Armed Robbers Steal $110,000 in Pokémon Cards From New York City Shop

It only took three minutes, but the damage was real. Three armed men stormed a Manhattan Pokémon card store, holding customers at gunpoint while smashing display cases and grabbing rare collectibles valued at over $110,000. The robbery at Poké Court on West 13th Street specifically targeted high-value items, including a first-edition Charizard card worth $15,000.

The timing was particularly brazen. About 50 people were gathered for the shop's first community event since opening in November. One robber pulled a gun while another blocked the exit, as a third used a hammer to break into cases holding cards priced between $400 and $18,000.

The incident is part of a nationwide wave of trading card thefts. A California shop had $300,000 worth of cards stolen this month, while a shop in Massachusetts lost over $100,000 in merchandise in July. There has been a renewed interest in Pokémon as both nostalgia and investment, with robbers viewing rare cards as easy targets for quick profits.

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https://www.entrepreneur.com/business-news/robbers-steal-110k-in-pokemon-cards-from-nyc-shop/502015

How Strong CEOs Can Engineer Execution That Outlasts

Motivation in 2026

Opinions expressed by Entrepreneur contributors are their own.

Key Takeaways

- Winning in 2026 requires disciplined systems, consistent execution and leaders who design scale, not chaos.
- Professional CEOs should build autonomous teams and protect their team focus.

The calendar does not lie, but leaders often do, especially to themselves. We are currently crossing the threshold of what the marketing world calls “Blue Monday.” For most entrepreneurs, late January and early February represent the “resolution hangover.” It is that specific moment where the luster of annual strategic planning begins to gather dust under the weight of daily urgencies, operational chaos and the recurring drama of a team that isn’t moving at the projected pace.

Many leaders find themselves trapped in a dynamic where they work excessively but fail to see the exponential growth they projected for. They are buried in tasks and constant urgencies, lacking the mental space to focus on strategic growth or personal well-being. If you feel overwhelmed, scattered and as your company depends too much on your physical presence for every decision, it is time to stop being a mere “creator” and start becoming a Professional CEO.

Success in 2026 will not come from a single brilliant idea, but from the ability to design a management system that scales impact while reducing drama. Here is the architecture required

to dominate the market this year.

1. The dictatorship of execution: Volume and consistency

Most entrepreneurs fail not because they lack talent, but because they lack volume. In my experience coaching thousands of leaders through the *Scaling Up* methodology, I have seen that the difference between a company that stagnates and one that scales is the discipline to do the “boring work”.

Having a vision is inspiring, but vision without execution is merely a hallucination. Your personal life plan and your professional plan must be aligned, but that fulfillment only occurs when the leader embraces routine. The ability to remain adaptable while maintaining a long-term focus is critical in a volatile economy.

The CEO of 2026 must understand that routine sets you free. It is not about working more hours; it is about ensuring the necessary volume of high-impact actions with a consistency that your competitors will abandon by the second week of February.

2. The return to office and the reconstruction of culture

The design of the modern CEO also involves making difficult decisions regarding where and how the team works. After years of experimenting with total remote work, the tide is turning toward the recovery of organizational culture within shared spaces.

A clear example is the strategic shift seen in tech giants. Microsoft’s return-to-office mandate will take effect in February 2026, signaling that even the companies that defined

the digital era are calling employees back. This isn’t an administrative whim—it’s a decision grounded in team cohesion and culture.

To scale without drama, you need an autonomous team aligned with a common vision. It is extremely difficult to transmit a company’s DNA or generate the “creative friction” necessary for innovation through a permanent Zoom screen. As a CEO in the “Scale Up” stage (81 to 250 employees), your primary role is that of a facilitator who eliminates barriers and reduces operational friction.

3. AI leadership with a human face

We cannot discuss 2026 without mentioning Artificial Intelligence, but the focus must be strategic, not just technical. The CEO does not need to be a programmer; they need to be a strategist who uses AI to scale decision-making. However, leadership remains a high-touch human activity.

Even the leader of Microsoft’s AI division, Mustafa Suleyman, maintains a strict in-person work policy. The reasoning is pragmatic: the hardest thing to change in a leader is their mindset, and that transformation happens most effectively in community.

Your company is like a person; it requires specific tools and attention to achieve its objectives. AI can optimize your processes, but only present and empathetic leadership can build the autonomous systems required to delegate effectively.

