

HoustonSuccess

Issue 4

MAGAZINE

Tony Hawk

13 Life-Changing Strategies For Winning In Business And Life

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Hello!

Welcome to the spring 2024 issue of *Houston Success Magazine*. Featured in this issue, we have an article from avid entrepreneur and famed skateboarding pioneer Tony Hawk. In our exclusive interview on page 10, Hawk reveals how he overcame haters, admits candidly that he is not a natural skater, and shares vulnerably that he suffered years of financial struggle, but he still overcame it all by applying a series of transformative business and life strategies. Whether you run a small business, manage a department, or are a leader in your community, you will get inspiration and practical advice from this legend.

Listening to Tony Hawk reminds me that he isn't just telling stories; he's giving us his recipe to succeed. The information is invaluable. I have discovered that to be a successful businessperson, it's vital to continue the learning process and further educate yourself. Thus, I do a lot of self-studying: reading technical and self-help focused books, attending seminars, and listening to audiobooks. I know what a difference having this can make, and with this publication, I'm going to share exclusive insights with you.

One important aspect of my business has been our co-management system, which enables enterprises to customize which IT services to keep in-house and with which to partner. It allows businesses to pair an external IT management service's amenities and up-to-date resources with their in-house specialists to optimize efficiency. Our co-managed services will enable you to choose the resources you need, when you require them. Co-management in IT is an



opportunity to create a partnership to supplement, support, and enhance your existing IT team. For many companies, we are finding this to be more cost-effective, and we've seen a significant uptick in demand for co-managed services in 2024.

We continue to develop REWST, an automated software that helps us streamline onboarding new employees for our clients. This program has many facets, including opening employee accounts with platforms that a client is using and purchasing licenses for the software needed to support those accounts. This process will be less prone to error and mistakes and will be a smoother, better experience for our clientele.

In closing, I'd like to say thank you for choosing to pick up our magazine and for supporting our good work, strengthening our communities by helping companies grow.

I wish you a wonderful spring, and if you're not yet a Braintek client and are looking for IT support, be sure to reach out with your questions or book your no-obligation tech assessment. We look forward to hearing from you. ■

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13 LIFE-CHANGING STRATEGIES FOR WINNING IN BUSINESS AND LIFE

MEET TONY





How To Become A Sales Professional

BY JACK DALY

Relationship selling means different things to different people. However, we should all be able to agree on one thing: successful career development depends upon how well we strengthen ongoing business relationships with our customers.

Some salespeople have built numerous valuable business relationships over five years. Others have been in the business for one year five different times. They do deals but don't establish strong, professional relationships with their referral sources.

A very insightful measure into your success as a sales rep is how many clients you have developed. We define a client as someone who regularly gives you 50% or more, if not all, of his or her business. In essence, you are the partner of that business source.

Superstar salespeople tell us that 80% of their business regularly comes from a few accounts. Others may envy their steady stream of referrals but aren't willing to discipline themselves to build strong business relationships.

Measure your activities against the standards and adjust your work efforts to build a more satisfying and profitable career.

THE RULES OF SELLING

1. Self-Renewal
2. Personal And Professional Vision
3. Total Quality Management
4. Seeing Fewer People
5. The Transfer Of Trust
6. Value-Added Partnerships
7. Recognizing Support Staff
8. Being Your Own Sales Leader
9. Career Growth

1. Self-renewal describes the constant search for ways to improve your productivity. Productivity means becoming better, smarter, and faster: a true professional. What are you doing to sharpen your axe?

2. To become a superstar or to reach the success level of your dreams, you must define your personal and professional vision of your future.

3. Quality management for any company starts with the sales force. Our company can only work with the business that we, as sales reps, provide. Therefore, it is our responsibility to seek quality business from quality sources.

4. Most sellers call on too many prospects. I believe you should target a limited number of top-quality account prospects and focus all your call activity on this target list. The goal of every sales rep should be to build a limited clientele of high-producing business sources.

5. Selling is the transfer of trust. If we analyze why prospects do business with a salesperson, the bottom line is trust. A trusting relationship must be built with them.

6. A value-added partnership is a business relationship in which each partner receives more than expected. To achieve this relationship, each partner must think like the other and strive to find ways to assist their partner in being more successful.

