The One Cybersecurity Shift Every Business Needs to Make Right Now



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Key Takeaways

- The old “perimeter defense” model of cybersecurity no longer works. With remote work, cloud platforms and AI, there is no clearly defined perimeter left to guard.
- Identity is now your company’s first line of defense. You should adopt a Zero Trust Network Access model, manage authentication and issue company-owned devices to keep your digital environment secure.
- Instead of completely denying your employees access to tools that help them work smarter, weigh the risks of

each tool and put the right safeguards in place.

Cybersecurity used to be simple: You just locked down the network, guarded the perimeter and called it a day. But that was a different world; one where your business was made up of cubicles, Ethernet cables and neatly siloed data centers.

Today, you'll find that the traditional notion of cybersecurity — the one hyper-focused on "perimeters" — has collapsed under the weight of cloud platforms, remote workers and artificial intelligence. It's become difficult to even define a new perimeter, let alone develop strategies to protect it. In fact, the perimeter, as we used to know it, is likely gone forever.

In an era where your business networks are not owned, employees are working from everywhere and applications live who-knows-where, the old security playbook is futile. Still, the fundamentals of cybersecurity have not vanished; they've just evolved.

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How did we get here?

To understand how today's cybersecurity commotion came to be, it helps to rewind to a time when things were more grounded — literally.

In any iteration of security, there are three aspects in play: the network, the user and the application. In what feels like a distant age — when employees would come to a physical office building and sit tethered to RJ45 connectors and Ethernet — security was naturally baked into the network.

With tools like firewalls and intrusion detection systems, it was simple and ritualistic to draw a perimeter around the workspace and lock down everything inside. But now, as remote

work, cloud applications and AI become the norm, we've stretched the perimeter so far that it's time to face a simple fact: Our old "defend the perimeter" strategy must evolve.

What do we do now?

With the network largely outside of our control, security today is supported by the remaining two pillars, the user and the application. The key to making new strategies is simple: Pick one and be prepared to master its intricacies. True security lies in deeply understanding the terrain you're defending, but they are not built the same.

With the rapid adoption of "Software as a Service" (SaaS), managing applications has become a daunting task. Previously, applications were protected because organizations built and hosted the data within their own centers. Now, third-party providers host applications – such as Google Drive, Slack, Dropbox, ChatGPT and more – over the internet, making them easier to access for employees with minimal IT oversight.

With SaaS only growing in popularity, navigating total application security can seem like following a spinning compass. While there are certainly techniques and platforms designed to help businesses tackle pitfalls like Shadow IT and Shadow AI, wouldn't it be easier to start with what you can control? For simple security success, shift your attention from the application itself to the person who's accessing it: the user.

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How do you manage identity?

Adopt a "Zero Trust Network Access" (ZTNA) model. Though popular in the past, today, it's critical to reject the idea that anything inside a network is automatically safe –

redefining the way security professionals think about trust in a borderless world. If the network is a free-for-all, everything within is a potential threat vector. Now, trust can only be built at the individual level by putting a microscope on every user, their identity, the devices they use and the access they're granted.

Implement a mechanism that authenticates: With no clearly defined perimeter left to guard, identity is now your company's first line of defense. It's imperative to make sure users are who they say they are, and sometimes, just asking for a password isn't going to cut it. Today's authentication methods are smarter and stronger, like multi-factor authentication, biometrics, security tokens and Role-Based Access Control.

Control users through devices: Letting employees bring their own devices might seem convenient, but it also opens the door to vulnerabilities. You can't control what you can't see, and allowing personal devices in the workspace is a surefire path leading to zero visibility. While it's impossible to control the actions of every single employee, issuing company-owned devices puts IT back in control through visibility.

With insights into employee behavior, security teams can establish more effective acceptable use policies (AUP), block risky applications, flag dangerous behavior in real-time and understand what their security posture really is. Maintaining visibility over users is the new means for keeping your digital environment airtight.

Balance security with productivity: The pressure to be productive, modern and agile is exacerbating the security crisis. Though nightmares of breaches may tempt leaders to put down the iron fist, that may do more harm than good. Throw down too many roadblocks, and people will seek out ways around them.

Instead of flat-out denying access to tools that help employees work smarter, ask them to make the case. If a new application or workflow improves efficiency and shows real ROI through solid, quantitative data, don't be afraid to say yes after weighing the risks and putting the right safeguards in place. The trick is knowing where to flex and where to hold firm.

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You are still in control

As controlling the network has become difficult in today's decentralized cloud-driven world, a strong cybersecurity strategy must instead focus on the user – even if they don't physically sit within the walls of your business. The network itself is no longer a trustworthy boundary, and in turn, the ability to assume safety based on location or device has become antiquated.

Instead, security must be built around your employees and their identity. Even though you can't lock down the network, you can control what people can access. Focus on authentication, own the user and embrace a strategy that fits today's borderless reality.

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When Life Collapses, Entrepreneurs Rebuild — 5 Lessons From From the Science of Resilience



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Key Takeaways

- Healing hidden injuries creates the foundation for sustainable leadership and growth.
- Energy management is the most overlooked strategy for long-term success.

When I first met Dr. David Lipman, I expected to talk about performance and mindset. Instead, I found myself deeply moved. Within minutes, he was not talking about metrics or growth strategies but about pain, purpose and the kind of resilience that only comes from being broken open. His journey was not about building a business. It was about rebuilding a life.

That conversation stayed with me. Years earlier, I had been at the height of my career, leading teams and chasing deadlines, when everything changed. I was hit by a car while pregnant. In an instant, my body, my health and my identity came undone.

Soon after, I developed two autoimmune conditions and could barely care for myself, let alone my newborn. I went from high-performing executive to full-time patient and mother in survival mode. But that collapse created something unexpected: space. Space to slow down, to heal and to rediscover what truly mattered. That space became the foundation for the purpose-driven work I do today.

David's story follows a similar arc, one that reveals universal lessons about entrepreneurship, perseverance and the art of starting again.

Lesson 1: Rejection is often the first invitation

When David was ten years old, his family moved to a new neighborhood where he was told he did not belong. For a sensitive kid eager to make friends, it was crushing. Then an older neighbor took him under his wing and introduced him to exercise, nutrition and routine.

Strength gave him confidence, and discipline gave him direction. It was the beginning of his transformation. Entrepreneurs often face a similar initiation. The world may not welcome your vision at first, but rejection can be the very friction that forges resilience.

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Lesson 2: Hidden injuries do not heal without attention

At fifteen, David was in a motorcycle accident that left him with a fractured neck, an injury he hid for years out of fear. The pain became part of his normal, something he learned to

live with while pretending everything was fine. Only when a mentor noticed his limited movement did he finally seek help. That single act of awareness changed everything. His first chiropractic adjustment released years of tension and pain he had tried so hard to conceal. It was pain no one else could see but one that had quietly begun to control his life.

