

NO **LAW FIRM** MAGAZINE LEFT BEHIND

December 2022/January 2023

**How To Get
More Love**
*(From Your Social
Media Followers)*

*Stop Calling It A
Labor Shortage*
It Is A Turnover Crisis

Influencing A Movement:
*Discovery Channel's
Mike Rowe On The Power Of
Authenticity In Communication
To Influence Your Audience*

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Influencing A Movement:

**Discovery Channel's
Mike Rowe On The
Power Of Authenticity
In Communication To
Influence Your Audience**



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The Right Thing Is Usually Not the Easy Thing

I did something dumb the other night. My wife and daughter brought home a blooming onion. You know, the deliciously deep-fried mess of grease and onion petals – yeah, that. Here’s the thing, I’m allergic to grease. But when that blooming onion sat hot and steamy on the kitchen counter, I couldn’t help myself. I ate it. The grease destroyed me, and I paid for it over the next two days. As a diabetic with high blood pressure, I run for my health – it’s one of my favorite hobbies. But now that it’s getting darker and colder, I’ve skipped a few runs. Why do I do that even though I know the run will add years to my life? Why did I eat that onion even though I knew it’d make me sick? *Why do we do things we know we shouldn’t?*

We don’t just do this in our personal lives. We cut corners in our businesses, too. You may stay with the same IT company even though you don’t like them because it’s less work than hiring a new one. It’s easy to say, “I have a backup, so if I get hacked, it’s fine,” instead of preventing an attack. It’s easy to think you’ll be okay with a few days of downtime; it won’t hurt your business. But I can tell you that all those things cause significant problems down the road. It’ll be more expensive and time-consuming and won’t get you any closer to your goals. The easy stuff will end up costing you.

It’s helpful to ask yourself whether your actions are right or easy. For example, let’s say you have a goal to improve business culture, but you have a bad employee. Keeping this person on is easy. Short term, you don’t have to mess with difficult conversations, close their accounts, or train someone new. But it doesn’t help you reach your goal. It could even hurt your business down the road if that person makes a mistake. My business partner and I are good at checking each

other and asking, “Are we doing it the right way or the easy way?”

We both believe in doing the right thing, but it’s not always clear-cut, so we hold each other accountable. How can I save money? How can I change the culture of my business? How can I improve the lives of the people who work for me through technology? To answer these questions, you must take the right path, not the easy one. If we keep saying yes to short-term solutions, we’ll never find out what life or work can really be.

Everything in this issue of *No Law Firm Left Behind* is about change – it’s about doing the right thing and going in the right direction. Read an article or two and be inspired to stop taking the easy way out. If I can help you do that, give me a call.

Sincerely,



Jim Gast,
CEO Of SpliceNet Consulting

How To Get More Love

(From Your Social Media Followers)

Without Engagement, Social Media Is Just Media.

Yes, having a good social media presence where you regularly put out interesting, relevant, and entertaining content will keep leads from thinking you're an archaic dinosaur. But without engagement, it's like standing all alone in the middle of a forest, talking to no one and expecting relationships.

How do you take the content you are already putting out there and get more likes, comments, shares, and engagement? It all starts with learning the No. 1 rule in the social media game.

Play The Game

Social media platforms make money through ads, which means their primary goal is to keep people engaged and logged on to the platforms for as long as possible in order to see these ads. **If your content engages your audience and keeps them on the platform, the social media gods will shine favorably on you and show your content more, which will turn into more engagement.** You don't have to be doing ads on social media in order to get visibility, though. You can (and should) be posting free content on a daily basis, Monday–Friday (at a minimum).

Tips To Get More Engagement

Reshare Content To Your Personal Pages. Even though many of your personal social network may be just that — personal connections — they are the ones who will be more likely to engage with your content, which is the goal! Ask team members to reshare as well, especially those who are visible figures in the company or have contact with clients and prospects (sales, marketing, engineers, etc.).

Get Likes FAST. Have employees go in and like and leave a comment on the post within 45 minutes to an hour of posting. **IMPORTANT!** The posts that receive interaction within the first 45 minutes to an hour will do the best, as the algorithm will notice people are interested in the post and will push it out to more people.





✔ **Go LIVE Once A Week With A Quick Tip.** Facebook likes live content and will give it more traction than an uploaded video.

✔ **Like Others' Pages Logged In As Your Page.** Go to the pages of your current clients or 100 dream prospects and click the "..." button underneath the cover photo and select "Like as your page."

✔ **Join Local Groups.** This could be groups such as the chamber, city business groups, etc. Join AS YOUR PAGE and share a post in there once a week.

✔ **On LinkedIn, Invite Connections To Like Your Page!** Each admin gets a set number of credits a month. When someone you invite likes the page, you'll get your credit back so you can invite someone else.

✔ **Spend 5-10 Minutes A Day Engaging With People.** Like, share, and comment on client pages, prospects, and community groups. Be active — but also be wary of the massive time suck social media can be. This isn't time to fall down a rabbit hole checking in on old school mates. This is an INTENTIONAL time set to engage with purpose. Set a timer and log OFF the second it goes off.

Limited Reach Is Normal: Roughly 10% of your followers on any platform will see a single post. The more engagement it gets, the more the platform will push it out.



ADVANCED TIP: Put Some \$\$ Behind It!

- **Facebook:** Upload your prospect list into your Facebook Ads Manager as a custom audience. Then you turn posts into ads and target the people you're trying to get in front of.
- **LinkedIn:** You can "sponsor" a post, which is just like a boosted post if you wanted to try putting money behind anything.

Remember you cannot buy social media engagement; you need to BUILD it. It will take time (don't get discouraged), and it will feel like it isn't worth it (until it is!). But keep at it! In the words of the bestselling author Erik Qualman, "We don't have a choice on whether we do social media. The question is how well we do it." ■



Allison Foelber is the VP of Done-For-You Agency Services at TMT. She has been in the IT marketing industry for over 10 years. In her current role, she manages the building of conversion marketing funnels for clients that leverage the power of print, digital, and authority marketing to generate leads. She can be reached at Allison@TechnologyMarketingToolkit.com.

It's Time For A Refresh!

4 Cyber Security Trainings To Do With All Employees



Students have returned to the classroom now that back-to-school season is officially underway. During the first few weeks, teachers have re-taught their students the topics they learned in the previous school year to help them regain knowledge they may have forgotten during summer break. But students aren't the only ones in need of a refresher every year. Your employees and team also need to be refreshed on company policies, values, and most importantly, cybersecurity practices.

Did you know that human error accounts for 95% of all successful cyber-attacks? When a cybercriminal is planning an attack, they look for weak points within a company's cybersecurity plan. The easiest spot for hackers to exploit is a company's employees. New cyberthreats are created on a consistent basis, and it's important that your employees know what to do when they encounter a potential threat. If your employees are not routinely participating in cybersecurity trainings, your business could be at risk — regardless of size.

Every single one of your employees should be familiar with your cybersecurity practices. When they're hired on, they should go through an initial training that lays out all of your practices and they should also participate in refresher trainings throughout the year to ensure that the entire team is on the same page with cybersecurity. At the very least, you should host at least one security training annually. If you've never put together a cybersecurity training, you may be wondering what topics you need to cover with your team. Here are four of the most important topics to cover.

Responsibility For Company Data

This is your opportunity to explain why cybersecurity is so important to your employees. They need to understand why cybercriminals are interested in your company's data and what they could potentially do with it. Everyone on your team has a legal and regulatory obligation to protect the privacy of your company's information. When discussing this topic with your team, it's imperative that they know the ramifications of falling victim to a cybersecurity threat.

Internet Usage

Does your company have restrictions on what websites your employees can use while at work? If you don't, that's something you should look into. Every device that's used by your employ-

ees should have safe browsing software downloaded onto it to prevent them from stumbling upon dangerous sites that could put your company's data at risk. Your employees should know what sites are acceptable to use and that they should not be accessing their personal accounts while connected to your company's network. They should never click on links that are sent from an anonymous source or are found on an unapproved website.

Email

If your employees utilize an email address while at work, it's important that they know which emails are safe to open. Employees should not respond to emails that are from people they aren't familiar with as that could be a cybercriminal attempting to gain access to your company's data. Employees should only accept and open emails that they were expecting or that came from a familiar email address.

Protecting Their Computers

If your employees have their own personal computers, they should be doing everything in their power to keep them protected. Whenever they walk away from their computer, they should make sure it's locked, and they should never leave their computer in an unsecure location. Also, ensure that your employees are backing up their data routinely and have downloaded necessary antivirus software.

It's of the utmost importance that your team has been fully trained in your cybersecurity practices. If they haven't, they could open your business up to all sorts of cyber-attacks that will damage your company's reputation from a customer perspective. Your business will also no longer be compliant and insurance companies may not cover your claims if your team is not participating in regular training.