4. The 4 critical decisions for 2026

To scale a company successfully through the “Valleys of Death,” a CEO must master four fundamental areas.

- **People:** Are you the CEO your company needs?. Do you have the right people in the right seats? If you have to micromanage, you have a people problem, not a time problem.
- **Strategy:** Does your growth exceed that of your industry?. If your company competes only on price, you do not have a strategy; you have a commodity.
- **Execution:** Are your meetings productive, or are they a waste of time?. You must establish a meeting rhythm that provides clarity and foresight.
- **Cash:** Do you have enough "oxygen" to maneuver?. You must optimize your cash conversion cycle to avoid relying on external debt to operate.

Carrying January's momentum into February is what separates amateurs from professionals. The CEO mindset for 2026 starts with putting your own oxygen mask on first. You can't scale a business if you neglect your mental health, lose strategic focus or lack the capacity to lead other leaders.

What got you here won't take you where you want to go. You have to level yourself up. 2026 won't belong to people with the best resolutions — it will belong to those with strong systems and the discipline to follow them when everyone else eases off.

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Run Your Marketing Agency With One White Label Platform for $400

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Marketing agencies use an average of 12 different software tools to serve clients, research from HubSpot says. If you’re

managing client websites, CRM systems, email campaigns, and invoicing across separate platforms, you can now consolidate your entire tech stack into one white-labeled solution. Sellful is currently offering lifetime access to its ERP Agency Plan for just $399, down 73% from the original $1,500 subscription price.

White-label everything under your brand

Sellful provides a complete business management platform you can rebrand as your own. The ERP Agency Plan includes 10 client sites or sub-accounts, each running under your agency’s branding. When clients log in, they see your company name and colors throughout.

The platform handles website creation using AI to generate complete sites and landing pages in seconds. The native CRM tracks customer interactions and automates follow-up sequences. Email and SMS marketing tools let you build campaigns without connecting to external services.

The appointment scheduler handles booking with automated confirmations. Project management features provide visual boards for tracking deliverables. E-commerce functions include an online shop, inventory management and a point of sale app. The platform supports over 20 payment gateways with no fees from Sellful.

The HR suite manages recruitment, time clocks and payroll. Online course tools build learning management systems with video hosting and progress tracking.

The built-in invoicing system automates agency billing and there is a content cloning tool that streamlines client onboarding by duplicating setups across new accounts in minutes. Each sub-account includes unlimited contacts, pages,

users and products with 100GB of storage and 50,000 free email sends monthly.

Marketing agencies managing multiple tools waste time switching contexts and troubleshooting integration failures. Lifetime access to Sellful’s white label platform presents clients with a single system handling their digital presence under your brand.

Get a lifetime subscription to Sellful – White Label Website Builder & Software: ERP Agency Plan for just $399, a 73% discount off the regular $1,500 subscription price.

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Streamline Your Business Operations With This $25 Office Suite Alternative

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Small-business owners often cite managing expenses as one of their biggest operational challenges. Software subscriptions alone can drain thousands of dollars annually from tight budgets, making affordable alternatives increasingly attractive for entrepreneurs and growing businesses.

MobiOffice Premium offers a cost-effective solution for business owners who are looking to reduce overhead without sacrificing functionality. This all-in-one office suite delivers the essential productivity tools your business needs: document creation, spreadsheet management, presentation design, and email organization, and a lifetime subscription is now only $24.97 (reg. $ 119.97).

Professional tools designed for business efficiency

MobiOffice consolidates four critical applications into one streamlined platform. MobiDocs handles everything from client proposals to internal reports with professional templates and formatting tools. MobiSheets provides the data analysis capabilities essential for tracking financials, inventory, and business metrics. MobiSlides enables you to create compelling pitch decks and stakeholder presentations, while MobiMail (Windows only) keeps your communications organized with integrated calendar management.

These productivity tools also come with a Free PDF Reader, which can serve as a lifesaver when processing, citing, and reviewing PDF documents for your business needs.

The lifetime subscription model eliminates recurring monthly fees that eat into profit margins. Instead of paying $10 to $15 monthly for similar services, you're investing once and securing permanent access to all premium features, including 50 GB of cloud storage for seamless file access across devices.

