Immigration Expert Reveals: 7 Mistakes That Can Get You Deported from Canada. - Page 27

Why Your Body Won't Let You Sleep (And How To Fix It Tonight - Page 41



10 SURPRISING WAYS EVERYDAY PEOPLE ARE EARNING WITH A PAGE 29

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SuccessDigest

Table of Contents









O4 Editor's Viewpoint Because the Robot Said So. **O9** Emmanuel Sunny- Ojeagbase's Wealth Library How to Handle that Critical Period between When You Start A New Business And When Money Starts to Come In (3) **Unlocking the People Code 17** The Unfair Advantage Nobody Talks About **27 Entrepreneural Lifestyle** 7 Costly Mistakes That Can Get You Deported From Canada **Tech Talk** 10 Surprising Ways Everyday People are Earning With Al The Gospel Of Money **36** From Rags to Riches: Inspiring Stories of Financial Success 41 **Living Healthy** Why Your Body Won't Let You Sleep (And How To Fix It Tonight) > **Exclusive Book Bonus** 49 Built to Fail

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Because the Robot Said So

A gentleman in his late 60s told me about something that happened last week.

He was searching for an address in an unfamiliar neighbourhood. Being old-school, he stopped to ask for directions.

Three people.
Three wrong turns.
Forty minutes of frustration.



Finally, his friend's grandchild sent a WhatsApp location pin. He opened Google Maps and arrived in six minutes.

Here's what struck me: He didn't question it. He didn't secondguess the route. He simply followed the instructions because the robot said so. And the robot was right.

That same trust, the willingness to follow where technology leads is creating a new class of earners right now.

People are using Al tools to build income streams that didn't exist two years ago.

A writer multiplies her output with AI research assistants.

A consultant runs an entire course business with Al handling content and customer service.

A manufacturer cuts production waste with Al quality control.

Young Nigerians are using AI to create income for themselves. These aren't tech experts. They are ordinary people who saw a tool, learned how to use it, and moved while others were still debating.



For Entrepreneurs, Al represents the most significant wealth-creation shift since the internet itself. It's collapsing barriers that once required teams, capital and years of expertise.

This edition of **SuccessDigest** reveals 10 proven ways people are making money with Al right now.

Text-to-video creation, Al-powered content businesses, Automated services, Digital products and six more strategies that require no coding and no massive investment.

Just curiosity and the willingness to trust the process.

Artificial Intelligence isn't coming. It's here. It's working. It's accessible.

The question isn't whether AI will reshape your industry.

It's whether you'll follow where it leads because the robot said so.

Samson Ojeagbase Editor, SuccessDigest.

From the desk of Samson Ojeagbase, the Editor of SuccessDigest:

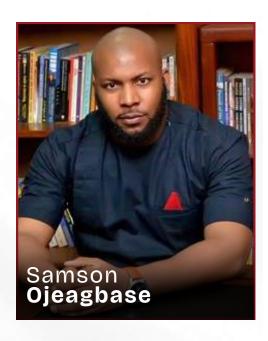
If You Are Looking To Get Ahead In Life And Business, Reading My Daily Email Could Very Well Be One Of The

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Emmanuel Sunny-Ojeagbase's

Wealth Library



How to Handle That Critical Period Between When You Start a New Business and When Money Starts To Come In (3)

In last month's installment on this topic, I directed us to the farm to see how farmers handle this delicate period.

Before I share my own experience, which you certainly have a whole lot to learn from, here's an article titled: Will Your Business Yield Fruit?

Written by Jim Daniels, an Internet marketer who is also a farmer. Go through the insight he gained from his farm first.

It will make what I have been saying (and will still say more on) clearer and deepen your own knowledge.

Below is the article:

With springtime arriving again in the Northeast section of the United States, I have managed to break free from my computer and get my hands dirty.

And in the process of planting a few new fruit trees in my tiny orchard, I noticed some remarkable similarities between this hobby and my online business.

I never noticed these similarities until this year but they are truly remarkable and if you are trying to grow an online business, you'd better take note of them.

Read the following directions for successfully growing a fruit tree and I will show you how the same principles apply to your business with the 'Tree' being your business and the 'Fruit' being the wealth your business yields.

Step 1:

If you have never grown a fruit tree, read this carefully. Of the first five original fruit trees in my orchard, only two have yielded fruit.

That's because instead of gathering all the information needed first, the gardener who planted them did so hastily. I'm sure he could just taste the fruit! So he dug a few holes and stuck those trees in the ground.

He had no idea that there were certain things he needed to consider first. Had he taken his time and researched properly, the trees would have yielded lots of fruits by now.



Unfortunately, too many new business owners do this with their business. They try to go it alone when they have no idea how to proceed.

All they have to do is get in touch with someone who has accomplished what they want to do and get their best advice. If that means buying a book or two, then so be it.

A few wise investments will go a long way towards yielding rich, luscious fruit. And it's much easier than starting a new tree every few years!

