

What Drives Uber

The Founders' Evolving Process That Led to Success

When you want to look something up, you Google it. Google's brand has become synonymous with retrieving answers through a catalog of experts on the internet, and it's so ingrained in our culture that we have transformed Google into a verb. (Google it, if you don't believe us.)

Likewise, Uber is following a similar trajectory. When you need to get somewhere or want food delivered, but you don't have a vehicle or can't drive, you Uber it. Like Google, the ride-sharing company that launched in 2009 has since become synonymous with catching a ride and convenience.

But the journey to this point hasn't always been a smooth ride. For founders Travis Kalanick and Garrett Camp, Uber was an idea borne out of a snowstorm. These two entrepreneurs became relentless in their pursuit of growth despite any failures they may have experienced previously, and the result is that you can now get a convenient ride to most locations you want to visit.

BEFORE UBER

Kalanick was known in tech before he founded Uber. In 1998, he dropped out of the University of California Los Angeles to join Scour, a startup that focused on file-sharing. Despite having major investors, in October 2000, Scour filed for bankruptcy after being sued by entertainment companies over creative idea licensing issues.

In an act of what Kalanick called revenge, he started Red Swoosh shortly after. Similar in its format, Red Swoosh was also a file-sharing software that Kalanick positioned as a lucrative option for use by the very same companies who had previously sued him. Red Swoosh wasn't without its problems — like tax

evasion — but Kalanick eventually moved Red Swoosh into a selling position. The company was sold in 2007 for \$23 million, positioning Kalanick to start Uber.

THE FOUNDING OF UBER

Uber lore claims that Kalanick and Camp found themselves in a precarious situation in December 2009, when a snowstorm derailed their attempts to get a cab. That launched the idea that would become Uber — previously UberCab — which was first only available in San Francisco in 2010. But as the popularity of the app spread, despite the added extra cost of an Uber ride compared to a cab, Uber began to expand to more cities. Investors took notice, and Kalanick's determination ultimately persuaded investors to take notice and funnel money toward the startup, despite its shortcomings.

Cab drivers in cities across the U.S. felt squeezed out by the app, while California courts concluded that drivers in their state had to be considered employees — not just contracted workers — to afford people certain protections that gig workers don't have.

Other reports found a culture of sexual harassment at Uber. (Kalanick would step down as CEO in the months after these allegations.)

Still, as cities procured more Uber drivers, Uber expanded its services. UberX was launched as a lower-cost option, while UberPool offered carpooling options at a discount for riders on similar routes. Soon, Uber Eats offered fast delivery of local food that previously wasn't deliverable. Plus, in the past, Uber has even dabbled with self-driving cars and flying technology!

UBER TODAY

In a world when ride-sharing isn't common due to lockdowns, it's hard to imagine that Uber could still be considered one of the top brands in the U.S. However, Uber has what Kalanick's previous businesses lacked: a continued evolution that doesn't let failures get in the way.

During a pandemic in which meal deliveries were more lucrative than ever, Uber continued to thrive because it moved beyond the original founding idea. Despite the problems it continues to grapple with, Uber was created to grow, transforming it from a noun to a verb.

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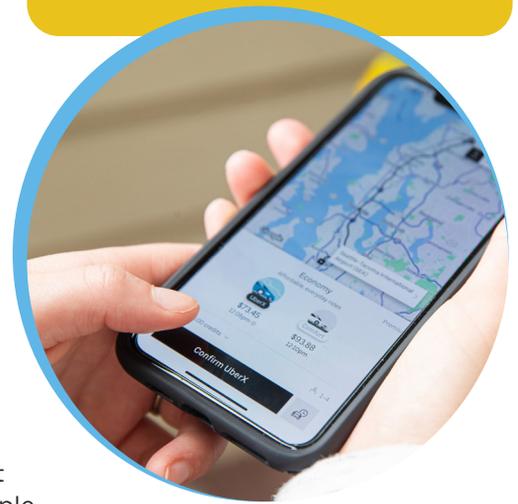
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Do You Want More Sales, More Profits, Happier Customers, and Less Work?

