed projects, rising input costs, missed delivery timelines and margin pressure that no amount of software optimization can fix.

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Why just-in-time procurement broke down

Modern startups were raised on just-in-time thinking. Inventory was a liability. Capital efficiency was paramount. If something was needed, it could be sourced globally at the right price.

That model worked in a world of surplus capacity and frictionless trade. It fails in a world where:

- Supply chains are concentrated in a handful of jurisdictions

- Export controls and industrial policy shape access
- New capacity takes years, not quarters, to come online

Just-in-time procurement optimizes for efficiency. The energy transition requires resilience.

Founders who treat critical materials like interchangeable inputs are discovering that price volatility is not the real risk — availability is.

The real innovation gap is materials planning

When clean-tech ventures struggle to scale, the default explanation is often execution: not enough capital, slow permitting or policy uncertainty. Rarely is the question asked early enough:

Do we actually have a realistic plan to secure the materials our business depends on?

Materials strategy has historically been treated as a downstream function—something procurement handles after the product is designed. In today's environment, that mindset is backward.

Access to commodities is not an operational detail. It is a strategic variable that shapes what can be built, where it can be built and how fast it can scale.

The companies gaining an edge are the ones that recognize this early. They are engaging suppliers upstream, locking in long-term supply, designing products around realistic material constraints and treating procurement as a core part of strategy rather than a back-office function.

Demand is easy. Supply is hard.

One uncomfortable truth about the energy transition is that demand has been easier to create than supply.

Incentives, subsidies and consumer enthusiasm can drive rapid adoption. But mines, refineries and infrastructure expand slowly. Capital markets, meanwhile, have often favored asset-light business models, leaving the most material-intensive parts of the system underfunded.

This imbalance creates a risk that the transition becomes slower, more expensive and more uneven than planned – not because the technology failed, but because the physical foundations were never adequately secured.

For entrepreneurs, this means timelines built purely on market adoption curves are increasingly unreliable unless they are matched with credible supply assumptions.

How founders can turn procurement into an advantage

Entrepreneurs don’t need to become mining experts, but they do need to rethink how materials fit into their business models. A few principles matter:

- ***Start materials planning early.*** Before scaling production, founders should identify which inputs are truly critical, where supply comes from and what realistic lead times look like under different scenarios.
- ***Prioritize access over spot pricing.*** In constrained markets, long-term relationships and contractual security often matter more than short-term cost optimization.
- ***Design for flexibility.*** Products that can adapt to

alternative materials or suppliers are inherently more resilient than those locked into a single constrained input.
- ***Assume volatility is structural.*** Commodity markets tied to the energy transition are likely to remain volatile for years. Planning for stability is the risky assumption.

None of this fits neatly into a traditional startup playbook—but neither does building hardware at global scale in a resource-constrained world.

From efficiency to control

The next phase of clean-tech entrepreneurship will favor companies that optimize not just for speed and capital efficiency, but for control over critical inputs.

This doesn't mean abandoning innovation or global trade. It means acknowledging that physical systems still matter — and that access to materials is becoming a defining competitive advantage.

The energy transition will not be won by the companies with the best slide decks or the most elegant code. It will be led by those who understand that the future still runs on commodities — and plan for that reality from the start.

Key Takeaways

- The energy transition is industrial, not digital, and moves at the pace of physical supply.
- Just-in-time procurement fails when critical materials are scarce, slow and geopolitically constrained.

For the past decade, clean-tech entrepreneurship has been driven by a powerful assumption: that if the technology works

and the capital is available, scale will follow. Better batteries, smarter grids, electric vehicles and cleaner power generation would naturally accelerate as innovation compounded.

What many founders are now discovering — often too late — is that the real constraint isn't software, funding or even regulation. It's materials.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/growing-a-business/why-clean-tech-scaling-is-running-into-a-physical-supply/500806

You Can't Do It All Forever. Here's How to Know When It's Time to Bring in Outside Help.

Opinions expressed by Entrepreneur contributors are their own.

Key Takeaways

- Sign #1: Your growth is outpacing your confidence.
- Sign #2: You develop leadership needs outside your skillset.
- Sign #3: Pride is impacting your progress.

Early-stage business growth is a wonderful thing, but it can also be misleading. It can also be addictive. Given both of

those things, it’s easy to see why some founders assume they can keep running their company forever without ever bringing in new talent. But my career has taught me otherwise.

When my brother Todd and I started Roof Maxx to provide a cost-effective roof restoration alternative to homeowners whose shingles didn’t yet need replacement, we were in charge of every major executive decision. We wore multiple hats because that’s what it usually takes to be successful in the early days. Everything has to run lean in order to get things moving.

But once things do start moving – and picking up speed – it often becomes impossible for one or two people to keep tabs on every aspect of running a company. That’s when you need to bring some extra help on board.

So here are three signs that you’re reaching that critical point, backed up by my personal experience. If any of the following feels familiar to you, it might be time to start headhunting.