Step 2:

When planting your tree, be sure the roots are set properly.

Your business needs solid roots too. If you plan to run your business from home, start out by going to your local town offices and check out licensing and zoning.

Chances are you will not have to do more than fill out a form and pay a small fee. But you are better off starting out correctly from the start so you don't have to worry about it later.

Also be sure when selecting a name for your company and your products, that the names are not already taken. Do a trademark search on the web before making anything official.

The last thing you want to do is have to pull up those roots after they are established and start all over again!

Step 3:

Regularly prune branches as necessary. Pruning your tree during the first 4-5 years is very important in defining the future form and structure of the tree.

A business needs pruning too.

Each branch that grows from your business needs to be carefully monitored. These new branches of your business represent new products and services you add to the mix over time.

They may be yours or they may be carefully selected affiliate products and services.

As they grow, you must take time to measure their results and snip off the branches that look weak or die.

Only the strongest branches should be left to grow.

Step 4:

Water and fertilize regularly.

Without regular water and fertilizer, your tree will not reach its full potential and may not yield any fruit!

Do you feed your business regularly?

Far too many small business owners spend little if any time and money doing that. Yes, I am referring to advertising and marketing.

That is the only thing that can make your business grow. If your fruit has been small or sparse, it could be a lack of water or fertilizer.



Your business needs a constant dose of marketing and advertising.

Make this a top priority if you want rich, bountiful fruit year in and year out.

Step 5:

Be patient.

Fruit does not always come in the first year but it sure tastes sweet when it does arrive.

In business too, it takes time for your efforts to pay off. If you give up too early and stop nurturing your business, regularly pruning, watering and fertilizing, it will never yield fruit.

So rather than concentrate on the fruit itself, concentrate on doing everything necessary to keep your business growing. Before you know it, you will see the fruits of your labour!

- Article by Jim Daniels of JDD Publishing

See what I mean?

This is a man with a first-hand experience talking. A farmer who is also an online business owner and allow me add this right away.

One thing farmers know that most beginner Entrepreneurs don't is that you have to make provision for the period between when you plant your seed and when you are expecting to harvest it.

This is usually a lean period for the farmer. But the wise and experienced farmer does not feel it.

They save money and where possible, some of their farm produce from their last harvest to cushion the effect of the period when the seeds have been sown and harvest is on the way.

What this means is that when you are planning to go into business, you should have a standby fund that you can fall back on.

From my own experience however, this is easier said than done.

In a situation where most startup businesses do not even have money left to advertise their products and services by the time they launch?

What should a beginner Entrepreneur do in this situation?

I will reveal how I was able to navigate this difficult phase of Entrepreneurship and I believe that information will bring positive results to your business.

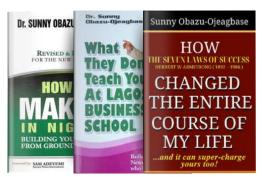
Have a great month ahead.

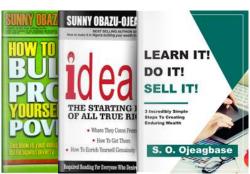


For anyone looking to build Wealth with peace of mind...

Grab Six of
Pst. (Dr.) Emmanuel Sunny
Ojeagbase's books on Business
Success and Wealth Creation
for the Price of One.







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Regular Price: N6,500

What They don't Teach You at Lagos Business School.

Regular Price: N-6,500

How the Seven Laws of Success changed the Entire Course of my Life.

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The Unfair Advantage Nobody Talks About

There's a skill that opens more doors than your degree ever will. It gets you better deals than your negotiation tactics. It lands you opportunities that never make it to the job boards.

And most people completely ignore it because it doesn't come with a certificate or a course outline.

I'm talking about being someone people actually want to help. Not respect. Not fear. Not admire from a distance.

Want to help.

There's a massive difference.

You can be the smartest person in the room and still struggle to get anyone to return your calls. You can have the best product in the market and watch inferior competitors win because people just like them more.

This isn't about being fake or manipulative. It's about understanding a simple truth: Opportunities flow through people, and people are selective about who they let opportunities flow to.

So, how do you become someone people want to help?

Start practicing these three specific behaviors today:

1. Ask Better Questions (And Actually Listen to the Answers)

Most conversations are just two people waiting for their turn to talk.

You've experienced it. Someone asks, "How's business?" but their eyes are already scanning the room for the next person to talk to You start answering and they interrupt with their own story.

We've all done it. We've all been on the receiving end of it. And we all remember who actually listened.

Here's the shift: Stop trying to be interesting. Get interested.

The person who asks "How did you get started in this industry?" and genuinely wants to hear the answer will be remembered long after the person who spent 20 minutes talking about their own achievements.

The practical application:

In your next five conversations, try this experiment. Ask one thoughtful question and then ask two follow-up questions based on what they say.