Check Out These Simple Adjustments Your Business Needs to Make Today

In what feels like a lifetime ago, in my early 20s, I owned a dry cleaning pickup and delivery business. I didn't own the dry cleaner — I just owned the routes and outsourced the dry cleaning. It was an interesting business model, and I had a decent amount of success with the company. I even coached and trained dry cleaners and other entrepreneurs around the country on how to successfully start and run their own pickup and delivery business.

The way I marketed that business was unsophisticated to say the least. We used pen and paper and literally went door to door in neighborhoods offering our free pickup and next-day delivery dry cleaning services. This service should have been a no-brainer, since 90% of the time we were the same price or better than if customers walked their clothes in — instead we picked them up one day and returned them the very next day. It seems like a no-brainer to me. The way you make good money in this business and maximize profits is to have lots of customers in a small geographic area, and at the time, door-to-door sales was the best way to make that happen, even if it lacked the ability to easily scale door-to-door selling.

I've personally knocked on tens of thousands of doors. For much of my door-knocking career, I simply went through the motions, not really giving a lot of thought to how many doors I knocked on, how many opportunities



I got, or how high my close ratio was. My company was growing, so I didn't focus on the numbers like I should have. I was playing small ball and thought some weeks are good, some weeks are bad, and it is what it is.

As I matured as an entrepreneur, I wanted to try to really build a business. I wanted to have something with systems and processes that was sellable. As I played around with the sales scripts and marketing one day, I stumbled upon a game-changing script. The best way for me to put this into perspective would be that a good week of knocking on doors at peak times (5:30-8:30 p.m.) four to five days per week would average about 18 customers each week. As I started testing this new script, I saw my numbers go crazy. The first full week using my new script, I personally signed up 42 new customers. This was going to be so huge. Clearly with these kinds of new customer sign-up numbers, I was going to be RICH!

I was pumped for the next week of door-knocking to start, which was the opposite of how I normally felt about knocking on doors each week. I confidently went out and started knocking. My first day back, I wasn't getting the same number of sign-ups as the previous week, but that's okay, it's just how things roll some days, I told myself. By mid-week, I was questioning my script and was wondering to myself if I had just gotten lucky. By the end of the week, I had actually signed up about 14 new customers, which was very demoralizing to say the least. As I licked my wounds over the weekend, I was

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trying to figure out what happened. Why is it that the new script didn't work? Was I saying or doing something different than the previous week?

It finally dawned on me what went wrong.

The week I discovered the new script, when I went out and knocked on doors, I gave my normal pitch, which went something like this:

Me: Hi, I'm Shaun with Dry Cleaning Butler; we offer a free home pickup and next day delivery dry cleaning service in your area. Do you guys use dry cleaning or laundry services?

Homeowner: We do.

Me: Great, you're going to love our service. We offer free home pickup and next day delivery of both dry cleaning and laundry service in your area. Here are our prices, and as you can see, they are very similar to the prices charged by other cleaners in town, etc. How many times per month do you guys use dry cleaning or laundered dress shirts?

This would go on until finally I asked them to buy. That was super simple — all we did was take down some of their information and give them a laundry bag to use for the service.

Once I asked for the sale, one of three things would happen:

1. They'd have some questions.
2. They'd want to talk with a spouse.
3. They'd say they were not interested.

I handled whichever situation arose and moved to the next house. If they wanted to talk to a spouse, I marked them down to do a follow-up.

When I came up with the adjusted script that worked so well the first week, I realized that if someone was interested in the service but didn't talk to someone or think about it, they clearly just needed a little more info and a small push because this isn't a complicated decision. After handling any objections, or they were still a no, or they wanted to talk to the spouse and wanted me to come back, I would literally go into acting mode and pretend I was going to walk away and end the conversation. I'd even do a half turn like I was leaving and then turn back as they were closing the door and say, "I have an idea. What

if I leave you one of our laundry bags right now and put a \$20 credit on your account so that way, you (or your spouse) can try the service with no risk. Go ahead and put some clothes out next week, and when you get them back, look at them and if you (or your spouse) don't love the quality and service, simply leave the empty bag out on the porch on your next pickup day and we will grab the bag and close your account. This way you can check out the service risk-free. How does that sound?"