Whether you're a solo consultant, freelancer, or managing a small team, MobiOffice adapts to your workflow. The platform works across Windows, Mac, iOS, and Android, allowing you to review contracts on your phone, update spreadsheets on your tablet, and finalize presentations on your desktop. With support for one desktop and two mobile devices, you maintain productivity regardless of location.

Get a MobiOffice Premium Lifetime Subscription for $24.97 (reg. $119.97) with code SAVE5.

Sale ends January 25 at 11:59 p.m. PT.

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AI Has Taken Over Every Industry — Here's How Your Business Can Actually Use It

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Key Takeaways

- The architects of AI have been recognized as Time Magazine's "Person of the Year" for 2025, symbolizing AI's sweeping influence on global industries.
- AI-driven technologies, including generative AI tools and machine learning platforms, are redefining business operations by enhancing productivity, personalization and decision-making.
- While AI presents opportunities for growth and operational efficiency, businesses are urged to adopt AI responsibly, ensuring security, transparency and ethical standards.

The architects of artificial intelligence (AI) have been named *Time Magazine's* 2025 "Person of the Year," reflecting the far-reaching impact AI has on every industry, company and nation. AI is reshaping business strategies to build a smarter future, significantly improving efficiencies, value and the customer experience. Those who fail to incorporate AI into their business models will ultimately lose relevance and competitiveness.

Generally speaking, AI performs human tasks, enabling machines to learn from data and experience to help businesses make better decisions, offer personalized experiences, streamline

operations, enhance productivity, create new capabilities and generate more growth.

Generative AI

Generative AI, such as ChatGPT, Google Gemini, Microsoft Copilot, Meta AI and others, learn from billions of data points and generate content based on human input. It helps businesses create marketing strategies, full-scale marketing campaigns and content for blogs, websites, social media posts and email campaigns. Tools such as Perplexity AI are used for research, and other AI tools are used for coding and software development, product design and prototyping.

These AI tools save you time and money by helping you develop a marketing plan, research the competition, launch new products, create collateral material and boost customer communication and engagement. What once took hours of mining consumer data, conducting research, writing and creating visuals can be done in a fraction of the time with AI and human input.

Generative AI is also being used by businesses to automate customer service with chatbots and virtual assistants that handle complex queries and provide personalized support, offering tremendous operational efficiency and helping ensure requests, complaints and other service-related issues don’t fall through the cracks. At the same time, the service team has more time to focus on growing the business through upselling and other strategies.

Machine learning and prescriptive AI

Machine learning (ML) is a subset of AI that uses algorithms and statistical models to analyze raw data, identify patterns and generate insights. It processes searchable data, like

names, purchase histories and website behavior, and analyzes unstructured content, including images, videos and social media posts. Prescriptive AI builds on those insights so you can take action.

On the retail side, for example, businesses gain insight into customer preferences and motivations from their behavior, enabling them to personalize marketing messages that will resonate with individual needs and create data-driven journeys and experiences that make customers feel seen and valued. Retailers know who will open an email, click through and make a purchase based on known behaviors and shopping trends.

In real estate, ML and prescriptive AI are helping developers leverage insights from datasets that include historical sales, demographic shifts, economic indicators and foot traffic to identify the next high-growth neighborhood or determine where properties are undervalued for purchase. Property owners use AI to assess potential development sites, with zoning laws, environmental data and local damage data at their fingertips to choose strategic locations and avoid delays or fines. Additionally, ML powers automated valuation models (AVMs), which provide instant data-backed property valuations by assessing various property attributes and market conditions. This allows for faster, more consistent appraisals and minimizes the impact of human bias.

Manufacturers use ML data and prescriptive AI to predict maintenance schedules, forecast equipment failures and optimize supply chains and production processes. Manufacturing operations can use real-time data to make quick, informed decisions to minimize errors, reduce waste and enhance productivity.

The insurance industry uses historical data to help determine underwriting risk patterns, whether an account is likely to have a loss, and if it financially makes sense to insure it. For example, one company used machine learning to develop a

crash-prediction model for the trucking industry.

By correlating insured data, claims and millions of records from government and other proprietary data sets, the company can predict whether a trucking account will have a crash. Using machine learning, it can accurately predict the highest-risk accounts. It can ultimately avoid writing business with customers who have high crash scores or can provide credits or discounts to trucking clients with low scores, ultimately resulting in better loss ratios.