Don't share your own experience unless they ask. "What made you choose that approach?"

Then, based on their answer: "What was the biggest challenge you faced?"

Then: "If you were starting over, what would you do differently?"

Three questions. Genuine curiosity. That's it.



Watch how people's energy shifts when they realize you're actually listening. Watch how they lean in.

Watch how they remember you afterwards.

Why this works: Most people spend their entire day not being heard.

Clients don't listen.

Bosses don't listen.

Even family members are half-distracted. When you give someone your full attention, you're giving them something rare.

They'll remember you for it.

2. Make Other People Look Good

Here's a test: Think about the last networking event or business meeting you attended.

How much time did you spend talking about your achievements versus highlighting someone else's?

Most people attend events with one goal: promote themselves, talk about their business, hand out their card, and make their pitch.

Smart people do the opposite.

They spend the event making introductions.

Connecting people who should know each other.

Publicly acknowledging someone's good work.



Giving credit where credit is due.

The practical application:

Next time you're in a group setting, try this:

Find one opportunity to make someone else look good in front of others.

"You should talk to Emmanuel - he solved exactly this problem for his company last year."

"Korede's team actually pioneered this approach. Korede, can you share how you did it?"

"I learned this from Nonso. He's the real expert here."

That's it.

One genuine moment of shining the light on someone else instead of yourself.

Here's what happens:

The person you highlighted remembers.

The people who witnessed it note that you're generous.

And paradoxically, you become more respected because confident people don't need to constantly promote themselves.

Insecure people hoard credit. Secure people share it. Which one do you think people want to do business with?

3. Follow Through on Small Things

Want to know the fastest way to lose people's trust?

Say you'll do something small and then don't do it.

"I'll send you that article."

"Let me introduce you to that contact."

"I'll follow up next week."

Then...nothing.

We've all done it. We mean well in the moment. Then life happens, and we forget.

But here's what people remember: not the big promises you kept, but the small promises you broke.

The practical application:

For the next 30 days, adopt one simple rule: If you say you'll do something, do it within 24 hours. If you can't, don't say it.

"I'll send you that link" \rightarrow Send it before you go to bed tonight, or don't promise it.

"Let me connect you with someone" → Make the introduction that same day, or say "Let me check with them first and get back to you."

"I'll call you next week" → actually call next week, or say "I'll reach out when I have something concrete to discuss."

This seems small. It's not.

Why this works: Everyone breaks big promises occasionally—deals fall through, circumstances change. But people who consistently break small promises signal something deeper: "I don't value my word. I don't value your time."

Does this long enough and you develop a reputation:
"When they say something, it happens." That reputation is
worth more than any marketing budget.

The Compounding Effect

Here's what's interesting about these three behaviors: none of them require talent, connections, or money.

"They just require intentionality.

But here's what most people miss: these behaviors compound.

When you genuinely listen to someone, they're more likely to introduce you to their network.

When you make someone look good, they're more likely to return the favor. When you follow through consistently, people trust you with bigger opportunities.

Six months from now, people won't remember what you said in your pitch. They'll remember:

- "That person actually listened when I talked."
- "They connected me with someone who helped my business."
- "They did exactly what they said they would."

That's the reputation that builds careers.

The Action Plan:

Pick one behavior.

This week, focus on asking better questions. In every conversation, ask one thoughtful question and two follow-ups. Don't talk about yourself unless asked.

Next week, focus on making others look good. Find three opportunities to publicly acknowledge someone else's contribution or expertise.

The following week, focus on follow-through. Don't make any promise you can't fulfill within 24 hours.

By week four, these aren't behaviors you're forcing anymore. They're becoming habits. And habits become reputation. And reputation becomes opportunity.

The Uncomfortable Truth:

Most people won't do this. They'll read this article, nod along, and change nothing. They'll keep waiting for their turn to talk. They'll keep promoting themselves. They'll keep making promises they don't keep.

And they'll keep wondering why opportunities go to "less qualified" people.

Here's what they don't see: those "less qualified" people aren't less qualified. They're just more likable. And in business, likable wins. Not always immediately. But eventually. Consistently. Reliably.

Because business is just people making decisions about who they want to work with.

And given the choice between competent-but-difficult and competent-and-pleasant?

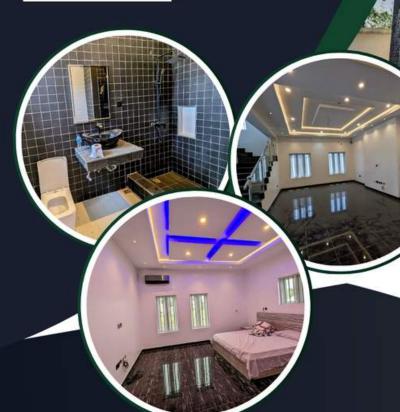
People choose pleasant every single time.

The question is: which one are you?



