

WHY BUSINESS IN ACTION MAGAZINE?

Business in Action is a powerful marketing tool that brings in more referrals for your business by keeping you top of mind with your sphere.

Check out just some of the great reader feedback we've gotten from a survey conducted on our branded publications.*

40
PERCENT

of readers pass along the magazine to other people, spreading your contact information.

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46
MINUTES

Recipients keep the magazine in their homes for an average of

3-4
WEEKS

80
PERCENT

of readers are more likely to do business with the professional who sent them the magazine than one who does not.

86
PERCENT

of readers have taken an action that has benefited the sender's business as a result of reading the magazine.

58
PERCENT

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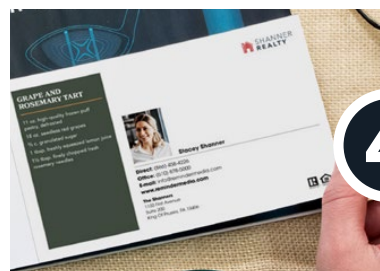
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1 front cover

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Dear Bill and Judy,

Many leaders spend the first few months putting in the work to set themselves up for a year of big wins. But finding success in this climate involves so much more than navigating numbers and analyzing the competition. This issue of Business in Action offers tips to help you work smarter, not harder, with a guide to eliminating negative behavior in the workplace, a look at "prey drive" and how to activate it, and ideas for making your meetings less time consuming and more productive.

Distractive behavior is the number one killer of efficiency. Some distractions are unavoidable, but a negative workplace culture isn't one of them. If you take initiative to cut out poor behavior from your business now, you'll see your teams thrive this year.

The phrase "trust your instincts" couldn't be truer in business, but how can you trust something that isn't there? Championship basketball coach and business coach Micheal Burt explains how to activate your instinctual prey drive and keep it alive to become the leader you were born to be.

When your team needs to get something done, you might be quick to throw a meeting on the calendar. But meetings aren't always the best way to accomplish your goals. The enclosed tips for leading effective and constructive meetings can help you avoid the common pitfalls that make meetings a burden on your employees.

Start this year by analyzing your business from the inside out and making positive, lasting changes. As always, it's a pleasure to send you this magazine.

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Each issue includes a prewritten letter alongside your contact information. But if you want to add a personal touch, you can always customize your letter as much as you want—you can even write a separate one to each recipient!

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magazine content

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The 48 pages within Business in Action include articles that all relate to home with categories including decor, landscaping, seasonal, home improvement, household management, and recipes.

After these pages, you will find your second customizable tear out card along with the two back cover spaces!

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How to Protect Your Business from Inflation

Every American business has been impacted by inflation. Use these strategies to stay ahead financially.

BY LAUREN KIM



IN TODAY’S ECONOMY, your business may struggle as costs rise for fuel, labor, and other necessities. However, by being shrewd, you can offset the effects of inflation and ensure your company is well protected.

Moneyball your business

Much like baseball general manager Billy Beane used player statistics to make the Oakland Athletics a winning team on a limited budget, as shown in Michael Lewis’s book *Moneyball: The Art of Winning an Unfair Game*, look at your business to see where it can be fine-tuned. Evaluate what’s working and what isn’t, and get rid of what isn’t a moneymaker. “If your company sells twenty products and you notice that only five are profitable, you can cut the other fifteen and save,” says Todd Scott, a regional vice president for Ameritas. You can also streamline your business by weeding out costly procedures. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, his agents started using Zoom regularly to connect with clients. “Now that they don’t have to drive, their costs went down,” he explains. “Look at your numbers. I tell my agents they should know how much money they make every time they make a phone call.



If you don’t know that, you haven’t Moneyballed your business.”

Cut costs

You may need to reduce your spending to protect your bottom line, and there are several ways you could do this. To hedge against rising prices, consider securing new vendors with lower prices on raw materials and supplies, and stock up on essential items to hedge your bets if prices get even higher. You can also trim unnecessary expenditures. Brian Fields, a vice president and financial advisor at Merrill Lynch, suggests reconsidering even small

expenses, as they can add up. “One of my pet peeves are FedEx, UPS, or other overnight delivery fees,” he says. “You should review your usage of them and evaluate which ones are necessary and which ones aren’t. If you plan ahead, you could use less-expensive two-day delivery or send items electronically instead. Don’t fall back on what’s easiest, as the costs could accumulate.”

Manage cash flow

Now more than ever, it’s important to keep a close eye on your cash flow. Implement practices to help you get paid faster, such as asking for

partial payment up front and using incentives, and, if need be, penalties to encourage customers to pay on time. Examine the due dates of your account payables to avoid paying them before you have to, or ask if you can get a discount for paying early. Alternatively, negotiate with your vendors to extend your payment dates, if possible. Another good idea is to put off arbitrary spending so you can hold onto more of your cash. “You should prioritize your needs and put off the wants until the economy improves and you are in a better situation,” Field says.

Consider your debt

Interest rates have been high, so, if you can, try to pay off some of your debt. You could talk with your lender about reducing interest rates on your loans to potentially lower how much you’ll pay. You could reserve the money you save for unplanned expenses or work with a financial advisor to chart the best financial course for your business.

Staff efficiently

When costs are high, it’s imperative to utilize your employees effectively. Scott compares staffing your business to filling a school bus.

When costs are high, it’s imperative to utilize your employees effectively.

“Does your bus have the right seats?” he asks. “Do you need a sales seat? Do you require an HR seat? Make sure you have the correct seats on the bus, examine your business, and determine whether you have the people you need in the right seats.” His company uses employee-assessment tools from Gallup, such as the CliftonStrengths 34, to determine employees’ strengths and to find which role suits them best. “You might have a person in sales, but it’s not what they like,” he explains. “They may work lots of hours but aren’t productive. If you move them to a new seat, they can be an effective part of the team. You need the right seats and the best people in those seats.”

