I’ve Earned Nearly 19,000 Glowing Reviews for My Business. Here Are the Strategies That Made It Possible.

Opinions expressed by Entrepreneur contributors are their own.

Key Takeaways

- Ask for reviews immediately. When you do so, the customer’s experience is still fresh in their minds, and giving a review feels like the natural way for them to close the loop.
- It’s not always necessary to offer incentives for customers to review your business. If you time your requests well, they will feel like they’re simply fulfilling the last step in the sales process.
- Don’t count on other platforms to display your reviews for you. Showcase your reviews on your website and on social media — this gives you more visibility and quality control.

Word of mouth is still the best marketing channel there is. In fact, in the United States, it’s the single largest source of brand discovery on the internet. That means reviews and testimonials are worth their weight in gold. But many businesses don’t leverage social proof effectively enough to get the full benefits it can provide.

Reviews don’t appear out of thin air, and simply having them isn’t enough. You need to put work into getting them, filtering them and displaying them in the right places so they deliver maximum impact for your business.

Below, I’m going to share some of the strategies I’ve used to get nearly 19,000 glowing reviews for my home services company, Roof Maxx — and how you can do the same.

Related: 4 Things to Know About Online Reviews (and Why You Can’t Afford to Ignore Them)

The best way to conquer your fear of asking for reviews is to do it faster

A lot of business owners aren’t proactive about asking customers for reviews, and here’s why. They worry that making the request will be annoying and that annoyed customers won’t leave positive reviews. It’s a completely understandable concern. It just also happens to be untrue.

Yes, calling or emailing out of the blue to ask for a review can be a pain, especially when you’re contacting a customer after a sale that took place weeks or months ago. But that’s not an argument for not asking. When you don’t ask for reviews, you tend to get more negative ones than positive ones, no matter how good your products or services are — a phenomenon known as negativity bias.

What you should actually do is ask for a review immediately, the moment you finish each job.

At Roof Maxx, we made this process easy by automating it for every dealer in our network. Every time a warranty is issued, a request for a review is issued alongside it. That way, the customer’s experience is still fresh in their minds, and

providing a review feels like the natural way for them to close the loop.

Bottom line: Requesting a review should never feel like a brand-new ask on your part. It should feel like the final step in the process that your customer already agreed to as part of the original sale you made.

Related: This Review Campaign Took My Company to Almost 5 Stars on Google — Here's How You Can Replicate It.

How to get positive reviews that your prospective customers actually trust

You might be toying with the idea of offering incentives for customers to review your business. But I'm here to tell you that's not always necessary. In fact, it can actually be counterproductive.

First of all, if you time your request correctly per my advice in the previous section, most of your customers won't actually need an incentive. Remember: They're not giving you something for nothing. They're fulfilling the last step in the sales process. It's only when you wait until they've already moved on before asking that they'll start to feel like you owe them something in return.

Roof Maxx is a perfect example: To date, we have 18,917 customer reviews across Google, Hubspot and Facebook, with a 4.9-star average — and they cost us nothing. We didn't have to offer an incentive for a single one of them.

That's important for another reason, too: A review given freely is always more honest and trustworthy than one you had to coax out of someone with a reward or a discount. We can point to those thousands of reviews as a genuine signal of the

trust people put in our brand, instead of it being a vanity metric.

When we call ourselves America's number one rated roofer, we're bringing compelling evidence to back up that claim. No other roofing business in the U.S. has this many slam-dunk reviews freely offered by their customers.

Related: 4 Ways to Leverage Social Proof to Grow Your Business Online

How you display your reviews directly impacts customer perceptions

Whatever you do, don't count on other platforms to display your reviews for you. Waiting for customers to stumble across them on Google or Facebook is passive. It only offers a fraction of the visibility that you could achieve with a little more legwork, and it offers you no quality control whatsoever.

Every channel you use to reach your audience is a potential place to display a good review or testimonial. At Roof Maxx, we put our best reviews in social media graphics. We invite homeowners with glowing feedback to send us video testimonials, then upload them to YouTube. We also reach out to those customers for referrals so we can activate their brand advocacy and use it to directly drive new business.

You also want to pay close attention to how you're displaying reviews on your website. Learning how to showcase the feedback that will be most relevant to your audience is much more valuable than pulling it all in without any kind of filter. You want people to find information that answers their questions and helps them make a decision about whether you're right for their needs.

We solved that by adding a badge to our website that links dynamically to a review aggregator app we built in-house. Then those reviews get displayed prominently and beautifully on our site, where new prospective customers can find them.

I've written extensively about how important it is for growing businesses to embrace new technology and how it should supplement your team instead of posing a threat to them.

Key Takeaways

- Ask for reviews immediately. When you do so, the customer's experience is still fresh in their minds, and giving a review feels like the natural way for them to close the loop.
- It's not always necessary to offer incentives for customers to review your business. If you time your requests well, they will feel like they're simply fulfilling the last step in the sales process.
- Don't count on other platforms to display your reviews for you. Showcase your reviews on your website and on social media – this gives you more visibility and quality control.

Word of mouth is still the best marketing channel there is. In fact, in the United States, it's the single largest source of brand discovery on the internet. That means reviews and testimonials are worth their weight in gold. But many businesses don't leverage social proof effectively enough to get the full benefits it can provide.

Reviews don't appear out of thin air, and simply having them isn't enough. You need to put work into getting them, filtering them and displaying them in the right places so they deliver maximum impact for your business.

The rest of this article is locked.

Join Entrepreneur+ today for access.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/growing-a-business/how-to-leverage-reviews-and-social-proof-for-business-growth/498830

Here’s Everything Warren Buffett Announced in His Thanksgiving Letter

Key Takeaways

- Warren Buffett, Berkshire Hathaway’s 95-year-old CEO, wrote his first Thanksgiving letter to shareholders on Monday.
- He began the letter announcing that he donated $1.3 billion in Berkshire shares to four family foundations.
- Buffett plans to make the letter an annual tradition as he hands the CEO role to Berkshire executive Greg Abel on January 1.

Warren Buffett, 95, has released a Thanksgiving letter to shareholders, one he plans to make an annual tradition as he steps away from running Berkshire Hathaway and hands the CEO title to his successor, longtime Berkshire executive Greg Abel, on January 1, 2026.