Ensuring that your team is aware of your cybersecurity practices and actively taking steps to strengthen your cybersecurity is the best way to stay compliant and prevent cyber-attacks. If your team is not regularly going through cybersecurity training, you need to start. It will offer more protection to your business, which will make your customers more comfortable doing business with your company. ■

How To Get More HVCs (High-Value Clients)



Pop Quiz

Question: How much more did your web designer charge you for the high-value client you got from the website over the lower-value clients you've gotten in the past? How much more did the post office charge you to send the sales letter that got the HVC versus the non-buyers and cheap-skates? How about Google PPC? Facebook?

The Answer: Not a penny more, but HVCs can be worth 2x, 5x, or 10x what most other regular clients are worth. If you know this, here's a good follow-up question: What are you doing specifically to attract, close, and develop more HVCs?



What Is An HVC?

A high-value client is different for everyone, but in general, they represent far more PROFIT (not revenue) than your average client. They're also easy to service where you can do your best work because their needs and your capabilities align. They appreciate what you do and don't see what they spend with you as "a LOT of money." Typically, they are a growing company with constantly expanding needs, creating more opportunities for you. Their needs are frequent, not sporadic. They pay on time, comply with your advice, and refer.



1%, 4%, 15%,
60%, 20%

I'm sure you've heard of the 80-20 Rule or Pareto Principle. It's a natural law discovered in the late 1800s by the Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto, who was attempting to uncover why 80% of the wealth (which at the time was land) was owned by 20% of the people. Since his discovery of this natural law, it's been studied and discovered to apply to all things in our lives from the mass of stars and the size of cities to the clothes you wear and the carpets in your house (20% of the clothes in your closet get 80% of the wear ... same with your carpets).

These numbers break down even more, which means that 1% of your client base are your "whales," 4% your baby whales, and 15% your top clients. From there, 60% of your clients are "average" in spend, and the bottom 20% need to be fired.

Therefore, it's very likely 80% of your PROFITS are coming from those top 20% of your clients. You might already know this, but the more important questions are what are you doing about it? What are you doing to attract more of the 20%? To develop the clients you have to be HVCs? What are you doing with the 20% to continue to expand that relationship? To get them to refer you to others like them? To simply show them more appreciation? In most cases, the answer is nothing. You have democratized support, effort, attention, and spend to ALL clients and ALL marketing, when it would be a heck of a lot smarter to figure out what's common about the top 20% and use that information to attract more like them versus more of "everyone."



Why It's More Critical Than Ever To Get HVCs

Inflation and a tough labor market require a different, more strategic approach to expansion than "more" clients. Since your business growth, revenue, and profits are directly tied to a need to hire employees, and those employees are becoming harder to find and



more expensive to pay, you've GOT to be smarter about not accepting just anyone as a client. Otherwise, you have very expensive talent working on low-money clients and low-leverage opportunities, which is a recipe for low margins and problems multiplied.

I have a beach home in Florida in 30A. One of the problems I've noticed over the summer is that many of the restaurants are only operating at 70% capacity — meaning they have about 30% of their tables open with no patrons, yet demand is higher than ever with people waiting in line out front and reservations booked weeks in advance. When I've inquired as to what's going on, ALL have said it's because they can't get the workers for the kitchen or the wait staff to serve the customers. Knowing this, they ALL should be gathering the contact information of any patron who comes in and spends an above average amount on dinner, drinks, and desserts and work to get THOSE people back into their establishment versus just letting anyone book a table. Of course, none of them are doing that. I'm a big spender when I go out to eat because I always order expensive wine, appetizers, AND dessert. I also tip big. I tend to host big parties and bring the family, running up high tabs — yet none of the restaurant man-

agers approach me about selling a membership or putting me on a special VIP notification list of "jump the line" seating. And because I have a house there, I frequent a few of the restaurants more often than people who are there for a week's vacation, then leave.

The point is that if your capacity is limited, you need to make sure you ONLY stock the pond with big fish and not minnows, because the MORE clients you NEED to hit your revenue, growth, or income goals, the more complicated, stressful, and problem-riddled your business becomes.



What Do HVCs Want, And How To Attract More Of Them

As I said, HVCs are going to be slightly different for each person. But if we stick to the common denominator, which is HIGH PROFITS with a BIG SPEND, then we can assume HVCs are people who are willing AND able to spend a higher amount of money.

Given that fact, they are also far more likely to seek the advice of trusted advisors. They make their decisions on WHOM to buy from, not WHAT to buy, and not on price or the features and benefits of the service or product.

For example, we recently had to have our pool rebuilt because the previous builder was a complete doofus who screwed up

How To Add \$1 Million In Sales

At \$300 Per Month = 278 Clients

At \$500 Per Month = 167 Clients

At \$1,000 Per Month = 84 Clients

At \$5,000 Per Month = 17 Clients

At \$10,000 Per Month = 9 Clients

A Good Question: How can you **DOUBLE** your sales without adding a single new client?



Newsletter Pro

Your Retention Strategy

Needs A Boost

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Did you know that it costs 5 times more to attract a new customer than to retain an old one?

It's true! When it comes to building a successful business, retention is essential. **In fact, it's estimated that an increase in customer retention of just 5% can result in a profit increase of between 25% and 95%!**

Content marketing is one of the best and most engaging ways to increase your business' long-term retention rates, but sometimes it can be hard to know where to start.

We can help.



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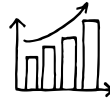
multiple things with our home. A lower-income person might have found someone to come out and put a patch on the leaks, ignoring the sinking pool deck and cracks. A middle-income person may have called a few pool companies and made the decision on whom to hire based on who answered the phones live and/or returned their calls (sadly, this is rampant). They might talk to a few about "what it would cost" to fix the pool and chose the company based on whom they felt wasn't "too expensive" and would do a "good" job. But a wealthy person is going to FIRST find the BEST pool company in town. They are going to ask their other high-net worth neighbors whom they trusted with their pools — then hire THAT guy, regardless of what it costs.

That's why referrals and networking are so critical to getting HVCs. In my case, I have a new builder who specializes in custom, high-end homes who I trust and called him to get a recommendation. I'm also PAYING him to oversee the job so I knew it would be done right. I didn't make my decision on price, but on hiring the best person.



So, What Does An HVC Want In A Business?

They want someone they can TRUST to have a high level of competence and expertise. HVCs make their decisions based on WHO is providing the service more than what the service is or the price. They want a highly competent person handling their service because they want to lower their RISK. They do NOT want to be embarrassed and appear incompetent or taken advantage of out of their ignorance and stupidity of making a bad decision or hiring the wrong person. THIS DRIVES THEIR SPEND.

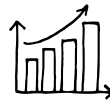


They want someone who will make their life EASY. HVCs tend to be running growing companies and need a vendor who can keep up with their growth. They want someone who doesn't need to be reminded or managed to do the job they were hired to do. They know their time IS money (unlike most who say that but behave entirely different) and hate to be stalled, inconvenienced, or aggravated by someone complicating their life.



They want someone who is highly compensated. HVCs are very accustomed to spending money on advisors, and "cheap" is a RED FLAG to them.

They expect price to go up with competence. Think about Rolex watches or Rolls Royce cars. They don't sell these items using a "Labor Day weekend sale!" with balloons and clowns and cheap markdowns spray painted on the windshield. In general, we all associate "expensive" with higher value. If your prices are too cheap, you're actually losing face with HVCs.



They want appreciation and special treatment. HVCs know they are HVCs and want to be recognized as such. If they feel appreciated, they will spend more and refer more often. ■

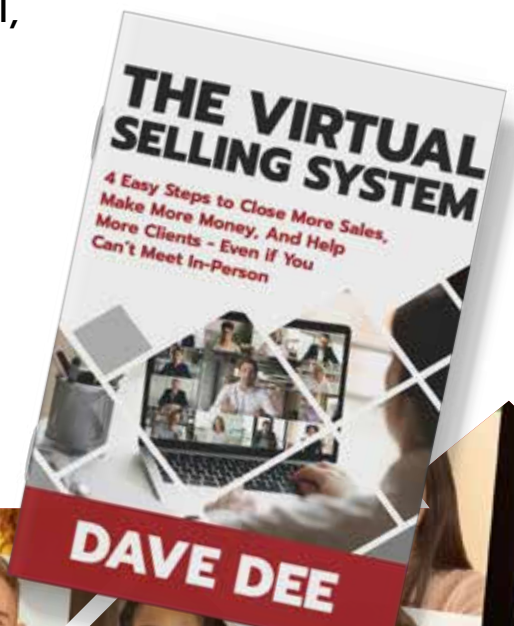
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12 Life-Changing Ways To

CREATE

YOUR

OWN LUCK

From Zico Coconut Water
Co-Founder & Millionaire
Entrepreneur Jesse Itzler

Jesse Itzler's life is about being bold and never shying away from taking risks.