Agentic AI and autonomous decision-making

Agentic AI analyzes unstructured data to enable real-time decision-making without ongoing human prompting, understands complex workflows to improve execution and results and interacts with other systems to adapt to evolving conditions.

For example, agentic AI can automate payroll logistics, adjust supply chains based on real-time data to improve efficiency and margins, help healthcare organizations interpret physician notes and medical images to adjust treatments in real time and reduce misdiagnosis rates across healthcare, auto care and other service organizations. Law firms are using agentic AI to autonomously review unstructured legal documents and contracts to support preparation and risk identification.

AI is helping businesses build a better future, but it’s important to use it responsibly and with intention. Prioritize security, transparency, fairness and accountability.

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If Business Travel Costs Are Eating into Your Bottom Line Then This AI Tool Could Save You Thousands

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Global business travel spending reached $1.3 trillion in 2023, with small-business owners and entrepreneurs accounting for a significant portion of that figure, the Global Business Travel Association says. For business owners who travel frequently for client meetings, conferences, or site visits, those costs add up fast. When you're already juggling tight margins and overhead expenses, finding ways to reduce travel costs without sacrificing quality can make a real difference to your bottom line.

OneAir Elite Lifetime Subscription is an AI-powered travel platform designed to help business travelers consistently secure the lowest prices on flights and hotels. Grab a OneAir Elite Lifetime Subscription for $99.99 (reg. $790).

How does OneAir work?

The platform's intelligent engine continuously scans and tracks millions of hotel and flight prices, sending instant alerts when prices drop on routes from your home airport to key business destinations.

Here’s where it gets particularly valuable for entrepreneurs: OneAir’s Smart Hotel Price Monitoring automatically tracks your existing hotel reservations and rebooks them at lower rates when prices drop, refunding you the difference with zero effort required. If you’ve ever booked accommodations for a conference months in advance only to see the price drop closer to the event date, you know how frustrating that can be. This feature ensures you’re always paying the lowest available rate, even after booking.

The travel-deal platform also includes Smart Flight Fare Monitoring for ticketed airfare. When significant price drops are detected, OneAir calculates your potential savings after change or cancellation fees and guides you through reticketing at the lower price. For business owners who book the same routes regularly for client visits or supplier meetings, this can translate to substantial savings over time.

OneAir provides access to private, pre-negotiated rates on more than 2 million hotels and unpublished flight deals from 700+ airlines that aren’t available on public booking platforms. Members typically save 20% to 60% compared to major sites like Expedia and Hotels.com, the company says. The platform also offers up to 10% cash rewards on most bookings that can be redeemed for future travel, effectively creating a revolving discount on your business travel budget.

The lifetime subscription means you pay once and access these benefits indefinitely.

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7 AI Tools That Run a One-Person Business in 2026 — No Staff. No Code.

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Most entrepreneurs use AI like a spellchecker and then wonder why nothing changes. In 2026, leverage beats hustle. I'll walk

you through seven practical ways to research faster, automate the boring stuff, see around corners and scale without adding headcount—or learning to code.

What you'll create today;

- **Trend radar:** Live web research that surfaces what's taking off now — plus smart comment replies to ride the wave instead of chasing it.
- **Competitor X-ray:** Spot gaps in your niche, reverse-engineer winning offers and pull insights without buying any pricey tools.
- **Autopilot architect:** Build simple workflows that connect your calendar, content and email and run in the background while you work or sleep.
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- **Solo Stack 2025:** A lightweight combination of voice, scripting and strategy that lets one founder do what used to take a team.

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Why Your Website Traffic Isn’t Turning Into Revenue — and How to Change That

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Key Takeaways

- Websites are revenue generators, not design projects. “Looks good” doesn’t equal “sells well.”
- There are a number of reasons websites fail to convert (even with good traffic), including slow load times, confusing layouts, no clear value messaging and poor mobile experience.
- Successful websites are engineered as conversion systems grounded in behavioral science, UX psychology and performance analytics.

Your website gets plenty of visitors. Your analytics show consistent traffic. Yet somehow, the phone isn’t ringing, and your inbox remains painfully quiet. Sound familiar?

