

Help Your Business Growth Skyrocket

By Kicking Your Ego to the Curb



When I started Newsletter Pro in 2011, there was a big shift happening in the marketplace from print materials to digital. At the time, e-books had even overtaken the sale of physical books. (Remember that?) Everyone was talking about how print was disappearing — but I'd been around the block once or twice already, and I knew that wasn't how things worked.

Heck, the yellow pages still existed! If any print marketing was going to disappear, it would be the yellow pages, but they were holding steady and people were actually making money off of them. I just knew that the \$60-\$70 billion per year direct mail industry wasn't going to disappear overnight. So, I took the chance and jumped in. I quickly found that I was right about direct mail, and Newsletter Pro has been thriving in that niche ever since.

You can probably see why I'm so attached to direct mail marketing. I bet big on it and won! However, a lot has changed in the marketplace since 2011. After years of studying, testing, and strategizing, I realized that Newsletter Pro had to change with it. We have some exciting new developments in the works that I'll announce here soon — and they just might surprise you.

As you can imagine, while I've been working through this the idea of "change" has been on my mind a lot. As entrepreneurs, we have a lot of reasons to make changes in our businesses. COVID-19 was a big one! Now, our shifting economy and rising interest rates are pushing

companies to change from the outside. Internal things can drive change, too. Maybe your company has grown a lot over the last few years, maybe you've hired some new people with big ideas, or maybe a particular product or service is selling like gangbusters (or falling flat).

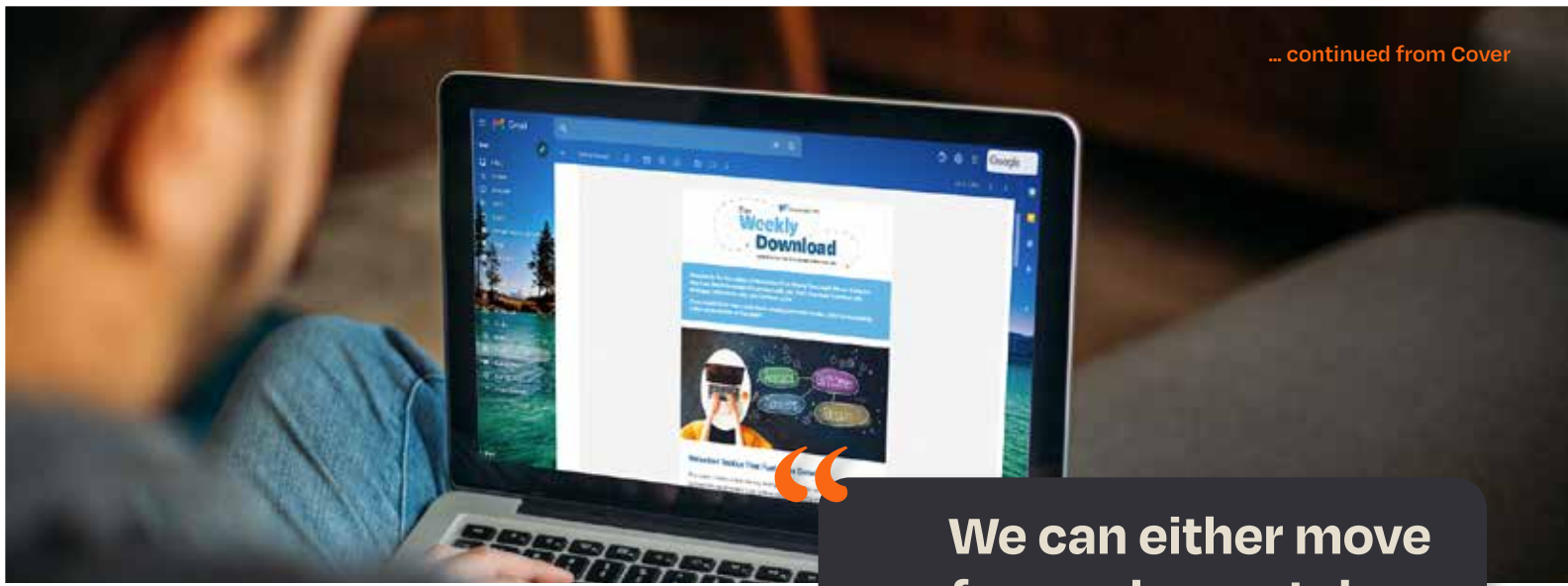
All of those adjustments are reasons to shake things up.