Buffett, who will stay on as chair of Berkshire’s board, informed shareholders that he will no longer be writing the company’s annual report or talking for hours at the annual meeting, but he will “keep in touch” with them through the Thanksgiving letter.

Warren Buffett. Photo by Daniel Zuchnik/WireImage
He began the letter announcing that he donated $1.3 billion in Berkshire shares to four family foundations: The Susan Thompson Buffett Foundation, The Sherwood Foundation, The Howard G. Buffett Foundation and NoVo Foundation.

Each organization is run by one of Buffett's three children (Susan, 72, Howard, 70, and Peter, 67) and has its own philanthropic focus, ranging from reproductive health to hunger.

Related: Warren Buffett Donates a Record $6 Billion to Various Foundations. Here's How the Money Is Being Split Up.

"All three children now have the maturity, brains, energy and instincts to disburse a large fortune," Buffett wrote, adding that he needed "to step up" his pace of lifetime gifts to their foundations "to improve the probability that they will dispose of what will essentially be my entire estate."

However, Buffett reassured shareholders that accelerating his donations to his children's philanthropic organizations "in no way" affects how he sees Berkshire's future. He praised Abel as "a very fast learner."

"I can't think of a CEO, a management consultant, an academic, a member of government – you name it – that I would select over Greg to handle your savings and mine," Buffett wrote.

In the letter, Buffett also reflected on his life and career, sharing vivid memories of growing up in Omaha, Nebraska. He recounted a time in 1938 when, as an 8-year-old, he had a "bad bellyache" that ended up requiring an emergency appendectomy. He nearly died, but instead spent three weeks recovering in the hospital.

Related: Warren Buffett Made 95% of His Wealth After Age 65. Here's How Much His Net Worth Has Grown Past Retirement Age.

Buffett also mentioned well-known figures in Berkshire's history, like former vice chairman Charlie Munger, former publisher Stanford Lipsey and former Berkshire board director Walter Scott Jr., who were all fellow Omahans, friends and business partners.

For example, he wrote that Lipsey, who sold the *Omaha Sun* newspaper to Berkshire in 1968, played an important role in Berkshire's early success in the newspaper business. In the early 1980s, Lipsey transformed a Berkshire-affiliated paper from a struggling business to one that allowed the company to earn over 100% annually on its $33 million investment.

Looking forward, Buffett offered a piece of advice: "Decide what you would like your obituary to say and live the life to deserve it."

"Get the right heroes and copy them," Buffett wrote.

Key Takeaways

- Warren Buffett, Berkshire Hathaway's 95-year-old CEO, wrote his first Thanksgiving letter to shareholders on Monday.
- He began the letter announcing that he donated $1.3 billion in Berkshire shares to four family foundations.
- Buffett plans to make the letter an annual tradition as he hands the CEO role to Berkshire executive Greg Abel on January 1.

Warren Buffett, 95, has released a Thanksgiving letter to shareholders, one he plans to make an annual tradition as he steps away from running Berkshire Hathaway and hands the CEO title to his successor, longtime Berkshire executive Greg Abel, on January 1, 2026.

Buffett, who will stay on as chair of Berkshire's board, informed shareholders that he will no longer be writing the company's annual report or talking for hours at the annual meeting, but he will "keep in touch" with them through the Thanksgiving letter.

The rest of this article is locked.

Join Entrepreneur+ today for access.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/business-news/what-warren-buffett-wrote-in-his-thanksgiving-letter/499418

How You Can Save Big During Amazon Business' Biggest Sale of the Year

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

It's that time of year again: Black Friday and Cyber Monday are right around the corner. Collectively, they represent one of the biggest shopping events of the year. It's the perfect opportunity for business owners to stock up on everyday essentials as well as larger items like electronics and office furniture.

And Amazon Business is ready with Black Friday Week kicking

off on November 20th. Shoppers can expect incredible savings on thousands of items. Here's how you can maximize your savings during Amazon's Black Friday and Cyber Monday sale event.

Deals made easy: Sign up for free to shop

Don't have an Amazon Business account yet? Don't worry. Getting in on the savings has never been easier. All you'll need is to create a free account, if you don't have one already. To create a free account:

- Go to business.amazon.com or download and open the Amazon Business app on your device.
- Click the "Create free account" button and fill in details such as your name, work email, and create a new password.
- Click "Create your Amazon account" and then verify your new account via email or phone by entering the one-time password sent to you.
- Voilà! Once Amazon verifies your business, you're ready to start shopping and saving.

If you already have an Amazon Business account, go to Amazon.com and sign in. It's that easy.

You'll find thousands of products at can't-miss prices

It's almost like Amazon Business created Black Friday Week just for business owners and managers. (Not really, but you get the idea.) Everything large and small will be on sale while supplies last.

What types of products will be on sale? Here are the kinds of deals to expect:

- Office supplies and equipment
- Technology and electronics
- Cleaning and janitorial supplies
- Industrial and safety products
- Break room essentials
- Professional-grade tools
- Furniture and facility needs

Need to get the word out about your business? You'll find customizable promotional products on sale, such as business cards, pens, shirts, drinkware—you name it.

If you're looking to improve your team's productivity, then tech is where it's at. On Amazon, you'll find deals on laptops, desktops, networking equipment, webcams, and docks. And that's just the start. Pick up the office and operational essentials you need, such as printers, scanners, office supplies, hardware, and so much more.

Start planning now

You know what your business needs so why wait until Black Friday to start getting organized? You can create a Business List, or several, to keep tabs on the items you're looking to purchase during Black Friday Week. Whether online or via the Amazon Business app, navigate to "Lists," select "Create a List," and then name it.

When you find a product on Amazon that you want, simply click "Add to list." After that, choose the list you want to add it to. It's that simple.

You can also create a Reorder List for items you purchase regularly, but not so frequently that they are on a subscription. When you purchase from a Reorder List, the item remains visible on the list so you can always find it again later.

Black Friday and Cyber Monday are coming up fast. You won't want to miss the deals and savings, so visit business.amazon.com and sign up for a free account today.

It's that time of year again: Black Friday and Cyber Monday are right around the corner. Collectively, they represent one of the biggest shopping events of the year. It's the perfect opportunity for business owners to stock up on everyday essentials as well as larger items like electronics and office furniture.