A former rapper turned entrepreneur, motivational speaker, and bestselling author, Itzler believes action trumps experience and you create your own luck by putting yourself in a position for luck to *find* you. He says, "Luck doesn't happen sitting at home watching the Kardashians." Check out this clip from the 2022 Producers Club meeting, where Jesse shares an incredible story of the action he took that pushed him as an entrepreneur:

[MSPSuccessMagazine.com/action](https://www.msp-success.com/action).

At 21 years old, he landed a record deal as a rapper (under the pseudonym Jesse James) by cold-calling a record label and hustling his way into the room.

After getting dropped from his record label, he wrote a theme song for the New York Knicks that went viral and started a record label called Alphabet City Sports Records. He and his partner wrote and produced sports team theme songs, including the NBA's Emmy Award-winning anthem, "I Love This Game," and collaborated on campaigns with big-name brands such as Coca-Cola and Foot Locker. They later sold the company for \$16 million.

At 27 years old, with only an idea, no experience, and not enough money to get his company Marquis Jets off the ground, he convinced the largest private jet company in the world to go into business with him. He grew that company to the world's largest prepaid private jet card company that did \$5 billion in sales, which he and his partner then sold to Berkshire Hathaway/Warren Buffett.

Jesse tells a fascinating TRUE story about how he sold his company, Zico Coconut Water, to Coca-Cola. He convinced Matt Damon to make a home video of himself, begrudgingly shaking a coconut from a tree in his backyard and tirelessly chopping it open so his young daughter could drink from it with a straw, then sent the video to the president of Coca-Cola. Zico Coconut Water, which Jesse co-founded, was one of 27,000 beverage companies in consideration for Coca-Cola to purchase.

During a 100-mile race he ran with friends, he became so inspired by a Navy SEAL named David Goggins, who ran the race by himself, that he invited Goggins to live with him for a month. He turned that experience into a bestselling book, "Living With a SEAL: 31 Days Training With the Toughest Man on the Planet."

Today, he is one of the top 10 speakers in the world, married to the founder of Spanx, Sara Blakely, raising four kids, and co-owner of the NBA team the Atlanta Hawks.

At a recent TMT Producers Club meeting, Jesse Itzler shared his unorthodox journey of going from a kiddie pool attendant to growing a company to \$5 billion in 10 years and how he pulled off his extraordinary accomplishments. Here are 12 lessons from Jesse on how to create your own luck.

Build Deep, Authentic, Meaningful Relationships.

When Jesse was 22 and had no money, he sent 10 handwritten letters out every day. They were all one-way letters, meaning he didn't expect a response. He built relationships by authentically sending messages that truly meant something to people at a time when they weren't expecting it. For example, he'd send a note to someone and tell them he admired the way they parented their kids and that they were an unbelievable dad. "I did three things my entire life to build deep, authentic, meaningful relationships with people in my inner

circle," Jesse said. "I complimented them. I congratulated them. And I consoled them ... and a crazy thing happened. They gave me a referral. When something went wrong in my business, they stuck with me."

Put Yourself On The Playing Field And Do Whatever You Can To Accelerate Your Plan.

In the beginning, a lot of Jesse's meetings were flukes. He'd be out somewhere and see someone he'd been looking to pitch. Then he started putting himself in situations where his audience was hanging out and be ready with his elevator pitch. When he started Marquis Jet, to get leads, he'd show up where wealthy people were hanging out. He flew to a conference called TED, but when he arrived, they wouldn't let him in because he didn't have the credentials. Noticing the TED audience was buying lattes and muffins from a local coffee shop during their breaks, he bought all the muffins. Offering people with credentials one of his "extra muffins" is how he made his first sale for Marquis Jet. "I literally controlled all the muffin inventory in Monterey, California," Jesse said. After people were told there were no muffins, Jesse stopped people as they left the coffee shop. "I'd say, 'Sir, excuse me, I overheard, and I have an extra muffin. If you want it, I'm not going to have it.'" The first man asked Jesse what he did, and when Jesse said he owned a jet company called Marquis Jet, it turned out the man was in the market for a timeshare jet. "When we wrote our business plan for Marquis Jet, nowhere in the business plan did it say, fly 16 hours, go to a coffee shop, and hope to land the customer," Jesse said. "When you have a business, do whatever you can do to get there faster. That's always been my attitude."

Do The 3-Minute Miracle Every Day.

There are a lot of calls and meetings you won't get, so you need to plant a lot of seeds. "I play the numbers game a little bit," Jesse said. "I have something I do called the three-minute miracle where every day, I write a text, DM, or email somebody. If you do it for 30 days, you'll hit a hundred people. If you do it for a year, you'll hit a thousand people. Not everyone's going to be your customer or best friend, but in the beginning, you need one person, one referral, one thing."

Optimize Your Time.

After living in a monastery with eight monks, the biggest change for Jesse was his relationship with time. He explained that often when we think of relationships, we think of people such as our relationship with our kids, our spouse, or our parents. But Jesse challenged the audience to think about relationships in terms of time and money. To illustrate, Jesse asked a woman in the audience about her parents. He discovered she lives in Hawaii and her parents live in Vancouver, and she visits her 80-year-old father once every other year. "Let's say he lives to be 90," Jesse said. "You don't have 10 years. You have five visits. Once you start to look at life and opportunities like that, in moments and not time, you get a fundamental shift in how you want to spend your time and who you want to spend it with."

Raise Your Standards.

As a dreamer, Jesse believes most people's standards for their products and services aren't high enough. "I believe once you have your product and most people say, 'This is amazing!' I immediately go to 'How could it be 10 times better?'" Jesse said. "Everything should be at an Olympic standard. My wife just made a product. Everybody in her company

loved it. They had all these people working on it for five years. They did a fit test, then she put it on. Everyone is going crazy thinking this is going to revolutionize the industry, and she said, 'No, send it back to Italy.' The standard must be high."

Never Give Self-Doubt A Voice.

When he was training for the ultramarathon, he learned to never verbalize pain or self-doubt and to build momentum through wins you create from positive self-talk. "I wouldn't make it a spoken word, because once you say it, it becomes a reality," he said. "When running an ultramarathon, you never say, 'I'm struggling,' you say, 'I feel great!' You start to believe your own lie in those situations, and those small wins are really important to conquer self-doubt. Start to build a little momentum around little things. Self-doubt — if you start saying I'm not good enough and actually believe it, you can't possibly win. None of us can."

Create No-Lose Situations.

Jesse doesn't use win-win situations because while both people may win, they are not equal wins. Instead, he creates situations where there is no way the person could lose. Jesse was given the opportunity to buy four New York Yankees Legend tickets that cost \$320,000 for the season at a time when he was in debt and had zero money. He had nothing to offer and was looking for something he could use to build relationships. He knew the tickets could do that for him and would pay for themselves 10 times over. He agreed to purchase the four New York Legend tickets, then convinced a friend to front him the money by creating a no-lose situation.

"At that point in my life, I was making negative money," Jesse said. "I made 20 grand, and I spent \$25,000 on my credit card. I called the only guy I knew who could afford the tickets and was a huge Yankees fan. I said, 'Look, these seats are available. We'll never have a chance for the rest of our lives to get them. If you lend me the money, I'll pay you back in two years with insane interest. And if I don't, I'll sign the seats over to you. So, you're either going to make a lot of money or you're going to own the best seats in sports history.' He did the deal. I met Jay-Z in a studio six months after I got the tickets. I knew he was a big Yankees fan. I never met him in my life. I told him about the tickets. We split the tickets and were partners in the tickets for 10 years. Two years later, I started Marquis Jet. He's doing a world tour. He needs an airplane. We flew his entire tour on Marquis Jet. It paid for all the seats right there."

Remember, Action Always Trumps Inaction.

Taking fast action on your ideas and dreams is more important than knowing how you'll get there when you don't have everything all figured out. When Jesse was 27 years old, he was a guest on a private airplane. Inspired, by the time he landed, he and his partner had decided to start a private jet company. By the time he was 28 years old, he and his partner co-founded Marquis

Jet. "I wanted to fly privately, except we had no airplanes, but we had an idea," Jesse said. "Our idea was so simple. We wanted to give everyone access to their own private plane without owning it. Everybody in this room is one idea, one referral, one meeting away from changing the entire trajectory of your life. And if you have an idea and it keeps coming to the top of your brain, the universe is telling you to pay attention to it."

Do Things Differently.