This worked like a charm. So why did it go wrong the second week I tried this script? Frankly, I made a very common mistake most entrepreneurs make. In the second week of training the new script, I got impatient. Instead of first asking for the sale, letting the prospect say no, hearing them out on any and all objections, handling the objection, and then doing the whole acting part, appear to come up with a brilliant idea on the fly, give them new information, add in a risk-free guarantee and then an incentive, I skipped those steps on week two and went straight to offering the discount and trying to close. Removing these steps actually ended up hurting my conversations and raised the cost of the sale because I was offering the \$20 in free cleaning to everyone, even those who would have signed up without the incentive.

Are you guilty of skipping steps in your sales process? What about follow-up with your leads? Are you nurturing those leads with new additional information, benefits, features, and offers and then asking for the sale again?

Be honest: If I personally came and reviewed your lead-nurture campaigns, sales process, follow-up systems and processes, and customer onboarding campaigns as well as customer nurture and sales processes, would there be a lot of work to do?

I can teach you all the coolest ways to generate a lead or say these three major words to close more sales. I can tell you the perfect color to use to make people buy more from your website. But when it comes down to it, most of that stuff doesn't actually matter if you truly don't understand that all of the non-selling actions you take, all of the helpful and useful information you provide, all of the personal information you share that helps people like and trust you is really what makes the difference. That is what moves your prospect closer and closer to becoming a buyer so that when you do send out that offer or get the person on the phone and ask them to buy, or whatever your process is, you close more sales.

It may seem counterintuitive, but I promise you time and time again, both in my companies and many others I've worked with or am privy to the behind-the-scenes details, this is how they all function. On the flip side of the coin, all of the companies I've owned that have struggled, friends of mine who are struggling now, all go straight for the close, and if you don't buy now, they simply move on to the next "hot lead."

-Shaun

Follow the Road to Optimization

3 Necessary Steps to Optimize Your Business

Is your business *optimized*? You might scratch your head and ask, “What does that even mean?” Words like “optimized” and “optimization” are vague buzzwords that get thrown around a lot, including in the title of this article. In terms of your business, they can mean a dozen different things.

But let’s define it and break through the vagueness. While “small-business optimization” can mean a number of things, that first question — is your business optimized? — is asking if your business is running the way you want it to. In other words, is your business giving you what *you* want? Have your marketing endeavors paid off? Are your employees working cohesively as a team? Are you hitting your financial goals?

The questions can go on and on, but if you’re answering no to these and similar questions, then there’s a problem. If any part of your business is NOT running the way it should or the way you want it to, then that area of the business is NOT optimized. It’s likely inefficient and may need an overhaul.

So, how can you optimize your business? How can you get any given system, process, department, initiative, or other area of your business running well — so well that you can say with confidence: “My business *is* optimized!”

IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM

If your business, in part or in whole, is running inefficiently, you must identify the source of the problem. If you aren’t going to hit your Q2 sales goal, there is a reason. For example, your current marketing campaign may have a kink in it — it may be poorly targeted, on the wrong platform, or just a bad offer.

The challenge is getting to the actual source of the problem. It’s like when your back hurts and you go to a physical therapist to pinpoint the cause of the pain. Sure, you can throw painkillers at it, but the fundamental problem will remain, and the pain will inevitably return. Find the source, and you’ll be able to correct the problem.

MAKE A PLAN

Once you’ve identified the problem, you can create a plan to overcome it — and put your business on the path you intended. It’s important to have a plan for every area of your business you want to optimize — whether you have an ongoing problem or that area of the business simply isn’t running smoothly.



Coming back to the marketing campaign example, let’s say the campaign was poorly targeted and now you’re going to miss your Q2 sales goal. You’re just not reaching your ideal customers. Why? Maybe you’re missing key data — the demographic data was wrong or out of date, or you’re leaning too heavily into the wrong platform (you’ve used Instagram when Facebook would have made more sense).