The uncomfortable truth in today’s digital climate: Traffic is abundant, but conversions are not. The game has changed. Websites can no longer function as static digital billboards displaying your brand colors and mission statement. They need to serve as full-time sales systems working around the clock to attract, educate and convert.

Without question, modern web design is behavioral science, analytics and user psychology blended into a conversion machine. The entrepreneurs who understand this are the ones

crushing it.

Related: Struggling to Gain Customers Online? Your Website May Be to Blame. Here's How to Fix It.

Why most websites don't convert (even with good traffic)

Most business websites fail to convert for predictable reasons:

- **Over-designed but under-performing:** Beautiful doesn't mean effective
- **Slow load times:** Every second of delay costs you customers
- **Confusing layouts:** Visitors shouldn't need a map to navigate your site
- **No clear value messaging:** If they don't instantly understand what you offer, they're gone
- **Poor mobile experience:** Over 60% of traffic is mobile; your site better work flawlessly on small screens

The harsh reality? "Looks good" doesn't equal "sells well." A gorgeous website that doesn't convert is just an expensive digital paperweight.

The science behind high-converting web design

Why do websites look good, but fail to convert traffic? Science.

Cognitive load theory:

Research shows users form opinions about your site in milliseconds. Simpler layouts reduce mental effort, leading to faster decisions and higher conversions.

Visual hierarchy and eye-tracking:

Users don’t read websites; they scan them. Eye-tracking studies reveal predictable patterns that determine what gets attention. Strategic placement of calls-to-action and key messages in these “hot zones” dramatically impacts results.

Behavioral psychology at work:

High-converting websites leverage psychological principles your visitors can’t resist:

- **Social proof:** Testimonials and case studies reduce perceived risk
- **Authority:** Certifications and credentials build instant credibility
- **Scarcity:** Limited-time offers create urgency
- **Clarity:** Confusion kills conversions; clarity converts

These aren’t manipulation tactics — they are reassurance mechanisms that help visitors feel confident about their decision to engage with your business.

The 50-millisecond rule:

Your website has 50 milliseconds to make a first impression. Combined with the reality that page speed directly impacts bounce rates, you can’t afford a sluggish site.

Related: 19 Experts Explain Why Your Website Isn’t Bringing in Customers

Designing a website that sells: The core building blocks

Clear value proposition above the fold:

Visitors must “get it” instantly. Your headline should answer: “What do you do, and why should I care?” Everything else is secondary.

Conversion-focused navigation:

Reducing options increases conversions. Every menu item is a decision point; too many choices create paralysis.

Trust and credibility signals:

Display reviews, security badges, client logos, industry certifications and guarantees prominently. These elements answer the unspoken question: “Can I trust this company?”

CTA strategy that reduces anxiety:

Generic CTAs like “Submit” or “Click Here” perform poorly. Benefit-driven alternatives like “Get Your Free Estimate” or “Start Saving Today” emphasize value over commitment. Your CTA copy matters more than you think.

Mobile-first conversion optimization:

Mobile users have different needs and behaviors from desktop visitors. Thumb-friendly buttons, simplified forms and faster load times aren’t optional—they’re essential for capturing mobile conversions.

Persuasive content structure:

Follow the proven formula: Problem → Solution → Proof → CTA. Break content into scannable sections with clear subheadings. Use visuals liberally. Remember: Walls of text convert nobody.

The metrics that matter: How to know your website is actually converting

You cannot improve what you don’t measure. Successful entrepreneurs track specific conversion metrics:

- **Bounce rate:** Are visitors immediately leaving?
- **Conversion rate:** What percentage complete desired actions?
- **CTA click-throughs:** Are your calls-to-action compelling?
- **Scroll depth:** Do visitors see your key selling points?
- **Lead quality:** Are you attracting the right customers?
- **ROI of redesign:** Is your investment paying off?

For a comprehensive framework on measuring website performance, explore this detailed guide on how to measure the success of your website redesign.

UX testing also plays a big role in turning clicks into customers. Data-driven decisions beat gut feelings every time. A/B testing different designs, headlines and CTAs reveals what actually works. Heatmaps show where users click and scroll. Session recordings expose friction points you’d never otherwise discover. Customer surveys provide qualitative insights that complement your quantitative data.