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7 Costly Mistakes That Can Get You Deported From Canada



Thousands of people living legally in Canada could face deportation this year and many have no idea what could be coming their way!

In this eye-opening video, I break down 7 real reasons people are getting removed from Canada in 2025.

Some of them are minor mistakes most people overlook but they have far reaching consequences.

But here's the good news:

I will also reveal to you to step by step process to protect your status, avoid common traps, and stay safe in Canada.

This 10-minute video could be the difference between building the life of your dream in Canada and getting deported.

→ <u>Tap here to watch this important video</u>

Tech Talk



10 Surprising Ways Everyday People are Earning With AI

You're not broke because you're lazy; you're broke because your systems are outdated.

The people stacking up income streams right now aren't working harder. They're working smarter by letting Al handle the busywork that normally eats your hours.

Here's the step-by-step playbook of how they do it (and how you can too).

1. Qualify Leads Without Chasing Every Prospect

Tip: Stop wasting time on every website visitor. Define your ideal customer and automate lead qualification to focus only on the hottest prospects.

Tool: <u>Drift</u> - Al chat assistant that engages visitors, asks qualifying questions, and routes the best leads to your team.

Action: Set up a chat workflow
→ automatically qualify visitors
→ focus on prospects that convert.



2. Build AI Agents to Analyze Your Business

Data

Tip: Don't guess what drives revenue — build a system that continuously tests, tracks, and learns.

Tool: Relevance Al — enables you to create Al agents that analyze data, spot patterns, and generate actionable insights.

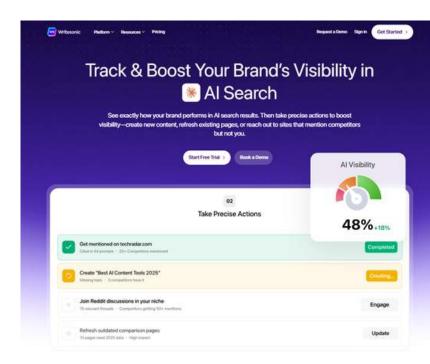
Action: Define KPIs \rightarrow create AI agents \rightarrow let them monitor and suggest improvements.

3. Publish Content Without Burnout

Tip: Consistent content builds authority. Have a system to create drafts and outlines quickly.

Tool: <u>Writesonic</u> - generates polished drafts for blogs, ads, or social posts while keeping your voice intact.

Action: Drop rough notes → generate content → publish consistently.



4. Automate Repetitive Workflows

Tip: Identify repetitive tasks like onboarding, follow-ups, or internal updates and automate them.

Tool: <u>Nekton.ai</u> - builds Al-powered automations across your stack without coding.

Action: Map the process \rightarrow set up automation \rightarrow let Al handle repetition.

5. Let Emails Work for You

Tip: Set up email sequences that educate leads and convert automatically.

Tool: <u>GetResponse</u> - combines Al-driven email automation with e-commerce and sales funnels.

Action: Draft sequences → schedule automation → nurture leads while focusing on other priorities.



6. Turn Text Into Videos

Tip: Video content outperforms text but shooting and editing can be barriers. Convert scripts into videos instead.

Tool: <u>Synthesia</u> - Al-generated avatars and voices produce professional videos from text.

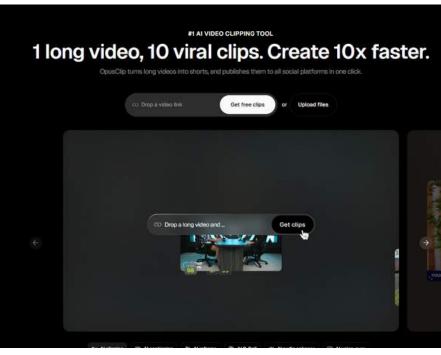
Action: Write one script → generate video → test engagement → scale content output.

7. Multiply Content From One Clip %

Tip: Repurpose content to maximize reach. A single webinar can become dozens of short clips.

Tool: Opus Clip - automatically edits long videos into short, social-ready pieces.

Action: Record once → let Al create multiple clips → post across channels.



8. Stay Visible Without Manual Posting

Tip: Consistency builds trust - Automate social posting so you're active without being glued to your phone.

Tool: <u>SocialBee</u> - schedule, rotate, and recycle posts to maintain presence.

Action: Plan weekly content \rightarrow load into platform \rightarrow relax while posts run.

9. Deliver Client Work Without Chaos

Tip: Organize projects, timelines, and updates transparently to keep clients happy and retained.

Tool: <u>Teamwork</u> - task and project management with automated reminders for client updates.

Action: Add projects \rightarrow invite clients \rightarrow let Al manage notifications.

10. Look Professional Without a Designer

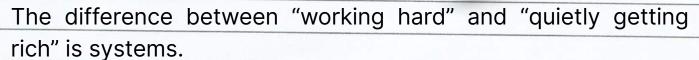
Tip: Strong branding builds trust and drives sales. Keep visuals consistent without hiring a designer.

