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THE EVOLUTION OF MONEY

UNLOCKING EFFICIENCY & SCALABILITY

CREATIVE STARTUP STRATEGIES

STREAMLINING BUSINESS OPERATIONS

Identifying & Improving
Problem Areas

DR. MIKEL BROWN



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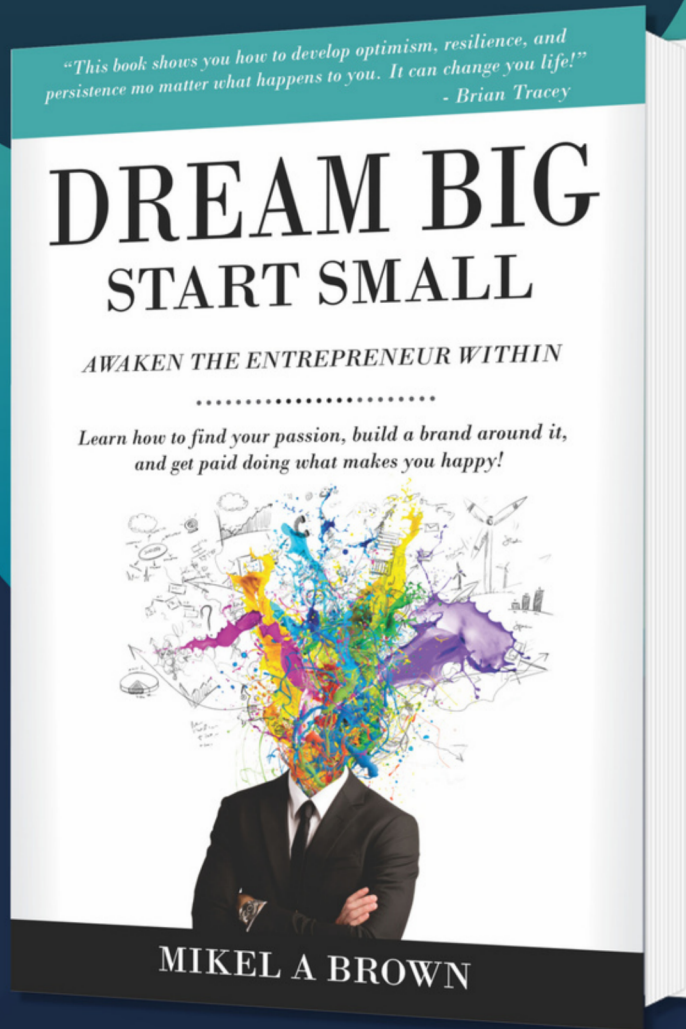
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The Slow Educational and Economic Death of America

By Dr. Mikel Brown

DREAM BIG START SMALL



Dream Big Start Small sets itself apart from other business self-help books by integrating the essential role of faith and spirituality in achieving success. This distinctive guide not only offers a beginner-friendly approach to starting a business but also highlights the importance of trusting in God's plan and recognizing His divine hand in one's journey.



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EDITORIAL / DR. MIKEL BROWN



Life comes at you fast, and every day can be challenging. Developing goals and creating ways to fulfill them can be exciting; but if your goals are unrealistic and you are experiencing a significant struggle, it may be because you are trying to jump from A to Z. Many have asked me how I predict the future. I don't. I am preparing for it.

Productivity relies on the right attitude, attention to detail, and knowing how to produce a healthy environment conducive to living your dreams. You must see yourself as the next doctor, entrepreneur, author, symphony conductor, pastor, manager, teacher... etc. If you want to see how far I have come, you must understand where I was. I learned to build bridges to cross over trouble areas and maintain movement in the right direction while pursuing my goals. I had to accept that success is a systematic process and that cutting corners will simply cut holes to fall through. You can never reach your goals without a plan and a strategic way to accomplish them.