7. No discussion of value-added partnerships would be complete without considering our partnership with our inside support staff. They are often the unsung, unrecognized heroes of the day-to-day sales process.

8. Success is achieved one step at a time and is based on evaluating past performance. Success is accepting personal responsibility and remembering that, "If it's meant to be, it's up to me." We should be our own sales leaders, as well as the CEOs of our business, and act on our own advice.

9. Maximum career growth starts with what we believe. Belief is the guiding factor, passion, and faith that provides our direction in life. ■



Jack Daly is a serial entrepreneur, international sales expert, and author of *Hyper Sales Growth* and *The Sales Playbook for Hyper Sales Growth*. Learn more at JackDalySales.com.

Create Your “GRID OF HAPPINESS” Short-Term Goal Setting To Reach Your Dreams, From Nick Vujicic

According to Nick Vujicic, to reach your full potential and achieve your dreams, you must believe you can while being, “disciplined enough to be your own greatest motivation, not your biggest hindrance.” But what happens when you don’t see progress? You get tired and burnt out. You lose motivation. To avoid feeling like you’re on a boat in the middle of the ocean with one paddle and no land in sight, use the following activity from Nick to stay motivated and shorten your path to your dream by half:

STEP 1: CREATE YOUR “GRID OF HAPPINESS.” WRITE OUT THE FOLLOWING SIX WORDS ON A PIECE OF PAPER:

- | | |
|------------|------------|
| 1. FAITH | 4. FITNESS |
| 2. FAMILY | 5. FINANCE |
| 3. FRIENDS | 6. FUN |

STEP 2: WRITE OUT THE TOP 10 SHORT-TERM GOALS YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE IN THE NEXT 45 DAYS

When setting your goals, consider how each goal aligns with your happiness grid. For example, if writing a book aligns with your happiness grid, prioritize it and set aside time to work on it.

STEP 3: SCHEDULE TIME

Set aside three hours every week to review your list

of goals you plan to achieve over the next 45 days and use this reserved time to work on those goals.

STEP 4: GET A DREAM BUDDY

Find a family member, friend or colleague who is also working to achieve goals. Each week, check in with your dream buddy and ask each other, “How are you doing with your dream?” A good practice is to put a set time on your calendar each week when you will check in with each other. Bonus idea: Tell each other what steps you will take towards your goals this week and report back the following week if you did them. If not, discuss what stopped you, the obstacles you faced and what needs to happen for you to complete them.

STEP 5: DETERMINE YOUR OBSTACLES

Write out the three biggest obstacles standing between you and your dream. Next, write out how you are going to get through those obstacles. Nick also recommends telling yourself, “These are the steps. These are the short-term goals. I need to conquer this. I need to start doing this.”

STEP 6: REPEAT THIS AFFIRMATION EVERY DAY

After taking a deep breath and letting it out, say aloud, “I want to reach my full potential. I also want to be happy and love myself.”

STEP 7: CELEBRATE

When you achieve a goal, cross it off your list. Revel in the good feeling of investing in yourself and seeing progress. ■

**“WHEN SETTING
YOUR GOALS,
CONSIDER
HOW EACH
GOAL ALIGNS
WITH YOUR
HAPPINESS
GRID.”**

— Nick Vujicic



Nick Vujicic is an extraordinary individual who has touched the hearts of millions around the globe. Nick entered the world with a rare condition known as tetra-amelia syndrome, a condition characterized by the absence of all four limbs. Despite facing immense physical challenges, Nick has emerged as an iconic figure of inspiration, resilience, and unyielding determination. Nick is a world-renowned motivational speaker, captivating audiences with his powerful message of hope and embracing the power of a positive mindset.

Visit NickVujicic.com



R.A.R.E.

Company Name:
Working With Hope

Name & Title:
Hope Hill, Founder

Location:
The Woodlands, TX

Website:
WorkingWithHope.com

Industry:
Chronic Invisible Illness Management

High Hopes:

How Greg Brainerd And His Team At Braintek Have Empowered Hope Hill, Founder Of Working With Hope, With Robust Technology Solutions To Support Her Mission For Chronic Invisible Illness Assistance

When you run a company whose mission is to support and provide resources to people living with chronic invisible illnesses, you need systems and protocols that function seamlessly and securely. It can be overwhelming to try and tackle the day-to-day technology challenges on your own, and this is precisely the situation that Hope Hill, the creator of Working With Hope, found herself in before partnering with Greg Brainerd and his team at Braintek. But today, her organization is thriving. Thanks to the robust technology solutions provided by Braintek, Hope and her team are able to focus on what matters most—giving hope to those struggling with chronic invisible illnesses throughout The Woodlands.