Tool: <u>Design.com</u> — quickly create logos, graphics, and ad creatives using Al.



Action: Set brand colors \rightarrow generate visuals \rightarrow maintain a professional look.

Final Takeaway



Al doesn't make you smarter; it makes you faster, more consistent, and less distracted. Start with one area of your business, automate it, and expand from there.

Published Oct 22nd, 2025 on ai.plainenglish - Written by Damian Kyska



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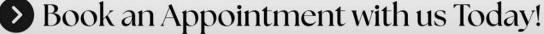
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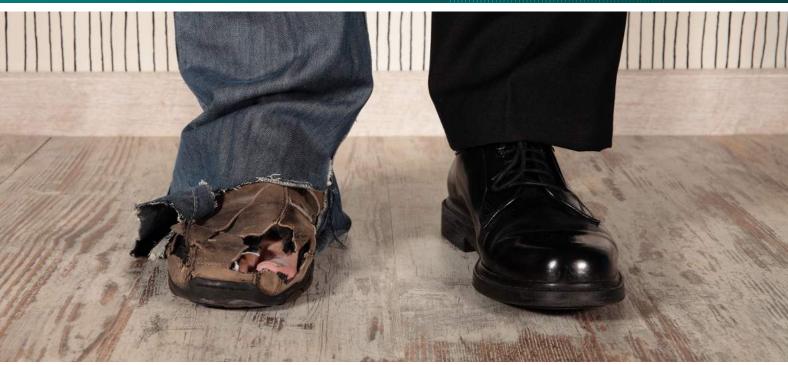
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From Rags to Riches: Inspiring Stories of Financial Success

We all love a good success story, especially when it comes to achieving financial success. From rags to riches, these inspiring stories remind us that with hard work, determination, and strategic financial decisions, anyone can achieve their financial goals.

Let's take a closer look at some real-life examples of individuals who have gone from humble beginnings to financial prosperity.

1. Oprah Winfrey: From a troubled childhood to becoming one of the most influential media moguls in the world, Oprah Winfrey's story is a true inspiration. She overcame adversity and built her empire through hard work, perseverance, and smart financial decisions.





Her journey teaches us the importance of believing in ourselves and taking calculated risks.

2. Warren Buffett: Known as one of the most successful investors of all time, Warren Buffett started with a small investment in stocks and built his wealth over time.

His story emphasizes the power of long-term investing and the importance of patience and discipline in achieving financial success.



3. J.K. Rowling: Before becoming the bestselling author of the Harry Potter series, J.K. Rowling was a struggling single mother living on welfare.



Through her determination and passion for writing, she turned her life around and became one of the wealthiest authors in the world. Her story teaches us the value pursuing our passions and never giving up on our dreams.

4. Elon Musk: From being a college dropout to becoming the CEO of multiple successful companies like Tesla and SpaceX, Elon Musk's journey is a testament to the power of innovation and entrepreneurship.



His story inspires us to think outside the box and take risks in order to achieve financial success.

These stories of financial success remind us that no matter where we start, it's possible to achieve our financial goals with the right mindset and strategic financial decisions. Here are some tips to help you on your own journey:

1. Set clear financial goals:

Define what financial success means to you and set specific, achievable goals to work towards.

2. Educate yourself:

Continuously learn about personal finance, investing, and wealth-building strategies. Knowledge is power when it comes to making informed financial decisions.

3. Create a budget:

Track your income and expenses to ensure you're living within your means and saving for the future.

4. Invest wisely:

Seek professional advice or educate yourself on different investment options to grow your wealth over time.

5. Surround yourself with like-minded individuals:

Build a network of people who share your financial goals and can provide support and guidance along the way.

Remember, financial success is a journey, and it's important to stay focused, motivated, and adaptable to changing circumstances. With the right mindset and strategic financial decisions, you too can go from rags to riches and achieve your own version of financial success.





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Why Your Body Won't Let You Sleep (And How To Fix It Tonight)



Adewumi Ebuk is a health coach with a niche in chronic health management and a thought leader passionate about restoring the divine design of health - where science meets biblical wisdom.

With an educational background in pharmacy and a 12 year career in health coaching rooted in functional medicine, she explores how behavioral science and our daily choices influence vitality, mood, and longevity.

Overview

Improving Sleep hygiene is a priority that should be monitored closely to prevent bigger health problems.

Poor sleep is not just about feeling tired - it disrupts your hormones, raises inflammation, and increases your risk of depression, heart disease, and diabetes.



This protocol highlights food, herbs, supplements, and lifestyle practices that improve sleep and why they work.

Foods for Better Sleep

Complex carbs in moderation -

(e.g., sweet potatoes, unripe plantain, oats) these help the brain release serotonin and then melatonin these are critical chemicals for sleep.

Bananas -

Rich in magnesium and vitamin B6, both support sleep quality. Many who have low quality of sleep most likely have deficiency of these nutrients.