Increase productivity

Productivity is important in lean times so you can increase profits on a tight budget. Smart staffing is one way to do this, but there are other cost-effective methods, too, such as automating

processes like scheduling or billing and increasing staff productivity by using incentives. It might seem counterintuitive to reward staff with raises in this economy, but inflation will also impact your employees, and using financial incentives to increase retention can be more cost-effective than training new staff. You could also offer employees remote or hybrid schedules to help them avoid personal costs like commuting or childcare.

Pass costs to consumers

Finally, you could consider pushing some of your extra expenses to your customers. Be sure to check your competition’s prices for similar products and services first, and keep your prices lower than theirs if you can. Be up front with your customers about your reasoning, and inform them in advance so you can avoid losing them. If you are honest, chances are they will understand and reward you with extra customer loyalty, which can propel your business even through turbulent times. ■



Analyze your company, and look for ways to cut costs, improve productivity, and streamline your business.

Each issue of Good to Be Home features 48 pages of content that appeal to a large audience. The articles inside change with every bimonthly issue and are ready to go—no need for you to worry about writing content to put inside your magazine!



The Cutthroat Crisis: How You Could Be Deterring Talent

Competition and rewarding success increase productivity, boosting employee performance. But how can you ensure you promote healthy competition and not cutthroat behavior among your most talented employees?

BY ANDRE RIOS



T'S TIME TO MAKE

staffing cuts. Those who meet a specific sales quota are considered for raises or promotions, while those who lag behind their peers face demotion or termination. Only the top performers get to stay, but, for others, there's blood in the water. The race begins.

Some leaders may think that stiff workplace competition and a harsh, austere culture would encourage the cream to rise to the top, while poor performers naturally get filtered out. In reality, the opposite may be true if this competition goes too far. Employees who sabotage, bully, and one-up each other to earn supervisors' approval create a toxic workplace, and such a cutthroat work atmosphere may hurt your organization in the long run.

Cutthroat behavior among employees is often a consequence of poor leadership. When your team observes that you're willing to profit or succeed by any means necessary, your employees may strap on their boxing gloves to match you. The resulting toxic atmosphere plagues organizations in multiple industries, including retail, entertainment, hospitality, and real estate.

⊕ The risks of cutthroat behavior

What's so wrong with a tough workplace? Why not encourage the tight-ship mentality associated with law school students and new physicians in residency—the sort of rigorous environment where your team is not only eager to please but also afraid to slack off?

An MIT Sloan study found that toxic, unethical workplaces are not only ineffective but also the number one reason people cite for leaving their jobs—even when they're passionate about their careers. As Mark C. Perna, a risk-management expert and contributing author for *Forbes*, states, "To the 'like it or lump it' workplace philosophy

of the past, workers are adding a new option: leave it. In a historically tight labor market, employees have more choices than ever before—and don't have to settle if their current work environment is unpleasant, dangerous, or unethical." These complaints could include workplaces that encourage toxic competitiveness to get ahead.

Worse, the underlying desensitization in cutthroat workplaces may also lead to racial, gender, and other forms of targeted harassment. Employees may even find themselves incapable of or discouraged to raise complaints of discrimination. In an environment where only strength is rewarded, grievances may register as weakness.

As a result, cutthroat environments may homogenize, as they can become unwelcome to diversity, which hurts leadership in the long run. It's hard to compile the best talent when segments of the population feel glued to the floor. To preserve talent and promote longevity, business leaders should make it a priority to identify cutthroat practices and put a stop to overall toxic workplace culture.

⊕ Symptoms of cutthroat culture

Look out for the top symptoms of toxicity in the workplace, like fawning behavior. Employees eager to please may take strides to earn your favor, including disingenuous flattery. Other symptoms of cutthroat behavior include pressure to work extremely long hours, accusations among salespeople of "stealing" clients, and coworkers openly bullying one another.

You should also be aware of toxic workplace politics, which can reward alliances rather than excellent job performance. These include employees separating into insular cliques, sabotage, and one-upmanship in meetings: "Great job, Liz. I'm glad *you followed my advice*, and it helped you sign a new client."



⦿ Where organizations go wrong

To address cutthroat workplace culture, you may first have to put your own leadership behavior under the microscope. Do you openly make some employees the butt of jokes? This may seem like good fun when you do it, but employees may mimic your behavior and harass coworkers to earn your approval (and avoid being caught in your crosshairs).

Do you blur the lines between work and life? Promoting work-life balance doesn't hurt your team's commitment; rather, it ensures that they approach each workday refreshed and with a more positive attitude. A healthy work-life balance can also prevent cutthroat culture, which is often born out of a company-wide perception that your work is your

life and employees should achieve by any means necessary.

⦿ What to do about cutthroat workplace culture

The secret lies in trust. While your employees and colleagues should inherently compete with one another, they should also trust each other. Across various industries, trust fosters success. And trust encourages longevity. The MIT Sloan study on the Great Resignation also found that a toxic culture is 10.4 times more influential than compensation concerning attrition. While this figure is associated with a variety of toxic environments, cutthroat culture is a significant contributing factor, and MIT Sloan listed this as one of the top five complaints employees raise when reviewing their workplaces.

Balancing competition with community in your workplace can therefore save your best talent. It's vital to job satisfaction that your employees feel supported and encouraged.

All this being said, competition is good for business. There are few motivations to excel as powerful as rewarding great performance. Nearly all businesses have a hierarchy structure in place (even when they actively try to resist it), and with each level of promotion, the pool only gets smaller. With room for fewer people at the top, rewarding the best talent is only profitable for managers and owners alike.

To prevent cutthroat behavior, try to create *productive* competition. How? Focus on rewarding top performers, not punishing lower performers who still meet quotas. Encourage those who need help, and reprimand poor workplace performance privately—don't make an example of people in front of their peers. A culture of shame motivates workers to blame their peers for errors or take credit for coworkers' accomplishments. Make it clear as day what constitutes unethical behavior, and ensure that this behavior will not be rewarded but punished.