TECH TROUBLE

The creation of Working With Hope came from a very personal experience Hope and her family faced. “Working With Hope was founded by my husband and I after I was diagnosed with a rare neurological autoimmune disorder that curtailed my previous career path,” Hope explains. “One of the symptoms was another rare condition called trigeminal neuralgia that is very painful and affects the side of your face. As you can imagine, this diagnosis completely turned our world upside down.” She continues, “Thankfully, I was blessed to have short- and long-term disability as well as access to the resources we needed to get our life back on track. But, at the same time, I realized that many people don’t have these same opportunities.” Born out of a desire to create an organization dedicated to helping and giving hope to those with similar chronic invisible illnesses, Working With Hope was created in 2021.

However, there was one difficulty that soon emerged, and that was managing their technology needs. “It seemed like every day we needed help and had a new question about our technology,” says Hope. “We have a lot of remote workers to support, and that’s not to mention the sensitive client data that needs to stay protected. We had a board member who stepped in to help, but he was more there to assist us with making decisions rather than to fix problems or execute our technological needs. . . . It became apparent that we needed someone full-time.”

Thankfully, Greg and his team at Braintek were there to answer Hope’s call. “I had met Greg previously through some of the other businesses I had worked at,” mentions Hope. “He also has a really good presence in the local community, and you can tell that when you speak to him, he’s sincere and truly cares. Plus, I have some friends of friends who work for him, and they have nothing but great things to say, which is important to me because I believe great companies start from the top down.”

ALIGNED EXPANSION

Upon meeting to discuss Working With Hope’s needs, Hope knew she had found the right team for the job. She recalls that “[m]idway through our first meeting, after I had unloaded all our tech problems on Greg, I remember listening to him explain our options, and I just thought, ‘Thank God I found him.’” After this, Greg and his team immediately got to work implementing the software, systems, and protocols that Working With Hope needed to be successful not only for today but for tomorrow. Hope notes, “The first thing we had to do was find the right software. There are so many options out there, but having Greg to help us is probably one of the best business decisions I’ve ever made.” She continues, “He’s always there to answer any questions I may have, and I can always expect a nonbiased answer that will give me the information I need to make the right decision.”

And, like all great partnerships, this relationship has created additional opportunities to engage with the community and support a common cause. For example, Greg will be sponsoring a hands-on computer lab for professionals at Sam Houston University in conjunction with Working With Hope. “Right now, I’m still putting the curriculum together,” Hope says, “but starting in the spring, we’re going to offer a program that runs once a month and provides training on a more professional level so our clients can learn skills they may have otherwise not had access to.” She adds, “This is how I know that Braintek was 100% the right choice—because they’re willing to lend their expertise to the cause, and if that’s not going above and beyond, I don’t know what is.”

HOPE’S HOLISTIC VISION

Looking ahead, Hope and her team at Working With Hope plan to continue expanding and helping more and more people who live with chronic invisible illnesses. Hope states, “The goal right now is to build a strong program here in The Woodlands before going to another community and doing the same thing there. We have a lot of amazing resources that we’re constantly exploring as well, including AI surveillance technology, AI virtual reality solutions, healing art therapy, and veteran peer-to-peer support. And Greg and his team at Braintek will continue to play an integral role in all of these services, particularly the AI and virtual reality.”

Ultimately, by Braintek taking the technology piece off of Hope’s plate, she’s able to focus all her resources and efforts on carrying out the company’s mission—giving hope to those who have lost hope for a cure by approaching their health from a holistic standpoint. As the saying goes, “Every journey to healing begins with hope.” And if you find yourself needing an IT firm that will exceed your expectations with their innovative technology solutions, look no further than Greg Brainerd and his team at Braintek. ■

13 LIFE-CHANGING STRATEGIES FOR WINNING In BUSINESS & LIFE



From Legendary Pro Skateboarder And Entrepreneur Tony Hawk

It's easy to look at successful people such as the legendary Tony Hawk and think it's inevitable. But while it may seem like success came easy, it didn't magically appear. Hawk, the pro skateboarder, entrepreneur, tech innovator, bestselling author, and founder of The Skateboard Project was 9 years old when his brother gave him his first skateboard.