I'm not going to lie: Change can be scary, but making a change doesn't always mean doing away with the old and finding something totally new. You don't have to throw ALL of your systems and processes out the window just because that new marketing or operations person you hired thinks you should. A radical change like that could actually hurt your business more than it helps! I've seen several companies nosedive after they tried to overhaul their marketing or internal processes overnight. Then, they had to scramble to roll back those changes.

Change is a good thing, but you need to do it the smart way, following these three rules.

- 1. Don't try to change everything overnight. Make a plan, then follow through with it step by step, keeping a close eye on the impact along the way. If things start going sideways, this will give you time to pause and regroup.**
- 2. Don't change your products, services, operations, etc. just because you're bored or a new employee wants to make a splash in their position. If you**

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We can either move forward or watch our businesses die a slow death.

do this you're just asking for disaster (and you'll probably waste time and money, too).

- 3. **Don't make a change that you know isn't going to work because you've already tried it 10 times before. What's that Albert Einstein quote? Oh yeah: "The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results."**

If the change you have in mind doesn't break these rules and it feels like a smart move for your business, do it. It's better to change than be left behind. I've seen a lot of entrepreneurs make the mistake of NOT updating their businesses because their No. 1 priority isn't making money or serving their customers — it's being right. Even when the information in front of them suggests their strategy needs to evolve, they won't do it! It hurts their self-esteem too much.

I get it. In an ideal world, we could all keep doing business the way we've been doing it and reap the rewards we've always gotten. It's easy and comfortable. But turning a blind eye to the marketplace is a recipe for decline, because the world is always evolving. We might wish that it would stay the same or go back to how it used to be, but it won't. We can either move forward or watch our businesses die a slow death.

Doing this means taking your ego out of the equation and admitting that you don't always have the right answer. I had to swallow my pride just like that in 2020. Before COVID-19 I used to say, "Man, this work from home thing will never work." But here I am today with a company full of remote workers. Do we have challenges from time to time? Absolutely. Has the strategy worked

for us overall? Heck yeah, it has! It's not perfect, but neither was having everyone in the office.

As a business owner, it's okay to change your mind. In fact, paying attention to the data in front of you and leaning into evolution is the best way to grow your company. Most entrepreneurs can either have a big ego or a big bank account — you don't get to have both.

If you've been on the fence about updating your products and services just because you're scared or because it hurts too much to admit you were wrong, do yourself a favor and get out of your business's way. Start making smart, incremental changes today. Your customers, your team, and your bottom line will thank you for it.

-Shaun

P.S. Here's a sneak peek at the change we have in the works at Newsletter Pro. Over the last few years, I've noticed a trend: Our clients and prospects are asking for content that goes *beyond* the newsletter, and we have the skills to deliver it! With that in mind, we're on our way to becoming a full-service content machine working on your behalf.

"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." **-Galatians 6:9 (NIV)**

Is Mark Cuban's Online Pharmacy the Next Medical Industry Disruptor? **We Hope So.**

You may know Mark Cuban from the hit show "Shark Tank," where he and other investors hear pitches from around the world to find the next industry-disrupting, sensational products. But that's far from all he does. You see, Mark Cuban is a dedicated industry disruptor himself, and his low-cost online pharmacy (CostPlusDrugs.com) could make one of the most positive health care impacts of the last century.

Here's how.

Americans spend about \$365 billion on prescription drugs every year, with Medicare representing \$115.6 billion of that spending. Of Medicare's spending, \$23 billion goes to the purchase of generic drugs, and 64 cents of every dollar spent on generic drugs goes to feed the drug supply chain and participating pharmacies.