You don't get a lot of chances for big opportunities. Most times, you have just one shot. You must figure out BEFORE an important meeting how you are going to stand out in a big way.

Jesse landed a meeting to pitch his idea for his jet cards/Marquis Jet to NetJets, the largest private jet company in the world. But 12 minutes into showing his PowerPoint presentation to Rich Santulli, Founder of NetJets, he was thrown out of the meeting. "We leave dejected thinking where are we going to get 650 planes to start this company?" Jesse said. "The president grabs my arm and says, 'That was unbelievable. Rich Santulli doesn't give anybody 12 minutes. There's something here. Come back next week and bring this thing to life.' We realized as entrepreneurs, we've got to be different. We've got to stand out. We have to take advantage of the opportunity. We have to look for the white space. So, we brought in our own focus group. We set up a table by the boardroom table and one by one, eight people came in: Carl Banks from the New York Giants, Run from Run-D.M.C., a powerful female real estate mogul from New York. One by one, they stood up and said they would never buy a fraction of a plane, which is what NetJets was selling, but they would buy a 25-hour jet card. By the end of the meeting, Rich Santulli said, 'I'm going to give you guys a shot.' A year later, we were bigger than

NetJets. We did \$5 billion in sales cumulatively, and we sold that company to Warren Buffett."

Don't Negotiate Your Goals.

You must have a do-what-ever-it-takes attitude and relentlessly chase your goal all the way to the finish line. When trying to get Marquis Jet



off the ground, he got a notification that Matt Damon, Jennifer Lopez, and Ben Affleck wanted to fly from Los Angeles to the Sundance Film Festival in Utah to demo his product. If they liked it, they would buy a jet card for \$100,000 each. In order to pitch and close the entertainers in person, he told them he was going to Sundance, too, so he could get on the flight with them. But when he didn't get to pitch them on the plane, he didn't let up on his goal. He continued to pursue them at the event, even convincing a gatekeeper to let him in the room at a VIP event.

"We get to 41,000 feet," Jesse said. "I come out and I start pitching Matt Damon on this idea. He says, 'Look man, this sounds like a really cool idea, and I'm actually interested in this, but I've got to get ready for our Project Greenlight event tonight. We're having this small, intimate gathering, and if you're not doing anything, come by. There won't be that many people there, and we could talk about your product and program there. I'd love to learn more.'" Jesse hadn't planned to go to the film festival, so he had no clothes and no hotel room. When they landed, he checked into a Motel 6, bought an outfit at the Gap, then headed to the event. "It's not an intimate affair," Jesse said. "There are 4,000 people trying to get through one guy with a clipboard. And I know I'm not on the list, but I also know I don't negotiate my goals. When we have a goal, it's unwavering. The plot might change. The script might change. But the goal, we don't dumb it down. I'm leaving with the sale."



If You Don't Have A Seat At The Table, Make One.

In the VIP room, he sees the table next to Matt Damon's has Pauly Shore's name on it, so he gets rid of Pauly Shore's nametag and gets a new nametag and writes Jesse Itzler on it.

"If you don't have a seat at the table, you make one," Jesse said. "That's how it works. We've got to create our own seat. Matt comes in. I start talking to him. I start pitching him. It's too loud. I can't hear him. I said, 'Matt, when are you going back to L.A?' He says, 'I'm going back on Sunday.' So, I say, 'You want to fly with me?' He says, 'Yes.'"



Put Pressure On Your Shoulders.

Success comes from learning how to be comfortable with being uncomfortable and putting pressure on yourself. When Jesse was trying to close Matt Damon, Jennifer Lopez, and Ben Affleck, he risked his entire marketing spend for the whole year to pay for the private jet to fly Matt Damon back to L.A. from the Sundance Film Festival because, as he told his partner, "That's all the credibility we need for a lifetime." He adds, "We went back and forth discussing whether we should bet our marketing money on this flight, and we decided to do it," Jesse said. "But it comes with all this pressure. He puts all this pressure on my shoulders."

Let me tell everybody, pressure is a privilege. As leaders and entrepreneurs, we play for pressure. Behind the wall of pressure is where the gold is. Pressure weeds everybody else out in the space. If you don't have enough pressure, put some pressure on your shoulders. As a 27-year-old kid, I wanted that pressure. And by the time we landed, I signed all three of them up."

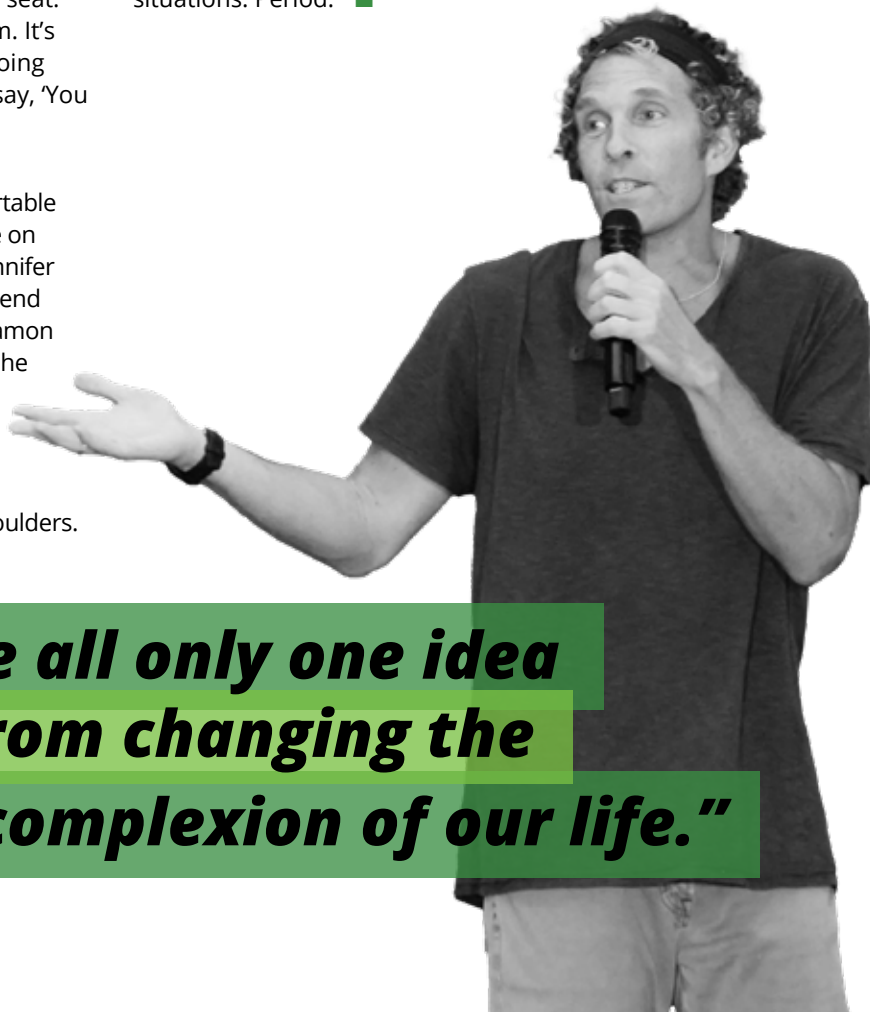


Don't Limit Yourself.

Thinking big is about your mentality. It will shape the way you make decisions and the way you do things.

It can motivate you, attract the right people and opportunities, and lure you out of your comfort zone. After asking his wife to look at his business plan for a coaching program, Jesse realized he wasn't thinking big enough, so he ripped up his plan and came up with a new one. "I said, 'This could be a \$20 million business.'" "My wife said, 'Shame on you.' That was her reaction. And I said, 'What do you mean?' She replied, 'Why would you limit yourself to \$20 million? You just set a limit.' And I said, 'You're right.' I got my team back together, and I said, 'Show me how this could be a \$50 or \$100 million company.'"

Be like Jesse. Reach for peak performance by overcoming self-doubt and pushing past your self-imposed limitations. Have the courage to put yourself out there even when it's foreign or scary and do things that make you feel proud of yourself. When you do, you'll create your own luck. "We've been wired to think success is the outcome of our journey," Jesse said. "What I'm most proud of in my backstories is that I put myself in a situation on the field. Sometimes it works out. Sometimes it doesn't, but I'm proud. And I'm proud I put myself in a position, despite the fear, despite not having it all figured out or being the best on the field. If you want to do exceptional things, you have to put yourself in exceptional situations. Period." ■



"We are all only one idea away from changing the whole complexion of our life."

Jesse Itzler



6 Things That Should Strike Fear Into Every Business Owner's Heart



Fears are odd things. I met a guy once who makes a living wiggling into tiny, dark crawl spaces under houses, where mold, feces, poisonous spiders, snakes, rats, and other unsavory things abound. He was impressed at my fearlessness in speaking in front of thousands of people. He said he could NEVER do that, yet he woke up every day and went to work in places that would give me a claustrophobic heart attack.