Look out for the top symptoms of toxicity in the workplace, like fawning behavior. Employees eager to please may take strides to earn your favor, including disingenuous flattery.



Also, make positive collaboration a fixture of your organization. Assign tasks to teams when possible, and even shuffle groups around from time to time. Don't underestimate active team-building activities, either. Team building encourages communication, builds trust among coworkers, and fosters an environment where employees excel because they enjoy their work. This motivates your team to excel, too, and put down roots in your organization.

While leaders are responsible for correcting negative culture, keep

your expectations realistic. As Charlie Sull of CultureX told BBC, "[Companies] don't change much unless they're pushed very hard, or there's a sudden shock like a major CEO-led culture change initiative. Even if the company wants to change, and knows how to, it's a generally slow process that can take years in large organizations." Lead the charge in improving workplace culture, and your team will follow.

Even if you manage only a small portion of a large organization, you may soon find that your efforts

foster success—and your leadership takes notice. This could be your opportunity to earn recognition of your own by ethical means. ■



Write down three words that describe your company culture. If any of these words could be associated with a cutthroat workplace, develop a clear list of goals to replace those words with positive ones.

How to Beat Workplace Bias

Preventing it from wrecking your company's morale and reputation begins with knowledge.

BY MATTHEW BRADY



I**N RECENT** years, many news outlets and business journals have addressed gender and race biases, two of the most prevalent types of American workplace prejudice. So there's a good chance that your company has already addressed those issues (and if it hasn't, you're frankly behind the times).

But there are a slew of other unconscious biases, also known as implicit biases, to be aware of. Understanding what they are and acknowledging that they exist in your business can be a first step to eliminating them from both your hiring process and work environment and helping your company reach its full potential.

→ The impact of bias
It's well worth your time and effort to take workplace bias seriously. It can cost you, both literally (in fines or lawsuits) and in overall morale and



Often overlooked, age-based discrimination against middle-aged or older people is more prevalent than ever according to AARP, with **78 percent of older workers reporting that they have seen or experienced it.**

retention. Both intentional and unconscious discriminatory practices are illegal, and some of the most well-known worldwide organizations have paid the price for allowing them. For example, Google and Signet Jewelers agreed

to almost \$300 million combined in gender bias settlements. Tesla was sued for racial bias, and McDonald's agreed to a \$33.5 million settlement with one of its store owners who had sued for racial discrimination.

Just as important, unconscious bias can be like a cancer in your workforce, silently eroding your team's morale and your company's reputation. Even AI algorithms that companies use for their hiring processes aren't immune to bias, resulting in a reported widespread loss of revenue and customers—and catching the attention of the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), which started investigating their usage and fairness in 2021.

→ Common types of bias
As mentioned earlier, gender and racial biases have received ample attention in corporate America, and deservedly so. But they only scratch the surface. Learning about different kinds of prejudice that can permeate a business culture is a smart way to start addressing and eliminating the problem and its potential toll on your organization.

Here are ten of the most common yet underdiscussed biases and how they can impact your team.

Ageism
Often overlooked, age-based discrimination against middle-aged or older people is more prevalent than ever according to AARP, with 78 percent of older workers reporting that they have seen or experienced it. But don't forget that implicit bias can also be experienced at the other end of the age spectrum if you make or allow hasty generalizations about people in their twenties.

Affinity bias
When you have an affinity for someone, you feel a kinship with them—which is not necessarily the best trait for hiring or promoting. So, for example, resist the urge to favor a candidate because they graduated from the same college as you.

Attribution bias
This type of bias occurs when you make a judgment about an employee and then allow it to stick with them. For example, if a person arrives late for their first day of work, they become known for tardiness even if their initial lateness was because of something out of their control, such as being





stuck in gridlock because of an accident.

Confirmation bias

Have you ever felt strongly about something or someone related to your business and found it hard to let that feeling go? If so, you’ve experienced confirmation bias—you want confirmation of your

belief, which may blind you to other people’s opinions or facts. If you’re a successful entrepreneur, you might be particularly affected by this.

Conformity bias

This is a subtle form of peer pressure or groupthink. Whether in meetings or during

the interview process, an employee may feel pressured to conform to others’ opinions rather than think individually.

Contrast effect

As the name suggests, this type of bias results from when you contrast candidates for hire or promotion, such as pitting

two consecutive resumes against each other rather than how each candidate satisfies the job description.

Halo effect

If you get easily wowed by one aspect of an interviewee, such as them having a degree from an Ivy League school, it can

cause you to ignore other potential red flags.

Horn effect

Consider this the anti-halo effect. In the case of this bias, you allow a negative attribute, even something superficial such as a candidate repeatedly saying “Um” during an interview, to stick with them, overlooking their positive traits.

Physical biases

This is all about first impressions and the judgments you make from them. For example, studies indicate that you may favor hiring candidates or employees because of physical traits such as beauty, height, or weight. People with disabilities, either physical or mental, can be particularly impacted by implicit assumptions. Also, although not always a physical characteristic, affect heuristics can cause you to prejudge someone by a quality such as their name or even the types of clothes they wear.

Proximity bias

Especially relevant since COVID-19 began, this bias occurs when a higher-up forms opinions and possibly makes decisions about someone based on physical closeness—such as showing preferential treatment to in-office employees over remote workers.

→ What to do

This list includes only a portion of the biases that can affect the employee experience, so it may seem like an impossible obstacle to overcome. However, communication is key. Discuss the issue with your human resources department and executive team, and decide whether tools like blind resume reviews or diversity training should be implemented. And be sure to go right to the source by anonymously surveying your employees to gauge how they honestly feel about your company culture and processes and their growth potential.



Workplace bias has likely existed since there has been an employer-employee dynamic. However, in the twenty-first century, it’s better understood, more discussed, and able to be

addressed. This creates a fairer, more equitable workplace, improves morale, and allows for the best people and ideas to rise to the top—a win-win for both companies and their employees. ■



Research the various forms of subconscious bias, and honestly ask yourself which of them you or your company may exhibit. Then talk to your HR director to find ways to address them.

