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You Are The Heart Of Your Business. Do You REALLY Know What That Means?

As a business owner, you're the true heart of your business. Though this may sound egotistical, there is some truth behind the expression. In a way, your business is an extension of yourself, which also means that your business cannot be something that you personally are not. So many people say, "I want to make the best product and get rich from it," but instead they

should be focusing on the why instead of the want. Much better questions to ask when deciding what direction to take your business are

"Why do I want to be rich?" and "Why is this the product to make it so?" If you want to see greater success in your business, treat it as an extension of yourself. If things get too muddled, take some time and reflect on what really matters to you. This will help you realign your business and make sure that you're focused on the things that truly matter.

GENERATING BUZZ CAN BE HARDER THAN YOU THINK

It's hard to argue that there's anything more powerful in the world of marketing than word of mouth. A report from Nielson found that people trust consumer reviews 66% of the time and recommendations from people they know 83% of the time, while fewer than half of the respondents showed trust in advertisements found on social media.

Word-of-mouth marketing can be difficult to obtain, but with these three tips, your business will be the talk of the town before you know it.

- **Master Your Field:** Always aim for the highest level of customer service and become knowledgeable about the product or service you're selling. If you wow your customers, they will probably tell friends about your business.
- **Inform Others Of Your Business Mission:** It's important that your business has a mission statement that the company works to maintain, but you should also be sharing that mission with all of your customers so they can buy in.

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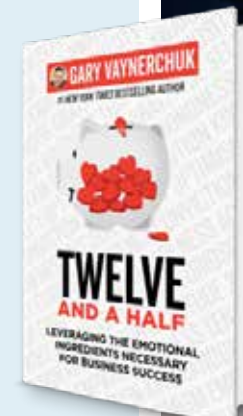
TECHNOLOGY TIMES

"Insider Tips To Make Your Business Run Faster, Easier And More Profitably"

Twelve And A Half

By Gary Vaynerchuk

Many business owners like to evaluate the skills of their employees as well as their personal success based on hard facts and numbers. They may feel like self-awareness and curiosity can't be tracked, so it's not worth their time to invest in, but Gary Vaynerchuk argues and explores the opposite in *Twelve And A Half: Leveraging The Emotional Ingredients Necessary For Business Success*. In his sixth business book, the best-selling author provides personal experiences and exercises relating to the 12 human ingredients that have led to his own personal success. If you're looking to refine or improve your leadership abilities, look no further than *Twelve And A Half*.



The 3 Options For IT Support And How To Choose The One That Fits Your Business

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This monthly publication provided courtesy of Jim Conley, President of Direct Connect Computer Systems.

Our Mission:

To empower our customers with the best-fit technologies, tailored and managed to suit their business needs, and to enhance their growth and success.

If you're a business owner or planning to open a new business, chances are you have looked into IT support options. For those unfamiliar with the world of IT support, it can be confusing trying to figure out which option is best for your business. You might be interested in the most cost-efficient option but worry that it won't offer enough support. Maybe you have looked at more extensive options and wondered what is truly necessary for your company's needs.

It can be problematic to look at cost alone to decide which option is best for you. When determining IT needs, there are three predominant options – that all come with different benefits and drawbacks – to consider before factoring in the cost of the company.

Time And Materials

Those in the industry who use the time-and-materials option are often referred to as "break-fix services." This essentially means that you pay an agreed-upon hourly rate for a technician to "fix" a problem when something "breaks." Many people like this option because it is the most straightforward and simple way to pay for IT assistance, but it often doesn't work in your favor and can even lead you to pay more for basic services.

The only time that I would recommend the time-and-materials approach is if you already have a competent IT person or team proactively managing your IT and you need additional

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support for a problem that your current IT team doesn't have the expertise to handle. Under the break-fix model, you'll find a fundamental conflict of interest between you and your IT firm. The IT company has no immediate need to stabilize your network because they are getting paid hourly. Computer networks absolutely need ongoing maintenance and monitoring to stay secure – something the break-fix model cannot supply.

Managed IT Services

In this option, the IT services company takes over the role of your in-house IT department for a fixed and agreed-upon monthly rate. They'll install, support and maintain all of the users, devices and PCs that are connected to your

network on a routine basis. They will even take care of your hardware and software needs for an extra cost. This model works for many businesses because it allows them to plan for IT services in their monthly budget and provides the business with routine maintenance and IT support that they will need. With managed IT services that are offered by managed services providers, you need to pay attention to the services they deliver for their monthly fees. Sometimes your needs may cost extra or the services you truly need are simply not offered.