Real-world results of high-converting design in action

A service business increased qualified leads by 217% by repositioning their CTA and clarifying their value

proposition. An ecommerce brand boosted sales by 34% through optimized product pages. A SaaS company reduced churn by 45% by redesigning its onboarding flow.

The common thread? Each treated their website as a revenue generator, not a design project.

AI + web design: The new frontier

Artificial intelligence is reshaping how digital experiences are designed, optimized and converted. Beyond personalization and predictive analytics, the next shift is agentic AI — systems that don't just recommend or test designs, but actively make decisions and take action on behalf of users.

As agentic AI shopping tools begin researching products, comparing options and completing purchases autonomously, websites must evolve from static conversion funnels into agent-ready experiences. The future of high-converting web design is intelligent, adaptive and built for a world where AI agents — not just humans — are navigating, evaluating and transacting online.

Related: Most Websites Never Reach Their Full Sales Potential. Here's Why.

How to approach your next redesign

Stop treating redesigns as design projects. They're revenue projects. Start with data: Analyze current performance, survey customers, and identify drop-off points. Set measurable goals tied to business outcomes. Prioritize usability over aesthetics — beautiful designs that confuse visitors are failures. Remember, measuring impact isn't optional. Track your key metrics religiously to ensure your investment generates returns.

The future belongs to entrepreneurs who view web design as a

growth engine, not a cost center. Your website should attract qualified traffic, educate prospects, build trust, overcome objections and convert visitors into customers – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

In the digital economy, your website can be your most powerful salesperson. Make sure it's actually selling.

Key Takeaways

- Websites are revenue generators, not design projects. "Looks good" doesn't equal "sells well."
- There are a number of reasons websites fail to convert (even with good traffic), including slow load times, confusing layouts, no clear value messaging and poor mobile experience.
- Successful websites are engineered as conversion systems grounded in behavioral science, UX psychology and performance analytics.

Your website gets plenty of visitors. Your analytics show consistent traffic. Yet somehow, the phone isn't ringing, and your inbox remains painfully quiet. Sound familiar?

The uncomfortable truth in today's digital climate: Traffic is abundant, but conversions are not. The game has changed. Websites can no longer function as static digital billboards displaying your brand colors and mission statement. They need to serve as full-time sales systems working around the clock to attract, educate and convert.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/growing-a-business/why-your-website-gets-clicks-but-no-customers/501032

4 Signs Your Product Is Overcomplicated — and How to Build What Customers Actually Need

Opinions expressed by Entrepreneur contributors are their own.

Key Takeaways

- Don’t mistake complexity for sophistication. The best solution isn’t always the most feature-rich one — it’s the one that democratizes access to the most valuable features, so more people can use them.
- When you’re too close to your product, you become a perfectionist and end up designing needlessly complicated systems that ignore the customer’s real needs.
- A comprehensive solution hides its complexity behind intuitive UX, expands the user base from specialists to everyday operators and makes difficult problems feel easy to solve.

One of the most important lessons I’ve learned in my career is not to mistake complexity for sophistication.

I’ve always been a tinkerer. Before I ran PhoneBurner, my current company that streamlines dialing for outbound teams, I used to stay up until the small hours of the morning in my home workshop just trying to build things from scratch. Back then, I wasn’t even sure I wanted tech to be my career. I just knew I was interested in creating things that solved problems.

Some of the things I created ended up being pretty useful. One was an app that sat on top of CRM systems to help users visualize data more easily. Today, user-friendly reporting features are a de facto requirement for this kind of software, but that wasn't always the case. It used to be that you needed deep technical knowledge to parse the info CRMs collected.

Of course, that also meant fewer people were able to use them. A decade ago, when CRMs were less user-friendly, the global market was worth just over $26 billion. By contrast, most current estimates put it at over $100 billion.

My point is: The best solution isn't always the most feature-rich one. It's the one that democratizes access to the most valuable features, so more people can use them.

Related: Your Product's Design Could Be Costing You Customers. Here's What You're Doing Wrong (and How to Fix It).

Why founders overengineer

As a founder, you probably know your core product better than most, and you want it to impress others. But either of these factors can make you lose perspective.

When you're too close to your product, you become a perfectionist. Even rare or outlying problems feel critically important. When you focus too much on earning acclaim from industry peers or investors, you end up designing needlessly complicated systems. In both cases, the same thing happens: You end up focused on edge cases instead of the customer's essential needs.