Running a business can also be really scary at times, but people are often scared of the wrong things. Here's my short list of things that actually SHOULD terrify you to the point of taking swift action on getting them fixed.

1. Not Knowing What Your Employees Are Saying To Clients And Prospects

Like the thrill of scary movies? Then allow me to suggest a totally free way to leave you unable to sleep at night: Eavesdrop on what your employees are saying to clients and prospects. A chill will run up your spine, guaranteed. Consider this

recent interaction I had at the airport checkout when buying a little snack for the plane. The salesperson says, "You know, *this is \$8,*" with an incredulous look on her face and emphasis on the EIGHT DOLLARS. I reply, "Yes, I know." (I actually didn't but didn't care.) She persisted, "Are you *sure* you want to get it?" At that, I replied, "No," and walked out to buy it somewhere else. Oh, but that doesn't happen in YOUR company, right? A friend of mine with a dental practice was told by a patient that she heard the receptionist telling a potential new patient that the doc was MUCH more expensive than other dentists in the area *because he had three kids in private school.* I have personally required clients to let me listen to inbound call recordings from Google AdWords and was utterly floored by what was said and how the call was handled. On MULTIPLE occasions, I've heard techs say to a prospective client calling to inquire about whether or not the company could assist with an IT project, "We can't help you. We ONLY do managed services," then *proceed to give out the phone number and website of a competitor.* For starters, you need a playbook, process, rules, and scripting for how the phone is answered, how a client is taken care of, how an upset customer is talked

to, how an appointment is booked, how an appointment is confirmed, etc. But MORE important than that is checking for COMPLIANCE with those rules and scripts. Everyone likes to do the rah-rah team motivation stuff, but hardly anyone will do the auditing and enforcement piece.

2. A Lack Of A COMPELLING Reason For A Prospect To Meet With You

The other day, I had a client who is desperately trying to break into a new market they said they have extensive experience and background in. I got on the phone to help assist in crafting their website copy and an offer to get them in and use throughout their marketing. When I asked them to give me a SINGLE (not multiple) reason for their defined prospect to meet with them, they came up empty. I tried a different angle: What are the top three biggest problems you can solve for your prospects? *Nothing ... just vagueness.* "We make their systems stay up and running." Geez. How about ONE problem you can solve? *Nothing.* Okay, so tell me what you know about your *competition* and where they are failing? Who are these clients already buying from? *No clue.* Frustrated, I told them I could not help them and refunded their money. I can't work with someone who is that clueless not only about their chosen target market, but also about what they bring to the table — then expects ME to somehow give them a magic pill to get customers to flood their doors waving checks. Look, this is Business 101: Money goes to *perceived* value initially (marketing), then REAL value after they buy. If your prospect cannot *instantly* see how working with you will greatly benefit them, you need to go back and work harder on your value proposition. Further, a USP has to be in your DNA, not some tagline or sales letter I write. And YOU need to know your customers, market, and competition thoroughly. That is not my job, and it's shameful for anyone calling themselves an entrepreneur to be and stay ignorant.

Bottom line: If your company and marketing are EASY to ignore, that should scare the crap out of you. It's a recipe for frustration, low margins, slow to nonexistent growth, slow sales, and price resistance. Yes, I'm a great marketer, but that doesn't mean I can wave my magic wand and pull a USP out of my butt for anyone who shows up on the doorstep.

3. Failure To Build, Maintain, And Farm A List Of Qualified, Interested Prospects

Not having a good, productive list of prospects puts you at a MASSIVE disadvantage in new client acquisition. Not only is it harder to convert cold prospects, but it's also more expensive and time-consuming. You also cannot know, with certainty, how your marketing will perform (with a house list, you get to know your

averages). Further, you're totally and completely flat-footed should you lose a major account or encounter some other sales disruption in your company because you have no pipeline of getting-ready-to-buy prospects. It's much easier to maintain a relationship than to initiate one, yet I know of many businesses who've been in business for 10, 20, even 30-plus years and don't have a list — and if they do, it's some dusty old relic that hasn't been touched in years! Your list, and more specifically your RELATIONSHIP with your list, is the single biggest asset in your company — yet for most businesses, it's awash with missing and incorrect information and ZERO systems in place to nurture the relationships.

4. Lack Of Accountability For Anyone Or Anything Important

Roughly half the salespeople I interview tell me they weren't given a quota. No quota! How can this be? It's because someone dumber than a box of rocks hired them. Even more common is no accountability or coaching; their managers didn't monitor them in any way ... just the two-part training of "good luck and hang in there." But it's not just sales — ANY position in your company ought to have some accountability for hitting some metric, quota, number, percentage, or goal, INCLUDING YOU. You (and your team) cannot hit a goal you don't have. Every sales rep in your organization needs to know 1) what their quota/goal is, 2) the minimum number of sales they need to bring in to keep their job, 3) backward numbers to specific daily and weekly activities they need to HIT their quota, and 4) the high-payoff activities they need to perform to maximize their time and productivity. Otherwise, you've got an army of the walking dead wandering around, hoping to sneak up on someone — but it's YOUR brains they'll eat.

5. Lack Of A Numbers-Driven Marketing Plan

I'm not talking about a marketing schedule of promotions, tweets, posts, and newsletters. I'm talking about a specific GOAL for new clients, sales, profits or all of the above, worked down to the specific number of prospects you need to target to



hit said goal. Money is not just sloshing around in the streets for anyone walking about to pick up. Disorganized, random acts for client acquisition and revenue generation should scare you. It IS a weakness that needs to be addressed.

6. Not Knowing If You Made Money UNTIL Your Accountant Finishes Your Tax Return

The other day, a client asked, “What is gross profit?” I almost choked. Do I even need to teach this? Kevin O’Leary said, “One hundred percent of the successful businesses that come on *Shark Tank* know their business and their numbers cold. They know where break-even is. They know their competition and their market size. They know their customer acquisition costs and lifetime value of a client. Those who don’t get funded are easily stumped by those numbers.”

Kevin’s counterpart on the show, Robert Herjavec, CEO of Cyderes (a \$1.2 billion MSSP) said, “If you don’t love numbers, you don’t love business.” The financial numbers — and sales and marketing numbers — are the heartbeat of your organization. They need to pulse on a regular, routine basis, not once a year when you listen in to find out the patient died three months ago! Yet, so many small businesses don’t really know what their sales are today or will be this month or this quarter. They have no sales pipeline, no knowledge of inbound leads, appointments set, close rate, average sale, or gross margins.

Many people are beaten down by the requirement to really KNOW their business and numbers — they’re not excited by it. Personally, I don’t “love” all the numbers and tracking, but there are certain things you have to get good at if you’re going to run a *successful* business. My feeling is that if it has to be done, let me learn to do it RIGHT and put a system to it (tracking the numbers, reviewing the numbers), so it’s less painful to do.

Most people never get to that point. They keep running their business, denying, resisting, and resenting doing the things that must be done (the tracking, training, and management) — doing it only when forced to do so when things get SO bad that they cannot stand it anymore, but then still doing it poorly, desperately seeking someone to just do it

for them, outsourcing or abdicating the responsibility to incompetent and inexperienced staff or vendors, starting over again and again.

We all know you can’t manage (or improve) what you don’t measure and track. Your sloth in these areas is your burden to bear, a cost to pay. You have to either decide you’re going to get ‘er done and figure it out or constantly be held back by it. If you’re a business owner, this IS your responsibility and your job. If you don’t like it, perhaps you might look to go to work for someone who will — now, *there’s* a scary thought! ■

Robin Robins



There is no doubt about it: Robin Robins has helped more MSPs and IT services businesses to double — even triple — sales, profits and MRR growth than any other marketing consultant in the IT services industry, period. As a trusted advisor to over 10,000 IT services business owners for over 18 years, Robin knows a thing or two about what it takes to grow sales, recurring revenue streams and a profitable client base for an IT services business.



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- The ONE THING that will make you the preeminent authority and go-to professional in your target market. (Do this, and you’ll immediately escape the commodity trap. Again, this is more important than ever for thriving now and in the future.)
- The three biggest mistakes that kill webinar results and what to do instead. (Almost everyone makes these mistakes. Fix them, and the number of appointments you get will skyrocket.)
- How “psychic selling” will increase the number of qualified prospects who schedule appointments with you. (This is the most controversial part of the training, but if you use it ethically, more people will say “yes” to you.)
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About Your Host:

Dave Dee has been helping entrepreneurs sell more of their products and services for the past 25 years. Known as “The King Of One-To-Many Selling,” Dave is a master of showing business owners how to craft and deliver group presentations that convert.