Hawk wasn't a natural at skateboarding. He was small, describing himself as "the runt" for his age, and didn't easily pick up the sport. The first time he got on a skateboard, he ran into a fence because he didn't know how to turn. He was criticized by his elders, and later on in magazines, for his style. Because he was so small and couldn't use his weight to get up in the air like the other skateboarders, he had to find a new way of doing tricks.

In 1982, at 14 years old, he turned pro. By 16, he was widely considered the best skateboarder in the world and was an athlete known by millions of people all around the world. But that didn't stop the haters or his struggles. Pros were quoted in magazines saying he didn't deserve to be on top. In later years, when his dad got involved in the industry, Hawk was accused of being favored because of that relationship. When Hawk got a sponsorship with McDonald's, he was criticized for being a sellout.

As skateboarding died out and went underground, the money stopped flowing, and Hawk had to figure out a way to stay in the industry he loved so much. In 1992, he started his own skate company, Birdhouse Projects (now Birdhouse Skateboards), but it was slow to get off the ground. After

“NOT BEING AFRAID TO TAKE RISKS IS PARAMOUNT TO ANY SUCCESS.” — Tony Hawk

the X Games brought new attention to skateboarding, Hawk made history landing a trick at the 1999 X Games no one had ever done. Shortly thereafter, he launched Tony Hawk’s Pro Skater, which is now his billion-dollar video game franchise and one of the biggest franchises in history. The Hawk Empire includes Birdhouse Skateboards, Hawk Clothing, and the Tony Hawk Signature Series products as well as his production company, 900 films. Recently, he was featured in an HBO documentary—*Tony Hawk: Until the Wheels Fall Off*—directed by the award-winning director Sam Jones.

Despite the criticism and the haters, not being a natural, and years of financial struggle while trying to build his business, he ended up on top, achieving incredible success. Here are his 13 life-changing strategies for winning in business and in life:

1. SET HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR YOURSELF

It didn’t matter what others thought; Hawk loved skateboarding so much that he truly believed he could be good at it. Once he was good, he didn’t stop there. He continued practicing so he could be great at it. “What got me to be good was the expectation that I had for myself,” Hawk said. “I thought, ‘I want to be able to do these things I see, and I’m going to do that however I can. I’m going to do whatever it takes to get there.’ Through injury and a lot of perseverance, I was able to do that. Once I got to be able to do those things, I didn’t stop. That was the key. I started to get good at it, and it wasn’t enough. I had to keep improving my skills. I had to see what was next and eventually started creating new techniques that hadn’t been done before. That’s when I started to cross over from ‘Oh, he’s pretty good’ to ‘Whoa, he’s creating something new here.’” →



“I EMBRACE THE FAILURES BECAUSE I FEEL LIKE THOSE ARE THE LEARNING PROCESS,” HAWK SAID. “THOSE ARE THE LESSONS YOU NEED TO LEARN TO GET TO THAT NEXT STAGE.”

— Tony Hawk

2. SURROUND YOURSELF WITH PEOPLE BETTER THAN YOU

As Hawk got a lot better, he was invited to be a part of the Bones Brigade, a premier skateboarding team. Hawk credits this group for helping him not just improve but really elevate his skills. “I was lucky that Stacy Peralta—who was widely regarded as a legendary skater but [was] also the best curator of a skate team at the time—recognized me,” Hawk said. “His team was considered the best and the most diverse. When he recognized me, that gave me a boost of confidence I hadn’t had before because I was still struggling for acceptance. People called me a circus trick skater. It was like, ‘Oh, he’s just a circus freak. He does these weird little board spins like he’s twirling a baton, and that’s not what skateboarding is about. Skateboarding is about power and style.’ He recognized something in me that gave me a boost of confidence. But being on that team definitely sent me to a new level of skating because of the expectation I put on myself. ‘Like, you’re a Bones Brigade member. You better step it up and do something really special.’ Suddenly, I’m hanging out with Steve Caballero, Mike McGill, and Rodney Mullen. They were only a couple of years older than me, but it felt like a lifetime older than me. Because they were in magazines and I was still struggling, it definitely was trial by fire. I just had to do it. I had to step it up.”