Beans and legumes -

Moderate portions at dinner provide tryptophan, an amino acid that promotes sleep. large portions caise digestive issues.

Warm milk or tiger nut milk -

Natural sleep soother. This is because its reach in magnesium.

Herbs that Calm and Relax

Confirm safety if you're on medications or have underlying conditions

Chamomile tea - Reduces anxiety, improves sleep latency.

Lemon balm or scent leaf infusion - Supports relaxation and digestion before bed.

→ Click here to buy quality herbs

Valerian root (capsule or tea form) - Evidence shows it shortens time to fall asleep and improves deep sleep.

→ Click here to buy quality herbs

Supplements for Sleep Support

Confirm safety if you're on medications or have underlying conditions!

→ Click here to buy quality herbs

Magnesium

(citrate or glycinate, 200-400 mg at night) - Calms the nervous system.



→ Click here to buy pharmaceutical grade brands

Vitamin D3 -

(2000-4000 IU daily. Low vitamin D is linked to insomnia.



→ Click here to buy pharmaceutical grade brands

Melatonin -

(1-3 mg) only short-term, when sleep schedule is disrupted. Supports circadian rhythm reset.



→ Click here to buy pharmaceutical grade brands

Omega-3 (fish oil) -

Linked to better sleep quality and reduced anxiety



→ Click here to buy pharmaceutical grade brands

Lifestyle Practices

- Digital sunset: No screens 1 hour before bed (blue light blocks melatonin).
- Consistent sleep-wake schedule: Go to bed and wake up same time daily.
- Bedroom environment: Cool, dark, quiet. Use blackout curtains if possible.

- Wind-down ritual: Reading the Bible, journaling, light stretching, or prayer meditation.
- Breathing practice: 4-7-8 breathing (inhale 4s, hold 7s, exhale 8s) calms stress hormones.
- Sunlight in the morning: A 2020 study (Sleep Medicine Reviews) shows that morning natural light exposure strengthens circadian rhythm.

Need a personal touch?

Your body is unique, and while this guide gives you a strong foundation, personalized guidance is where the transformation happens. What you stand to gain in my 1:1 virtual consultations,

- A root-cause approach coaching for healing and health maintenance
- Guide on foods to eat, what herbs to use safely, the right supplements for your body, and lifestyle changes that restore balance.
- A personalized strategy (no guesswork)
- Country, culture and busy lifestyle specific

Safe guidance if you're on medications

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Support to import pharmaceutical grade supplements (99% purity)





PRICING

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- Meals, herbs, & supplements, plan
- Email support

TH40K/\$40 IN NIGERIA / OUTSIDE NIGERIA /

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- Best for guided clean living (no diagnosed
- 4 sessions monthly

health condition)

- ✓ Lab test advisory
- Meals, herbs, & supplements, plan

#80k/\$80 5

RESTORE **PLAN**

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- Lab test advisory
- Meals, herbs, & supplements, plan
- Assigned personnel and email support

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2 Gummies a day keeps the Wrinkles away!



- Clear Wrinkles
- Clear Dark Spots
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- Regain your Youthful Glow

Good evening full just to let you know that I can see some changes
Thanks alot

Voi

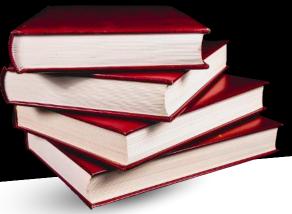
I hope your boss is enjoying the product?

Yes sir

16:13

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EXCLUSIVE BOOKBONUS



Built to Fail

The Inside Story of Blockbuster's Inevitable Bust

The Summary in Brief

Have you ever wondered why dominant companies fail?

How seemingly invincible corporations just fade away? If you were a teen or adult in the 80s, 90s, and early 2000s, you probably spent a fair amount of time at Blockbuster.

It was a behemoth for many years, and then...it wasn't. Alan Payne is the single most successful Blockbuster franchisee in the company's history, and in Built to Fail, he outlines exactly what Blockbuster did wrong — and how it all could have been prevented.

How did Blockbuster go from a sure bet to what Carl Icahn called 'the worst investment I ever made'? It turns out that streaming didn't kill Blockbuster— its culture and leadership did.

In **Built to Fail** and this accompanying summary, it's time to find out why.

Trace the incredible rise, massive domination, and eventual fall of the world's most famous video store and discover how the lessons of what went wrong and what could have gone right can help owners, entrepreneurs, and managers everywhere build more resilient businesses.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

How Blockbuster rose from small

- video store chain to the leader in video rentals worldwide.
- The management change that led to Blockbuster's initial decline.
- How Blockbuster's own actions (and inaction) were more devastating than anything Netflix or other competitors did.



What leaders can learn from Blockbuster's mistakes.