And Amazon Business is ready with Black Friday Week kicking off on November 20th. Shoppers can expect incredible savings on thousands of items. Here's how you can maximize your savings during Amazon's Black Friday and Cyber Monday sale event.

Deals made easy: Sign up for free to shop

Don't have an Amazon Business account yet? Don't worry. Getting in on the savings has never been easier. All you'll need is to create a free account, if you don't have one already. To create a free account:

The rest of this article is locked.

Join Entrepreneur+ today for access.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/growing-a-business/how-you-can-save-big-during-amazon-business-biggest-sale/499411

‘Ghost Job’ Postings Could Be the Reason You’re Not Getting Hired

Key Takeaways

- Ghost jobs are postings that never become real employment opportunities.
- An analysis from AI resume builder MyPerfectResume shows that nearly one in three job opportunities are for ghost jobs.
- There were 2.2 million ghost jobs posted in the U.S. in June alone.

Millions of job postings never lead to a hire, according to a new report.

AI resume builder MyPerfectResume used U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS) data in an analysis published last week, which shows that nearly one in three U.S. job postings go nowhere. In other words, millions of open roles never materialize into real employment opportunities.

In June, for example, there were 7.4 million reported job openings in the U.S. but only 5.2 million hires, leaving over 2.2 million jobs, or 30% of roles, unfilled. Employers advertised these “ghost jobs,” but the roles remained vacant.

“On paper, the labor market looks full of opportunity, but in reality, millions of these postings are illusions,” says Jasmine Escalera, career expert at MyPerfectResume. “Ghost

jobs don’t just waste job-seekers’ time. They inflate hope, undermine confidence in employers and create blind spots in the economic data policymakers depend on.”

Related: ‘More Soul-Crushing Than Ever’: Popular Hiring Platform Finds Around 20% of Its Postings Were ‘Ghost Jobs’

The gap between openings and hires has existed for years, peaking in 2021 when job postings surged above 11 million, but only six or seven million people were hired. As many as 38% of job postings were for ghost jobs.

Since then, the gap has lingered. Today, the ghost job rate is between 28% and 32%, per the study.

Ghost jobs hurt job-seekers, causing them to pursue nonexistent work opportunities, according to the study. Job-seekers spend time on applications that will never result in interviews or offers, while repeated failure to hire as advertised erodes trust and credibility in employer brands.

“Until postings more accurately reflect actual hiring, workers will continue to chase jobs that don’t exist, and trust in the labor market will erode,” the study reads.

Related: 1 in 4 Job Listings on LinkedIn Are Likely ‘Ghost Jobs,’ According to a New Report. Here Are the Cities Impacted the Most.

Some of the sectors with the highest percentage of ghost jobs include education and health (50%) and financial activities (44%).

Not all ghost jobs are intentionally fake. Some are the result of labor shortages, or true vacancies that remain unfilled due to a lack of qualified candidates, such as in healthcare and education. Others are due to administrative delays, like budget freezes, that can put hiring on indefinite hold even as jobs remain posted.

In another case, some companies post jobs to maintain a pool of qualified candidates for future openings, rather than immediate needs.

Still, the ghost job economy presents the illusion of a "deceptively strong" U.S. labor market, according to the study. "The ghost job economy inflates hope [and] wastes job-seekers' time," the study stated.

Related: Tired of Getting Ghosted By Hiring Managers? These Are the 10 Fastest Growing Jobs for 2025, According to LinkedIn.

Key Takeaways

- Ghost jobs are postings that never become real employment opportunities.
- An analysis from AI resume builder MyPerfectResume shows that nearly one in three job opportunities are for ghost jobs.
- There were 2.2 million ghost jobs posted in the U.S. in June alone.

Millions of job postings never lead to a hire, according to a new report.

AI resume builder MyPerfectResume used U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS) data in an analysis published last week, which shows that nearly one in three U.S. job postings go nowhere. In other words, millions of open roles never materialize into real employment opportunities.

The rest of this article is locked.

Join Entrepreneur+ today for access.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/business-news/millions-of-job-pos

tings-are-for-ghost-jobs-study/499415

How Small Businesses Can Compete with Big Brands on Cyber Monday

Opinions expressed by Entrepreneur contributors are their own.

Key Takeaways

- Promote to your loyal customers first, use AI to work smarter, play to your strengths, and bundle instead of discounting.
- Partner with other small businesses, leverage micro-influencers or local creators, and focus on one signature product or service.
- Plan ahead for storage and fulfillment, extend the sale window, and keep in touch with customers you already have.

Cyber Monday often feels like a playground for big brands. They have entire teams, massive ad budgets, and the ability to flood every channel at once. But that doesn’t mean smaller businesses can’t win.

What small teams lack in budget, they make up for in speed, creativity and agility. While big companies are tied to rigid plans and endless approval layers, small businesses can pivot

quickly, try new ideas and connect with customers on a more personal level. On Cyber Monday, that kind of agility can be more powerful than any expensive ad campaign.

Related: I've Managed Over 150 Ecommerce Stores – Here's How to Actually Win Cyber Monday Sales

Promote to your loyal customers first: They're your secret advantage

According to Detailed Drivers, repeat customers account for up to 60% of revenue for many small service-based businesses. That is why your existing audience should be the first to hear about your Cyber Monday offers. Reaching loyal customers costs almost nothing compared to trying to win over new ones.

Send them early access to your sale, a personalized offer or even a simple thank-you message. It's free to do, but it creates a strong emotional connection. These customers already trust you, and that trust can outperform any ad budget.

Use AI to work smarter, not bigger

You don't need a large marketing or tech team to build something impressive. According to Durable, nearly 67% of business owners now prefer to use AI website builders to create or improve their current site rather than start from scratch. That shift shows how affordable and accessible good design has become.

According to a recent case study by Swif.ai, Patreon reduced its IT workload by 30% after automating device management and compliance tasks. The company saved thousands of dollars annually while giving its team more time to focus on creative and strategic work. For small businesses, the lesson is clear.

Automation does not just save time. It gives you the freedom to work on what actually drives growth.

The same principle applies during Cyber Monday. Automating the background operations, from inventory updates to customer emails, can make your business move faster, stay organized and deliver a smoother customer experience. When you remove the repetitive work, you gain the flexibility and focus that big brands often lose to bureaucracy.