Fill in the holes and re-strategize. It may be as simple as realigning the campaign or starting over. The same applies to systems and processes within your business. If something is falling short, draft a plan that serves as a road map to get from where you are right now to where you want to be in a month or six months.

FOLLOW YOUR ROAD MAP

It may sound simple, but it rarely is. You need the tools, resources, and support of your team (just as your team needs *your* support) to put your plan into action. If you want any part of your business to become optimized, the pieces must fit together. If you’re missing a piece, find it. If your team needs help, get them that help.

The road map should also offer flexibility in the event you run into any roadblocks, and it should have enough guidance to get your business from point A to point B — the plan needs to be detailed, but not *too* detailed. You don’t want to give yourself room to cut corners (which can be tempting when you want to save time and/or money). When you cut corners, you’re liable to miss a step, which could end up setting you back or putting you right back where you started.

Optimizing your small business isn’t easy, but if you want it to run the way you intended, it’s absolutely necessary. Walk through these steps, and you’ll achieve that wonderful thing called optimization.

Be Productive Even When It's So Nice Out

3 Ways to Discourage Summer Distraction

There's nothing more distracting than being at work, looking out the window, and seeing sunshine and a clear blue sky. Suddenly, work takes a back seat to thinking of all the things you'd rather be doing in that beautiful weather. If it happens to you, you can be sure it happens to every single one of your employees. So, how can you keep productivity up while thoughts of that upcoming vacation run rampant? Here are a few things to consider.

PUT GREATER EMPHASIS ON SMALLER GOALS. During the summer, put big-picture goals or projects in the background. Instead, replace them with smaller or shorter projects — projects your team can complete with shorter deadlines. This helps stimulate a greater sense of urgency within the workplace, which can often be lost during the summer and when employees are working on projects with longer timelines. Return to those projects toward the end of summer.

OFFER REMOTE WORK (PARTIAL OR FULL). Give team members the option to work out of the office, if you haven't done so already. You can go part time or full. Maybe offer a rotating schedule out of the office: a few days in, a few days out. This gives employees the opportunity to work where they want, how they want. Just be sure you have key performance indicators (KPIs) in place to track their work and accountability.

VARY THE WORK SCHEDULE. This is something a lot of businesses do during the summer. Instead of the traditional work hours, they shift things around or scale back. For example, you might do alternating Fridays off or close up early on Fridays at 1 p.m. instead of 5. Find a schedule the team likes the best and give it a try. The research is already clear on shorter work weeks:

Productivity goes up and there's a greater sense of urgency.



Want to Convert Leads to Clients?

According to a 2013 Salesforce white paper, a mind-blowing 79% of marketing leads are never converted to clients. That means on average, small businesses are only making 21% of the sales they could be. If your business fits that trend and your average client is worth \$500, then for every 100 leads, you're leaving \$39,500 on the table. Are you cringing yet?

If you've noticed leads falling through the cracks at your company (or just want to boost an already strong conversion rate), one of the best things you can do is build or revamp your sales funnel. A sales funnel is a classic marketing tool that thousands of companies, including Newsletter Pro, use to great effect. If you've never heard of it, the name pretty much says it all: Leads enter in at the "top" of the funnel and are gradually guided down to the bottom, where they enter your company as clients.

Building a sales funnel can seem intimidating if you've never tried it. So to help you get started, we put together a simple five-step guide!

'On Writing Well'

Why You Need This 45-Year-Old Writing

Every business owner knows that a confident writing voice can take them far. Not everyone will meet you face to face, and you want your written prose — whether it's an email to a customer or a message to your team — to represent your ability and professionalism as much as possible. However, improving your writing can seem like an overwhelming task. Where do you start?

If you want a writing guide that is still a contemporary favorite nearly 45 years after publication, pick up "On Writing Well" by William Zinsser.

The book is a product of Zinsser's work as a professor at Yale University. He gives concise, warm guidance on how to improve all aspects of nonfiction writing, such as crafting interviews, travel articles, memoirs, scientific and technical writing, business writing, sports writing, criticism, and humor.

Most writing guides fail to fully explain the mindset behind good writing. Writing may feel like it overexposes you at times, and maybe you're self-conscious about the way you jump from point to point.