Introduction

Despite popular belief, Blockbuster was in severe financial trouble long before Netflix ever streamed a single film. So if streaming didn't kill Blockbuster, what did?

How can a company that SO dominated an industry be in an struggle constant almost to survive? Because through its brief twenty-five-year history, the only thing Blockbuster ever did better than everyone else was open more stores.



But when competitors multiplied and opening more stores was no longer enough, Blockbuster was helpless.

Blockbuster was phenomenally successful in its early years and made thousands rich beyond their wildest dreams. But it was built to grow and nothing else.

Even though leaders at the company had ample time to rescue Blockbuster from itself, we all know how that worked out. Blockbuster became one of the most iconic brands in the history of American business, but it cracked at the first sign of a challenge.

From its founding, Blockbuster was a company built to fail

America Goes to the Video Store

In the 1980s, landmark court cases established the right for video rental stores to rent out films to customers.

Meanwhile, the video rental industry launched and funded an unprecedented movement for independent films, which could find a home in video rental stores they would have never found in major theaters.



Video rental businesses began to explode. Video Station boasted 500 stores, while smaller competitors like National Video, Adventureland Video, Erol's, Video Concepts, and Video Biz all had at least 100 stores.

But none of these companies could keep up, and each of them would fail in the next few years. But in 1987, the owner of a waste management company from Florida was about to take over the industry.

Blockbuster Takes Charge
H. Wayne Huizenga bought
controlling interest from
Blockbuster when it had just
20 stores, so even though
he's not technically the
'founder' of Blockbuster, he is
the one who made it what it
ultimately became.



His strategy? Buy, buy, buy. He opened stores. He purchased production companies. He even bought land and initiated plans to build a theme park in Florida to compete with Disney World.

But in a few years, every one of the businesses Blockbuster had bought to expand the brand had failed. And, of course, BlockbusterLand was never built.



Blockbuster's history could have been very different had it used this time and flood of cash to commit more resources to improve the business instead of having a singular focus on growth.

And while Blockbuster sat on the largest movie database in the world and did very little with it, others were already using their own information to develop a superior consumer proposition.

That Little Old Grocery Store Company from Texas

In 1992, Blockbuster's leading competitor was Video Central, a smaller chain owned by retail grocery company H-E-B.

There were only 35 locations of Video Central, but almost all competed directly with Blockbuster and dominated their locations in head-to-head competition.



Sales at Blockbuster stores near Video Central were half the national average, and Video Central stores across the street from Blockbusters were profitably generating sales two to three times that of Blockbuster.

How did Blockbuster respond? By raising prices for new releases, which helped give rise to Redbox's low-price approach.

Even as Netflix was demonstrating how consumer tastes were expanding, Blockbuster's selection of catalog titles was shrinking. Blockbuster's biggest mistake came from its lack of curiosity about competitors. It could have learned from them, but was never interested until it was too late.

Welcome to Blockbuster

For the next decade, venturing out to the video store would become America's favorite way to watch movies. Yet the industry leader, Blockbuster, was already crumbling on the inside, incapable of transforming itself from a growth company to an operating company.

But before the extent of the carnage was known to the outside world, Huizenga had sold Blockbuster and was on to his next venture. The problems were left for others to fix.

So, would the new ownership turn the company's direction around with some innovative ideas that would change Blockbuster's fortunes? Not exactly. What came next was, in fact, even worse

The Decline Begins

Although still dominant in 1996 thanks to its sheer size, Blockbuster was in trouble financially.

In a stunning decline, average annual store sales in the U.S. had fallen over 20% from \$900,000 to \$700,000 over the course of just three years. Sales growth had not kept pace with new store openings which, given the high fixed costs of

virtually guaranteed the financial problems that would plague Blockbuster for years to come. The dramatic decline occurred years before new technologies would pose legitimate threats. Unknowingly, the group that purchased Blockbuster in 1994 had purchased a company that was on the verge of collapse. It had been built to grow and nothing else.

Death by DVD

In 1997, DVD arrived and immediately began to change everything about home entertainment. However, widespread DVD players in homes were still a bit of a ways off.

Blockbuster did its best to adapt, but instead of going all-in on DVD instead focused on an increasingly baffling barrage of promotions and raised prices.



They created characters, looked for new sources of revenue including a pizza partnership with Round Table Pizza and even an electronics partnership with Radio Shack. Not surprisingly, both failed.

DVD was destined to help destroy Blockbuster. Or rather, it was the weapon with which Blockbuster destroyed itself. Why? Not just because it was superior to VHS in every way, but because it was cheaper. A brand-new DVD could be purchased for just \$20 at retailers. That meant more people could buy movies they wanted versus renting them from Blockbuster.

Did Blockbuster take advantage of lower DVD prices and rent them out to customers at a lower price? Nope. Instead, they kept prices high and continued to offer an increasingly poor selection of movies.