Play to your strengths, not their scale

Big brands can buy attention, but small businesses can earn it. Without a big budget, your best weapon is authenticity. Large companies have to stick to polished, corporate messages. You can show the real story, who you are, why you started and what your customers mean to you.

That level of honesty and personality costs nothing, yet it can make people choose you over brands with million-dollar marketing. Your strength lies in being personal and relatable, not perfect.

Bundle instead of discounting

When you can’t afford to slash prices like the big brands, focus on adding value instead. Create small bundles that feel like a better deal without cutting too deep into your margins.

For example, a coffee brand could pair beans with a reusable mug, or a marketing consultant could combine a strategy call with a short content audit. Bundling helps increase perceived value and keeps your business profitable while still giving customers something special.

Related: How to Win Black Friday and Cyber Monday This Year

with AI

Partner with other small businesses

Partnerships are one of the smartest low-cost strategies you can use. Team up with other small businesses that share your audience. A clothing brand could collaborate with a jewelry maker, or a SaaS startup could partner with a design agency for a joint promotion.

Each brand gets exposure to the other's audience, effectively doubling reach without doubling costs. Big brands spend millions to buy reach, while small ones can achieve it through collaboration and creativity.

Leverage micro-influencers or local creators

You don't need celebrity influencers. Micro-influencers — creators with smaller but loyal audiences — can generate stronger engagement for a fraction of the cost.

Work with local voices who genuinely like your product and align with your values. Their recommendations come across as authentic rather than paid, and the cost is often just a free product or a small commission. Authenticity beats ad spend every time.

Focus on one signature product or service

Instead of spreading your budget thin, focus on the one thing that defines your brand. Make your best-selling or most-loved product or service the star of your Cyber Monday campaign. It is easier and cheaper to promote one strong message than ten different ones.

Highlight what makes that offer valuable. A single, clear promotion helps customers decide faster and allows you to spend less on ads or creative materials.

Plan ahead for storage and fulfillment

According to Corrugated Industries, 40.2% of rentable storage space in the United States is owned by small operators, which shows how many small businesses rely on external storage rather than large in-house facilities. Limited space becomes one of the biggest challenges during busy seasons like Black Friday and Cyber Monday. Big brands have entire warehouses ready for the rush, but smaller companies often need to rent extra space to stay organized and keep up with demand.

If you plan ahead and secure temporary storage for a month or two before the holidays, you can stock up, pack efficiently and avoid last-minute chaos when orders start flooding in. Good preparation helps small businesses move faster and deliver the kind of smooth experience that keeps customers coming back.

Extend the sale window

If you can’t afford to flood every ad channel in one day, extend your sale. Starting a bit early or running through the week gives you more time to reach your audience without competing for the same crowded attention.

Send early access offers to subscribers or repeat buyers first. It costs nothing and makes them feel special. Extending your sale window also gives you more breathing room to fulfill orders and manage cash flow more effectively.

Related: 9 Ways to Market Your Small Business During the Holidays

Keep the momentum after Cyber Monday

The most cost-effective marketing you can do is keep in touch with customers you already have. Follow up after the sale with a thank-you note, a simple survey or helpful content about the product they bought. It takes minutes, not money.

According to small business research, it costs up to five times more to acquire a new customer than to retain an existing one. Staying connected through email or social channels keeps your brand top of mind and builds long-term loyalty that no discount can buy.

Competing with big brands during Cyber Monday is not about money. It is about mindset. When you focus on loyalty, creativity, collaboration and preparation, you can achieve results that feel much bigger than your budget.

Small businesses win when they stay authentic, agile and resourceful. You don’t need a massive marketing department or a warehouse full of products. You need strategy, heart and the courage to do things differently, because that’s something no big brand can replicate.

Key Takeaways

- Promote to your loyal customers first, use AI to work smarter, play to your strengths, and bundle instead of discounting.
- Partner with other small businesses, leverage micro-influencers or local creators, and focus on one signature product or service.
- Plan ahead for storage and fulfillment, extend the sale window, and keep in touch with customers you already have.

Cyber Monday often feels like a playground for big brands. They have entire teams, massive ad budgets, and the ability to flood every channel at once. But that doesn’t mean smaller businesses can’t win.

What small teams lack in budget, they make up for in speed, creativity and agility. While big companies are tied to rigid plans and endless approval layers, small businesses can pivot quickly, try new ideas and connect with customers on a more personal level. On Cyber Monday, that kind of agility can be more powerful than any expensive ad campaign.

The rest of this article is locked.

Join Entrepreneur+ today for access.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/growing-a-business/how-small-businesses-can-compete-on-cyber-monday/499247

How to Balance the Personal and Professional When Running a Family Business

Opinions expressed by Entrepreneur contributors are their own.

Key Takeaways

- Your family tree grows naturally, but your business doesn’t. Don’t take growth for granted. Familiarity can

make you complacent if you're not careful.
- Set concrete rules for work – then leave them at the office.
- Know when to look beyond the family tree and bring in outside expertise.
- Family can be the foundation of your business – but not the whole structure.

It's safe to say that the family business is the backbone of America's economy. Nearly 90% of U.S. businesses are either family-owned or family-controlled, and they represent over half the nation's GDP. But running a business with your relatives can present unique challenges, and you'll have to be able to compartmentalize your personal and professional relationships with them if you want to succeed.

I know this because I started my first roofing company with my brother Todd in 1988. Eventually, we evolved into what is now Roof Maxx, and it's still a family-owned company to this day. My sister, Amy Koch, is part of the business as well. Along the way, however, we realized that expanding sometimes means looking beyond the branches of your family tree for outside talent or perspectives.

So here are my thoughts about going into business with your family, including the benefits, hurdles and limitations that come with this kind of business model. Use this to learn what you'll need to consider if you plan to do the same.

Related: Love Doesn't Have to be Tough – 3 Things to Do to Keep Harmony in Your Family-Owned Business

Your family tree grows naturally (but your business doesn't)

The most important thing to understand about going into business with your family is that you can't take growth for

granted. Most family trees grow naturally over time as people get married and have children. But a business doesn't grow unless you're proactive.