3. UNDERSTAND THAT FAILING IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE LEARNING PROCESS

At the 1999 X Games, Hawk became the first skater to complete the 900, a 2½-revolution (900 degree) aerial spin performed on a skateboard ramp. It took him 10 years of failing at it over and over before he could complete it successfully.

“I embrace the failures because I feel like those are the learning process,” Hawk said. “Those are the lessons you need to learn to get to that next stage. The first time I ever tried the 900 was around 1987 when it was an idea. I kind of tested it, and it seemed impossible. I couldn’t get my body to spin that far. Years later, I finally figured out how to spin my body, but I didn’t know how to [stick] the landing. A few years later, I got bold and I tried to land and I broke my rib. Throughout that process, even though it was traumatic and discouraging, there was something to be learned from every stage. When I finally did it, there was an ‘aha’ moment. Like, ‘Oh, there was that one thing I was missing.’ But I needed to go through that process to figure it out. I embrace that timeline as opposed to letting it just be discouraging and give up.”

4. COMMIT TO SUCCESS

In learning difficult tricks, Hawk only visualized successfully executing them. He never doubted he could do it, even after failing repeatedly. “Everything in my head says, ‘Stay on, just hold onto it no matter what,’” Hawk said. “Sometimes, I don’t even get ahead of it, or I’m holding on, I’m doing everything that I think I should, and it just doesn’t happen. What I’m telling myself is to commit. That’s pretty much it. In various ways, I’m just saying commit to it. As soon as you doubt it, it doesn’t happen. Or if you picture yourself in the worst-case scenario, that’s what’s going to happen.”

5. EMBRACE LEARNING AND BE WILLING TO TAKE RISKS

As a top athlete and top business pro, Hawk believes the psychological aspects of being willing to overcome hard things contributed greatly to his success.

“There’s a lot to be said for having confidence, and the confidence that I’ve gained and built through my skating career lent itself to business quite a bit,” Hawk said. “Not being afraid to take risks is paramount to any success. I’m willing to put it out there and . . . risk quite a bit of it for the sake of success. I learned a lot along the way, and I was also very eager to learn about the business. It would’ve been simple for me to say, ‘Yeah, I’ll put my name on that, and I

hope it works.' But I was definitely right there in every part of the process. I've held that very dearly because I wanted to represent skateboarding well, not just my own name."

6. DON'T GIVE UP

Before connecting with Activision, Hawk was approached by a PC developer who'd created an engine for skateboarding. He teamed up with the developer, and they pitched the idea of creating a new skateboarding video game to a lot of console manufacturers and software developers, but no one bit. "It was very discouraging," Hawk said. "In fact, some were outright insulting." After a year of hearing "no," the developer got frustrated and gave up. "I remember this distinctly," Hawk recalls. "He told me, 'Look, I've got to go make a living. But I sense that because we were taking these meetings, your name is out there in the ether of video games, and so if someone were to do a game, they probably want to call you.'"