Many entrepreneurs carry invisible injuries of their own. We push through exhaustion, disappointment and fear, convincing ourselves it is simply part of the job. Yet what we ignore, we prolong. True growth often begins with the courage to look directly at what hurts and the willingness to heal it.

Lesson 3: Breaking tradition can be the most loyal act

David was expected to join his family's business, a legacy that had provided stability for generations. But something in him wanted more, a deeper way to serve others. When he told his father he wanted to pursue a different path, he expected resistance. Instead, his father gave him a rare gift. He said, "If this is what you love, you will find more success and satisfaction here than anywhere else." Sometimes, honoring where we come from means having the courage to evolve beyond it.

Lesson 4: Making space for what is next

There comes a point in every entrepreneur's journey when the familiar begins to fall apart. Partners walk away. Opportunities dry up. Systems that once worked no longer do. In those moments, it is tempting to cling tighter, but often the breakdown is not punishment. It is preparation.

David faced this when insurance companies stopped covering

much of his work. Overnight, his thriving practice was at risk. Around the same time, his father died suddenly, leaving him in grief and uncertainty.

He could have walked away, but instead, he dropped to his knees in prayer – a faith-filled moment that allowed him to reimagine what healing could look like. He rebuilt from purpose, not pressure and created something stronger than before.

I experienced the same truth in my own life. The accident and illness that halted my career were devastating, but they created the space for transformation. Forced to stop, I learned about recovery, Culinary Medicine (nutrition) and the science of healing. That process led me toward new work, new purpose, and a deeper understanding that success without health is not success at all.

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Lesson 5: Energy is currency

After decades of practice, David discovered that every form of decline, whether in health, creativity, or leadership, can be traced to depleted energy. The same is true in business. When your energy drops, your decisions follow. Entrepreneurs spend years learning to manage capital but rarely learn how to manage capacity. Building routines, systems and recovery habits is not indulgence. It is an intelligent strategy. Protecting your energy is protecting your enterprise.

Lesson 6: Growth is an incline, not a straight line

David often says he lives on the incline. It means refusing to accept decline as inevitable, whether in age, business, or

innovation. That mindset is what separates those who burn out from those who break through. I have learned the same in my own work. Resilience is not about avoiding failure. It is about creating upward momentum from it.

Entrepreneurship, at its core, is an act of faith. It tests your adaptability, your endurance and your ability to keep creating when the plan no longer makes sense. The path to purpose is rarely linear. It is shaped by recovery, reflection and the courage to begin again.

Whether you are rebuilding after loss, launching a new idea, or standing in the middle of uncertainty, remember this truth. Your power lies not in what you avoid but in what you transform. Sometimes what feels like an ending is only the beginning of something far greater than you imagined.

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What Today's Consumers Value More Than Convenience — and How You Can Leverage It to Elevate Your Brand



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Key Takeaways

- Craftsmanship makes your brand instantly trustworthy, and customers will pay more for products that feel personal.
- When you're clear about how and why you make your product, you attract purpose-driven consumers who want their spending to reflect their values.
- Craftsmanship fuels word-of-mouth better than any campaign. It also future-proofs and humanizes your brand in an automated world.

Over the past year, something surprising has been happening across sectors that used to reward speed over soul. From fashion to kitchenware to luxury goods, emerging brands are trading mass production for meticulous process — and they're being rewarded with loyalty, not just sales.

This shift isn't about nostalgia or aesthetics. Consumers are gravitating toward brands that feel personal, rare and rooted in something deeper than convenience. Craftsmanship, once a niche differentiator, has become a modern business strategy. Here's why it's paying off.

Related: How a Craftsman Turned His Handiwork into a Cutting-Edge Business

1. Craftsmanship makes your brand instantly trustworthy

When customers encounter a new brand, their first question usually isn't "How fast can I get this?" It's "Can I trust this?"

Craftsmanship answers that question before it's even asked. A product that feels hand-touched or meticulously designed signals care, integrity and long-term value. That's especially

powerful in markets flooded with private-label replicas and algorithm-generated designs.

Salsify’s 2025 Consumer Research report found that 87% of shoppers are willing to pay more for products from brands they trust. And trust, it turns out, often starts with quality. Whether it’s hand-stitched denim or heirloom cookware, consumers associate craftsmanship with transparency and pride.

This type of perceived authenticity also helps small brands punch above their weight. In a saturated market, a handcrafted product cuts through noise by offering what mass production can’t: a tangible sense of origin. For early-stage companies, that’s a shortcut to credibility.

2. Customers will pay more for products that feel personal

Craftsmanship doesn’t just justify a higher price. It demands one. When customers understand the effort, tradition or artistry involved, price becomes part of the story.

That’s exactly how brands like Rùadh have carved out space in the crowded fashion industry. Launched with just 11 pieces, Rùadh’s debut collection focused on slow production, regenerative cotton and hand-finished details. The strategy worked — not by scaling quickly, but by resonating deeply. Customers weren’t just buying clothes; they were buying into a mindset of meaningful consumption.

Even beyond fashion, this trend is clear. According to Market Growth Reports, 12% of all handicraft sales in 2024 were for personalized or bespoke goods. This represents a sharp rise fueled by consumers who value individual expression over standardization.

This behavior isn’t limited to luxury buyers. Across categories, consumers are increasingly drawn to products that

reflect their identities. Whether it's a small-batch skincare line with ethically sourced ingredients or a hand-poured candle brand that highlights cultural storytelling, customization and care now rival convenience in perceived value.

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3. It's not just what you make — it's how and why you make it

Today's consumers are asking what your product means.

Craftsmanship offers an answer that's hard to fake. Consider Boito, a brand founded in 2023 to spotlight India's tribal handwoven textiles. Rather than adapting to trend cycles, Boito leans into cultural preservation, transforming regional weaves like Bomkai and Khandua into contemporary luxury pieces. It goes beyond fashion; it's heritage storytelling.

This level of intentionality is becoming a brand identity in itself. It draws in customers who want to align their purchases with their values, and it creates a deeper moat than price or convenience ever could. When your method reflects your mission, everything about the business becomes more cohesive (and more compelling). This "why" becomes a built-in filter for decisions, partnerships and messaging, making the brand more resilient to fads and more attractive to purpose-driven consumers who want their spending to reflect their values.

4. Craft fuels word-of-mouth better than any campaign

When you create something exceptional, customers become your

marketers.

That’s not just a romantic idea; it’s a practical one. Products with distinct, handcrafted details naturally spark conversation. They photograph well. They carry stories. And they invite others to ask, “Where did you get that?”

Word-of-mouth remains one of the most trusted forms of marketing. According to Nielsen, 92% of consumers trust recommendations from people they know over any form of advertising. Craftsmanship gives them something worth talking about.

This kind of organic buzz boosts awareness and builds credibility. People aren’t just sharing a product; they’re passing along a piece of their own taste and values. That emotional endorsement carries far more weight than paid placements or influencer shoutouts.