However, "On Writing Well" is famous because it's a wonderful manual for becoming a better writer and explains why you should be motivated to do so. For example, some people think that writing only matters if

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Build a Sales Funnel in 5 Easy Steps

STEP 1: IDENTIFY YOUR PERFECT CLIENT

In order to build your sales funnel, you need to know who to “suck in” to the top of the funnel. These people will start as leads but eventually convert to clients, so think carefully about the demographic you’re targeting. Who is your product or service designed for? What is that person’s age, gender, occupation, and income? What are their hobbies, dreams, and problems? Where do they hang out, and how do they spend their free time? Using the answers to these questions, you can build a customer avatar (or several) that will shape your decisions in Step 2.

STEP 2: ADVERTISE (THE SMART WAY)

Now that you’ve identified your ideal leads, it’s time to pull them into your funnel. To do this, design a multi-prong marketing campaign that’s tailored to the customer avatars



you built in Step 1. Some channels to consider include direct mail postcards, Google AdWords, co-branding, SEO, paid social and print media posts, online ads, and influencer campaigns. The strategies you choose will depend on your target demographic as well as your business model (are you B2B or B2C?). If you’re targeting seniors, for example, a direct mail campaign might be more effective than social media advertising, while the reverse may be true for a younger audience.

STEP 3: GENERATE EXCITEMENT

This step of funnel-building is often called “desire.” It’s where you convince people who have made their way to your social media page or website to stick around, dive deeper, or express interest. The key to success here is quality, consistent branding. Make sure that your company’s mission and products are clearly stated and use tactics like engaging and

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Guide

you want to be published or if you want to appeal to a huge audience.

Zinsser disagrees with both of these premises, saying there are many good reasons for writing that have nothing to do with being published.

For one, writing is an excellent tool for examining your own narrative in a way you never have before. This is for one simple reason: “Clear thinking becomes clear writing; one can’t exist without the other.” In your effort to achieve clear writing, you may surprise yourself with what truths reveal themselves.

It’s also important that you don’t get paralyzed while trying to “visualize the great mass audience.” Zinsser writes. “There is no such audience — every reader is a different person.” It’s best to write with honest confidence and hope that your reader will listen.

We highly recommend picking up this classic! There’s a good reason it’s been an industry favorite for decades.

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THE Good News

“Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.”

—Romans 12:16

“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.”

—John 15:1-2

“If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person’s work.”

—1 Corinthians 3:12-13



“**On average, small businesses are only making 21% of the sales they could be. If your business fits that trend and your average client is worth \$500, then for every 100 leads, you’re leaving \$39,500 on the table.**”

consumable content, reviews and testimonials, eye-catching visuals, and strong calls to action to keep readers on your website longer.

Videos and humor are great tools to use here to help build your brand. In addition to this, lead magnets, like free downloads or email newsletters, will capture visitor information and officially convert them into leads. As you’re considering all of these things, keep usability in mind! Your site also needs to be mobile-friendly, functional, and easy to navigate.

STEP 4: STAY IN TOUCH

Congratulations, you’ve successfully generated leads! Now, it’s time to nurture them. This is where a lot of companies drop the ball and where their sales funnel can fall apart. According to Forbes’ in-house research, only 27% of leads are ever contacted by the company they show interest in. That is a huge untapped resource! To correct it, put automated strategies in place to nurture your leads and keep your company top of mind. Print newsletters are a great way to stay in touch, build your brand, and create a relationship that will pay off.

Your newsletter content can answer questions, assuage fears, and keep readers up to date on products, services, and offers they might be interested in. Email newsletters are another good strategy, and don’t underestimate the power of a good, old-fashioned follow-up email, text, or call. (Our team members at Newsletter Pro truly are “pros” in this area, so if you want to enhance your nurturing campaign, give us a call!)

STEP 5: CONVINCING AND CONVERT

Now, make it easy for your warm leads to convert to clients. Offer a clear path to booking a consultation or purchasing a product, including a Q&A page and several simple-to-use payment options. In order to help them follow through, minimize the fine print that leads have to read, boxes they have to check, and steps they must take to see basics like shipping costs.

