



Storytelling

# 30 Entrepreneurs Explain Why They Started Their Business



Mercy - CBNation • 3 weeks ago • 0 comments • 19 minutes read



Each business has a story. No matter if the business is a Goliath like Wal-Mart, or a local business owned by a couple or family, the business has roots in an idea. For each business owner, the story of their journey can range from monetary needs or the passion for a unique project. Each story is different though the reasons may be the same. No matter the tale, the background behind each and every business is what fuels each and brand.

We asked some entrepreneurs and business owners, why they started their businesses:



CEO Podcasts Hosted by Gresham Harkless  
IAM381- Special Episode





*Photo Credit: Dan Meyer*

When we bought our current home, it required a complete renovation. We planned for a project lasting up to nine months. Two years later when we were almost done, we looked at each other and said there has to be a better way. We decided to focus on giving homeowners and pros a better way to select and purchase items to reduce delays, cost over-runs and frustrations. Soon we were busy working on what Pocketdoor is today!

Thanks to Dan Meyer, [Pocketdoor!](#)

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## #2- Reduce miscommunications



*Photo Credit: Juli Lassow*

I started up my business because I knew that retail businesses needed support, navigating the fast-paced changes in the industry. Specifically, retailers and their suppliers spoke increasingly different languages. This miscommunication was leading to fewer great partnerships and new business opportunities. I knew that I could help get retailers and suppliers talking again – growing each of their businesses. I have more flexibility than larger organizations to move quickly and drive change. Additionally, I had the insights from my time at a corporate retailer to help make needed connections between the teams. I find



Thanks to Juli Lassow, [JHL Solutions!](#)



## #3- To do something more impactful based on my experience



*Photo Credit: Sabriya Dobbins*

I started my business because I understood what it was like to live through poor mental health which resulted in high levels of depression, anxiety, and physical ailments for several years. After months of counselling and prayer, I realized that I needed to do something more impactful to help others find healing. I decided to create a “sounding board” opportunity for people to step away from their stressful life situations and grow within a community. This company will help people to rediscover beauty in the world, the people around them and the beauty within.

Thanks to Sabriya Dobbins, [Project Passport LLC!](#)

## #4- I didn't want to die wondering!



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*Photo Credit: Sean  
McPheat*

I'd had a very successful commercial career and made a lot of money for the organisations that I had worked for but there was always a nagging doubt in my head in terms of whether I could do it for myself! I knew, though, that if I looked back at my life when I was old that I would have regretted it if I hadn't tried and given it a go. I therefore didn't want any "shouldas" "couldas" and "wouldas" in my life. In other words, I didn't want to die wondering! Going into starting my business I had the mindset that if I failed, then at least I would have tried and would know for sure. It's the best decision I ever made and should have made the jump a lot sooner.

Thanks to Sean McPheat, [MTD Training!](#)

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## #5- Passion



*Photo Credit: Jeffrey Scott*

The motivation behind starting my business is truly passion! I started working part time 10 years ago at a luxury menswear store in NJ where I learned so much about the industry and started growing a liking towards men's suiting specifically. Over the years, I've educated myself to the point where I felt comfortable starting my own custom menswear brand two years ago called Jeffrey Scott. I educated myself on the ins and outs of running a business, as well as the custom clothing industry so that I felt comfortable starting my own brand. I absolutely love what I do and I love helping the gentleman of the world find a suit that actually fits! It's extremely rewarding and that is a huge part of why I started my business.



## #6- Address frustrations among business owners and their employees



Photo Credit: Bob Graham

In 2017, I started my business, Serious Soft Skills LLC, to address the growing frustrations and confusion among business owners and their employees on how to work effectively. Companies invest heavily in their technology at the expense of their employees. Leveraging employees' soft skills can radically improve a company's bottom line, while also addressing common workplace problems like generational differences, missing deadlines, bad teamwork, and a lack of creativity and innovation. My company addresses these challenges with workshops and training sessions that combine research, personal experience, real-world scenarios and even kazoo playing (really!) to help people not just understand the role of soft skills, but actually put them to work in lasting ways.