Often, founders who make these mistakes assume that more capability automatically translates into more value. But that isn't always true. In fact, focusing too much on edge cases is more likely to compromise the core of your product.

There's a story that in the 1970s and 80s, the former Soviet

Union commissioned the nation's top electrical engineers to design electric guitars rather than import them from the West. The guys in charge of the project were brilliant, but they weren't musicians. So they weren't thinking about features that improved playability; they were thinking about how impressive it would be to stuff each guitar full of experimental electronics.

The results were technically impressive and looked like nothing else being made at the time. They also played terribly. In setting out to impress party bosses and push the limits of engineering, the designers had ignored what makes a guitar valuable in the first place.

Related: 6 Reasons Your Perfect Product Isn't Selling — and How to Avoid the Marketing Mistakes Behind Them

How to spot the early warning signs that your product is overengineered

So now that you know why people tend to overengineer, how can you stop yourself from doing it? In my career, I've come across a few clear signals that you might be overcomplicating your solution:

1. You keep adding just one more feature to close a hypothetical gap, but it never feels finished. The more you add, the more you notice that appears to be missing. In reality, you may just be moving the goalposts.

2. You need to educate your own team extensively before they feel enabled to sell what you've designed. If it's not intuitive to them, it probably won't be intuitive to customers.

3. You're designing for the exceptions, not the 80% of users or use cases that are more common.

4. Your MVP feels more like a platform than a product. A versatile solution is valuable, but an unfocused one isn’t.

What a comprehensive solution should look like

It might seem like this whole article is just an argument for simplicity, but that’s not actually what I’m saying. You can still develop a powerful and broadly useful product that manages to avoid being overengineered.

This is not necessarily about removing functionality. You just need to focus on making your product accessible and user-friendly. Here’s what a comprehensive solution can and should do when it’s designed carefully:

- A comprehensive solution hides its complexity behind intuitive UX. For example, PhoneBurner, the power dialing platform I run for outbound calling teams, uses programmable disposition buttons to help users streamline complex follow-up tasks after calls and create more efficient workflows.
- A comprehensive solution also expands the user base from technical specialists to everyday operators. My app for CRM systems helped make it so that you no longer needed to be a statistician to interpret the data from your software. We’ve since carried the same philosophy into PhoneBurner with intuitive real-time reporting that anyone on a sales team can understand at a glance.
- Above all, a comprehensive solution takes a difficult problem and makes the solution feel easy. For example, calling more prospects shouldn’t require you to master a brand new system, which is why it was important to lower the barrier to entry for our dialing platform and make

sure new users could be up and running with a free trial in minutes.

So yes: Sophisticated things can be complicated, but complicated things aren't necessarily sophisticated. Maybe that's also why some of the most concise advice I've been given in my life has also felt the most profound – see the link at the end of this article for more on that subject.

Ultimately, there's little value in window dressing for its own sake. But the solutions that appear simplest from the outside are often surprisingly elegant when you take the time to understand where they come from. That elegance, and the intent behind it, are usually what make the difference between a comprehensive solution and a complicated one.

Related: The 1 Question I Ask Every Successful Person I Meet – and How It's Changed My Life

Key Takeaways

- Don't mistake complexity for sophistication. The best solution isn't always the most feature-rich one – it's the one that democratizes access to the most valuable features, so more people can use them.
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This Coach Transformed a Losing College Football Program by Eating the Same $11 Lunch Every Day

Curt Cignetti took over Indiana’s football program with more losses than any other in college football. Now, after winning the Rose Bowl and Peach Bowl, the Hoosiers are one win away from a national title when they face off in Monday’s championship game. His playbook? Eating the identical $10.90 Chipotle burrito bowl every single day for over two years.

The 64-year-old coach told orders rice, beans, chicken and guac so he doesn’t waste mental energy on lunch decisions, according to *The Wall Street Journal*. His assistant, Jake McDonald, picks it up daily, racking up 64,000 rewards points (worth $6,400) in the process, though they expired before he could cash them in.

Cignetti’s habit obsession extends beyond burritos. At his previous coaching job 15 years ago, game day meals never varied: chicken and zucchini, with steak reserved only for deep playoff runs. For Cignetti, eliminating trivial choices means more mental bandwidth for winning games.

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