The Power of Business Networking

Networking can be pivotal in helping you grow your business, allowing you to meet like-minded professionals, business owners, thought leaders, and entrepreneurs. BY BONNIE JOFFE

THE POWER OF BUSINESS networking should be recognized for the value it provides—to consistently increase the prospects you acquire while nurturing mutually beneficial relationships. If you're looking to boost your networking efforts, the following ideas can help you maximize your connection-building potential and create lasting relationships that will drive your business for years to come.

TYPES OF NETWORKING GROUPS

There are several networking platforms available to business owners and other professionals. You may consider joining more



David DeCelle

PHOTOS COURTESY OF DAVID DECELLE

than one, depending on the rules of the group, as some allow members of only one profession or industry. Do your research to determine which group pairs best with your goals, expectations, time commitment, and financial obligations.

Casual groups

These groups are far less formal than others and allow professions and industries to overlap. A chamber of commerce is an example of this type of group. It's generally local to a town or city, or, for a broader reach, a region. These are usually face-to-face monthly meetings held as breakfasts, luncheons, or evening mixers or even for fundraising purposes. They may also include a guest speaker who sponsors the meal. There are no requirements to pass referrals or attend a certain number of meetings, so if you want a more relaxed and flexible networking experience, this may be the best choice.

Structured groups

Highly structured groups typically have one member per profession and may require a yearly membership fee. Some of the most recognizable groups include LeTip International; Business

Networking International (BNI); Young Presidents' Organization (YPO), a global leadership community for chief executives under forty-five years old; Young Entrepreneur Council (YEC), which accepts members forty years old and younger; and Entrepreneurs' Organization (EO), an exclusive entrepreneurial, peer-to-peer network, focusing on mentorships and global networking. Since COVID-19 began, many of these groups now offer both in-person and virtual attendance or a combination of both.

If you want to become a member, you will be vetted or interviewed before acceptance. Most often, you're required to attend a certain number of meetings, whether weekly or monthly, and you're expected to provide referrals to other members each time you meet. (Every group has its own quotas.) Spots for real estate agents and financial advisors are highly competitive, so it may take time to get in if you are in these industries.

Community-service clubs

Business leaders will often donate their time to nonprofit groups, such as Rotary International, arts and

cultural organizations, advocacy, school, or religious groups, and community food banks. Though not set up as a typical networking forum, community service is a chance to meet other local people, allowing you to broaden your personal and professional networks.

Professional associations

In these industry-specific groups, such as banking, legal, financial, or health care, the primary focus is to exchange ideas and information with professional peers. By joining this type of networking group, you will be able to build relationships that may open doors for you in the future, gain new contacts and potential clients, and tap into target markets.

BEST NETWORKING PRACTICES

David DeCelle, president of Model FA, speaker, entrepreneur, and financial advisor coach, believes that when you're networking and trying to build a professional relationship, you must begin with how you can give back. "It's about the law of reciprocity. You should make multiple deposits—meaning you provide help and value—rather than making withdrawals where you take instead of give."



It's about the law of reciprocity. You should make multiple deposits—meaning you provide help and value — rather than making withdrawals where you take instead of give.”

- DAVID DECELLE



For more information,
visit www.modelfa.com
or connect with David
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daviddecelle](https://www.linkedin.com/in/daviddecelle)



HERE ARE SOME OF DECELLE'S
BEST TIPS FOR MAXIMIZING YOUR
NETWORKING EFFORTS.

Listen and learn.

“We have two ears and one mouth, so use them correctly,” says DeCelle. Networking is not transactional; to be successful at it, you need to listen and connect on a personal basis

with the person you are talking with. It could be about their kids, common hobbies, travel, or food interests. As you begin to build on these relationships, do not ask questions for your benefit. Rather, dig deep and avoid surface-level small talk. Ask specific questions such as, ‘What is it about your work that you love?’

Create an elevator speech.

An elevator speech is a way to share who you are and what you do in the amount of time it takes to ride in an elevator. Unfortunately, it’s not so easy to encapsulate all of who you are in a thirty-second pitch. DeCelle says that people often spend too much time on their elevator speech and that it should be no more than two sentences. State why you love what you do and the kind of people you like to help. People want to know you care about them.

Respect other professional relationships.

If you are a financial advisor and the person you are speaking with tells you they already have a financial advisor, avoid selling yourself and your products. It’s best to acknowledge that you are happy they have this other relationship. This is the perfect chance to obtain their LinkedIn handle and other contact information. Also, view this as a moment of opportunity to learn what other professionals are doing in your field.

Set expectations.

Slow and steady wins the race. Since relationships need to be cultivated, you need to set realistic expectations. According to DeCelle, it can take up to twenty-four months

before you begin to reap the rewards of your networking efforts. During that time frame, you should only be concerned about making deposits. Also, it can take time to sort through which groups are the most beneficial for you.

Follow up.

One of the biggest mistakes people make is their lack of follow-up after a networking event. To be an effective, successful power networker, you must not overlook this task. DeCelle recommends spending ninety minutes per day doing business-development activities by sending follow-up emails, phone calls, or texts. He is also a proponent of sending video messages as a follow-up because it makes it more personal. (Websites like loom.com have useful tools to help with this.) Start pushing out lots of well-thought-out content to your new contacts so you remain top of mind.

Build a referral system.

Successful networking means building a robust referral network. You can accomplish this by thinking about conversations you’ve had with people you met. You could make the meet-up casual and social by having dinner or drinks with them or more professional and organized by inviting them to a

Networking is not transactional; to be successful at it, you need to listen and connect on a personal basis with the person you are talking with. It could be about their kids, common hobbies, travel, or food interests.

lunch-and-learn seminar, where you can share valuable information. As you begin to build trust and credibility, the number of referrals should markedly grow.

Leverage social media.