They failed to rebuild their inventory to transition customers from VHS to DVD. They thought customers would just shrug off missing DVD titles and instead rent the VHS. Instead, they left and bought the DVD for themselves — cutting out Blockbuster entirely.

The **Netflix** You Do Not Remember Netflix didn't start as a streaming giant. They started with an even simpler idea—eliminate the trip to the video rental store and send people DVDs directly. It got attention, but it didn't initially have public approval.



Even though Netflix was a Wall Street darling, five times more people still preferred to rent DVDs in stores. There is no reason to believe Blockbuster could not have run successful stores for several more years.

Just as Netflix used its DVD-by-mail business to build a bridge to streaming on the internet, Blockbuster could have done the same with its stores. Instead, they destroyed them by trying to turn them into Netflix— which was, of course, impossible.

It's Over

By the end of 2005, the degree of carnage at Blockbuster was fully understood. Rental revenue declined by about \$220 million, \$150 million more than Blockbuster projected.

But the bigger issue was cost for product. Rental margin declined from 72% to 66%, which reduced gross profit by \$250 million, more than double their expectations. But it was not nearly enough to stop the massive out-of-stocks caused by ending late fees.

Sales never recovered but even if they had, the end of late fees had destroyed the supply chain and had reduced gross margin to an unsustainable level. There were now fewer reasons than ever to go to Blockbuster. The DVDs you wanted were probably not there, which was once Blockbuster's greatest strength availability.

McDVD

In 2004, McDonalds tested an odd idea at 100 of its locations throughout Denver. It was a series of automated kiosks outside the store, by the parking lot, where people could rent DVDs for cheap.

They called it Redbox. Immediately, Blockbuster stores in the Denver area saw reduced sales.

You can imagine what happened when Redboxes started popping up in every Walmart, supermarket, and drugstore around the country. At this point, it should come as no surprise that Blockbuster didn't even attempt to develop their own kiosks. Blockbuster once again ignored a competitor until it was too late.

Fixing What's Broken

A small contingent of Blockbuster franchise owners believed that if the stores were better managed, the bank that was now managing the company at that point could recover much more of its loan balance by simply running the stores as opposed to liquidating them.

The bank agreed, so instead of buying the stores, the franchisees entered into a three-way management agreement with the bank, Blockbuster, and new owner Glen Klicker. Immediately, sales and profits improved dramatically and the stores were re-energized.

The immediacy of the turnarounds was a testament to the demand for what they were renting DVDs. DVDs were still America's favorite way to watch a movie. In 2007, nothing else came close.



Once the inventory was there and the pricing was right, customers came racing back to stores.

Unfortunately, every time the store owners in this experiment tried to contact Blockbuster to explain how they'd turned the stores around, they were politely told to go away.

Full Death Spiral

In June 2007, Blockbuster had roughly 8,300 stores. More than half of them were in the U.S. Annual sales were trending at about \$5.5 billion — still almost double the number from a decade earlier. Yet the company was barely profitable and sales trends were the weakest in its history. Blockbuster could not service its debt, and its stock was trading at one-third of its all-time high.

And because of its precarious financial condition, the company didn't have access to new capital, which would be necessary for any hope of survival. Yet the ownership insisted Blockbuster was well-positioned for the future, and just three years later, would blame the company's failure on their successors.

One Last Chance

Throughout the final years of Blockbuster, its demise was defined by well-meaning people making critical decisions from 30,000 feet when those decisions could best be made on the ground, in the stores, listening to operators and customers about what really happened in a Blockbuster store. But from the company's founding until its very end, that was never part of Blockbuster's DNA.

In the years leading to bankruptcy, franchise stores were subjected to untold bad press because of Blockbuster's persistent financial difficulties.

They couldn't even have a sale without customers believing it was a 'going out of business' sale. For every step forward, it was two steps back due to negative headlines about Blockbuster's mass store closures, layoffs, and eventual bankruptcy.



In the end, the Blockbuster ticket no longer stood for the proud brand it once was. More than anything else, it was now a symbol of failure.

Conclusion

What can we all learn as leaders from Blockbuster's failures? There are seven core lessons.

- Clearly define your company's purpose and its mission.
- Identify what drives your business and pursue it relentlessly
- Measure what matters

- Respect and learn from competitors
- If you're going to do it, be the best. In difficult times, rely on the fundamentals to survive.
- Don't just talk about the future. PLAN for it.

What can we do that Blockbuster failed to do? We can define our own path, our own purpose, and the path we'll take to get there. We'll determine how we measure our progress and stick to those metrics.

No one can do that for us. Every organization has unique challenges that require original ideas, and those can only come from within by following our passion, guide by facts, to the right answers.

Alan Payne spent thirty-one years in the movie rental business, the last twenty-five of those as a Blockbuster retail franchisee. He took over a small group of Blockbuster stores in 1993 and grew it into one of the largest and most successful chains in the company. He finally closed his last store in 2018, more than eight years after Blockbuster filed for bankruptcy.

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