Thanks to Bob Graham, [Serious Soft Skills LLC!](#)

## #7- My daughter



Photo Credit: Matt Daigle



our fixer-upper just in time for our first daughter to be born. The whole experience triggered in me a desire to think more seriously about our future and give my daughter the best world she deserved. It also made me realize just how tough it was to have a home that reflected our values. When I picked up our new power bill and noticed that it hadn't changed despite investing over six figures into the house as part of the renovation, it became apparent that we had built a home that reflected our aesthetic values and style, but not our core values as a family. That fuelled me to research home improvement alternatives relentlessly, but I quickly realized how difficult it is to try to have a home that is more sustainable. It required research and resources that simply didn't exist. So I hired an incredible team and together, we created a solution to solve my very own problem so that we could have a home that is true to our family's values, pocketbook, and one that respects our planet and is mindful of our future. Today, Rise is the leading online authority in sustainable home improvement having welcomed and helped over a million homeowners in the past year.

Thanks to Matt Daigle, [Rise!](#)



## #8- To keep on-trend



*Photo Credit: Holly Rollins*

I started the digital marketing business I have now (in its current form) because I've always worked in marketing and prefer to manage my own destiny and be autonomous. Why digital marketing? I saw five years ago that the traditional form of marketing and PR was going the way of the dinosaur if digital weren't

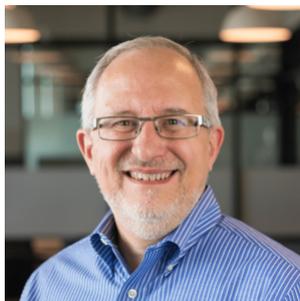


perhaps more importantly, my business helps meet a void in the marketplace where creatives, marketing managers/strategists integrate with developers and the more technical SEO experts to give the ultimate digital ROI for clients.

Thanks to Holly Rollins, [10xdigital!](#)

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## #9- Primary caregiving to my mother



*Photo Credit: Tavis Schriefer*

In 2009, my mother moved into a house across the street so I could help her with her daily needs. During this time she began showing increasing signs of early-stage dementia. After numerous medical issues arose, I spent the next six years as her primary caregiver. I learned firsthand about the everyday challenges those living with early dementia face, including using the telephone. In 2015, I came up with the idea for teleCalm, developing and refining the design while interviewing other caregivers about their family challenges with Alzheimer's disease or other dementias.

Thanks to Tavis Schriefer, [teleCalm, Inc.!](#)

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## #10- Share my love of art



I have worked for 10 years in international IT companies selling software products. But years of work in this field made me think that there is no tangible result of my work. IT products were replaced one by another, new versions and upgrades were released, and previous achievements were dissolved in an endless stream of IT progress. This made me think and look for something that not only brings momentary benefit to a person but also stays with him forever, remains to descendants. My skills and experience in sales of complicated and expensive IT software combined with my love for visual arts. So I came to a decision to start my gallery and ultimately left the office life. By and large, I was driven by the desire to do exactly what inspired me and made me dream. I had no goal to get instant profit, I just sincerely wanted to share my love of art with others, to discover new things in art with inspiration. And the fact that this can make good money came later as a bonus. Perhaps it may seem banal, but I would like to give advice to those who are just thinking about starting a business. You can dream a lot of becoming an IRONMAN and watch competitions on YouTube but if you want to understand, you just need to open the door and run.

Thanks to Ilya Podorvanov, [Podorvanov Art Gallery!](#)

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## #11- I wanted to lead my own life



*Photo Credit: Andrei  
Vasilescu*

From childhood, I was keenly attracted to rule my own kingdom. There was no kingdom to rule when I grew up, but I truly fancied living my life in my own rules to follow. I couldn't fulfill my wish if I took a regular job, however money I might earn as salary. After all, a service job is a job where you need to obey



Thanks to Andrei Vasilescu, [DontPayFull!](#)

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## #12- Two reasons



*Photo Credit: Nirbhay  
Kanoria*

Starting your business is never easy but there are times you just need to take the leap. In my case, it was really an undying passion for books combined with an underserved literary market in India that made me make the decision. After studying the market it seemed like it was the right time to launch a literary magazine as reading was gaining more and more popularity in India- this was reflected by the increasing book sales, number of well-attended literature festivals taking place, etc. It was the perfect opportunity to combine a passion with a need in a populous marketplace.

Thanks to Nirbhay Kanoria, [The Curious Reader!](#)

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## #13- Teach others to do more, and stress less



*Photo Credit: Alexis  
Haselberger*



I've always been a hyper-organized and efficient person; my goal has always been to do the best possible job with the least amount of time and effort. In my 15+ years managing operations and HR at several early-stage start-ups, where there was always way more to do than people to do it, I began to realize that many people around me were productive through brute force, and were burning out. I realized that the primary difference between what I was doing, and what other people were doing, was that I had systems that allowed me to streamline. Over time, I started to codify these systems and knew that I wanted to teach others to do more, and stress less. Now I get to help people do more of what they want, less of what they don't and build the balance that's right for them. Nothing I've done professionally has been as satisfying.