Sign #1: Your growth is outpacing your confidence

I certainly hope that anyone who starts a business does so with a certain degree of confidence. You should start a business because you’ve clearly identified a problem no one else is solving – or solving properly – and you believe you’ve found the best way to solve it.

That’s what we did with Roof Maxx. Nobody was offering roof restoration in the residential space when we started out. Most of the industry just focused on selling replacements that homeowners didn’t always need. The product we discovered and brought to market helped those homeowners get years of additional life from the shingles they already had, for up to

80% less money than a roof replacement would have cost them. Needless to say, we believed in the value of what we were doing unequivocally.

But as you grow, your internal voice starts to sound different. You eventually stop thinking “I know what I’m doing” and start asking yourself, “Am I still doing things the right way?”

When Todd and I started the business, our team was small and agile. We knew everybody who worked with us, so it was easy to keep a bird’s eye view of what was happening and take quick action to solve challenges. But the more customers we served and the larger our dealer network became, the longer we noticed it was taking us to make strategic decisions. There were just more moving parts to consider.

So if you notice that your ability to call the shots is taking longer, that’s your first signal. It means you’re starting to second-guess yourself, and you might need an outsider’s perspective.

Sign #2: You develop leadership needs outside your skillset

Every founder eventually learns to function in a chaotic environment, because that’s what every startup is. But to go from being a startup to being a national brand, you need to be able to organize that chaos. Sometimes, that requires skills or experience you don’t have.

In our case, we realized that Roof Maxx needed more than our passion and determination. It even needed more than the decades of roofing industry experience we had between us. With a dealer network spread across the country, it became clear that we needed a way to share and standardize information for them. That was a technology problem, and we were roofers. We

didn’t know the answer, but we knew it had to come from someone who understood data better than we did.

That person ended up being Matt Ferguson, who we eventually brought on as our CTO. He wasn’t a roofer, and he wasn’t part of the Feazel family. But he was a data engineering expert. He’s currently spearheading our development of an AI-empowered training system that supports our dealers by connecting them with learning modules tailored to their individual needs. This has been instrumental in standardizing the experience our network delivers to homeowners across North America.

Sign #3: Pride is impacting your progress

If you use the steps above, identifying your need for outside help is a lot easier. But admitting someone else might be able to do part of your job better than you can be a lot harder.

A lot of founders can see the signs that it’s time to bring in new talent, but they still wait too long to do it because they’re afraid it will make them less valuable to the enterprise they’ve created. They don’t want to feel replaced.

We’re all human, and we all get emotionally attached to the things we’ve invested serious time and effort into making from time to time. In those moments, I find it helpful to remind myself that the ability to let other people in is a strength, not a weakness. We should talk about the value of vulnerability in business as much as we talk about the value of vision. Because in the end, you need both to make it.

Welcoming fresh talent to your C-suite doesn’t weaken you and your co-founders. It protects you by keeping you and your business from burning out. You can read more about that in this article about how we’ve managed to keep Roof Maxx a family-owned business without letting those dynamics impact

our growth over the years.

Sign up for the Entrepreneur Daily newsletter to get the news and resources you need to know today to help you run your business better. Get it in your inbox.

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https://www.entrepreneur.com/growing-a-business/3-signs-its-time-to-bring-in-outside-help-for-your-business/501204

Amazon’s New Store Is So Big It Could Fit Two Target Stores Inside

Amazon is going big. The e-commerce giant is planning a roughly 230,000-square-foot store in Orland Park, Illinois, large enough to fit nearly two average-sized Target stores under its roof. The Wall Street Journal reports that half the property will sell groceries, general merchandise like diapers and paper towels, and prepared food, while the other half handles fulfillment of online and in-store orders.

The store will blend digital ordering with in-person shopping. Customers can order different sizes or colors at kiosks, then pick up items at checkout. Heavy purchases like 50-pound dog food bags can be brought directly to cars. Online grocery orders will be assembled in a back-of-house space.

Amazon has struggled in the retail space, closing dozens of branded stores and more than half its Amazon Go convenience locations. The company approved the Illinois location this week and could open as soon as next year. More big-box stores are planned across the U.S.

Read more

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https://www.entrepreneur.com/business-news/amazons-new-store-could-fit-two-targets-inside/502123

Solopreneurship Is Set to Hit a Record High in 2026 — Here Are the Reasons Why

The solo founder wave is bigger than most people think, and it's still rolling. Right now, 29.8 million solopreneurs contribute $1.7 trillion to the U.S. economy. That number is expected to grow in 2026.

Why? AI is part of the spark. LinkedIn says there's been a 69 percent jump in people adding "founder" to their profiles, and 47 percent said AI makes them more likely to start a business. For some, AI feels like a leg up. For others, it is a glaring

warning to take control before the job market changes again.

What’s really interesting is where the growth is showing up. A 2024 study found entrepreneurship growing 2.5 times faster in rural areas than in cities, meaning this is not just a big city trend. And many of these new businesses are not just hobby projects. Forty-one percent of founders running companies less than 24 months old say they plan to hire in the next quarter.

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Read more

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