Finally, if you offer a lot of products or services, consider cutting them down. A study conducted by Columbia University found that customers with fewer choices (in the case of the study, 6 jams versus 24) are 10 times more likely to make a purchase.

Getting to the Bottom

Why This Meridian Company

Lately, near our cozy Boise, Idaho, headquarters, we’ve been seeing strange billboards on the streets. They read “YAY! I POOPED TODAY!” with an image of either an empty roll of toilet paper or two smiling women with toilet seats around their necks. But what does it mean?

Although everyone deserves privacy in the restroom, there’s one company that wants to destigmatize the conversation about our daily constitution.

Microbe Formulas, a supplement company, launched over 22 billboards all over the Treasure Valley as part of their motivational advertising campaign. “[We’re] a supplement company that focuses on boosting people’s immune system through detoxification and increasing energy in the body,” co-CEO Ryan Riley said.

There’s been an interesting mix of positive and negative responses to the candid billboards — but that’s just what Microbe Formulas was going for. “The attention that we’re getting has been exactly

Resource of the Month



Be honest: How many tabs did you have open last time you pulled up your internet browser? In our experience, entrepreneurs are the kind of people who have dozens of tabs, folders, and programs running at all times. In many ways, this is a good

thing! It probably means you’re keeping a close eye on your business and trying to use the best possible tools to track projects and communicate with your team. But wouldn’t it be nice to simplify?

m of Gut Health Is the Talk of Our Town

what we anticipated,” Riley said. “In the climate of today’s world, we need to be talking about boosting our immune systems; we need to be talking about the importance of our bodies performing their normal functions, and one of those is pooping.”

What do our stool and “today’s world” have to do with each other? Well, research shows that gut health is a lot more important than we assume.

According to researchers from UC Davis, a healthy gut contains healthy bacteria and immune cells that ward off infectious agents like bacteria, fungi, and — importantly — viruses. A healthy gut also maintains our general health and well-being by communicating with the brain through nerves and hormones.

Although the billboards might be embarrassing for some, they do draw attention to a very important aspect of our health that we otherwise flush without a second thought. Microbe Formulas plans on putting up fresh versions of the billboards soon, but it remains to be seen whether they’ll continue the same campaign or lay a new one on us. Even when they’re gone, though, these billboards won’t be forgotten anytime soon.



Get Inspired

"Great salespeople are relationship builders who provide value and help their customers win."

—Jeffrey Gitomer

"How you sell matters. What your process is matters. But how your customers feel when they engage with you matters more."

—Tiffani Bova

Dropbox Business: Consolidate Your Online Tools in One Place

If you’re feeling that urge, Dropbox Business could be the perfect tool for you. Most people associate Dropbox exclusively with sending and storing files, but Dropbox Business goes way beyond that. It’s a fully integrated tool. You’ll have secure storage and file-sharing capabilities, but you’ll also be able to consolidate your documents from Microsoft Office with cloud content from Google Docs, Sheets, Slides, and Dropbox Paper all in one place! Next time you’re looking for a particular PowerPoint, you won’t have to dig through both your cloud and in-house file storage locations — you can just check Dropbox Business.

Another perk of Dropbox Business is that it integrates with communication tools like Zoom and Slack. Instead of having a separate Slack window, you can chat with your team or set up a virtual conference room in Dropbox Business. In 2019, PCMag gave the program an “excellent” four-star rating, writing, “Dropbox Business improves on

an excellent cloud file storage solution for small to mid-size businesses. It offers Smart Sync and Remote Wipe features and an increased focus on collaboration.”

Entrepreneurs can choose from three different Dropbox Business plans: Professional, Standard, and Advanced. The Professional plan is perfect for solopreneurs and startups because it covers just one user and costs \$19.99 per month. The Standard and Advanced Plans start at three or more users and go for \$15 or \$25 per user per month, respectively. Each plan comes with different storage space, administrator structures, and other perks.

If any of these tools sound beneficial for your company, you can give Dropbox Business a try for free. Visit Dropbox.com/Business to check out all three plans and choose the best fit for a 30-day free trial.