You must have a deep-seated desire for business, whether to sell a product or offer a service and develop a Street-Smart MBA mentality and be willing to adjust to on-the-job training and creative avenues to start, run, or reenergize any business. Do you want to be successful in business? I bet you do! And, more so. It is not just about where your dreams will take you; it is where you take your dreams. I can see where you are headed, and you are going to like it there. Whether your dream is to open a café or return to school, the best place to start is with someone who believes in your dreams.

That's why more people attend my conclaves for motivation and business education and read BELIEVE Business Magazine. Wouldn't it be fantastic if you could count on having reliable answers for those times when your financial future is a concern? If you always have the best information to help you fulfill all your dreams and goals, you can go a lot further navigating through the pitfalls that often come when having a business. I think that would be wonderful, too. We, BELIEVE Business Magazine, are working on ways to make it happen. Your success is God's passion in you and BELIEVE Business Magazine is God's plan for you!

-Dr. Mikel Brown

Creative Startup Strategies

Embarking on the journey of starting a business can be both exhilarating and daunting. Conventional approaches are not always the most effective means to carve a niche in today's competitive landscape. In this article, you will find some insights and creative ways to start a business that will help you achieve success. So, let's dive in and explore how you can unleash your entrepreneurial ingenuity to build a thriving venture.

Solve a Unique Problem:

Instead of following the crowd, focus on identifying a unique problem that needs solving. Tap into your passion and expertise and seek opportunities where you can offer innovative solutions. By addressing an unmet need in the market, you can differentiate yourself from competitors and attract a loyal customer base.

Embrace Collaboration:

Collaboration can be a powerful tool for startup success. Look for partnerships with complementary businesses or professionals who share your vision and values. You can access new markets, reduce costs, and enhance your overall competitive advantage by pooling resources, knowledge, and networks.

Leverage Technology:

In today's digital age, technology can be a game-changer for startups. Embrace the latest tools, platforms, and automation solutions to streamline your operations, reach a wider audience, and create efficiencies. Leverage social media, e-commerce platforms, and data analytics to gain insights, optimize marketing efforts, and scale your business rapidly.



Embrace the Sharing Economy:

The sharing economy has revolutionized the way we consume goods and services. Explore opportunities to build a business model around sharing resources or utilizing underutilized assets. Whether it's renting out unused office space, providing peer-to-peer services, or creating a platform for sharing skills, the sharing economy can open up new avenues for revenue generation.

Build a Strong Brand:

In a crowded marketplace, a strong brand is essential for standing out and attracting customers. Craft a compelling brand story that resonates with your target audience. Invest in creating a visually appealing and consistent brand identity across all touchpoints. Develop a unique value proposition that sets you apart and builds relationships with customers through exceptional customer service and personalized experiences.

Embrace the Power of Content:

Content marketing can be a cost-effective strategy to build brand awareness, establish thought leadership, and engage with your audience. Create valuable content such as blog posts, videos, podcasts, or social media campaigns that provide insights, solutions, or entertainment related to your industry. By offering value upfront, you can attract and retain a loyal following.

Seek Alternative Funding Sources:

Traditional funding methods may not always be readily accessible, especially for startups. Consider alternative funding sources such as crowdfunding, angel investors, venture capitalists, or government grants. Craft a compelling business plan and pitch that highlights the potential return on investment and the unique value proposition of your business.

Adopt a Customer-Centric Approach:

Put your customers at the heart of your business strategy. Conduct market research, gather feedback, and listen to your customers' needs and preferences. Tailor your products or services to their

requirements and continuously refine your offerings based on their feedback. By providing exceptional customer experiences, you can build a loyal customer base and generate positive word-of-mouth.

Creativity, adaptability, and a willingness to think outside the box are key ingredients for building a thriving venture. By embracing these creative strategies, you can find innovative ways to start a business and position yourself for long-term success. Remember, the journey of entrepreneurship is filled with challenges, but with the right mindset and a dash of creativity, you can transform your vision into a reality.