Though in-person networking is a very productive way to grow your professional network, social media is a method for building your brand, following, and credibility. DeCelle recommends identifying twenty people you want to know and then focusing on connecting with them on multiple platforms. This will give you a lens into where they like to

congregate and what their interests are. You can then lead with value by sharing useful content, which will serve as soft touches as they scroll through their social media feeds.

Whether you are a seasoned networker or just beginning this journey, you can build your business exponentially by implementing these networking strategies. Remember to always be a good listener, ask engaging questions, and construct an ironclad follow-up system. If you remain consistent and diligent in your efforts, you’re guaranteed to see it pay off. ■



Do some research on the best type of networking group for you based on your goals and industry, and commit to joining one such group this year.



5 Ways to Get Media Coverage for Your Business

As a business owner, you want as many people as possible to know who you are and what you do. Here you'll learn strategies to put your business in the spotlight.

BY LAUREN KIM



I F YOU CAN GET YOUR BUSINESS FEATURED IN NEWSPAPERS, ONLINE, ON RADIO, AND ON TV, it can create added awareness and credibility for your brand. Gaining good press coverage isn't always easy, but with these tactics, you can stand out from the crowd and create buzz about your company in the news.

Cover the basics

A good first step is researching publications and news outlets that cover your industry and your local community. Build a list or database of journalists who cover these areas, include their email addresses and other contact information, and learn how to write a proper press release that includes a headline, short introduction, quotes, and tidbits that could be used in media coverage. Be sure to include the who, what, where, when, and why of your story idea in your press releases and your title, credentials, company, and contact information.

Be a resource

Stay abreast of what's going on in your community and industry, and keep in mind how you could contribute to news coverage. For instance, if road construction in



your area is impeding foot traffic to businesses like yours, get in touch with a contact at your local news outlet and share your insights and other relevant information. If industry trends or the economy is impacting your industry, pitch the situation to a business-magazine contact you've

developed. You can sign up to receive email alerts from resources like HARO and SourceBottle, which reporters use to find sources and quotes for their stories. "The quicker you respond, the better your chances of getting coverage," suggests Christina Nicholson of the Media Maven PR firm. "As

a former TV reporter, I can tell you that you must be fast. TV journalists come in for work at 9:00 a.m. and must turn in a story by the 5:00 p.m. newscast. They work on tight deadlines."

Create a strong online presence

The Pew Research Center says that over 90 percent of journalists use social media in their work, so you are more likely to be noticed by them if you are active online. Post helpful content related to your industry regularly on your social media profiles, and if you have a blog on your website, update it with new information. Follow local media outlets, bloggers, and influencers on social media, and engage with them online. "Connecting with journalists on social media is huge," Nicholson says. "After getting tons of terrible pitches, they are more likely to pay

attention to a social media notification than another email in their inbox."

Partner with a charity

One way to garner positive attention for your business is by doing charitable work or hosting a charity event. For instance, you could support a cause that has personal meaning for you, such as raising money to fight a disease like cancer or Alzheimer's disease, or choose a charity that is related to your line of work, such as volunteering at a local Habitat for Humanity project if you are an interior designer or real estate agent. "Having an event that gives back always increases the newsworthiness of a story, especially if you're reaching out to the local media," Nicholson says. "It's also a great way to get in the calendars of local publications and online, and it's easy to promote in local Facebook groups."

Take part in events

Hosting or participating in

industry and community events can get you noticed by reporters who regularly attend these functions. For instance, you could partner with other businesses in your community to host a mini fair with booths for local businesses and vendors. Be sure to promote any event you are attending or hosting on social media—you might be able to start a conversation with a journalist before the date arrives. Even if you fail to get media coverage, you could have the chance to chat with a reporter and your company might appear in future news segments or photos. Get business cards from the journalists you meet, and follow up with them later via email or social media for future opportunities.

Throw a media junket

Finally, instead of waiting for media attention, attract it yourself by hosting a fun and informative media junket for reporters, bloggers, Instagrammers, and other



influencers, where you could share industry-related information and introduce your products and services. For instance, if you are a real estate agent or sell home products, try holding a seminar with tips on how to improve home security. Make it a red-carpet event by providing gift bags of

products, serving food and beverages, and providing pamphlets that promote your business. High-paid celebrities love swag bags, so it's no surprise that your guests will enjoy receiving freebies too. You may be rewarded for your work with coverage of your event and reviews of your products and services. ■



Create a database of journalists you can reach out to for media coverage of your business.

Unlock Your Prey Drive

As a former championship basketball coach and now motivational speaker, **MICHEAL BURT** has helped thousands of professionals discover a hidden power he calls the “prey drive.”

BY ALEXA BRICKER

ALL ANIMALS HAVE instinctual behaviors that help them live and thrive in their environments. Lions and other big cats have a fantastic ability to camouflage themselves and stalk their prey, allowing them to go undetected until just the right moment. Raptors like eagles and hawks have incredible eyesight and speed to home in on their fast-moving targets, and wolves utilize a pack mentality to improve their odds of tracking and hunting their next meal.

Humans, like other animals, have instinctual behaviors, too—we just don’t often put them to good use. Coach Micheal Burt has spent decades in both the sports and business worlds helping people discover innate abilities that can help them stimulate action and drive

success. Here you’ll learn how Coach Burt defines what he calls the “prey drive,” how he helps people unleash it from within, and how they use it to advance their businesses.

→ The origins of prey drive

Burt began his coaching career as a women’s basketball coach, winning his first championship game that same year. “I became a deep disciple of Stephen Covey and his book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*,” Burt says. “I used his methodology to develop my own coaching style that targeted my players’ hearts and spirits, not just their bodies and minds.”