Related: Chatter That Matters: 4 Must-Haves for Word-of-Mouth Marketing That Works

5. In an automated world, craftsmanship future-proofs your brand

While AI and automation dominate headlines, brands that offer human-ness stand out more than ever. Craftsmanship is the antithesis of scale-for-scale’s sake. It resists disposability. It builds long-term brand equity.

And there’s evidence it’s not going away. A report from Future Market Insights projects the global handicrafts market to grow at a 10.5% CAGR through 2035, led by demand for eco-friendly, story-rich products that machines can’t replicate.

In this context, craftsmanship isn’t old-fashioned. It’s

future-ready. The brands that embrace it aren’t just making things. They’re making meaning.

Ultimately, craftsmanship isn’t a luxury reserved for heritage houses or slow fashion obsessives. It’s a modern tool for founders who want to differentiate, resonate and build something that lasts. Whether you’re launching a new product or recalibrating your brand’s identity, investing in craft isn’t a step backward. It’s a leap forward into a business model built on trust, meaning and staying power.

Key Takeaways

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What 25 Years in Ecommerce Taught Me About Building Businesses That Last



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Key Takeaways

- Collaboration across disciplines creates a competitive advantage and stronger results.

- Focus on core strengths to scale sustainably without losing identity.
- Great ideas and growth come from empowered teams and trusted partnerships.

After leading ecommerce and digital teams at Ralph Lauren, Brooks Brothers and Theory, and later co-founding and scaling a Shopify-focused agency, I've spent 25 years immersed in how brands grow.

I've learned key lessons from running brand-side teams in design, user experience, strategy, and eventually the entire ecommerce team. Cross-discipline success came from a focus on a culture of collaboration, subject matter expertise, a spirit of innovation and the primacy of external partnerships.

These became foundational principles in building my own business, now the largest design and development partner on the Shopify platform.

Collaboration is the real superpower

I've never enjoyed the "lone genius" idea. I grew up drawing and being deeply familiar with the art world, and "lone genius" is essentially a foundational principle of that world. It's also the defining feature of all business heroes that adorn magazine covers and books.

However, success in a subject as complicated as digital commerce requires teamwork and deep expertise. It calls for the coordination of professionals in marketing, merchandising, technology and creative. I've always found that the finest work comes from groups of curious, collaborative individuals who actually enjoy working together to solve complex problems.

When the right subject matter experts are present and an enthusiastic, future-thinking environment is established, the

process of collaboration itself turns into a competitive advantage.

In the user experience field, a discipline I enthusiastically embraced in 2005, I became fond of reminding people that it's not just about creating ease of use, but also joy of use. This principle applies to running a business as well.

I once asked a UX guru whom I admired, "What is the hallmark of a successful team?"

He replied, "that each member doesn't think they're the most important person in that team."

Creating an atmosphere that is enjoyable to be a part of is an important but often overlooked aspect of successful companies. And this has nothing to do with camaraderie at the expense of outcomes — being results-oriented is, in fact, one of my company's core values.

But when you recognize that morale and performance are related, everything changes. A healthy, collaborative culture draws great people in, equips them to grow through challenges, and creates something greater than the sum of its parts.

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Scale by staying true to what you're best at

One of the quickest ways I see businesses flame out is by chasing every new request or adjacent opportunity. This is especially true for service agencies at an early stage of their growth, when it's hard to say no to additional revenue. It usually starts with a small yes, a request that falls just outside your core competency. This can cascade into working in areas that don't play to your strengths. Your brand loses its

clarity, and the edge that attracted clients in the first place begins to fade.

Companies built to last stay disciplined, especially in their foundational years. They are “self-aware.” They double down on what they do best and rely on their trusted partners to do the adjacent work. I’ve always respected partners who know their niche, own it fully, and don’t drift from it.

This also illustrates that true experts know their limits. Focus doesn’t restrict growth; it makes it sustainable. When you commit to a clear direction, you sharpen your expertise, strengthen your systems, and build a reputation for excellence in your field.

The best ideas don’t always come from the top

One valuable business lesson came from Andrew Rosen, cofounder and CEO of Theory, whom I reported to. He told a company-side meeting, “The ideas that will propel us forward aren’t necessarily going to come from me or from our executives. They’ll come from one of you, people who are closer to the action, who can see opportunities that we can’t.”

That perspective shaped how I lead and is vital during mid-stage business growth.

My experience running the design agency within Ralph Lauren gave me my first real leadership lesson, that my team was serving many masters. The digital design-and-build process trained me to stay open, to see possibilities around every corner.

That same mindset applies to leadership. It’s more important to foster an atmosphere where innovative ideas can come from anyone and anywhere than it is from the most senior voice in the room. The most effective leaders inspire their people to

seek out these possibilities themselves.

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Partnerships are your growth multiplier

When I started my first agency, my primary focus was on driving excellent work and providing exceptional customer service. Rather than relying on salespeople or marketing, a founder-led business can rely on referrals from our high-quality delivery.

However, putting more effort into our platform partners, providers, and peer ties is something I personally would’ve done sooner. Luckily, my co-founders carried that responsibility in our early years. As time went on, I came to realize that external collaborations may be just as significant as the actual job. Particularly in the networked realm of e-commerce, no company functions in a vacuum. Your capacity to resolve a client’s issue often hinges on the personal relationships you’ve formed with your key business partners.

These relationships function as concentric rings of trust that extend from your internal team to your clients, their own customers, and out to the industry. Being known as a trustworthy partner who works well with others can open up doors that you can’t get just through marketing or sales.

It helps your company by building a strong network that provides you with client leads and also valuable industry insights and competitive information. Strong business partnerships born during positive, early engagements are also invaluable during the challenges that arise in any agency-client relationship.

Work with people whose strengths complement yours. When you set a relationship on trust and a clear, common goal, their success will reinforce your foundation over time — and sustainable growth will follow.

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Wall Street Is Losing Its Edge. Here’s Where the Smart Money Is Moving Now.



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Key Takeaways

- The world’s boldest investors are chasing yield, culture and controlled chaos in private markets and alternative assets.
- Public markets are crowded, and the edge now lives in the shadows — private credit deals, cultural assets, digital rails and tangible scarcity.

If you’re still playing the stock-and-bond shuffle, you’re late to the after-party. The smartest money is already moving

off the public grid into private credit, infrastructure, collectibles and cultural assets that make both life and portfolios interesting.

Even Gary Vaynerchuk is saying it out loud. "*We're living in a fractioned media landscape*," he told a packed room at the Clover x Shark Tank Summit. "*The big mistake we're making is not taking advantage of where the attention actually is*."

Attention is the new alpha — and right now, it's living in the private markets.

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1. Private credit is the new crypto — but with cash flow

Crypto taught a generation to question institutions. Private credit taught them how to profit from that skepticism.

With banks retreating under regulation, private lenders are earning double-digit yields funding middle-market businesses, real estate projects and asset-backed loans. Platforms like Yieldstreet and iCapital have turned what used to be a hedge-fund game into something accredited investors can actually access.