Thanks to [Alexis Haselberger](#)

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## #14- Impact the older generation



*Photo Credit: Alex Kurkowski*

I started mailing epistolary (literary/artisanal work in the form of letters) style hand-drawn images to the older more seasoned parts of my family (mainly my older parents and uncles/aunts) as a joke approximately one year ago. I would draw pictures in story form and mail them out to loved one's piece by piece over a period of time. Imagine a comic or any book with images being taken apart page by page and then those pages snail mailed out one by one throughout weeks or even months! For my family, it was always a way to stay connected and create fun, personalized stories so that they could look forward to checking their mailbox every day. My family always enjoyed these stories because they were always goofy, consistently sent over a period of time, and



passion of mine. Last year I started my second year at the Rice University MBA program and decided to turn my passion into something that can truly impact the older generation who feel like they are lost in the technology shuffle, so I decided to start Tellinga. Tellinga is a creates personalized stories with customized illustrations through traditional mail. Story recipients receive hand-drawn stories about themselves based on unique preferences.

Thanks to Alex Kurkowski, [Tellinga!](#)

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## #15- Fired for lack of education



*Photo Credit: Troy McClain*

Motivation can be triggered by fear, money, fame, respect and more; however, my motivation to start our company came out of President Trump firing me on national television for what he called Lack of Education. I still remember saying to him: Just because I did not pay tuition, does not mean I didn't pay attention. Growing up, my family didn't have the resources for me to go college, but I knew I still needed to get an education. So I studied, learned and practiced in areas where the information was available and where those were willing to help me. Eventually, I realized there were so many other talented people in the world who simply don't have access to traditional institution learning, so I set out to change the world by creating access to education. My opinion is: No matter the issue, Education is the answer. In 2018 our online training and learning software Tovuti was launched! The mission behind Tovuti is to use software to increase access to education, whether it's traditional education, workplace training programs or alternative forms of education like mastermind training, continuing education, etc. Because our software is full-featured, easy



Thanks to Troy McClain, [Tovuti!](#)

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## #16- Reach out to people beyond my community



*Photo Credit: Frederick W. Penney Esq.*

When I started my law firm in 1992, I did it to help others, to provide the assistance they needed when they were suffering from accidents that were outside of their control. When one talks about starting their own business, they often do not consider a law firm! But this is a common question in all professional careers: Should I start my own business? I decided I wanted to help people instead of big companies, so I reached out to those who had their own practice and asked a lot of questions. I found that this was the most important thing, to reach out to people who have a similar business but NOT in your community. Some might see you as competition, and refuse to help you with their most trusted secrets of success. If you are not from their community, then they may open up more. Do this, and you are likely to be ahead of the curve when it comes to becoming a successful business person.

Thanks to Frederick W. Penney Esq., [Penney and Associates!](#)

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## #17- Make my success to be more about personal fulfilment





Photo Credit: Lida Citroen

In 2008, I became an entrepreneur. I had spent 20 years in corporate America before making this decision and I made it in the worst economic climate to do it. Markets were crashing. People were losing their jobs. I had lost my job as well. While I considered potential job prospects, a question kept popping up, What if I worked for myself? When I started LIDA360, I wanted my success to be more about personal fulfillment and having a positive and meaningful influence on others. I'd never started or run a business by myself, so it was a lot of learning! I asked everyone around me for information, support and tips to try to avoid the mistakes they'd made, and take advantage of the opportunities they seized. Today, I share that same knowledge and insight with entrepreneurs daily — when you become successful, it's important to help others get there, too.

Thanks to Lida Citroen, [LIDA360, LLC!](#)

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## #18- Call the shots in my life and spread a message



Photo Credit: Jill Stanton

For me, it's always been a mix of wanting to call the shots in my own life and



to people AND would earn me a cool \$10 extra a week outside of my allowance. 30 years later and that desire to make my own rules, build something meaningful and create a life of purpose is still my driving force (only these days my weekly goal is a bit more than \$10!).