But what if you didn't need to use the lengthy supply chain or the pharmacies?

Well, that's exactly how CostPlusDrugs.com operates. They have their own manufacturers and distributors, so they don't have to rely on the traditional channels for production or shipping. Each Cost Plus Drugs order is charged a 15% markup, a \$5 shipping fee (or \$15 for expedited shipping), and a \$3 dispensing fee. This directly translates to major savings for consumers and shockingly low drug prices.

One of the drugs available on Cuban's site is esomeprazole, a medication to combat acid reflux. This medication is available through Medicare at \$160 for 90 tablets. Through CostPlusDrugs.com, it costs just \$17 for a bottle of the same size. By switching to Cost Plus Drugs for the purchase of this drug, the U.S. government could save \$293 million per year. Cuban's site also provides a generic version of the popular medication rosuvastatin, which is used to treat high cholesterol, for half of what Medicare typically pays through Part D.

In fact, it's estimated that the U.S. government could save taxpayers \$3.6 billion annually by using this low-cost online pharmacy for the purchase of generic drugs for Medicare. That's more than a third of the \$9.6 billion spent on drugs in 2020.

Unfortunately, current regulations prevent Medicare from making the switch to purchasing from Cuban's site. As it stands, CostPlusDrugs.com doesn't accept insurance, and federal law does not permit the government to purchase drugs directly for Medicare participants.

That being said, many advocates are still dedicated to Cuban's vision and are ready to make the push necessary to help create a more affordable health care system.

Dr. Hussain Lalani, a primary care physician at Brigham and Women's Hospital and a Harvard Medical School fellow, is a researcher studying how to combat high health care pricing in the U.S. He stated, "There are some serious inefficiencies in the pharmaceutical supply chain. It's clear Medicare is overpaying for some generic drugs, and they could save billions."

With any luck, within the next few years, we could be seeing major shifts in Medicare regulations to permit this revolutionary cost-saving site to fill prescriptions for millions of Americans. This would lead to benefits for consumers across the board, but especially the most vulnerable among us. And really, what could be more revolutionary than that?



4 Ways Every Employee Can Contribute to Company Culture

When it comes to building a great company culture, there's a lot at stake. Businesses known for their positive workplace environments are more attractive to potential candidates, have lower turnover rates, and have more productive employees. But as the old axiom goes, "There is no 'I' in 'team,'" and a great culture can only be built when everyone in an organization is dedicated to doing their part.

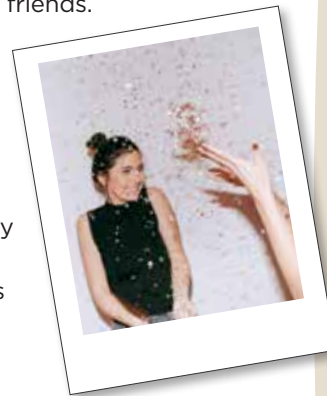
Here are four things any employee can do to help create a great work environment.

Get to know people.

All relationships, whether professional or personal, are impossible to maintain without investing the proper time. So, get to know your coworkers! Ask them about their pets, kids, hobbies, families, travel plans, and more! Invite new or quieter coworkers to have lunch or coffee with you. You might be shocked at how that kind of camaraderie is contagious, and you just might even make some new friends.

Celebrate others!

We all want to feel celebrated when we do a truly excellent job or experience a big life event. While these efforts to celebrate individuals are typically led by management, they don't have to be! You can take the initiative to celebrate your coworker's birthdays, work anniversaries, and milestones all on your own.



Show up for others.

Everyone needs a little extra support from time to time. Whether your coworker is going through a bereavement process, battling a bout of illness, or experiencing familial stress, stepping up to help them get through the day means a lot. Now, that doesn't mean you should be a martyr who allows everyone to dump their work on you, but when possible, lending a helping hand can make a real difference in someone's life.

Be the example.