Scaling a family business can feel deceptively natural at first, because you and the other founders probably have a lot in common: shared values, built-in trust and a similar understanding of what hustle looks like. If you didn't, you probably wouldn't decide to go into business with your family in the first place.

But that familiarity can also make you complacent if you're not careful, which can cause growth to stagnate. It's fine for your family dynamic to be relaxed (and I hope yours is), but you can't run your business like a reunion BBQ.

Set concrete rules for work — then leave them at the office

You don't want to argue like siblings in the boardroom. You want to collaborate like business partners. But old family patterns often run deep, and we can fall into them without realizing.

I can think of countless occasions when my brother, sister and I have caught ourselves (or each other) reverting to the kind of language we used to settle disagreements in childhood. Look out for phrases like "you always" or "you never," which tend to precede deeply-rooted assumptions about how the other person will behave in a present situation but are often based on perceptions from years ago and may not be valid anymore.

We love each other deeply, but nearly all siblings do this to some extent. It's hard to be objective when strong feelings are involved or you're thinking about the order you were born in.

This makes it imperative to clearly define roles and

responsibilities in any family business. Diligent process documentation is also a must – it prevents duties from overlapping and removes the risk of jealousy tainting your regular business operations. It's easier to stay in your lane when you know exactly where the painted lines are. That way, when you all go home for the day, you can leave the office as friends.

Related: **The Good, the Bad & the Ugly of Family Business**

Know when to look beyond the family tree for fresh fruit

Shared passion and common values carry many family businesses a long way. But if you grow to a certain point, you'll eventually hit a ceiling. That's when you'll need to bring in outside expertise.

This can be more difficult than many families realize. Family businesses that experience early growth also produce a shared sense of pride. It takes humility to admit that you can't keep doing everything by yourselves. If you let it get to you, it can make you feel like your family isn't "enough."

But bringing in outsiders shouldn't threaten the bonds of family; it should support them. After all, the talent you bring into the fold is there to protect the company, which also helps protect your relationships.

Roof Maxx now has dealers across North America and has served tens of thousands of homeowners. At that size, it's just not possible for my siblings and me to run the business by ourselves.

So we've brought in new blood. Our current CTO, Matt Ferguson, isn't one of our founders, but he's been incredibly valuable. Matt didn't grow up in roofing; his background is in data analytics and AI. With his expertise, we've been able to

create a system for our dealers that helps eliminate knowledge gaps and standardize training resources, exponentially improving the service our dealers are able to provide to customers.

Related: **The 4 Forces That Drive Family Business Success**

Family can be the foundation of your business — but not the whole structure

The things that make you a good family can help you become a great business, but you'll have to build on that foundation. And to keep building past a certain point, you'll have to let others help as well.

Start by identifying your shared strengths, then create clear roles and rules to keep everyone's unique talents and personalities organized. Finally, look for people you trust enough to challenge you without radically altering the family dynamic, and make sure they have valuable skills or ideas you don't.

If you manage to do those things successfully, you'll have the trifecta: diverse talent, clear processes and an unwavering commitment to each other at the heart of it all. That makes it much easier to maintain your commitment to your customers and to your future success.

Key Takeaways

- Your family tree grows naturally, but your business doesn't. Don't take growth for granted. Familiarity can make you complacent if you're not careful.
- Set concrete rules for work — then leave them at the office.

- Know when to look beyond the family tree and bring in outside expertise.
- Family can be the foundation of your business — but not the whole structure.

It’s safe to say that the family business is the backbone of America’s economy. Nearly 90% of U.S. businesses are either family-owned or family-controlled, and they represent over half the nation’s GDP. But running a business with your relatives can present unique challenges, and you’ll have to be able to compartmentalize your personal and professional relationships with them if you want to succeed.

I know this because I started my first roofing company with my brother Todd in 1988. Eventually, we evolved into what is now Roof Maxx, and it’s still a family-owned company to this day. My sister, Amy Koch, is part of the business as well. Along the way, however, we realized that expanding sometimes means looking beyond the branches of your family tree for outside talent or perspectives.

The rest of this article is locked.

Join Entrepreneur+ today for access.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/growing-a-business/4-keys-to-running-a-successful-family-business/498828

---

6 Common Data Backup Mistakes That Established Businesses

Make — and the Costly Consequences That Follow

Opinions expressed by Entrepreneur contributors are their own.

Key Takeaways

- While most established and larger companies with big IT budgets employ professional backup solutions, they still often make costly mistakes.
- These include long intervals between backups, not testing backup recovery systems regularly, not being able to restore a backup to a different device quickly, keeping backups in a single location or only in a remote cloud and failing to do a cold backup.
- Keeping data backed up, protected and tested is a big investment, but it is well worth it in the long run.

In my previous article, I examined five data backup mistakes that could bankrupt a startup. Now, nearly all established and larger companies with huge IT budgets will employ professional backup solutions and prevent these errors. But even these companies can still make some other mistakes in backup, which may cost them millions of dollars.

So, here are five of the most common backup mistakes that established companies make and some tips on how to avoid them.

Related: 5 Data Backup Mistakes that Could Bankrupt Your Startup (and How to Quickly Fix Them)

Mistake 1: Long intervals between backups

One of the most important steps that anyone can take to protect data is to make a backup. In case the data is stolen or lost, you can always recover it. However, even larger organizations make the mistake of not backing up their data storage in a short interval regularly. According to a recent report, 91% of all organizations back up their data, but only 26% actually do it daily.

A majority of organizations either do it once every week or once every month. A large organization can have thousands of customers, inventories and products, and accumulate terabytes of new data every week. Once a data disaster occurs, even with the backups, you will still lose data for about one week.

For example, Walmart, the world's largest retailer, handles 240 million customer transactions a week. That's 2.5 petabytes *(1 petabyte equals 1 million gigabytes)* of data every hour. Even losing a single hour's worth of data can be costly for a company of this scale. Therefore, for larger companies, a minimum of daily backups and even automated live backups are the only solution.

Mistake 2: Failing to test backup recovery regularly

Keeping a backup of all your data does not automatically make it secure. According to a report, more than 50% of all backups actually fail when data is being restored. This can be due to incomplete backups, corrupt files or just the recovery software not performing.