Thanks to Jill Stanton, [Screw The Nine To Five!](#)

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## #19- Turn passion into a career



*Photo Credit: Margaret H. Geiger*

I've always had a passion for helping people, from supporting family and friends to volunteering at local charities and organizations. So I thought, why not turn that passion into a career? After working at an advertising agency and learning a wide range of skills from all departments, I decided to take what I learned and the many connections I made, and take a leap of faith. I wanted to leave a toxic work environment and really own my work. If I fail, it's on me. If I succeed, it's on me. My company's focus is to create big ideas for small businesses. So many businesses and organizations can't afford to spend thousands of dollars a month on marketing services. I saw a need and went after it. I've always been motivated to help others and have been lucky to make that a career.

Thanks to Margaret H. Geiger, [Twelve31 Media, LLC!](#)

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## #20- Solving a real estate challenge





*Photo Credit: Yotam Alroy*

Dan and I founded Mindspace because we recognized a fundamental problem in the current real estate model, especially for startups and growth companies. We both have entrepreneurial blood in our veins and a familial background in real estate and startups, so solving the real estate challenge for startups was close to our hearts and something we both wanted to do on a large scale. Opening the first modern coworking site in 2014 in Tel Aviv, Israel, the startup nation, made sense because we knew that a flexible rent model would be very attractive to startups and entrepreneurs like us, and that creating a boutique experience would set us apart while also being advantageous for our members. We created the office that we had always wanted to work in, and were happy to see that others quickly wanted it too. Fast forward a few years and we are proud to say that Mindspace locations are now in 13 cities across Europe and the US and continue to be used and loved by both entrepreneurs and startups, but also by some of the world's biggest enterprises. And as an entrepreneur, there's nothing more fulfilling than seeing your vision comes to life.

Thanks to Yotam Alroy, [Mindspace – Global boutique coworking provider!](#)

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## #21- As a hobby



I started my business as a hobby to fill the need of playing with food and cooking and connecting people. I was catering and personal chef-ing when I decided I wanted to work with people in a more global way, stretching my reach beyond local. So we started taking all the things off of our menu that we felt were stable enough to ship and started to create gift baskets with them. From there we evolved to gift boxes. I also saw a huge opportunity with our clients who were struggling to consistently connect with their clients through their client appreciation marketing efforts. For a lot of people finding the right gift is work, if not, just downright painful, especially the logistics of it all that all effect its success. There is always a lot of insecurity around if someone is going to like the gift selected. Being that this is fun for me and easy (great gift ideas fall effortlessly into my lap all the time), I created our done for you, automated gift plans and services to support other heart-centred business owners. I continually listen to my clients and colleagues, often asking them to participate in further developing our programs and catalog of gifts. I love to work with people, help them grow their business, be more successful and support them not just with our services but with our resources as well.

Thanks to Lucia Robles, [Lucia & Co.](#)!

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## #22- Deliver easy to find parking information



*Photo Credit: Eugene  
Tsyркlevich*

I launched Parkopedia after I drove to a conference in San Francisco in 2007 and struggled to find any useful parking information online. I realised that



innovative parking solutions. 12 years later, Parkopedia is the world's largest parking services provider, delivering easy to find parking information for 70 million parking spaces across 89 countries. Parkopedia's service is also integrated into the navigation systems of 20 of the world's leading car brands, as well as mapping and navigation providers including Apple Maps, Garmin and TomTom.

Thanks to Eugene Tsyркlevich, [Parkopedia!](#)

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## #23- I did the math



*Photo Credit: Russell Knight*

I started my business because I did the math. I looked at what I was being paid and what my boss was billing me out for. I was receiving 10 cents on every dollar he was making. Did he have a lot of overhead and responsibilities? He sure did. But it wasn't 90 cents of overhead for every dollar his employees made. Now I have a nice little law firm where I bill my employees out. But, I only keep a modest 80 cents for every dollar they bill out.

Thanks to Russell Knight, [Law Office of Russell D. Knight!](#)

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## #24- To factor in diversity and inclusivity





*Photo Credit: Laura  
Donovan*

As someone so not in the “old boys club” – I wanted to create my own kind of “club” After several years working in the financial services industry, I saw time and time again how the industry can miss the mark – especially when it comes to working with women & millennials. This isn’t all that surprising considering that currently, only 16% of advisors are women & just 10% of are under the age of 35. So as a woman, under the age of 35 – I saw an opportunity to create a firm where diversity and inclusivity are integral to our company identity, and the clients we serve. As someone so not in the “old boys club” I wanted to create my own kind of “club”: A place where people of all different backgrounds, occupations, financial situations, life experiences, and unique stories all feel welcome. Where the financial planning experience is educational, welcoming and even a bit fun – regardless of how much you know or where you’re starting from.