It's one thing to talk about how important a healthy work environment is, and it's another to embody it. So, start walking the walk! Stop working through your lunch breaks, use your PTO, and set appropriate boundaries with supervisors when necessary. By stepping up to the plate and becoming an example for your colleagues, you can illustrate the importance of prioritizing your personal well-being.

By putting these four tips into practice, you can start building a happier, healthier, and more balanced company culture — not just for yourself, but for your coworkers as well. Now that's what we call being a team player.

Marketing Leaders Can Drive Value By Using These 5 Tactics



The business world has shifted multiple times since the pandemic first arrived over two years ago. Businesses across the country have tried countless strategies to ensure they can keep up with the competition. Those that are successful not only keep up but set a new standard for their industry. Although digital advancements and changes in the world of business have been ongoing for decades, there has been rapid acceleration throughout the past couple years. This has provided the perfect opportunity for marketing professionals to prove their value and show that when done right, marketing can drive sales and growth.

For marketers, it is not enough to say what you think will work. You need to prove it through analytical data. This includes looking at your customer needs, the priorities of your business, and your company's digital agenda. When you build a strong strategy bolstered by these three important areas, you will drive growth and create value for your business.

If you're a marketing leader in your business, there are things you can do to help drive value. Below are five ways to help you get started.

Understand that marketing drives revenue.

In the past, marketing was costly and it was one of the first departments to lose funding due to budget cuts. Now, marketing is seen in a new light — essential to sales. It's important that marketing leaders realize this and take full advantage of marketing opportunities. Research, social media, and search engines will help you explain to others why marketing is so valuable in today's climate. Not everyone lives in the world of marketing, though. Break it down to the simplest terms so everyone at your business can see the positive results that come with your strong marketing strategies.

Lead the team to build a better customer experience.

When customers choose to shop with a business, they don't care about what's going on behind the scenes.

Happy Accidents

Lessons From 'Permission to Screw Up'

There are natural-born leaders, and then there is Kristen Hadeed. In her book "Permission to Screw Up," Hadeed makes no bones about the fact that when she started her award-winning business, Student Maid, she had no idea what she was doing. In fact, Hadeed never intended to start a business at all — she just wanted a pair of jeans.

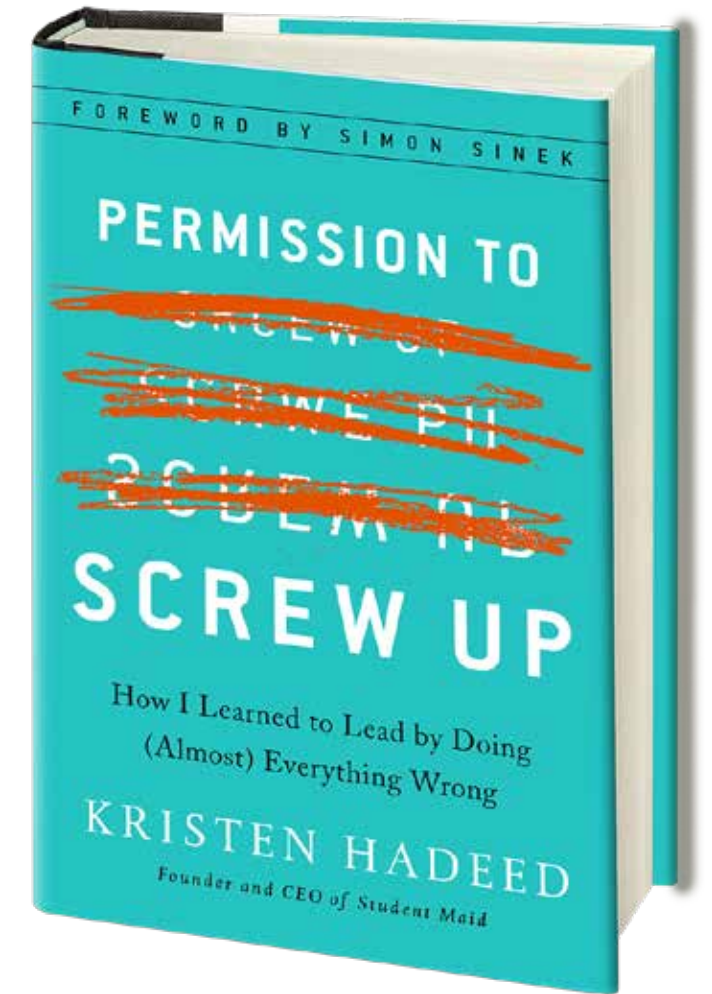
"Permission to Screw Up" is not an ordinary business book, and Hadeed is not an ordinary entrepreneur. While many guides written by CEOs come across as self-aggrandizing or portray success as a straightforward process, nothing about this book makes leadership look easy. In a sitcom, Hadeed might resemble the hopelessly clueless boss Michael Scott from "The Office." But in real life, she learned from her many mistakes to become someone her employees could be proud to follow.