Whatever the case, even large organizations fail to understand the importance of testing backup recovery systems. It is

important to “test drive” data recovery systems, modules and their efficiency regularly.

What use are data backups when they fail to work when needed the most? Most leaders view this as an expensive chore that takes up resources. Nothing can be further from the truth. A large organization should test its data recovery systems every quarter as a minimum and every week for the most important data.

Mistake 3: Cannot restore to a different device quickly

Another common mistake is using backup software that cannot restore the backup to a different device quickly.

If a computer is damaged, lost or stolen, the company might have to buy a new one with a completely different hardware configuration. If the backup software cannot restore the backup to the new computer and make it a bootable system directly, the company needs to manually install the operating system on the new computer and restore the other data separately, which costs a lot of time and human resources.

This problem is more critical if your data recovery plan has a lower recovery time objective (RTO).

Related: One of the Most Overlooked Risks in Business – and How to Protect Yourself Before It’s Too Late

Mistake 4: All backups in a single location

Many large companies, instead of storing their data on the cloud, build their own in-house data storage. The idea is to keep data “within the company” and safe from potential theft. However, having all physical storage and backups in a single

location is a disaster waiting to happen.

Therefore, in times of a disaster, such as a fire, burglary or even earthquakes, your data might not really be safe since they are all stored in one location.

Mistake 5: All backups in a remote cloud

On the other hand, there are large companies that only rely on remote cloud networks for data storage and backup. This might make it difficult and time-consuming when there is a need to restore data.

However, a more serious problem can be that of cloud servers failing. One of the most famous examples is that of OVHcloud, a French data center that caught fire and brought millions of websites down. This included websites of government agencies, banks and businesses.

Any organization that did not have a physical storage probably lost all of its data. Therefore, storing on the cloud alone comes with its own risks.

Mistake 6: No cold backup

Many large companies fail to make a cold backup of their data. A cold backup is an offline backup on an air-gapped external hard drive. When ransomware attacks, it not only attacks your data but also your online backups connecting to your system. Keeping an external air-gapped backup of all your data is one of the best ways to keep your data protected.

Related: 5 Reasons to Make Regular Data Backups a Part of Your Business Plan

Even large and established companies make common backup mistakes that can jeopardize their data management. Properly

backing up data is one of the easiest ways to protect yourself against ransomware attacks, human errors and even hardware failure.

Keeping data backed up, protected and tested is a major investment for large companies. By some estimates, an organization of 1,000 employees can typically look to spend $267,000-$675,000 or 7% of their IT budget on backing up data.

Such an investment, if done right and if these common mistakes are avoided, is well worth it in the long run.

Key Takeaways

- While most established and larger companies with big IT budgets employ professional backup solutions, they still often make costly mistakes.
- These include long intervals between backups, not testing backup recovery systems regularly, not being able to restore a backup to a different device quickly, keeping backups in a single location or only in a remote cloud and failing to do a cold backup.
- Keeping data backed up, protected and tested is a big investment, but it is well worth it in the long run.

In my previous article, I examined five data backup mistakes that could bankrupt a startup. Now, nearly all established and larger companies with huge IT budgets will employ professional backup solutions and prevent these errors. But even these companies can still make some other mistakes in backup, which may cost them millions of dollars.

So, here are five of the most common backup mistakes that established companies make and some tips on how to avoid them.

The rest of this article is locked.

Join Entrepreneur+ today for access.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/science-technology/6-common-data-backup-mistakes-established-businesses-make/498620

In the Controversial World of Performance Aids, One Brand Is Betting Less Is More

Opinions expressed by Entrepreneur contributors are their own.

Key Takeaways

- Athletic Nicotine makes low-dose, slow-release nicotine pouches without the smoke.
- Co-founder Jason Winn reimagined nicotine use for high-performance athletes.
- But building a brand that promotes moderation is a delicate balance.

Most brands are marketed to sell as many units as possible. But Athletic Nicotine comes with a different playbook. Use less, benefit more.

The company makes low-dose, slow-release nicotine pouches designed to sharpen focus without the smoke or tobacco. Each pouch contains 1.5 milligrams of synthetic, pharmaceutical-grade nicotine. The result is a subtle lift rather than a jolt, a way to stay locked in without overstimulation.

This has made the product popular with some athletes,

trainers, and even doctors who see nicotine as a tool for focus rather than a habit to hide. At events like Running Man, the company reported selling out its entire supply within hours.

For co-founder Jason Winn, that reaction confirmed why he launched the product in the first place. “People want something clean that helps them focus, but they don’t want to feel dependent. That’s what we’re building toward.”

Related: This Entrepreneur Turned a Dry Skin Problem Into an Eight-Figure Business After Asking, ‘Why Doesn’t This Product Exist for Men?’

The spark

Jason’s path to Athletic Nicotine started long before the company launched. He played football at Texas Tech, where he was surrounded by teammates and coaches constantly dipping tobacco. He tried it a few times but never liked how it made him feel.

After college, he stayed close to sports and launched a nutrition company, which made plant-based energy bars for endurance athletes. During that time, he noticed that many of the professional athletes he trained with, including NFL veterans and surfers, were using nicotine as part of their routine.

“They’d sneak it mid-workout, look over their shoulder, and toss it back in the drawer,” he says. “These were some of the most disciplined people I knew, but they were buying something at a gas station that made them feel like they had a problem. That didn’t sit right with me.”

Jason started to wonder if there was a better way. He had patented a nicotine toothpick years earlier, and the idea resurfaced as he watched the stigma around nicotine shift. He

and his partners, Chris Motley and Dan Victor, saw a chance to reimagine it for a performance-driven audience. Their early brainstorming sessions led to Athletic Nicotine.

Related: Gen. McChrystal Says You Need a Risk-Taking Mindset to Succeed: 'If You're Not Failing a Certain Percentage of the Time, You're Not Doing Enough'

The philosophy

Many nicotine products are all about high doses and that deliver quick energy boots, but Athletic Nicotine is deliberately slow and low. Each can contains 1.5 milligram and 3 milligram options. "Less is more when it comes to nicotine," Winn explains. "Lower doses give you the focus and composure you want without the spike or crash."

That choice was intentional. "People ask us all the time when we're going to make a six or a nine milligram," Winn says. "We tell them there are plenty of brands that do that. That's just not us."