Over the next few years, a lot of people began to take notice of Burt’s ability to foster success for his team, and they



➔ The five activators

There are a few different factors that can help with tapping into your prey

If people can't see you, they don't know you exist and you'll miss out



- MICHAEL BURT

on valuable opportunities. No matter what industry you're in, you need to position yourself in front of other highly motivated individuals, such as people in positions of power. Make



The final activator of prey drive is the feeling of how others might perceive you if you don't succeed, but, as Burt notes, it's not always that simple. "I use embarrassment a little differently than other people do," he says. "I want you to look at where you are in comparison to what you're capable of. You might find that you're playing so small." No one wants to be perceived



as mediocre by their competition or the people who mean the most to them. So this type of embarrassment often comes from within and the feeling that you’re not living up to your full potential.

➔ **The value of follow-up**

Prey drive is not a “set it and forget it” mentality; once it’s activated, it must be activated again and again to stay turned on. “High performers know how to activate their own prey drive,” Burt says. “When I wake up in the morning and my prey drive isn’t activated, there are certain things I do to flip the switch. It could be what I watch, who I listen to, or how I exercise.” For those who aren’t as well versed in the activation process, Burt’s coaching methods are aimed at helping individuals find what motivates them and tap into that motivation consistently every single day.

To keep your prey drive active, you must exemplify persistence and intensity—the other two critical components of Burt’s method. In his book *Million Dollar Follow Up*, Burt discusses the fact that humans are easily excitable by nature.

**Take
Action**

Find what prey drive activator resonates with you. Challenge yourself to tap into that motivation every day to help you achieve the goals you’ve set for your business.

The problem comes from a lack of follow-through once that initial excitement wears off and the subsequent feelings of guilt about not following through. It’s a vicious cycle that Burt often sees while coaching.

Whether in sports or business, the motivation a coach can provide is a key to winning. “Most people lack the ability to be persistent and see their goal through to its logical conclusion without the help of another person,” he says. Burt’s programs—Monster Growth Online Academy, Monster Producer, Coaching Accelerator, and Executive Coaching—are designed to create structure, foster accountability, and drive performance, all through the activation of prey drive. ■



For more information, visit coachburt.com.



Wealth-Building Basics

NATE AUFFORT, a professional sales trainer, shares his expertise on how to build wealth and unlock your potential for success.

BY **BONNIE JOFFE**



NATE AUFFORT, founder and CEO of Strategic Wealth Accumulation Tactics (SWAT) Financial, started his sales and marketing career in his early twenties. Having grown up in a large family with not a lot of money, he knew at a young age that he wanted more and to make it on his own. After dropping out of college twice, Auffort attended a seminar about network marketing where he met his mentor who influenced his decision to begin working as a network marketer. However, after four years, he was struggling to make more than \$3,000 a month and knew he needed to get on a better path.

He set a goal to close \$25,000 in sales in one month but ended



HEAD SHOT COURTESY OF NATE AUFFORT

Nothing is standing in the way of your success. Whether you are a seasoned business owner or just starting out, begin by setting realistic goals, hold yourself accountable to achieve them, and before you go to bed each night, visualize your success—and, as Auffort preaches, always practice an attitude of gratitude.

up surpassing it by several thousand dollars. By the end of the year, he was generating \$20,000 a month in income, and a year and a half later, he became a millionaire.

Here Auffort reflects on the tactics and mindset that have made him successful in business throughout the years and offers solutions for business owners on their own journeys to build wealth.

What is the first lesson you learned as a business entrepreneur?

Most of us have everything we need for success, we just don't have a *why*. But it's not really about your why because

you still have a purpose; it's about what you need to know, what your burning desire is, what motivates you, and what you need to do to get it done. I learned that destiny is a matter of choice, and no one ever got wealthy doing it by themselves.

What's the hardest thing to teach yourself to be successful in business?

Discipline. Many people fail in business because they're not good at self-managing. To be successful, you must set goals for yourself and work as if you're reporting to your manager. It takes discipline to hold yourself accountable—doing the most productive activity at every moment of each day and only



rewarding yourself if your goals have been met. And don't confuse activity with productivity; activity is a nonproductive time suck, whereas productivity makes you money. If you haven't met your commitments, you don't get to receive a paycheck, take the holiday off, or go away on vacation. Also, being disciplined is not just juggling your time between your business and personal life

but also being 100 percent present wherever you are and whomever you are with.

What's the best approach for someone who has never set goals for themselves?

Just start. Set goals for yourself that you believe can be reasonably

accomplished on a daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly basis. Establish where you want to go, and then figure out how to get there. By holding yourself accountable every day, your confidence will grow as you continue to meet your goals. It's your choice: you can create or destroy your goals daily.

In an episode of the Stay Paid podcast, you said people have a movie script playing in their head preventing them from achieving their goals. What's the most common theme? What suggestions can you give on rewriting a script for success?

Fear, worry, and doubt are always the common denominators, but they are usually unwarranted. You cannot rewrite the script if you are continually surrounded by others who make you feel bad about yourself. I believe your subconscious mind is the driver of your car, so before you go to bed at night, protect your brain by exposing it to positive rather than negative thoughts and visualize the things you want to accomplish. I liken the brain to a computer—what you put in it is what it will put out.



Most of us have everything we need for success, we just don't have a *why*. But it's not really about your why because you still have a purpose; it's about what you need to know, what your burning desire is, what motivates you, and what you need to do to get it done. **-NATE AUFFORT**

To help alleviate your fears, doubts, and worries and gain a broader perspective of them, ask yourself these questions:

1. What's the worst thing that can happen? Will I be able to live through it? Will it matter ten years from now?
2. Will it affect anyone outside of my immediate circle?
3. Is there someone I know who has gone or is going through the same thing or something worse than me?

What do you think is the biggest mistake people make in business that leads to their downfall?

"People quit three feet from gold." This quote, from Napoleon Hill, author of *Think and Grow Rich*, references the reasons why people

fail in their quest for success—they quit when things get tough and experience temporary defeat. However, if you look at the most successful entrepreneurs, their biggest win or miracle, as I call it, was created during their most challenging period, just before a downfall. My philosophy is that you need to have an attitude of gratitude as you are going through trying times. Rather than just passively moving through them, turn these obstacles into opportunities.