Thanks to Laura Donovan, [Sonder Financial!](#)

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## #25- To own my own time



*Photo Credit: Shannon D.  
Hughes*



merchant processing and after my first account I obtained, my client said to me, thanks for helping me. I didn't know I was helping them. So, then my focus went to just helping people. As my merchant processing accounts grew, I added being a wholesale real estate investor to my bag of talents. Again, helping people find a buyer for their home distressed or otherwise. Especially people that needed to move quickly without hassle. Now I am owing my time helping people with my two initial niches and have added success coaching both business and personal and speaking as well. Owning my own time and helping people. I know this sounds like a public service announcement but it feels good to be able to do both.

Thanks to [Shannon D. Hughes](#)

## #26- Two reasons



*Photo Credit: Louise  
Beattie*

The motivation for starting my business was to escape a job I had come to despise and to gain a sense of freedom and independence. It was a job I had once loved – working around the world as an Offshore Co-ordinator for a subsea construction company in the oil industry. However, as the company evolved so had my job. I had gone from feeling that my contribution made a difference to being a faceless cog in the machine. Looking back I had always wanted to start a business but never had the courage. As I approached my 40's I started to think it was now or never. Reading Seth Godin's Linchpin gave me the final nudge I needed and I jumped ship to start a photography business (photography was a lifelong passion) before evolving to business coaching. I realised that my inner geek loved the business side of things more than



Thanks to Louise Beattie, [Working A Better Life!](#)

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## #27- On Accident



*Photo Credit: Melanie  
Ocana*

I started my business on accident. Or maybe it started me. Over 15 years ago, I owned an eBay franchise store in south Texas that failed miserably. But my honed eBay skills led me to specific type of tile native to Mexico and south Texas – handmade Saltillo tile. I found a local supplier who agreed to let me sell this flooring on a consignment basis on eBay. My eBay sales skyrocketed beyond what that local business could supply. I couldn't get enough tile to fill my orders. So, I partnered with my soon-to-be husband and took a drive to the manufacturing site of Saltillo, Mexico. With no manufacturing knowledge, ecommerce skills, freight shipping or flooring experience, we bought a truckload of tile. In a short amount of time, we started a website and became experts quickly. Fifteen years later, our company (Rustico Tile and Stone, headquartered near Austin, TX) is the largest producer and wholesale distributor of handmade Mexican Saltillo tile. We're an online-based business for a variety of speciality Mexican tile and stone. And we ship worldwide. We also continue to navigate the thrills of growing our family and serving in our local community. It's a been a journey!

Thanks to Melanie Ocana, [Rustico Tile and Stone!](#)

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## #28- Solution for our own problem





*Photo Credit: Felix Gerlach*

We originally started in 2017 as a crypto exchange management product where people could buy and trade over 1,000 different coins long before other players adopted it. The product gained significant traction, particularly during the bitcoin run up to \$20k. We pivoted to digital identity last year after the app ran into regulatory difficulties. Apple took the app down because they required us to perform verification checks for every user. In the worst case, a user had to run 8 times through a verification check, which was completely unreasonable. We just couldn't find a solution in the market which fit our needs of seamlessly verifying and re-authenticating users, so we pivoted into an identity company and built a solution for our own problem.

Thanks to Felix Gerlach, [Passbase!](#)

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## #29- Get an idea off the ground



*Photo Credit: Caitlin  
MacGregor*

I was voted most likely to save the world in my high school yearbook. It wasn't until I built two businesses that I realized I was meant to save the world by revolutionizing talent processes to prepare businesses for the future of work.



software-as-a-service that enables organizations to make predictive talent acquisition and talent management decisions with psychometric data – out of my own necessity. After all, for any of my future endeavors to be successful, I needed to make predictive talent decisions that only a product like Plum could inform. With the future of work looking so uncertain, getting the right people in the right roles will ultimately determine whether a business succeeds or fails.

Thanks to Caitlin MacGregor, [Plum!](#)

## #30- Two reasons

I started my company in 2006 so that I could work from home and start a family. I originally started selling items on eBay, and my goal was to get enough part time income coming in to quit my day job so that I could stay home with my children. Very quickly the business grew into more than a full time job. Within two years, my husband was able to quit his day job to help with the business. Business has grown through the years. Today, we have seven employees and we are still growing.

Thanks to Kim M. Hawkins, [Wholesale Event Solutions, Inc.!](#)

**Why did you start your business? Tell us in the comments below. Don't forget to join our [#IamCEO Community](#)**

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