The company markets only to adults 21 and over. Their flavors and packaging are designed for adults not kids. "We have to do this responsibly," Winn says. "That means no youth marketing, and no pretending nicotine is harmless. It's about balance."

That level of caution is justified. Studies from 2025 found substances such as formaldehyde, nitrosamines, and chromium in certain nicotine products. Athletic Nicotine is tested through a third-party company Informed Sport, which certifies that it is free from banned substances.

Nicotine is known to be addictive and can cause dependence if used excessively. Winn concedes his product is not for everyone. "We're not going to go out and try to convince people to use nicotine," he says. "But for people who want to use low-dose nicotine to perform better and think clearer,

we’re here for that.”

Related: Fat Joe Doesn’t Believe In the 9-to-5 – His Latest Venture Will Help Everyday People Build Financial Freedom

The lessons learned

Athletic Nicotine is still a young company, but it has built momentum through word of mouth. Winn says the early response has been encouraging, though it has not come without challenges. Building a nicotine brand that promotes moderation is a delicate balance.

“It’s not an easy category,” he says. “You have to face the stigma, the regulation, and the addiction question head-on. You can’t ignore any of it.”

For Winn, the biggest lesson has been about people. “You can have the perfect idea, but if you have the wrong team, it will fall apart,” he says. “The partners you choose and the values you share are what hold it together when things get tough.”

He’s also come to realize that the company’s core philosophy of slow and low applies to more than just nicotine. In running a business, his mantra is: “Do one thing really well. Keep it clean, keep it honest, and don’t rush to grow faster than you can handle. If it works, people will find you.”

In a business world obsessed with more, Athletic Nicotine is hoping that sometimes the smartest move is less.

Key Takeaways

- Athletic Nicotine makes low-dose, slow-release nicotine pouches without the smoke.
- Co-founder Jason Winn reimagined nicotine use for high-performance athletes.

- But building a brand that promotes moderation is a delicate balance.

Most brands are marketed to sell as many units as possible. But Athletic Nicotine comes with a different playbook. Use less, benefit more.

The company makes low-dose, slow-release nicotine pouches designed to sharpen focus without the smoke or tobacco. Each pouch contains 1.5 milligrams of synthetic, pharmaceutical-grade nicotine. The result is a subtle lift rather than a jolt, a way to stay locked in without overstimulation.

The rest of this article is locked.

Join Entrepreneur+ today for access.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/starting-a-business/in-the-controversial-world-of-nicotine-one-brand-is/499173

The New Playbook for Real Estate Wealth — How Owning Nothing Could Actually Make You Richer

Opinions expressed by Entrepreneur contributors are their own.

Key Takeaways

- The savviest investors don’t trap themselves in one property, one market or one mortgage. They diversify and spread risk across many assets.
- Fractional ownership is emerging as the new blueprint for real estate wealth. Traditional ownership exposes you to illiquidity, concentration, debt dependency and operational drag.
- Through fractional ownership platforms, you can own slices of multiple properties and gain rental income, appreciation and tax benefits without the challenges that come with being a landlord.

Everyone loves to talk about the “American Dream.” Buy a house, pay it off, hold it for decades and hope you’re wealthy when you’re 65. That story worked in the 1950s, when houses were cheap, debt was manageable and growth was predictable. But in today’s world? That’s not wealth. That’s a liability with granite countertops.

Wealth isn’t built by owning more. It’s built by owning smarter. The savviest investors don’t trap themselves in one property, one market or one mortgage. They diversify. They spread risk across dozens of assets. They use structure, leverage and partnerships to cap downside while leaving upside open.

This is why fractional ownership is emerging as the new blueprint for real estate wealth. And the irony is clear: The future may belong to those who own less.

Related: Can Fractional Ownership In Real Estate Be a Wealth Creator for Retail Investors?

Real estate’s next era

I recently sat down with Alex Blackwood, co-founder of Mogul, a platform that’s redefining what it means to be a real estate investor. Blackwood left Goldman Sachs, not because he wanted less security, but because he realized something few people admit: Security is the enemy of growth.

At Mogul, the model is deceptively simple. Properties are placed into LLCs, divided into shares and offered to investors. You buy in. You get exposure to rental income, appreciation and tax benefits. And you do it all without the headaches that come with being a landlord.

Blackwood put it:

“For decades, real estate investing has been stuck in an old playbook that’s been dominated by institutions and locked behind massive capital requirements. With Mogul, we’re unlocking the real estate market. By fractionalizing properties, securing them on blockchain and using AI to drive both efficiency and personalization, we’re changing how real estate gets bought, sold and experienced. That kind of disruption doesn’t just tweak the system; it redefines the asset class itself.”

The rise of fractional real estate platforms

Mogul is part of a broader ecosystem of platforms democratizing real estate ownership. Each one is attacking the problem from a slightly different angle, but together they’re reshaping the industry.

- **Arrived:** Backed by Jeff Bezos, Arrived lets retail investors co-own rental properties with as little as $100. Investors earn dividends from rent and share in

the appreciation when the property sells. It's the definition of "real estate investing without being a landlord."

- **Pacaso:** Pacaso focuses on luxury vacation homes — Aspen ski chalets, Napa vineyards, Malibu beach houses. Instead of one buyer writing a $5 million check, Pacaso fractionalizes the home into eight or more shares, complete with scheduling and resale options. It's not just ownership; it's lifestyle access wrapped in an investment vehicle.
- **Fundrise:** One of the pioneers of online real estate investing, Fundrise manages billions in assets across apartments, commercial projects and housing developments. Instead of single properties, investors buy into portfolios, gaining broad exposure with professional management.
- **Lofty AI:** Lofty takes the fractional model one step further by tokenizing property shares. Investors can buy and sell shares of rental properties daily through a blockchain-powered marketplace. It's a glimpse at the future of liquidity in real estate, a stock market for houses.

Each of these companies points to the same truth: Real estate no longer has to mean "one family, one house." It can mean thousands of families sharing ownership of thousands of properties, creating wealth without the burden of doing it alone.

Related: This Family Business Thrives Giving Small Investors Big Real Estate Opportunities

Why 100% ownership is overrated

Traditional real estate ownership feels good. There's pride in "owning" your house. But let's strip away the emotion and look at the math.