Hadeed's story begins during her college years when her parents refused to buy her a \$100 pair of jeans. She found a way to earn the cash herself through an advertisement for a cleaner on Craigslist. Soon, she realized she could make more money by starting her own business and paying others to do the sweeping and scrubbing. And, as many entrepreneurs would tell it, the rest is history.

But Hadeed made more than her fair share of mistakes along the way, perhaps most notably when 45 of her 60 workers quit at once due to poor working conditions. Then there was her failure to confirm her business name wasn't already trademarked and the resulting lawsuits. Her blunders continued with an almost comically non-confrontational management style and costly hiring mistakes. Once, the company even paid employees 100 times their regular salary — oops.

Most business books would omit or gloss over these errors, and Hadeed admits in her book that she did the same in her first draft. But she ultimately realized that approach was more than dishonest — it did her readers a disservice. Student Maid didn't eventually obtain an industry-leading retention rate despite Hadeed's mistakes, but because of the lessons she learned from them.

"Permission to Screw Up" portrays a decidedly millennial perspective on the workplace. Hadeed leans into and smashes apart the negative stereotypes that have followed her generation since their first days in the workforce. She's also unafraid to make jokes at the expense of her age group and overall provides a fresh perspective.



This book is easy to read, and there's no five-point plan to memorize. Hadeed instead focuses on simply telling her story and what she learned while making mistake after mistake after mistake. And her lessons don't only apply to entrepreneurs. Anyone who has to work with other people can take something away from her journey.

As an interesting footnote, Hadeed disbanded Student Maid in 2021 and reimagined it as Student Made, an organization dedicated to teaching leadership skills to the rising generation. Based on what we've read here, we can't wait to see where this latest project leads and what lessons Hadeed learns along the way.

"He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

—Luke 10:2 (NIV)

They just want everything to go as smoothly as possible. As marketers, you're fully in charge of this experience and can drive it to improve sales. Whenever media is sent to customers, it should connect to a personalized e-commerce service that can also be accessed from a mobile device. When customers run into barriers that prevent them from completing a sale or make the buying process a hassle, they'll turn to a competitor instead. Work with the department that builds the online product pages and payment mechanics to ensure everything works perfectly for potential customers. When marketing leaders have their hands in other areas of the business, things usually operate much more smoothly.

Focus on the data.

Customer service is a huge part of driving sales and improving your brand, but how are you keeping up with all of the concerns, questions, and data you receive from your customer base? Do you use a CRM (customer relations management software)? Is anyone looking through the data to discover common concerns? If not, this is something that needs to be addressed. When marketers use quality data found within customer interactions, they can build a foolproof strategy that tackles any prior concerns while creating something new that works well for customers. While this might not be the marketer's job, creating a successful business is a team effort, and marketers need to work with the rest of the team to figure out how to best market to potential customers. Be sure to look through the data that's available to help build a marketing plan your customers can connect with.

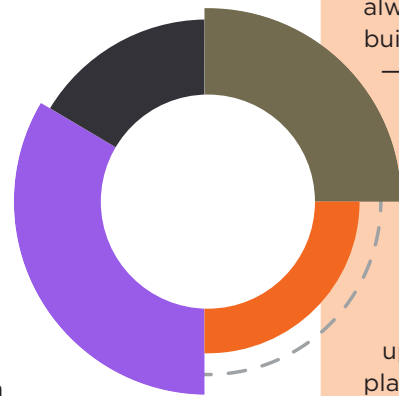
Hire the right people.