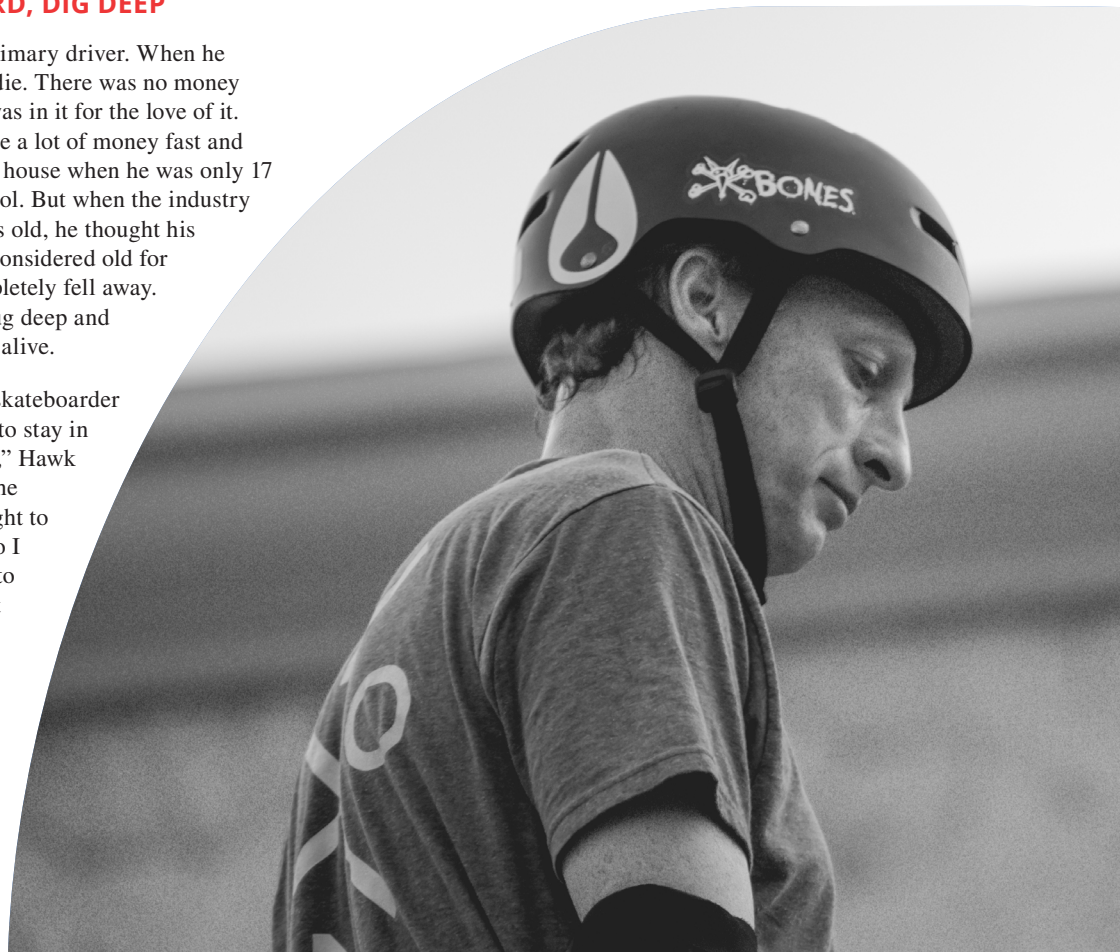
Hawk was doubtful, but less than a year later, Activision called and said, "We heard you want to do a game." Hawk took a meeting with Activision, and after trying a game they were working on, he signed a deal on the spot. One year later, the Tony Hawk's Pro Skater video game was released.

7. WHEN THINGS ARE HARD, DIG DEEP

His passion has always been his primary driver. When he started, skating was beginning to die. There was no money to be made in the industry, so he was in it for the love of it. However, as success came, he made a lot of money fast and furiously, earning enough to buy a house when he was only 17 years old and a senior in high school. But when the industry crashed when he was only 24 years old, he thought his career was over. Not only was he considered old for a skater but the industry also completely fell away. Because he loved it so much, he dug deep and figured out how to keep his dream alive.

"I thought my career as an actual skateboarder was starting to fade, and I wanted to stay in the industry because I just loved it," Hawk said. "I loved the culture. I loved the business of it. I loved what it brought to me through my formative years. So I wanted to stay in it. I also wanted to create a team much in the way that Peralta created the Bones Brigade. So I chose to start a company and took out the equity from my second home to start the business. This seems crazy because, at the

time, skating was in such a lull. But I also felt like I had already seen skateboarding come and go twice in my lifetime. It's bound to come again. I hope it's bound to come back around again. And when it does, we will have established ourselves as one of the best brands because we have one of the best teams. We have a unique direction. We have good aesthetics, and we have set ourselves apart from the rest of the industry. I felt pretty good about that. It took a lot longer than I thought. Through those years, I ended up selling that house for what I owed on it, moving back into the other smaller place I lived in during high school, and living off peanut butter and jelly, Top Ramen, and Taco Bell for probably three years, all while trying to keep the business afloat and keep the team happy. We would drive across the country to skate shops, skate in their parking lots, beg them for money for gas and food, and maybe a hotel that we're all going to share in one room, then go on to the next one. But in those days, it was a struggle financially, but also, we still got to skate, so we were kind of still living the dream. It was on a much smaller scale; it was much rawer. There were no trainers or anything. I remember distinctly one of our skaters fractured his wrist. We went to the hospital, and it was going to take hours for him to be seen, so we just drove on to the next city, and he figured it out and wore a wrist brace the whole time. It was just stuff like that."