It's boring in all the right ways: predictable income, real collateral and none of the meme-coin mood swings. The next time someone says "*blockchain,*" think "*balance sheet*."

2. Infrastructure and energy bottlenecks: Power is the new real estate

Forget flipping houses — today's moguls are flipping

megawatts.
AI’s insatiable hunger for power has turned data centers, transmission lines and battery storage into the hottest assets on Earth. Investing here isn’t glamorous, but it’s grounded. You’re literally funding the backbone of the digital economy.

According to BlackRock’s 2025 Global Outlook, themes centered around rebuilding the physical economy — such as infrastructure, manufacturing and homebuilding — are “*better poised to benefit as they sit at the intersection of policy tailwinds and structural change*.”

BlackRock’s Private Markets Outlook also projects private markets expanding from roughly $13 trillion today to more than $20 trillion by 2030, with infrastructure highlighted as a top-performing sector.

In short, infrastructure is having its moment. BlackRock even forecasts that infrastructure returns will outpace equities through the decade. Stability, yield and relevance? That’s a sexy combo.

3. Crypto didn’t die. It got classy.

The hype wave may have crashed, but serious capital never left. Under the surface, investors are building positions in tokenized assets, DeFi credit lines and real-world-asset (RWA) platforms that turn everything from real estate to royalties into tradable tokens.

Think of it as blockchain’s grown-up phase. Smart investors aren’t gambling on meme coins — they’re using crypto rails to buy things that actually exist. That’s how speculation evolves into infrastructure.

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4. The passion portfolio: From whiskey to wearables

Wealth is getting personal. Investors are building “passion portfolios” filled with assets they can touch, taste and tell stories about — barrels of bourbon, vintage sneakers, rare art, even signed guitars.

Platforms like CaskX, Vint and Rally fractionalize everything from fine wine to Ferraris. Returns can range from 8-20% a year, and the bragging rights are priceless.

As Poppi founder Allison Ellsworth told the Clover X audience, “*Take 20% more risk*.” It’s a mantra that applies as much to investing as it does to entrepreneurship. Because when attention is currency, owning the cool stuff pays twice — once in returns and again in relevance.

5. Pre-IPO plays and secondary markets: Getting in before the bell

While everyone else complains about IPO droughts, private investors are quietly buying pre-IPO shares in late-stage giants like Stripe and SpaceX through Linqto, Hiive and EquityZen.

This is the new insider game — legal, transparent and lucrative if you time it right. You’re betting on growth before CNBC ever utters the ticker symbol.

6. Farmland, water rights and other earthly hedges

In a world of virtual everything, the oldest assets are suddenly the hottest.
Farmland and water rights are pulling in investors who want

sustainability with yield. Platforms like AcreTrader and FarmTogether turn literal dirt into defensible wealth. When climate volatility meets population growth, soil becomes the ultimate scarce commodity.

It’s slow, patient and profoundly unsexy — until you see the returns.

7. What the Sharks know

At the Clover x Shark Tank Summit, Barbara Corcoran reminded the crowd why intuition still matters in business: “*Fun is good for business. Always hire happy people*.” That spirit of optimism and playfulness now defines a new generation of investors — creative, curious and unafraid to color outside the lines.

On the same stage, Kevin O’Leary put it more bluntly: “*You can either buy the package or send your kids to college*.”

The message was clear: Safe is expensive; smart risk buys freedom.

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8. The new rule of wealth: Weird is the new diversified

We’re past the era of passive portfolios. The modern investor is part economist, part tastemaker, part rebel — curating wealth the way others curate brands. They’re not just chasing returns; they’re chasing relevance. In 2025, attention has become its own form of currency, and scarcity is the new status symbol.

As Vaynerchuk told the audience at the Clover x Shark Tank Summit, “*Everyone in this room is one post away from things*

being different."

The same logic applies to investing: replace *post* with *position* — and you've got the new investment thesis.

Public markets are crowded. The edge now lives in the shadows — private credit deals, cultural assets, digital rails and tangible scarcity. Crypto made investors fearless. Private markets will make them wise. Because the best investments don't just make money; they make stories.

Key Takeaways

- The world's boldest investors are chasing yield, culture and controlled chaos in private markets and alternative assets.
- Public markets are crowded, and the edge now lives in the shadows — private credit deals, cultural assets, digital rails and tangible scarcity.

If you're still playing the stock-and-bond shuffle, you're late to the after-party. The smartest money is already moving off the public grid into private credit, infrastructure, collectibles and cultural assets that make both life and portfolios interesting.

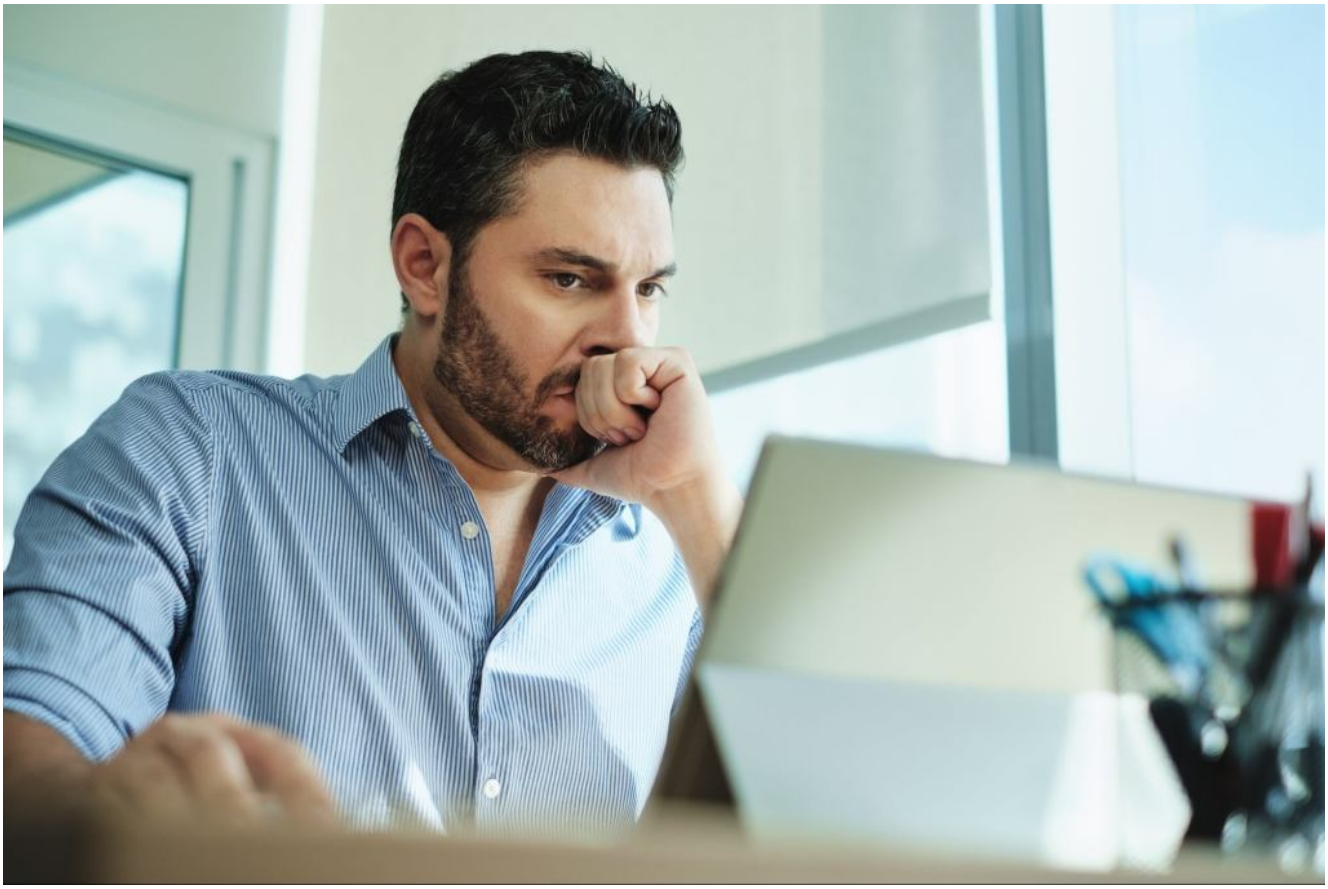
Even Gary Vaynerchuk is saying it out loud. "*We're living in a fractioned media landscape*," he told a packed room at the Clover x Shark Tank Summit. "*The big mistake we're making is not taking advantage of where the attention actually is*."