- **Illiquidity:** You can't easily sell part of a house. Your capital is locked.
- **Concentration:** One house = one market. If that city declines, so does your net worth.
- **Debt dependency:** The bank always gets paid before you do. A spike in interest rates can crush your margin.
- **Operational drag:** Repairs, tenants, lawsuits, taxes — they all land on your desk.

Owning 100% of an asset doesn't make you powerful. It makes you exposed.

This is why institutions have never played that game. They pool, they syndicate, they share. Retail investors are only just catching up.

The new wealth playbook

Fractional ownership flips the narrative. Instead of tying up $500,000 in one property, you might place $5,000 across ten properties in ten different markets. Instead of spending weekends dealing with repairs, you track your portfolio in an app and collect distributions.

Think about it this way: Would you rather own 100% of one house in one zip code, or 1% of a hundred properties spread across booming cities nationwide? One is fragile. The other is antifragile.

This is why billionaires think differently. They don’t chase ownership for the ego. They chase exposure for the upside.

And thanks to fractional real estate platforms, that mindset is no longer exclusive to billionaires. It’s available to anyone willing to break free from the old script.

Where this is heading

The next generation of millionaires won’t all be landlords. They’ll be fractional investors, holding slices of hundreds of properties, collecting income, compounding gains and staying liquid enough to pivot when markets shift.

The real estate industry is at an inflection point. Just as Robinhood changed stock investing and Coinbase changed crypto, fractional real estate platforms are changing how people think about property. The “dream” of one white picket fence is being replaced by a new reality: many properties, many markets, no single point of failure.

Owning less isn’t weak. It’s strategic.

Related: How Rami Tabbara Is Unlocking Real Estate for the Digital Age

The billionaire’s perspective

If you’re still clinging to the idea that wealth is measured by square footage you can walk through, you’re already behind. That’s not how the game is played at the top.

The future of wealth is simple:

- Diversify.
- Share risk.
- Own slices, not burdens.

Owning less might actually be the smartest way to end up with more.

Key Takeaways

- The savviest investors don’t trap themselves in one property, one market or one mortgage. They diversify and spread risk across many assets.
- Fractional ownership is emerging as the new blueprint for real estate wealth. Traditional ownership exposes you to illiquidity, concentration, debt dependency and operational drag.
- Through fractional ownership platforms, you can own slices of multiple properties and gain rental income, appreciation and tax benefits without the challenges that come with being a landlord.

Everyone loves to talk about the “American Dream.” Buy a house, pay it off, hold it for decades and hope you’re wealthy when you’re 65. That story worked in the 1950s, when houses were cheap, debt was manageable and growth was predictable. But in today’s world? That’s not wealth. That’s a liability with granite countertops.

Wealth isn’t built by owning more. It’s built by owning smarter. The savviest investors don’t trap themselves in one property, one market or one mortgage. They diversify. They spread risk across dozens of assets. They use structure, leverage and partnerships to cap downside while leaving upside open.

The rest of this article is locked.

Join Entrepreneur+ today for access.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/starting-a-business/real-estates-next-era-how-owning-less-can-make-you/498743

Experts Say This Job-Finding Method Works Better Than Applying

Key Takeaways

- Career experts Alan Stein and Aaron Cleavinger say job-seekers should focus their efforts on networking.
- Stein, CEO of the professional coaching company Kadima Careers, says to implement the “five chats” rule.
- Cleavinger, managing partner at Murdoch Mason Executive Search Group, says to spend just 3% of your time applying to jobs and the rest on networking.

Career experts say that the best thing you can do for your career is to spend more time networking, or making connections and talking to people — especially when it comes time to find a new job.

Alan Stein, former hiring manager and CEO of professional coaching company Kadima Careers, told Business Insider on Monday that job-seekers should put networking above applying for roles. Rather than endlessly applying to jobs, they should fulfill what he calls the “five chats” rule and aim to have five conversations a week with people at companies where they might want to work.

Stein recommends approaching these conversations with genuine curiosity and learning more about the other person rather than

directly asking for a job.

“Go in there with an intent to learn about them,” he told BI. These conversations are a means of “leveraging your relationships” and creating new connections, he added.

Related: 5 Common Mistakes Entrepreneurs Make When Networking and Building Connections

Networking could lead to an internal referral, where someone inside the company vouches for a job-seeker and puts in a good word with a recruiter or hiring manager. It could also lead to the job-seeker knowing about a job opening as it opens up, enabling them to apply early, which could give them a better chance of landing an interview.

Another career expert, Aaron Cleavinger, a managing partner at Murdoch Mason Executive Search Group, told BI that most job seekers spend 80% to 90% of their time applying for jobs, which usually results in just a 3% return in terms of interviews.

Instead, Cleavinger suggests aligning time investment with expected returns and spending just 3% of time on applications and the rest on conversations and networking.

“If your return is 3%, then spend 3% of your time applying to jobs,” Cleavinger told BI.

Related: How to Build Meaningful Connections in the Digital Networking Era

Networking is also a useful technique for people who are still employed and not actively looking for work, he mentioned. Those who have a job can still benefit from talking to one or two people a week about their work and building relationships.

“The time to start networking is when you don’t need something from someone else,” Cleavinger told the outlet.

Related: Want to Succeed as an Entrepreneur? Discover the Key to Building Long-Lasting Connections

Key Takeaways

- Career experts Alan Stein and Aaron Cleavinger say job-seekers should focus their efforts on networking.
- Stein, CEO of the professional coaching company Kadima Careers, says to implement the “five chats” rule.
- Cleavinger, managing partner at Murdoch Mason Executive Search Group, says to spend just 3% of your time applying to jobs and the rest on networking.

Career experts say that the best thing you can do for your career is to spend more time networking, or making connections and talking to people — especially when it comes time to find a new job.

Alan Stein, former hiring manager and CEO of professional coaching company Kadima Careers, told Business Insider on Monday that job-seekers should put networking above applying for roles. Rather than endlessly applying to jobs, they should fulfill what he calls the “five chats” rule and aim to have five conversations a week with people at companies where they might want to work.

The rest of this article is locked.

Join Entrepreneur+ today for access.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/business-news/how-to-network-effectively-to-find-a-job-according-to/499400