8. PRACTICE GRATITUDE

Originally, Hawk had a partner at Birdhouse Skateboards. The two of them kept taking pay cuts and cutting costs to make the business work at a time when skateboarding wasn't popular. Gratitude for being able to remain in an industry he loved was what kept him going. "We both believed in it so much," says Hawk, "and there were a couple of times where we had heavy conversations like, 'Are we going to have to give this up?' And then we would make another cut and we would stay afloat. Eventually, it came back around. It took a lot longer, and it was tricky, but all the while, I was just thankful we were still doing it. We were still in the business. When it did come back around, it came back around in a way we never imagined in terms of how big it got."

9. BELIEVE IN YOUR DREAM

There will be pressure to give up. There may be family members who look at you like you're a failure. Even when others don't, you must believe in your dream until you make it a reality. Nobody paid attention to skateboarding for years, so it had undergone a revolution as it moved underground. It turned into a street activity with new moves and styles, so when the inaugural X Games were held during the summer of 1995, it became a catalyst for people to start paying attention to skateboarding again. "It took a lot longer for my business to succeed, but I believed in it so much," Hawk said.

10. FIND YOUR TRIBE

Hawk has dealt with a lot of bullies throughout his entire life, including his elders within the skate community. Growing up with bullies, criticism, and hate taught him how to ignore criticism. "It was weird because skateboarding was such a small community at the time, so we're already outcasts from mainstream sports," he said. "And now I'm an outcast within this little outcast community. It was very isolating. But at the same time, it taught me resilience and to just believe in what I was doing. Because it gave me so much for my sense of confidence and mental health, I just ignored all that noise. I found salvation in my peers because I did have friends who were of the same mindset. We had the same type of approach to skating. We would bounce ideas off each other, and I always felt validated by them. That was my big help. Having the skate park was where I found my crew, my tribe, and my direction. It's where I developed my own style. That's very much why I started a foundation for public skate parks because of what it brought to me as a kid."

11. DON'T DO IT ALONE

To scale, Hawk built a team around him that he trusts. "I have an awesome team behind me that will filter and vet things before they even get to me," Hawk said. "They have the same sort of sense of values and aesthetics that they know what's authentic to skateboarding or what's authentic to what I do or my brand or video games. It's more about surrounding yourself with those people you trust."

12. KNOW YOUR CUSTOMER AT A DEEP LEVEL

Through experiencing both success and failures in the skateboarding industry and being face-to-face with his customers, Hawk has developed a tremendous understanding of his ideal audience. "I have a radar for authenticity and know what will resonate with our customers," he said. "That just comes from walking the walk and skating. You can't fake skating, and you can't cheat at skating. It takes so much perseverance and so much effort. You're literally in the streets, so I have that to my advantage where I can tell if something looks authentic or if something is going to resonate with the skate community or with the action sports or street culture community."

13. CELEBRATE HOW FAR YOU'VE COME

What gets Hawk charged up and keeps him excited is to see how far he's come and how far the sport has come. By staying the course and remaining involved in the industry, he has been able to enjoy experiences he never would have thought possible, such as being invited to the Olympic Games and being the first skater to ride the Olympic course. "It's so exciting to be alive and to be part of the skate scene, to see it thriving so much, and to see it become this international interest and phenomenon and so inclusive," Hawk said. "For me, that's what fires me up—to see how far skateboarding has come and that it's for everyone. That it is truly international."

As you strive to grow your IT business, take risks and stay committed to the process. Believe in yourself and figure out how to push through the tough times. As you reach new levels of success and achieve the top of your profession, Hawk advises you to release yourself from the pressure by giving yourself permission to fail. Continue to push yourself but focus on your strengths rather than doing something completely outside your wheelhouse. Says Hawk, "Embrace your failures. Don't rest on your accolades." Most of all, Hawk says to figure out and know what your priorities are. When you do that, you'll always be a success in the things that matter most. ■

7 Ways To Maximize Workplace Productivity With Tech

BY GREG BRAINERD

In the fast-paced world of business, efficiency and productivity are paramount. Advancements in technology have revolutionized the way we work, providing a plethora of tools and resources to help us accomplish more in less time. Maximizing workplace productivity with technology has become an essential strategy for organizations looking to stay competitive and innovative in today's global market. Here are seven ways to add tech to your day-to-day activities to stay productive.