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This Red Flag Reveals If You’re Stuck In a Job That’s Going Nowhere



Key Takeaways

- Roughly 60% of employees don’t have “quality jobs,” according to a recent Gallup report.
- Lana Peters, chief customer experience officer at Klaar, discusses how to determine where you stand.

You might be investing a lot of time into your 9-5, but is it paying dividends for long-term success?

About 60% of people lack “quality jobs” offering fair pay and benefits, safe workplaces, opportunities for growth and more, according to a 2025 Gallup report.

The research, which surveyed more than 18,000 U.S. workers across industries, demographics and employment types, noted that quality jobs are linked to higher satisfaction and wellbeing — yet 25% of employees said they had no potential for promotions or advancement.

Related: These Fields Are Losing the Most Entry-Level Jobs to AI, According to a New Stanford Study

The opportunity to grow at work is a core value for modern employees, Lana Peters, chief customer experience officer at performance management platform Klaar, tells *Entrepreneur*.

“Workers can determine if they’re in a high-quality job by looking at how frequently they receive feedback and coaching for career growth within the company,” Peters says. “Do managers deliver real-time feedback on your work and insights to how you can improve?”

Related: These ‘AI-Resistant’ Jobs Don’t Require a College Degree — and Starting Salaries Can Surpass $70,000 a Year

Frequent conversations about feedback and goals can impact the trajectory of your career significantly — and managers should leverage AI and modern technology to make them as fruitful as possible, according to Peters.

In fact, Peters says that if your organization isn’t encouraging its leaders to use AI to free employees from manual work and drive individual growth, you might not have a quality job — and should consider taking steps to improve your working conditions.

For example, if you’re not receiving feedback as frequently as you’d like, explain to your manager that real-time feedback

helps you thrive, Peters says.

Related: Don’t Expect to Get a New Job in 2025 If You Lack These 2 Skill Sets, New Report Reveals

If you do decide to move on to your next job opportunity, don’t hesitate to ask HR and the hiring manager questions about growth opportunities within their company and if it’s recently adopted any technology that can improve the flow of work, Peters suggests.

“The answers can help you identify a good job in this volatile economy and job market,” Peters says.

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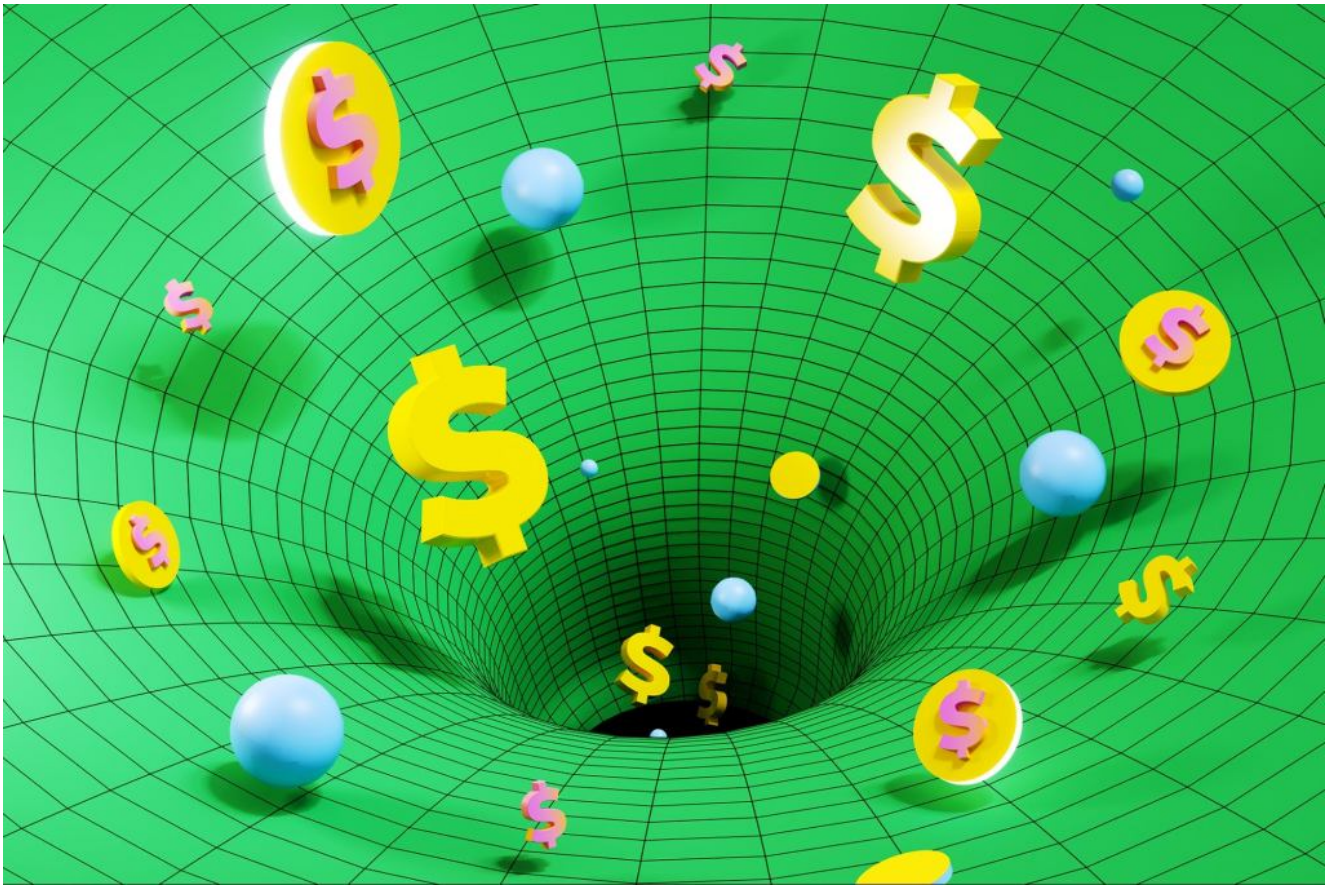
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What It Will Actually Take to Bridge the Gap Between DeFi and Traditional Finance