Tim Piccirillo, a marketing consultant says, “Your stuff as basically tripled my business and my income. Anyone not using your material should have their head examined.”

During this one-of-a-kind web class, Dave will show you a new and unique way to attract a consistent, reliable, and predictable flow of new customers, clients, or patients every month like clockwork using webinars.

Stop Calling It A Labor Shortage

It Is A Turnover Crisis



The Statistics Are Alarming



A record-setting **10.1 million jobs opened** in the U.S.



11.5 million workers quit just in the second quarter of 2021.



41% of the global workforce would consider leaving their current employer within the next year.



54% of Gen Z are considering quitting.

The “Great Resignation” is a mass, voluntary exodus from the workforce. It is here, and it is quite real. Turnover is nothing new and neither are corporate retention strategies. But the Great Resignation and extreme turnover happening today across industries is a different phenomenon that requires a different approach. The Great Resignation caught so many business leaders flat-footed.

What Is Fueling The Great Resignation?

There are numerous reasons, most originating from the pandemic that started in early 2020. According to a LinkedIn survey, 74% of respondents said the time spent at home caused them to rethink their current work situation. More than 50% cited stress and burnout in their job as a reason for looking elsewhere. Others did not like how their employer had treated

them over the last 18 months, from a lack of genuine concern to employees being forced to take concessions while senior executives didn't. The work-from-home (WFH) dilemma opened Pandora's box for many employees and has become a contentious issue for many organizations. And finally, yes, the increase in unemployment benefits has caused a lack of urgency for many to return to the workforce.

We saw a booming economy during the last decade, which always results in two things: Most businesses start losing focus on the customer *and* employee experience. Businesses need to stop thinking Ping Pong tables and Friday happy hours create a strong company culture.

A Professional Awakening

For so many, the pandemic has had the same effect on people who survive near-death experiences. It has caused employees to reevaluate their professional careers, not only what they want but also what they aren't willing to tolerate anymore. This professional awakening has caught a lot of leaders and companies flat-footed. However, too many leaders are using the Great Resignation as a crutch. A significant percentage of people who have quit over the last 15 months is a result of poor company culture, where leaders are solely focused on productivity and bottom-line profits.

I have seen firsthand that the companies with the strongest company culture, long before the pandemic, are significantly less affected by the so-called labor shortage. And the organizations that churned and burned their team members or only had lip service to support a “great” workplace culture are the ones hit the hardest by the employee turnover.

Leadership Epiphany

“You are the average of the five people you spend the most time with.”

You have probably heard that quote hundreds of times. I know I have repeated it at least that many times to my three boys, at new employee orientation, and to any young person who asks me for advice.

The point of this quote is that each of us are the ones responsible for whom we allow in our circle of friends. We



The No. 1 priority for businesses today needs to be focusing on keeping their top talent and improving their internal culture. Stop trying to find great employees; instead, focus on becoming the type of business great employees find.

The businesses with the highest engaged employees enjoy:

- 81% less absenteeism
- 33% less turnover
- 10% increase in customer loyalty/engagement
- 23% more profitability

“Stop trying to find great employees. Focus on becoming the business great employees find.”

Businesses need to stop treating their employees like children. Leadership needs to be about helping people reach their potential in performance, not just managing them if they break policy or screw up. High performers need innovation; innovators need autonomy. Don't let one poor employee ruin your organization's freedom and flexibility. Employee freedom means they can take a lot of risks and fail. Risk-taking breeds innovation.

“Days of lighting fires under people are over. Days of lighting fires inside people are here.” ■

must audit the people around us to make sure we are spending time with people who make us better, inspire us, and encourage us in all areas of our lives.

Has it hit you yet, the “aha!” moment? My leadership epiphany is that the employees who work in our organizations do not get to choose with whom they work or with whom they spend more time in their lives than their family and friends. As leaders, we choose for them.

Then we complain that we have good employees but their morale has gone down, and they are not performing like they once were; we have good employees quitting our company. Then we blame it on the Great Resignation or the younger generation's lack of work ethic, or we claim all they care about is money. Wrong, wrong, wrong. Great employees hate working with lousy employees. When leaders compromise on whom they hire and whom they allow to stay, they pollute their workplace culture. Every leader is responsible for the average of the five coworkers their employees spend the most time with. Audit that!

I disagree with the way this old adage is worded: “Employees don't quit companies, they quit leaders.” While that is true, it is incomplete. The correct way to say it is: “Employees don't quit companies, they quit people.” Employees quit because of the people they work with (coworkers and leaders).

“You can't hire your way out of a bad culture.”

The 2 Biggest Mistakes Companies Are Making Right Now



Hiring To Fill Vacant Positions With Just Anyone



Keeping Poor Performers

Too many companies are trying to solve this staff shortage issue by hiring people as fast as they can to just fill positions and keeping employees with bad attitudes. Both are huge mistakes. “A” players hate working with “B” and “C” players. Unengaged employees are like squatters taking up space and sucking the energy out of your organization.

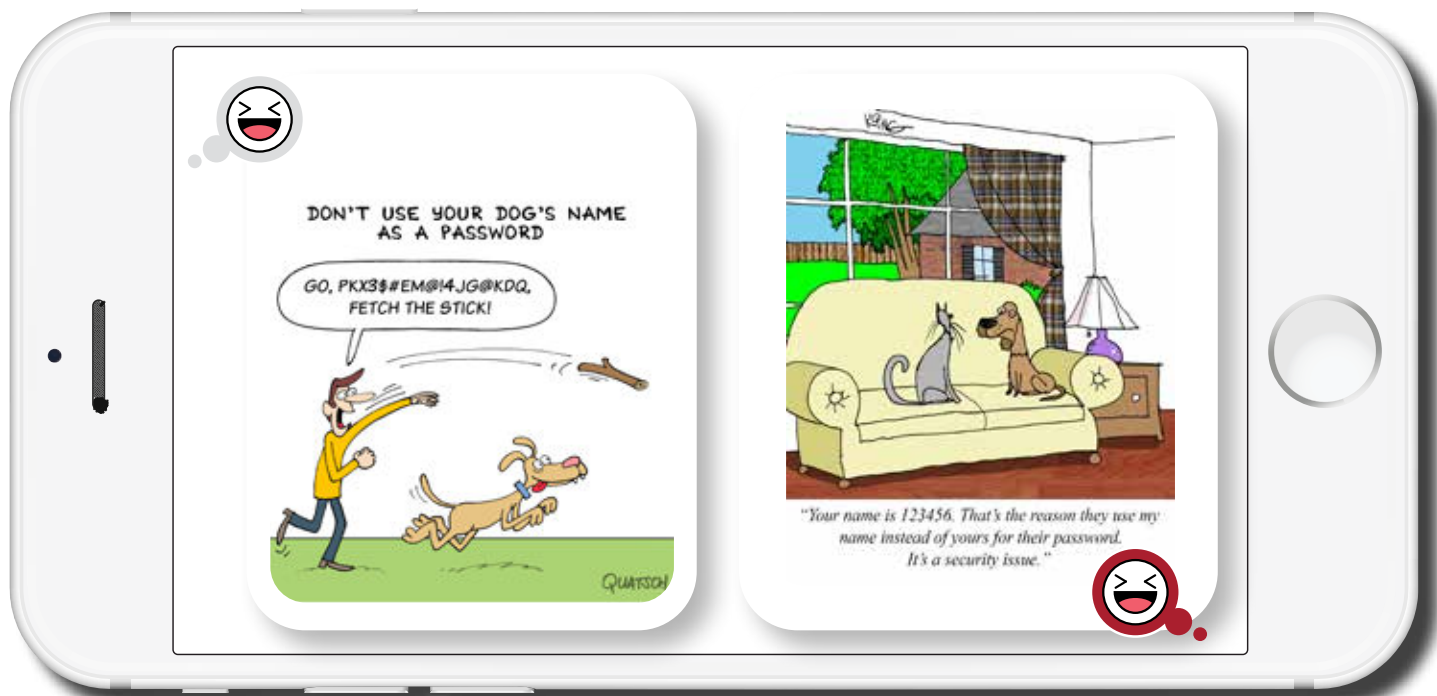
10 Ways To Build The Culture Employees Will Love

1. Love your employees and show it.
2. Do not compromise whom you hire or keep.
3. Prioritize employees' mental health.
4. Measure employee engagement (surveys) quarterly.
5. Improve the quality of your employees' lives.
6. Stop policing them from screwing up and start inspiring them to reach their fullest potential.
7. If your team is virtual, increase your one-on-one meetings.
8. Constantly share vision, direction, and what is in it for them.
9. Demonstrate you genuinely care for your employees.
10. Systematize leaders catching employees doing something right.