You believe in the importance of "getting yourself into the room." Would you explain what you mean by that?

Sure. It's plain and simple. If you're going to take the time, energy, and expense to attend large-scale training events or seminars, make sure you surround yourself with

the best to learn the most. Look at this opportunity as a business investment and your ticket to pay-to-play. Place yourself in the front of the room where the successful businesspeople and influencers are. Also, approach these events with the attitude of "How can I bring value to the people I meet?" "How can I get more customers?" and "What do I want to get out of this?" It doesn't matter what type of industry you are in because these principles and skills remain the same.

Distraction can prevent someone from achieving their goals. What suggestions do you have to help people who are easily distracted?

First of all, you never get rid of distraction. It's around you every day, all day. You just need to push through and ignore it. Being disciplined, as we talked about earlier, can help you stay laser focused and shut out the white noise. If you need to reset, take time to recalibrate and come back with your daily goals in mind. ■



For more information, visit www.swatfinancial.us



Lead Meetings with Meaning

Are you tired of demotivating, lengthy, and purposeless meetings? So are your employees. Use these tips to make sure every meeting you lead is worth everyone's time—including your own.

BY LUKE ACREE



IT'S A SCENARIO THAT has happened to just about everyone: you sit in a meeting for thirty minutes to an hour, only to walk out of the room or hang up the call with zero valuable takeaways or an action plan for what to do next. While the amount of time Americans spend in meetings has been steadily increasing, productivity has not. In fact, according to a report from the project management company TeamStage, the majority of employees surveyed said that their meetings are a waste of time.

Meetings can be an enormously valuable way to connect with your people, solve problems, and set new goals—but they can also be a huge time suck and drain on resources if you're not careful. As a leader, it's up to you to ensure every meeting is a productive one and that you hold participants accountable for their level of engagement.

The tips that follow can help you identify and reduce common pain points in your meetings to make your teams and your business more efficient and successful.

→ **Email vs. meeting**

First things first. Before you hit send

A meeting that begins five minutes after the set start time or lasts ten minutes longer than intended is guaranteed to put people off, increase distraction, and reduce productivity.

on your meeting invite, you need to ask yourself one simple question: could my goal be accomplished without a meeting? If the answer is yes, develop an agenda with action points and delivery dates, and send your team the details of the plan via email. It could be helpful to include a note at the bottom of your email explaining how team members should follow up with you or another point person regarding their questions.

If you deem that the meeting is necessary, you'll want to follow a similar plan and establish an agenda before sending any invites. The purpose of an agenda is twofold: to set the stage so participants can prepare and to keep everyone on



track toward the end goal. Here are some best practices for creating an effective agenda for your meeting:

- Set clear expectations for the meeting. Include all necessary notes and information participants will need to prepare and spark valuable discussion.

- If the meeting requires multiple facilitators, make sure everyone is aware of their role and the expectations you have of them beforehand.
- Be flexible, leaving room for additional discussions (within reason). If a participant brings

up a valuable point to add to the agenda that is within the scope of the project or goal, be sure to add it before the meeting.

→ **Minutes matter**

It's important to be respectful of your people's time. A meeting that begins five minutes after the set

start time or lasts ten minutes longer than intended is guaranteed to put people off, increase distraction, and reduce productivity. Set a clear start time and end time, and stick to it as much as possible. As the host, you should plan to arrive at or sign on to the meeting a minute or even a few minutes in advance.

There's also no reason why a well-planned meeting would need to last longer than an hour, and, according to the American Psychological



Association (APA), the engagement of participants will start to dramatically decrease the longer the meeting goes on. Every minute of your meeting should be put to good use. Creating the aforementioned agenda can help with this but only if you stick to it. As the meeting leader, you should foster an inclusive environment by allowing participants to ask questions and



encouraging those who don’t often speak up to do so. However, if the conversation moves away from the points outlined in your agenda, you’ll need to rein it in. The longer you allow the conversation to go off topic, the harder it will be to bring it back to the main talking points.

In short, the faster you can get through the agenda of the meeting, the better. Decision-making skills will start to wane and attention spans will suffer as time goes on, so keep idle chitchat to the first five minutes of the meeting, hit your talking points, develop necessary action items, and then let everyone move on about their business.

→ **Actionable takeaways**

Speaking of action, if you don’t give every person at your meeting an action item, you’re wasting everyone’s time. Everyone at your meeting should come away with something to do, and it’s even better if you can give people an idea of their action item or items ahead of time.

Break down your meeting goals into smaller pieces that can be delegated. For example, if you’re meeting to discuss a sales target for the next quarter, ask yourself how each

participant can contribute to that goal in a way that is actionable and measurable. Your marketing lead, for instance, should leave with a game plan for how many new leads they will need to acquire over the next few months to deliver to the sales team. A creative lead could have an action item to develop a set amount of new lead magnets to bring in those leads, while a sales lead would need to know how many calls their team needs to make to bring in the necessary number of sales per day to reach the quarterly goal.

Not every meeting will have a groundbreaking objective, and that’s OK. Regardless of the size and scope of your goal, everyone at your meeting should walk away with a clear understanding of exactly what they need to do next, how to follow

up with you on their progress, and when they need to have it completed. Be sure to encourage participants to revisit their action items shortly after the meeting is over, perhaps even blocking out time immediately afterward to come up with their own game plan. Doing so allows everyone to think critically about the next steps while the meeting’s discussion is still fresh in their minds.

→ **Tips for one-on-one meetings**

We’ve reviewed how to improve group meetings; however, one-on-one meetings deserve arguably more attention because they tend to be less organized and goal driven than group discussions. It’s extremely important to meet with employees individually so that you can check in with them on both a personal level and professional level, ask about



Review the upcoming meetings on your calendar. Create agendas for each, and remove any meetings you no longer deem necessary.

their family and interests, inquire about their goals, offer praise, and highlight areas for improvement. These meetings can also serve as a great opportunity for you to take valuable notes about what motivates your employee, be it a financial goal, their family, or peer recognition.