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For all its excitement, there is still a barrier when it comes to decentralizing institutional finance. Those within Web3 understand the benefits these technologies can bring, but outside the bubble, there remains mistrust and hesitation.

Sure, we're seeing large banks speculating. With one third of institutional investors allocating at least 10% of their portfolios to cryptoassets, it's easy to assume adoption is on the rise. However, there is still a high level of caution, especially when it comes to elements such as RWAs and digitized assets.

At the heart of this reluctance is one simple factor: trust.

Institutional investors lack confidence in the safety, stability and governance of crypto and RWAs. To bridge this gap, the market needs to address the key concerns at play and provide reassurance. At the same time, the Web3 space still needs to enable innovation and growth, given its nascent stage.

Related: **The Future is DeFi: Going Beyond the Traditional Norm**

The ‘R’ word

For a long time, the concept of regulation was in complete contrast to the ideals of Web3. The community has voiced its concerns, especially in relation to decentralization. The idea of regulation brought with it images of bureaucracy and inefficiency. But as time has gone on, the market has matured. Many in Web3 realize that regulation, especially in finance, is now a fundamental need.

We’ve seen major leaps forward this year. The GENIUS Act, combined with financial markets committing to crypto are positive signs. However, many institutional investors are still concerned. EY’s Institutional Investor Digital Assets Survey tempered market enthusiasm with the need for “regulatory clarity.” While the market is on the right track, traditional finance needs more.

Innovation with guardrails

Web3 must balance innovation with compliance. While concerns about rising compliance costs are not unfounded, the risks of an unstructured approach are far greater. A lack of structure around innovation in institutional finance creates risk. Without following clear protocols, a new application could potentially expose a bank to risks ranging from fraud to market manipulation. As such, Web3 organizations engaging with traditional finance need to recognize the sensitivities and

concerns at play.

While other industries may welcome more conventional disruption, Web3 companies need to play by the rules of traditional finance if they want to succeed. Innovation can still happen, but it needs to take place within the controls of these established players. As frustrating as it may sometimes be, aligning with traditional financial controls will open the door to this market.

Related: Why We Should Advocate for Decentralized Finance and Its Regulation

Making compliance central

At the same time, building trust goes beyond following legislation. The regulation that grew out of the 2008 crash had strict requirements in place, but regulators were equally focused on ensuring banks demonstrated "positive intent" towards the "vision" of these controls. Even if a Web3 organization is compliant on paper, it is also important to show that they championed regulation as a concept.

Achieving this requires leaning into how institutional organizations operate. For large banks, compliance is at the core of the process, and the same needs to be so for Web3 — not for an individual organization, but as a standard that any company can follow, competitor or not.

Building a network of trust

Institutional investors can't rely on a single, "trustworthy" organization. They need to see an entire ecosystem that holds compliance and regulation at its core. In this way, working together to align on compliance will benefit the entire Web3 space. Establishing a community of companies that show the same approach will increase trust from non-Web3 companies.

In doing so, investors can “plug in” to the system, knowing that everyone they are dealing with meets the same standards. To establish this environment, Web3 businesses need to collaborate together, adhere to the same principles and maintain the same standards as one another. In a competitive market, this may feel counterproductive, but it’s the only way to unlock institutional engagement.

Examples are already emerging from JP Morgan’s tokenized collateral pilots toMiCA’s pan-European regulatory framework. These initiatives show how industry-wide trust can unlock institutional engagement.

Related: This Data Security Consultant Explains Why Businesses Should Embrace Web3 — But Do It Cautiously

Slow and steady

In the rapid market of Web3, it’s easy to think that appealing to institutional investors is about having the first-mover advantage. While there’s no doubt that the fastest offering can gain majority support, overlooking the needs of institutional investors can cause a business to go back to the drawing board.

Instead of speed, the organizations that create robust systems that maintain trust will be the winners. Systems that can stand the test of time for decades will be the measure of success for these organizations.

While compliance is a growing discussion in Web3, it requires attention in the world of traditional finance. These established institutions need to feel confident in adopting Web3. To do so, they need to see the entire market prove the focus on compliance and trust that they know exists within traditional markets.

The bridge between DeFi and TradFi is only half-built. To

finish it, the industry must lay its foundation in compliance and trust. Only then will real adoption follow.

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Want to Increase Sales? Start

With This Weekly Report.



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Key Takeaways

- A disciplined, weekly-reviewed pipeline report gives business owners a clear, data-driven view of future revenue and potential shortfalls.
- By tracking, weighting and analyzing every sales opportunity, companies can focus efforts, improve performance, and consistently drive higher sales.

Rarely do I meet a business owner who isn’t looking to increase sales. There’s never quite enough work, right? The backlog only stretches so far — and beyond that lies the abyss.

The truth is, there’s no magic bullet for growing revenue. But

there is one report you should be reviewing every single week that will dramatically help: the pipeline report. Do you have one? You should.

Why the pipeline report matters

Some of my clients track their pipeline in a simple spreadsheet, and that's fine. But my best clients rely heavily on their CRM systems. Most CRMs come with a pipeline report built in, and the smart companies take the time to customize it to fit their business.

Successful owners and managers live and die by this report because it tells them their future. It identifies potential revenue shortfalls before they happen, highlights top performers and gives them the visibility to plan their marketing, spending, hiring and investment decisions with confidence.

Related: Want to Maximize the Sale Price of Your Business? Start with These 5 Value Drivers

What the report reveals

A strong pipeline report shows all potential revenue opportunities in play – every quote, bid, proposal, and estimate. It also includes prospects who haven't yet received a quote but are moving in that direction. In other words, it's a forward-looking snapshot of your business. It's your revenue forecast in motion.

Building a strong pipeline report

Start with the basics. List every active opportunity with the company name, contact, description, estimated value, date created, expected close date and the salesperson or manager responsible for it. Don't limit this to new prospects –

include existing customers if they’re likely to buy more.