John DiJulius, bestselling author of five customer service books, is the chief revolution officer of The DiJulius Group and works with the top brands in the world on customer and employee experience.

HAVE A LAUGH



“If you can’t do the little things right, you will never do the big things right.”

-Jesse Itzler, entrepreneur, author, and co-founder of Marquis Jet



“Passwords are like underwear: Don’t let people see it, change it very often, and you shouldn’t share it with strangers.”

-Chris Pirillo, entrepreneur and former CEO of LockerGnome, Inc



“It takes 20 years to build a reputation and few minutes of cyber-incident to ruin it.”

-Stephane Nappo, global head information security for Société Générale International Banking



“If you spend more on coffee than on IT security, you will be hacked. What’s more, you deserve to be hacked.”

-Richard Clarke, White House Cybersecurity advisor, 1992-2003



“People will be the weakest link in securing critical infrastructure.”

-Poornima DeBolle, co-founder of Menlo Security



“It is important to have the capacity to balance between the risks and business opportunities but never compromise on integrity.”

-Raffella Marzi, Head of Corporate HR and Compliance at Sika AG



“Sense and deal with problems in their smallest state, before they grow bigger and become fatal.”

-Pearl Zhu, Author Of “Digital Master” book series and “Future Of CIO” blog



“There are risks and costs to a program of action — but they are far less than the long-range cost of comfortable inaction.”

-John F. Kennedy, 35th President of the United States



INFLUENCING A MOVEMENT

Discovery Channel's Mike Rowe On The Power Of Authenticity In Communication To Influence Your Audience



Mike Rowe's mother, Peggy Rowe, always finds a way to outdo her son — and she does so in a way only mothers can.

"I am so brutally and relentlessly upstaged at every turn by my mother," Mike said.

Peggy Rowe is a retired teacher, mother of three boys, wife of more than six decades, and the author of two books, but it's her simple, tell-it-like-it-is one-liners (with a mother's touch) that Peggy is known for. They dig at the root of the stories she's uncovering as a journalist, author, wife, and mom.

At least, that's what happened one day when Peggy called Mike about his grandfather, Carl. As Mike explained, everyone knows a man like Carl. He was the product of a seventh-grade education, but he could solve more problems with his hands than a mathematician could with a calculator.

"By the time he was 30," Mike explained, "[he was a] steamfitter, pipefitter, mechanic, welder, amateur architect — a jack of all trades. I was determined to follow in his footsteps as a kid, but the handy gene is unfortunately recessive. So, I wound up with a very different toolbox."

That toolbox led Mike through a career in the arts. He sang on stage as a Viking in the Baltimore Opera, landed a gig selling random trinkets and items at 3 a.m. on QVC shopping channel on a \$100 bet, and, at the time of his mother's greatest guilt trip to date, hosted the San Francisco CBS affiliate KPIX's "Evening Magazine." On the show, Mike would fill the role of expert, leading just a handful of viewers through winery openings and art galleries.

It was a standard day for Mike at that TV station when Peggy felt compelled to dial up her son about his 92-year-old grandfather and say to him, "It sure would be great before he dies if he could turn on the television and see you doing something that looks like work."

That was what Mike calls the beginning of his *peripeteia*, the Greek word for a turning point upon which a protagonist's perspective changes. His mother had planted the seed that by coasting for the past 15 years, picking up little acting

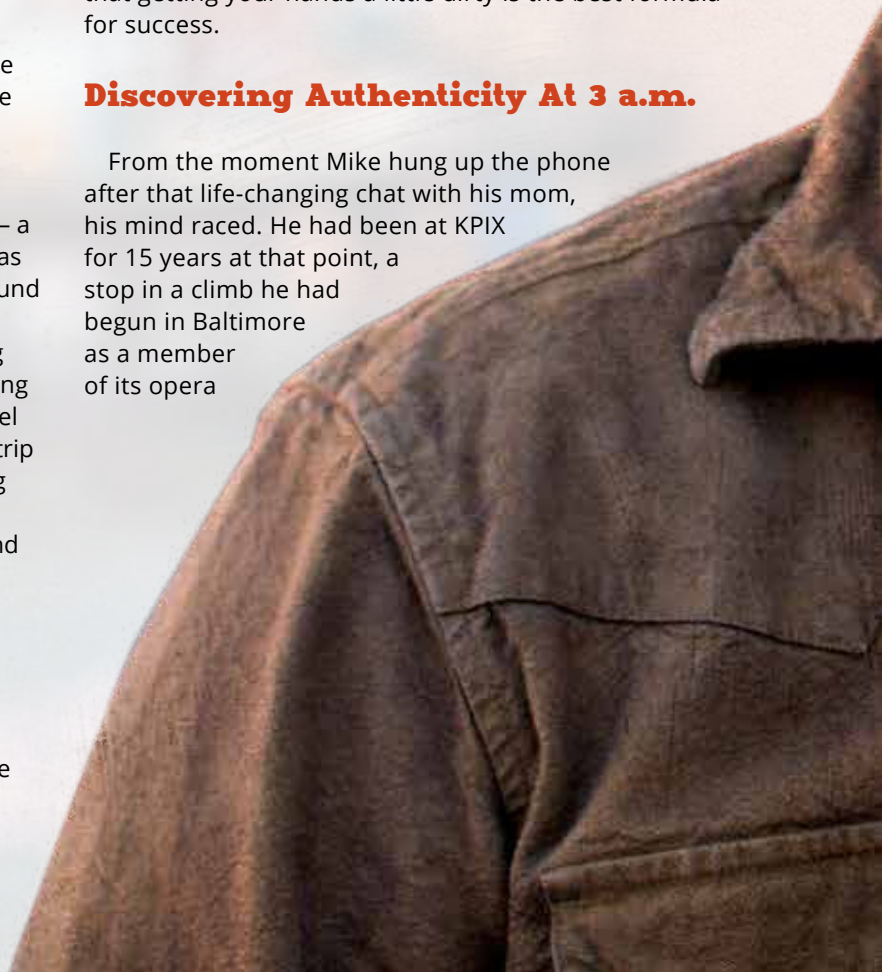
gigs and hosting jobs to pay the bills, Mike was actually heading down a path he hated.


"My business model all the way up to 'Evening Magazine' was a controlled failure," Mike recalled. "I didn't want a hit show. I was looking to have 4-5 months off a year and work three weeks [each month] tops."

Since that phone call with his mother, Mike's *peripeteia* has sent him on a spiral into the world of hard work, exposing some of America's "dirtiest" jobs and simultaneously becoming an advocate for trades and skilled-labor education. Mike shared his journey into the grimy yet powerful work that keeps America churning with Robin Robins and select members of Robins' Tennessee-based marketing company, Technology Marketing Toolkit. From singing in the opera and hosting Discovery Channel's hit series "Dirty Jobs" to narrating countless other series and creating a foundation to fight for America's trades, Mike continues to live out the request his mother had for him all those years ago, proving yet again that getting your hands a little dirty is the best formula for success.

Discovering Authenticity At 3 a.m.

From the moment Mike hung up the phone after that life-changing chat with his mom, his mind raced. He had been at KPIX for 15 years at that point, a stop in a climb he had begun in Baltimore as a member of its opera



A close-up photograph of a middle-aged man with light skin and blue eyes. He is wearing a dark brown, textured cap and a matching brown button-down shirt. He is holding a thick, weathered wooden post with both hands, one near the top and the other lower down. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a wooden structure or a window with a view of the outdoors. The lighting is warm and natural, highlighting the textures of his clothing and the wood.

**“It’s always about
the thing you can do
with the thing you’re
talking about.”**

company. On the hourlong break he had during shows, he would sneak across the street in full costume for a beer and watch football with his friends. It was there that a buddy challenged him to get a callback for a QVC audition slated for the next day.

Mike was given the job after he successfully sold a yellow No. 2 pencil to the QVC producer for eight minutes, likening it to the very device Albert Einstein could credit with $E=mc^2$. That was when he first discovered his ability to influence others, just by talking.

"It's never about the pencil," Mike said about his uncanny — and personally unwanted — ability to sell. "It's always about the thing you can do with the thing you're talking about."

Admittedly, Mike had no idea what he was doing on camera, so rather than fake it, he told the viewers as much, going so far as to ask those who happened to be watching at 3 a.m. to call into the channel and tell viewers about their experience with the tools he was selling. And to his surprise, it worked. Mike had created a small hub of testimonials, filled with stories from people who had used the devices.

"I had no idea how valuable it was for me until 10 years went by, and everything I needed to know to work in television I learned at 3 in the morning. It was that toolbox that gave me the [ability] to book a lot of auditions," Mike explained.

QVC wasn't Mike's dream job, and he also claims to have been fired three times by QVC, but to this day, he credits those early morning gab sessions with happy customers as his first test in humility.