- Keep the first five to ten minutes of your one-on-one meetings lighthearted and personal. Ask how your employee is doing both outside of work and at work and how they feel about their core responsibilities.
- Take well-organized notes during every one-on-one meeting you have. Be sure to include any life updates your employee mentioned, such as an engagement, an upcoming birthday, or vacation plans.

- Ask your employee to come prepared with any points they need to discuss. One-on-ones should never be one-sided. This is as much a chance for your employee to open up to you as it is for you to ask them questions.

- One-on-ones need action items too. Spend a few minutes at the end of the meeting to recap and set clear expectations for the next time you meet.

→ **Open-ended feedback**

As a leader, it can be difficult to reflect on your own areas of weakness and opportunities for growth. So much of your focus is put toward helping your employees improve—but it is essential that you make time for self-reflection.

Ask your team members for feedback from recent meetings to see where you may have fallen short, what’s working, and what isn’t. This information can be invaluable to help you improve meetings in the future and ensure that everyone is working as focused and efficiently as possible. Also, don’t be afraid to make changes that rock the boat a little. If you’ve been holding the same meeting

every week for three months and have very little progress to show for it, cancel it or switch up the format to occur less frequently or with different team members. You and they will both be better off.

Running meetings is an essential component of being a leader. But, like all other aspects of your role, it might take some time to get it right. Implement these tips for your business as soon as possible to drive results, and make sure other leaders in your organization follow suit with their own meetings. ■



About the author: Luke Acree is an authority on leadership, a lead-generation specialist, and a referral expert who has helped more than 100,000 entrepreneurs and small businesses grow their companies. He hosts *Stay Paid*, a sales and marketing podcast, and has been featured in *Entrepreneur*, *Forbes*, and *Foundr.com*.

Create a Winning Work-Life Balance

Want to be a hero to your team? A surefire way is to add balance to their workweeks. BY **MATTHEW BRADY**

I**T SEEMS HARD TO** believe, but less than a century ago, the average American workweek was fifty hours. A mere thirty years before that, if you were a worker in the manufacturing or building industry, you could expect to work *one hundred* hours a week on average.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the idea of working eight-hour days and forty-hour weeks was gaining steam, and it was famously championed and then adopted by Henry Ford in the 1920s. In 1940, Congress made the forty-hour workweek official.

However, the term should perhaps come with air quotes today. The very real reality is that, thanks to the internet, social media, and email, many workers feel like they must be available 24/7—something that companies may implicitly or explicitly encourage. The end result can be devastating to both workers and businesses.

A balance of power

For ages, supply and demand—namely, more job seekers than jobs available—tended to give the upper hand to employers, who could (and did) generally dictate all the terms of employment, including requiring hires to regularly work long hours to keep their jobs or move up in their respective companies. However, as the recent Great Resignation has demonstrated through its impact on employee retention, that dynamic has shifted. Today’s American worker has more of a say in their need for a balanced life, and they are vocal about it. Most people work to live, after all, not live to work—in fact, a 2022 Gallup survey found that 61 percent of workers consider work-life balance, and the well-being associated with it, to be very important.

So when it comes to attracting and keeping top talent, a key strategy is acknowledging that an employee’s home life is often just as or even more important to them than their

job and company—and then acting on it. By offering tools to foster a good work-life balance, such as the ones that follow, you can not only increase employee satisfaction and retention but also create raving fans within your business.

The why

Simply put, COVID-19 created a paradigm shift when it came to work. Longtime cornerstones of the corporate world, from a rigid nine-to-five schedule to mandatory in-office work, quickly gave way as companies were forced to reassess the most efficient ways to be productive in a changing world. Millions of people embraced the work-from-home experience, and white-collar business owners, many kicking and screaming, were forced to admit that, yes, it *could* work from a business perspective and even help their businesses thrive.

The cost analyses bear this out. Harvard Business School estimated that work-related stress and burnout result in upward of \$190 billion in annual healthcare costs—and that was in 2017, three years *before*



COVID-19 struck. Stressed-out, overworked employees are also consistently found to be less productive, less interested in their jobs, sicker, and more likely to leave—but research shows that these ills can be reversed by instituting a work-from-home environment.

The how

There are various work-life options you can implement to make your employees happy. Here are just a few to consider; you can always brainstorm more, knowing what would realistically work best for your specific team members and organization.

Work-from-home options

Allowing employees to work from home has some distinct advantages. Your team members can save money and stress without the daily commute, and they get to spend much more time at

home. Plus, as an organization, it’s possible to save big on overhead costs. Keep in mind this caveat, though: some employees will prefer the face-to-face interaction of the office, so if you can offer a choice, it may work out best overall for your company.

Here are some other options you may want to consider offering to improve your workers’ work-life balance:

🕒 Volunteer opportunities

Between their work life and home life, people sometimes can’t find time to pursue their favorite altruistic endeavors. Show that you understand how important this is by allowing an extra day off every six to twelve months that’s dedicated to helping others.

🕒 Unlimited PTO

Instead of boxing in the number of days team members have off

for sickness and time off, combine each into a paid time off bucket so employees can use their days as needed. Unlimited PTO can strengthen the employer-employee bond to its max because you show how much you trust that they’ll get the job done. In fact, research shows that unlimited PTO can result in employees taking *fewer* days off.

🕒 Workday cutoffs

Nothing quite says you care about an employee’s home life like ensuring they are available for dinner, so you could encourage nonmanagers to clock out by 5:00 or 5:30. For in-office employees, you could also set this cutoff at 4:30 so they can beat the traffic home.

🕒 Flex time

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FOLLOW UP.
Dedicate at least ninety minutes per day to business-development activities, such as sending follow-up emails, phone calls, and texts—video messages are great too.

BUILD A REFERRAL SYSTEM.
Referrals are the bread and butter of marketing. When you spend time building trust and credibility with new relationships, the number of referrals you receive will grow.

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