Next, assign a probability to each opportunity. Keep it simple. In my company, we give unquoted opportunities a 10% chance of closing. Once a quote goes out, that jumps to 50%. If it’s been sitting for more than 30 days with no movement, we lower it to 25% unless there’s a good reason not to. If it’s looking promising, we move it up to 75%. And once it’s closed but not yet invoiced, we assign it 95% . We review and adjust these numbers every week.

From there, calculate the weighted value of each opportunity by multiplying its value by its probability. When you total those figures, you’ll have a clear forecast of your likely sales over the next 30 to 90 days. This method works, and it works consistently.

Each opportunity should also include recent activities — calls, emails, meetings — and the next planned follow-up. Managers need to know who last communicated with a prospect and what comes next. While a spreadsheet can handle this manually, a CRM integrated with your email and calendar makes the process automatic.

Finally, organize the report by the age of the opportunity and by the person accountable. This allows managers to zero in on older or stalled deals and decide what to do — apply pressure, re-engage the prospect or remove the opportunity altogether.

Learning from lost opportunities

When an opportunity is lost, remove it from the active report but keep it in your database. Always record a reason — price, competitor, timing, or any other factor. Review these reasons quarterly. Patterns will emerge. You may find that a specific competitor is winning too often, or that pricing or communication needs improvement.

This analysis also helps you measure performance. Track each salesperson's "batting average" – their closed deals compared to total opportunities – and you'll quickly see who's performing best and why. You can do the same for wins to identify what's working and replicate it across the team.

How this drives sales

The power of the pipeline report is in its discipline. It keeps management aware of every opportunity, helps salespeople focus on the best ones, and prevents leads from slipping through the cracks. It shows where the business is heading, who's driving it, and what adjustments need to be made now – not after the quarter has ended.

Related: Work Smarter and Boost Sales with These 5 Peak Season Tips

Make it a habit

If your company already uses a CRM system, make the pipeline report your top priority. Eliminate redundant spreadsheets and require all opportunities to be entered and updated regularly. Many businesses complain that their teams don't fully adopt the CRM. Weekly pipeline reviews fix that problem fast.

My company has implemented hundreds of CRM systems across industries. The most successful owners and managers – the ones who consistently hit their sales goals – are those who commit to their pipeline report. They review it weekly, discuss it with their teams and use it to drive decisions.

Do the same, and you will increase your sales.

Key Takeaways

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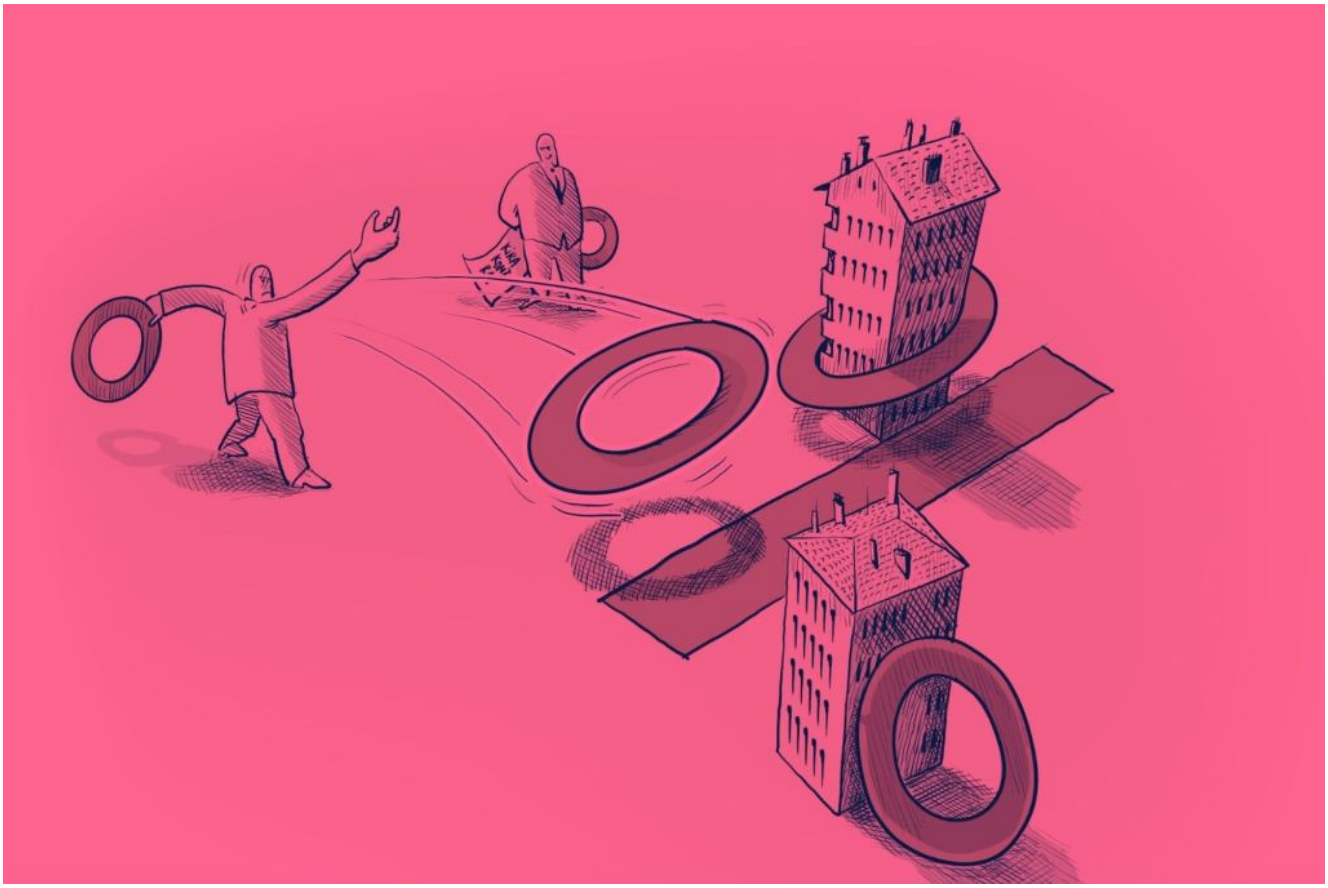
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The Uncomfortable Truth About Property Owner Profits in 2025



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Key Takeaways

- Rent prices have surged over 50% in the past decade, outpacing inflation and fueling strong top-line growth for landlords.
- But rising operating costs, tenant turnover, and affordability pressures mean profits aren’t as straightforward as they seem.
- The key to sustained profitability right now is to focus on tenant retention, add value through upgrades, control expenses and monitor local affordability.

Over the past decade, rent prices have skyrocketed — jumping more than 50% between 2015 and 2025. At first glance, this looks great for landlords: higher rent checks, a strong cash flow and steady demand keeping units desirable.

However, when you factor in inflation, rising operating costs

and shifts in tenant affordability, the question becomes more complex: Are landlords really making more money, or are their profits just keeping pace with higher expenses?