Later, that same lesson would smack him in the face — literally — and it encouraged him to put his talents toward a cause that fueled his passion.

A Sewer May Not Have Been What Peggy Had In Mind

The afternoon after his mother called him at KPIX, Mike went into his boss's office and pitched doing "Evening Magazine" from a trades position, like at a factory or in the sewers. His boss didn't care what he did because the show only had 60 viewers.

So, after a quick call to the city, Mike and his cameraman, Branson, were scheduled to meet with Gene Cruz at a San Francisco intersection in the Tenderloin District of the city.

From the moment he climbed into the manhole with Gene, Mike was completely out of his element.

"The sensory overload is so intense that your brain doesn't know what sense to focus on first," Mike explained. "As your eyes adjust to the gloom of the sewers of San Francisco ... you're standing up to your knees [in sewage], the ceiling is 5 feet high ... you spend a couple of minutes watching the flow of this terrible chocolate tide."

It was at that point that Mike knew he needed to document the moment for his grandfather. He asked Gene to stop his trek, made sure Branson was rolling, and began his opening.

"Good evening, San Francisco. Welcome to 'Evening Magazine,'" Mike began. "Tonight, I've brought you to a different sort of place, a special place, an important place I'd dare say any of you have never been before ..." As Mike candidly shared with us, "And that's as far as I got."

At that moment, a gurgling noise caught Mike's attention just in time for human excrement to hurl toward Mike's face, and the second piece soared over his head.

Mike stared in disbelief.

His cameraman puked.

Gene just rolled his eyes and said the line that would become Mike's mantra: "Down here in the sewer, it's best to keep your mouth shut."

Yet, Mike didn't learn at that moment. In the time spent in the sewer, Mike tried his line two more times, resulting in a tidal wave of sewer cockroaches — one of which crawled in his cameraman's mouth — a rat perching on his shoulder, which would later crawl into his boot, and face planting into the "chocolate" pool beneath him. All Gene could do was shake his head before finally asking if Mike was ready to work. "Mike, when you're done screwing around with the local wildlife, maybe you can come over here and give me a hand."

Still rolling, Branson recorded footage of Gene and Mike rooting out rotted sewer bricks, and for the first time since he had climbed down the manhole cover, Mike shut up and listened. He listened as Gene regaled his background and expertise as a sewer inspector for the city of San Francisco. He learned about replacing bricks and the sewer system that keeps California's major city humming day in and day out. He also learned that Gene was a skillful engineer.

Back at the studio — after many showers — Mike's peripeteia unfolded.

"As I watched our conversation, it killed me because what I saw was me at about 10 years old working with my grandfather



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in 1,000 different ways,” Mike recalled. “Digging a spring cellar, putting in fence posts, running electricity, doing basic plumbing — this whole apprentice-expert relationship was suddenly unfolding in front of me at my desk.”

At that moment, Mike created the first show he knew his grandfather would be proud of. He listened to Gene and didn’t force being the host or expert on the show. He let the real worker speak instead.

The viewers of San Francisco were a different story. After the segment aired that evening, hundreds of letters poured into the studio. Half of the viewers were upset that their dinners were ruined, but the others were much more excited.

“The other half of the letters were from people who were saying, ‘Oh my god, you should meet my brother, my cousin, my uncle, my sister, my mom — wait until you see what they do,’” Mike said. “I got into my head that there was a possibility to do nonfiction television in a different way.”

He was right.

The Authenticity Of Hard Work

Mike’s idea landed him at the Discovery Channel, which bought his pitch to turn from TV host to apprentice who just happens to have a camera following him to the jobs that keep America functioning.

That’s how “Dirty Jobs” was born, and today, the eight-season show, its reruns, and its spin-offs continue to amass fans. Mike has transformed his talent of selling, pitching, and hosting into a platform for America’s workforce, teaching him and his viewers along the way the value of authenticity, acknowledging your discomfort, and finding satisfaction in the opportunity to work.

But it wasn’t so much the strange and creepy jobs that had America watching; it was the people Mike featured. With an innate sense for storytelling and an ability to get people to listen, Mike let those he featured on “Dirty Jobs” — and today on his Facebook show, “Returning the Favor,” which gives back to those helping their communities — command the attention of the public.

Today, Mike’s personal Facebook page has more than 6 million followers, with interactions on his post ranging anywhere from 50,000 likes to more than 3 million views. (For the record, Peggy’s Facebook page is quite popular, too.) Unlike other users in today’s politically charged landscape, Mike veers into the controversial without choosing a side.

Last year, Mike’s foundation, mikeroweWORKS — which advocates for trade jobs and funds scholarships to lessen the

skills gap in the U.S. — began creating and selling masks to raise funds for scholarships. Mike didn’t choose to endorse masks, other than to say how politically charged they had become and how much he hated those conversations. Instead, Mike did what he has always done: He steered the narrative into the benefit of purchasing the mask. The funds go directly into the workforce and help fill America’s skills gap with qualified, young, excited workers. That narrative drove thousands of buyers from Mike’s Facebook page to the ordering page, credit cards in hand.

Today, “Dirty Jobs” and the legacy found in the sewer culminates on Facebook in what Mike believes is the single most important thing he does.

“My Facebook page is the single most important thing I do because it allows me to create the news I want to create,” Mike said. “It allows me to respond to headlines that are good for my brand and foundation ... I realized along the way that I never actually worked for Discovery Channel. I worked for the people who watched me, and that’s where they are. They’re on my f---ing Facebook page.”

It’s actually not far off from what Mike has done with his entire career since he began “Dirty Jobs.” When Discovery Channel wanted to create a chat room called The Mud Room, Mike was hesitant at first. But as he had more conversations,



real and knowledgeable conversations, Mike realized he had stumbled into a gold mine.

The balance, Mike reiterated, is that his authenticity cannot be the sacrifice he makes for his sanity. Toeing the line between authentic and personal has made it easy for Mike to deliver his message without alienating hordes of people or the pursuit of his own goals.

“On the one hand, you’re saying to your customer — your boss — ‘I want to know what you’re thinking. I want you to know that I understand this is the most important relationship I have with you,’” Mike explained. “But every once in a while, you have to log off.”

The Big Reminder From The Septic Tank

During one of the first episodes of “Dirty Jobs,” Mike found himself in a septic tank on a sticky, humid, Midwestern day with Les Swanson. Les had quit his job as a guidance counselor and psychologist of 15 years to begin his septic tank pumping business just outside of Madison, Wisconsin. In that boiling tank, Les told Mike he was just tired of dealing with other people’s s--t.

Joking aside, Les confided in Mike that he left his stable career in counseling to open his own business because he saw a need in his community.

“It was Les Swanson who said to me, ‘I’m not here because I’m passionate about septic tanks,’” Mike recalled. “‘I’m here because I wanted to do something different. I looked around to see where everybody was going, and I went the other way.’”

By that time, Les was enjoying a lucrative career and had built a loyal following around Madison. In many ways, Mike, whose career had begun at the Opera and landed him in the toilet — sometimes literally — was doing the same thing. He had stumbled out of the sewers and into an opportunity to use his talents for good.

“It’s just the idea that you go into your life or career expecting to be surprised, expecting to be uncomfortable,” Mike said. “The lesson isn’t to not have passion. Passion is important to follow. Bring it with you in all things ... Real job satisfaction comes from finding an opportunity and finding a way to be great at it, and then finding a way to love it.”

Mike had left a cushy career covering wineries and restaurant openings to dig into the infrastructure that helps daily life chug along. His grandfather’s prowess and ability to fix anything and everything wasn’t a trait he acquired, but it was his passion for trades and ability to be uncomfortable and incompetent that has enabled millions of viewers to this day to learn something new about the world around them. It’s his authenticity that drives this message forward.

Mike took his opportunity and transformed it into his life’s work and dedication. Today, Mike hosts his podcast, “The Way I Heard It,” to continue sharing stories that fascinate him. He also hosts numerous shows on cable networks, and his Facebook videos have garnered millions of viewers.

All of this, the work he does to “close America’s widening skills gap,” the legacy he’s left of telling seemingly small stories with a big purpose, and the lessons he has learned along the way, came from a motherly guilt trip and a face plant into someone else’s poop.

That’s about as authentic and opportunistic as anyone can get. “It’s very easy to trust someone covered in someone else’s crap,” Mike explained. “There’s just no way a guy like that is going to lie to you. He’s been utterly humbled.”

If Mike’s career is a testament to anything, it’s that the best way through is wading into the crap and letting others know you’re not afraid to do it.

Hear more from Mike Rowe and see Robin’s interview with him online at MSPSuccessMagazine.com/Mike-Rowe/ ■

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