Marketing is not a one-person job, but in today's climate, it can be difficult to retain talented team members. A successful business will hire marketers with a wide variety of expertise. Build hiring strategies that encourage talented individuals to join your team. Create retention and relationship-building strategies to keep your team members motivated. If need be, build your own training curriculum to ensure your team members can do what they need to. Having the right people by your side will bring countless benefits.

Don't lose your creativity.

When marketers begin to dig too deep into the analytics, they can lose their creative side in an effort to put out what they think their customers will want. Don't get too caught up in the numbers and focus on the future. Data and analytics can help guide you but should not completely determine your actions. When you are able to develop creative campaigns, you'll set yourself apart from the competition.

The business world is ever evolving, and marketing departments are now receiving their share of the spotlight. With these strategies in place, you can improve your marketing and continue to see growth for years to come.



Chipotle Burritos and the Rise of the Metaverse

Opening the doors of its first store in Denver, Colorado, during the summer of 1993, Chipotle has since become an international sensation. With more than 2,900 restaurants worldwide, this burrito-building business is always looking for new and innovative ways to continue building its empire. Last year, they entered new territory — the metaverse.

A long-standing Chipotle tradition, the Halloween "Boorito" promotion is a fan favorite. Typically, this spooky sale involves free burritos and amazing discounts. But in October 2021, Chipotle tried something new and brought the promotion to Roblox. This gaming platform has seen increased marketer attention as interest in the metaverse picks up, and with 51% of young people reporting having played Roblox, it seemed like a safe bet for breaching uncharted digital territory. According to a press release,



"Chipotle wanted to give fans a fun way to visit the restaurant virtually and experience Boorito in the metaverse for the first time."

And experience Boorito they did! Chipotle's Roblox activation included player skins, a virtual corn maze, and \$1 million worth of free burritos. The player response was overwhelmingly positive, and in the end, the 2021 Boorito promotion was considered a huge success! Afterward, Chipotle donated its portion of the promotion's proceeds to a charity that supports young farmers.

Chris Brandy, chief marketing officer of Chipotle, had this to say about the promotion:

"As a digital innovator, we are always experimenting on new platforms to meet our guests where they are ... Roblox's popularity has boomed over the past year, and we know fans will be excited to celebrate the next evolution of Boorito in the metaverse."

So, is the metaverse the next big thing when it comes to promoting brands like Chipotle? While it's true that only time will tell, the success of the metaverse Boorito extravaganza certainly points to "yes."

Resource of the Month

When entrepreneurs first start a small business, they often have a strong product or service to offer to the general public. Is having a great product enough to breed success, though? In most cases, the product or service is just one supporting feature of a successful business. Businesses need to run efficiently and effectively from the ground up, and one area entrepreneurs struggle with is accounting and bookkeeping. Sending out invoices, keeping track of payments, and organizing tax information can be difficult tasks for new business owners, but thankfully, Wave is here to help!

Wave is a cloud-based software system that allows users to manage invoicing, taxes, and payment processing. With a plethora of features, Wave is a must for new or small-business owners struggling to keep up with their accounting. Wave can help

Improve Your Business's Accounting Abilities With Wave Software System

you create invoice templates, manage your billing, track payments, manage payroll and finances, and more. The best part about Wave is that most of its features are free.

With other free accounting software, there's usually a limit to the number of users allowed or the reports you have access to, but that's not the case with Wave. Wave's invoicing, accounting, and banking software is completely free. There is no monthly subscription fee or startup fee. You don't even have to enter a credit card number to get started. You only need to pay for services if you choose to use their online payment processing, payroll, or one-on-one advisor services.