Related: Increase Your Rental Property Revenue by Making This One Simple Change

Rent growth outpacing inflation — at a cost

From 2015 to 2025, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for rent of primary residence rose about 54%, or 5.4% annually, while general inflation averaged closer to 2-3% per year. On paper, this disparity suggests that landlords have been able to grow income faster than the cost of living.

However, rental income gains don't automatically translate into higher profits. Operating expenses like insurance, utilities and financing have also risen sharply in the past decade. Insurance premiums, for example, have spiked in states prone to natural disasters, while maintenance costs have climbed with labor and material inflation.

The result? While your top-line revenue has expanded, profit margins have tightened in some markets.

The post-pandemic surge

Following the pandemic, landlords who had absorbed rent freezes and concessions rapidly raised prices to recover lost income. Between 2021 and 2022, rents spiked by 17-18% nationwide. Many landlords saw their strongest year of income growth during this window, but expenses also surged:

So, even though gross rental income surged, profit margins didn't always follow. As of 2025, rent growth has cooled, but average rents remain roughly 36% higher than pre-pandemic

levels, signaling a permanent upward reset in housing costs.

Profitability hinges on retention

The past decade also highlighted another profit factor: tenant turnover costs.

As rents have grown faster than wages, housing affordability has declined. Many renters now spend over 30% of their income on housing — a threshold signaling financial strain. When rents outpace local income growth, landlords face greater risks of vacancy, nonpayment and turnover.

Even a few months of vacancy can erase the gains of a 5-10% annual rent hike. As such, sustainable profitability often comes less from aggressive rent increases and more from keeping good tenants long-term.

Related: How to Raise Rent Prices Without Losing Tenants — A Guide for Landlords

Regional differences: Inflation's uneven impact

Not all landlords share the same profitability trends.

The Southeastern U.S. has been hit particularly hard by inflation. Between January 2021 and October 2022, household prices in the region rose 14.2%, compared to the national average of 13.9%, according to the U.S. Congress Joint Economic Committee. Although inflation has cooled to around 2.3% in 2025, the effects remain.

Meanwhile, high-demand markets like Florida, Arizona and Texas saw the steepest rent growth — often doubling landlords' returns. But those same markets also experienced sharp increases in insurance premiums and maintenance costs, especially for single-family homes.

In contrast, urban centers such as New York, San Francisco and Seattle have seen rent growth slow in recent years as new supply entered the market. Here, profitability depends more on operational efficiency and offering competitive amenities rather than raising prices.

Suburban single-family rentals, which boomed during the remote work era, remain lucrative but come with higher upkeep and management costs than multifamily units.

Ultimately, it all comes back to “location, location, location.” It influences how much rent landlords can charge, how much tenants can afford and how quickly rising costs eat into returns.

Adjusting rent in an inflationary economy

Inflation’s impact on property management goes beyond headline numbers. Landlords must understand where inflation hits hardest — insurance, property taxes, maintenance — and adjust rent strategically to keep pace.

Raising rent is a necessary part of maintaining profitability, but there’s a fine balance. Pushing rents too high can lead to vacancies and turnover, while holding prices steady can erode margins over time. The most successful landlords adjust rents gradually, aligning with both market trends and tenant affordability.

Moving forward

The average rental increase per year is cooling, with growth projected at 2-4% for 2025. For landlords, this signals a return to more normal profitability margins. Without double-digit rent hikes, future profit growth will come from smarter management, not just higher prices.

Key strategies include:

Related: **How to Set a Fair Rent Price for Your Properties**

Your bottom line

Yes, rents have outpaced inflation over the past decade, but landlords' profit growth hasn't been as straightforward as the numbers suggest. Rising operating expenses and affordability constraints limit just how much of those rent gains translate to real net income.

For landlords, the next chapter isn't about chasing the highest possible rent — it's about balancing rent growth and affordability, tenant stability and efficient operations. That's the path to sustained profitability in an era where inflation squeezes everyone, landlords included.

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This Tech Giant Just Hit $4 Trillion in Market Value — a Feat Only Achieved by Nvidia and Microsoft: 'Watershed Moment'

Key Takeaways

- Apple hit a major milestone on Tuesday, reaching a feat only achieved by Nvidia and Microsoft.
- The stock rally was fueled by early iPhone 17 sales, which were stronger than iPhone 16 sales, according to new research.
- Apple stock has increased by approximately 10% year-to-date, a smaller gain than Nvidia's 40% and Microsoft's 29%.

In early July, Nvidia became the first ever company to hit $4 trillion in market value, with Microsoft following later in

the month. Now another tech giant has joined the exclusive $4 trillion club.

Apple reached a $4 trillion market capitalization for the first time on Tuesday, with the company's stock price reaching new highs of around $270 in early trading, elevating its market cap to a little over $4 trillion.

The stock rally has been driven by strong sales of the new iPhone 17, which Apple introduced last month. According to a Counterpoint Research report last week, sales of the iPhone 17 series surpassed those of the iPhone 16 by 14% during the first 10 days after launch in both the U.S. and China. In other words, initial iPhone 17 sales have significantly outperformed iPhone 16 sales in Apple's two biggest markets.

Related: Here's Why Apple Stock Just Hit an All-Time High, Setting a New Record

The Counterpoint report also indicated that the iPhone 17 Pro Max has been selling well in the U.S. as phone carriers like T-Mobile, Verizon and AT&T offer deals to make the premium device more affordable to customers.

Meanwhile, the iPhone 17 has been selling well in China, with unit sales nearly double that of iPhone 16 sales at the same time in 2024.

In past remarks, Apple CEO Tim Cook has consistently emphasized the strength of the iPhone. For example, at an Apple town hall meeting in 2016, Cook said that the iPhone is the "greatest business of the future" and that he expects iPhone sales to continue to grow for decades.



Apple CEO Tim Cook at Apple’s Fifth Avenue store in New York on Friday, Sept. 19, 2025. Photographer: Kena Betancur/Bloomberg via Getty Images

Apple’s stock has increased by approximately 10% year-to-date, a smaller gain compared to Nvidia’s 40% and Microsoft’s 29%. Investors are somewhat cautious about Apple’s position in the AI race, according to *Business Insider*, while Nvidia, a major supplier of AI chips, and Microsoft, a leading AI investor, have seen more significant stock gains.

“Despite missing out on AI so far, Apple hitting the $4 trillion market cap club is a watershed moment for Cupertino and Big Tech,” Dan Ives, Wedbush Securities analyst, told *Bloomberg*. “This is a testament to the best consumer franchise in the world.”

Related: Apple’s Foldable iPhone Release Date Has Been Revealed, According to a JPMorgan Investor Letter

For its fiscal third quarter, Apple generated revenue of $94.04 billion, a 10% year-over-year increase. The tech giant

saw double-digit growth in its iPhone, Mac and Services segments, as well as growth in every geographic region it operates in.

Apple is expected to report its fourth-quarter earnings on Thursday after market close for the period ending September 30.

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