It's my sincere belief that the managed IT approach is undoubtedly the most cost-effective and intelligent option for any business. Managed IT services are all about protecting your business from IT-related problems while keeping your systems up and running. In our current age, cybercriminals are working around the clock, trying to gather valuable data. Hiring a managed services provider will help protect your business and prevent common "disasters" such as rogue employees, lost devices, hardware failures, fires, natural disasters and a host of other issues that can interrupt or outright destroy your IT infrastructure and the data it holds.

Technology As A Service

The final option that you will run into on your hunt for IT support is companies offering



technology as a service. These companies offer everything that managed IT services offer but with the addition of new hardware, software and support. This service ensures that your business is always up-to-date with the newest technologies. You'll need to read the fine print, though since many of these companies do not cover third-party software. The greatest benefit of technology as a service is that you'll avoid the heavy cost of new hardware and software when you need it, but you will be paying far more for the same hardware and software over time.

Choosing the correct form of IT support for your company is incredibly important and something you want to attend to. Mistakes could have disastrous effects on your business. If you're unsure of which model will work best for you, give us a call. We'd be glad to help you find the perfect IT support for your business.

Cartoon Of The Month



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- **Be Authentic And Charismatic:** Be real with your customers and share your values with them. Find out what makes you and your business unique and find new ways to express that uniqueness.

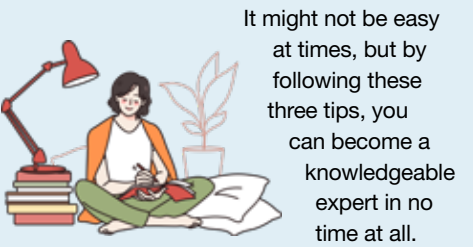
BUILDING TRUST IN THE REMOTE ECONOMY

The pandemic saw a huge shift in people working remotely. Before the pandemic, only 6% of the workforce worked remotely, but those numbers soared to 54% in May 2020. The shift has been difficult for many employers, but there are things you can do to make remote work easier for you and your employees. Offer flexibility that better fits their needs, find ways to build trust, limit restrictions and listen to what your employees are saying. To build a more appreciative and joyous remote culture, make the job more about your employees' needs and less about what you want.

Become An Expert In Anything

Whether you're changing career paths or simply want to invest yourself in a new hobby, there's a pretty good chance that you want to become an expert in that field or activity. You might think it will take years of dedication and hard work to become an expert in anything, but there are three simple steps you can take to put yourself on the fast-track toward becoming an expert in whatever your heart desires.

- Learn the language of your desired field or activity.
- Take notes at every opportunity and do research in your free time.
- Make connections and find influencers within the field.



Get Different And Avoid Defeat



When I released my first book, *The Toilet Paper Entrepreneur*, I hoped that it would be met with instant success. Instead, nobody bought the book on its initial release day. I felt defeated like most would be in this situation. I quickly questioned my next step. Should I learn how to market effectively or simply give up on my hopes and dreams?

I knew that I wrote a good book and that it would help other entrepreneurs succeed, so it became my mission to properly market it. The lack of good and effective marketing is what holds many businesses back from reaching their goals.

If you want to beat the competition, you must differentiate yourself from the rest. My book *Get Different* explains ways that you can make your company more visible in the business marketplace. I truly believe that the three main steps from this book can help any company's marketing strategy be more engaging and effective.

The first thing you need to do is differentiate your business from its competitors. Strong

word-of-mouth marketing is incredibly difficult to achieve and can lead to failure. Instead, you should get out there and use your marketing tools to ensure that people know just how great your business is. Use your talents to stand out from the crowd. Consumers will surely take notice of your brand if you appear to be more knowledgeable or even funnier than the competition.

After you get your consumers' attention, you need to offer engagement opportunities. Give your campaign an authoritative, trustful or socially significant approach so they feel comfortable using your business.

Lastly, you need to be direct. Tell them what to do after getting their attention. Develop a call to action so customers and ideal prospects will take the next step. You can also measure the results and see how effective your marketing truly is when you pick a specific action.

Proper marketing can be very difficult to achieve, but with the right strategy, you will be on the road to business success.



Mike Michalowicz has always believed that he had the formula to success and has proven it on multiple occasions. He is the creator of the book *Profit First*, which is used by hundreds of thousands of companies across the globe to drive greater profits. Mike is a former small-business columnist for *The Wall Street Journal* and served as a business makeover specialist for *MSNBC*. Mike currently leads two new multimillion-dollar ventures as he puts his latest research to the test.