Another great feature of Wave is the ability to customize your invoicing templates. That way you can brand your invoices and your estimates sent to clients to further promote your brand. On top of being able to customize your invoices, you can also set up recurring invoices and



The History of Halloween

Halloween originated with the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain when people would light bonfires and wear costumes to ward off ghosts. Pope Gregory III designated Nov. 1 as a time to honor all saints in the 8th century. Soon, All Saints' Day incorporated some of the traditions of Samhain. The evening before was known as All Hallows' Eve, and later Halloween. Over time, Halloween evolved into a day of activities like trick-or-treating, carving jack-o'-lanterns, attending festive gatherings, donning costumes, and eating treats.





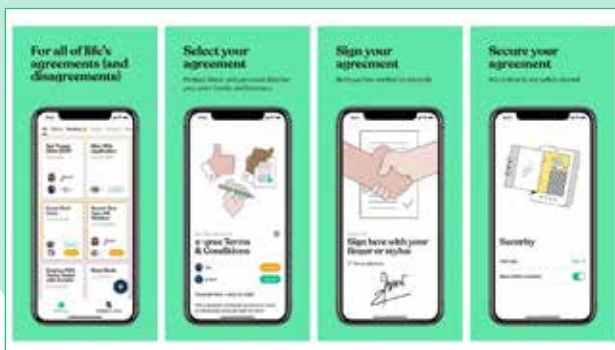
Agree to E-gree

The Startup Disrupting Contract Law

Celebrities and multimillion-dollar corporations have contract lawyers on standby. But the rest of us usually rely on handshake deals and our flimsy understanding of standard-issue fine print. In 2020, the startup app E-gree was launched in an effort to change that. It aims to make contract law accessible to everyone — not just those who can afford a lawyer.

The first seeds of E-gree were planted when attorney Keith Fraser represented entrepreneur Araz Mamet. In an interview with Startup Savant, Fraser explained, “[We] both witnessed and experienced the inequalities inherent in the legal justice system as well as the outdated, archaic manner in which the legal system operated.” Rather than shrugging their shoulders and moving on, they teamed up with an additional entrepreneur, Ilya Flaks, and secured funding from model, philanthropist, and investor Jessica Kahawaty.

The E-gree contract model is simple. Users download the app, select a contract template, and adjust a few personal details. The contracts are written in straightforward language so everyday users can understand them.



The other people entering into the agreement can read through the contract and e-sign it in the app. Best of all, every contract is saved and accessible to all parties at any time.

When E-gree first launched, the company primarily touted its use as ideal for friendly wagers and small business ventures. The offerings have since expanded considerably. There are currently 25 E-gree contract templates, with more on the way.

Contracts under the “business heading” include agreements about freelance work, venue usage, handyman projects, and non-disclosure agreements. More personal affairs are covered by rental and loan agreements, purchase contracts, and minor automobile accident settlements. Some options are lighthearted (though still legally binding), like the one you can create for your child’s allowance. Others are no laughing matter, like the option to complete end-of-life directives and prenuptial agreements.

“We aim to disrupt the legal industry by essentially privatizing it,” Fraser explains. “The current legal systems are rooted in notions of venue, standing, jurisdiction, precedent. All of these are inconsistent with the way people are now connected and how they transact and interact.”

He acknowledges that E-gree isn’t the only legal tech company in business but believes it stands out from the pack in one crucial way. “Most legal tech companies focus on providing services that improve the ability of people to access and/or use the current legal system. We aim to change the legal system and essentially create a new one that operates within a social network all contained within E-gree.”

That’s a tall order, but since its inception two years ago, users have created roughly 50,000 legally binding contracts. Better yet, they’ve done it for a sum virtually anyone can afford. The first three contracts are free, and additional agreements only cost 99 cents each. Heavy users can sign up for monthly and annual subscriptions — and even have trees planted in their honor as a thank-you.

In 2021, investor Kahawaty told Vogue Arabia, “Traditional legal avenues ... are expensive, intimidating, and an inaccessible avenue to the majority of the population.” That leaves most people who need a contract feeling like they’re out of luck. But E-gree is on its way to leveling the playing field one signature at a time.

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