1. AUTOMATION AND STREAMLINING PROCESSES

One of the most significant ways technology maximizes workplace productivity is through automation and process streamlining. With the help of tools like workflow automation software and robotic process automation, businesses can automate repetitive tasks, freeing up employees to focus on more creative and strategic tasks. By automating routine processes, organizations reduce the likelihood of errors and increase the speed at which tasks are completed. This not only boosts efficiency but also enhances job satisfaction by allowing employees to concentrate on tasks that require critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

2. COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION

Effective communication and collaboration are vital to a productive workplace. Technology has provided a range of solutions—such as video conferencing, project management software, and instant messaging platforms—that enable teams to work together seamlessly, regardless of their locations. These tools facilitate real-time communication, file sharing, and project tracking, ensuring that all team members stay on the same page and are able to work efficiently together. This results in faster decision making, improved project management, and, ultimately, higher productivity.

3. DATA ANALYTICS AND BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

In the modern workplace, data is king. The ability to collect, analyze, and leverage data is a powerful tool for improving productivity. With the help of advanced analytics and business intelligence tools, organizations can gain insights into their operations, customer behavior, and market trends. This data-driven approach allows for informed decision making, optimized resource allocation, and the identification of areas where improvements are needed. By harnessing data and analytics, businesses can work smarter, not harder.

4. REMOTE WORK AND FLEXIBILITY

Technology has also played a pivotal role in reshaping the traditional office environment. The rise of remote work and flexible work arrangements has been made possible by advancements in communication and collaboration tools. Employees can now work from anywhere, provided they have an internet connection, which not only enhances their work-life balance but also opens up opportunities for businesses to tap into

a global talent pool. Remote work can boost productivity by reducing commuting time and allowing employees to work in environments where they are most comfortable and productive.

IMPORTANT: Security should be a high priority if you have remote workers. If you don't have a robust security system for virtual team members, you need to get one right away.

5. PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND TASK TRACKING

Effective project management is key to productivity. With project management software, businesses can plan, execute, and monitor projects more efficiently. These tools provide a clear overview of tasks, deadlines, and team member responsibilities, ensuring that everyone stays organized and accountable. From agile methodologies to Gantt charts, technology offers a range of project management approaches to suit various business needs.

6. EMPLOYEE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Investing in technology for employee training and development is another avenue to maximize workplace productivity. Learning management systems and online training platforms enable organizations to offer continuous learning opportunities to their employees. By upskilling and reskilling their workforce, companies can ensure that their staff remains adaptable and capable of using the latest tools and technologies, which in turn enhances overall productivity.

7. SECURITY AND DATA PROTECTION

As technology becomes more integrated into the workplace, the need for robust security and data protection measures is crucial. Cybersecurity solutions help protect sensitive information, prevent data breaches, and ensure business continuity. When employees feel secure in their digital environment, they can work more confidently and productively, knowing that their data and the company's assets are protected.

Technology is an indispensable resource for maximizing workplace productivity. From automating tasks and improving communication to harnessing data and fostering employee development, technology offers a wide range of solutions to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in the modern workplace. Embracing these technologies and staying up to date with the latest trends is essential for businesses looking to thrive in today's competitive and ever-evolving business landscape. By leveraging technology effectively, organizations can achieve their productivity goals, improve their bottom line, and create a dynamic, innovative work environment. ■



Greg Brainerd is Founder & CEO of Braintek IT Services. They are based in Houston and to find out more about what they do and how they could help you, please visit Braintek.com.



meet Hope Hill

Hope Hill is the founder of Working With Hope, Inc., a non-profit organization that, through its R.A.R.E. support network, represents a partnership between Working With Hope and businesses. It is a collaborative framework of participating businesses that are able to offer complimentary or discounted services.

Hope, inspired by her own struggles with invisible chronic illness and trauma, created the R.A.R.E. Support Network to give hope to those who have lost hope for a cure.

She advocates for the importance of both mental and physical healthcare, envisioning the R.A.R.E. Support Network as a pivotal element in the quest for a cure. R.A.R.E. empowers individuals to confront the hurdles, underscoring the organization's dedication to fostering understanding and mutual reliance.



Hope encourages others to share their unique stories to inspire individuals on their journey to empowerment.