[Business Today]

Unlocking Efficiency and Scalability: The Power of Systemization in Business

In today's fast-paced business landscape, organizations constantly seek ways to enhance efficiency, streamline processes, and achieve scalability. One strategy that has proven to be immensely beneficial is systemization. Systemization involves the development and implementation of structured systems and processes throughout an organization, enabling seamless operations, improved productivity, and sustainable growth. This article explores the significance of systemization in modern businesses and how it can revolutionize operations, drive profitability, and deliver long-term success.

Defining Systemization:

Systemization is the practice of designing and implementing standardized systems, procedures, and workflows across various departments and functions within an organization. It aims to create a consistent and structured approach to work, enabling employees to operate efficiently, minimize errors, and achieve optimal outcomes. By establishing clear guidelines, automating repetitive tasks, and promoting collaboration, systemization empowers businesses to achieve higher levels of productivity, quality control, and customer satisfaction.

Key Benefits of Systemization:

- Enhanced Efficiency: Systemization eliminates ad-hoc approaches and replaces them with well-defined processes. By standardizing workflows, businesses can minimize time wastage, reduce redundancy, and improve resource allocation. Employees can focus on value-added tasks rather than getting entangled in non-productive activities, thereby increasing overall operational efficiency.
- Scalability and Growth: As businesses expand, the absence of structured systems can hinder growth potential. Systemization allows organizations to scale seamlessly by providing a blueprint for replication and expansion. It ensures that new employees can quickly understand and adapt to established processes, reducing onboarding time and facilitating smoother growth transitions.
- Consistency and Quality Control: Standardized systems enable consistent outputs, thereby ensuring quality control and reducing errors. By implementing checks and balances at various stages of a process, businesses can identify and rectify issues promptly, leading to improved customer satisfaction and brand reputation.
- Employee Empowerment and Collaboration: Systemization clarifies roles and responsibilities, empowering employees to take ownership of their tasks and make informed decisions. It promotes collaboration by facilitating effective communication, knowledge sharing, and cross-functional cooperation. Empowering and engaging employees fosters a positive work culture, higher job satisfaction, and increased productivity.



- Adaptability and Continuous Improvement: Systemization encourages businesses to regularly monitor and evaluate their processes. By analyzing performance metrics and customer feedback, organizations can identify areas for improvement, refine systems, and adapt to changing market demands. This iterative approach to optimization ensures long-term competitiveness and agility.

Implementing Systemization:

- Assess Current Processes: Evaluate existing workflows, identifying pain points, bottlenecks, and areas that require improvement. Determine which processes can be standardized and automated to enhance efficiency.
- Define Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs): Develop detailed SOPs that outline step-by-step instructions for each process. Include key performance indicators (KPIs), roles and responsibilities, and quality control measures to ensure consistency.

- Automation and Technology Integration: Leverage technology solutions such as project management tools, customer relationship management (CRM) systems, and workflow automation software to streamline processes, reduce manual efforts, and enhance collaboration.
- Training and Change Management: Provide comprehensive training to employees on the new systems and processes. Ensure they understand the rationale behind systemization and the benefits it brings. Foster a culture of continuous learning and improvement.
- Regular Evaluation and Adaptation: Continuously monitor and assess the effectiveness of systemization efforts. Seek feedback from employees and customers to identify areas for refinement and adaptation. Embrace change and make necessary adjustments to stay ahead of the curve.

Systemization is a powerful strategy that allows businesses to optimize operations, achieve scalability, and drive sustainable growth. By establishing standardized systems, organizations can enhance efficiency.

THE EVOLUTION OF MONEY

/ DR. MIKEL BROWN



Since its inception, it has undergone a fascinating evolution, transitioning from rudimentary bartering systems to physical forms such as shells, beads, and precious metals, eventually adopting paper and coinage, and now moving towards digital currencies.

Money, as a medium of exchange, has played a pivotal role in the development of human civilization. From the early days of bartering to the advent of digital currency, money has undergone a significant transformation. This article will explore the historical progression of money, its evolution into digital currency, and the reasons behind this transformation.

The Early Days of Bartering

The concept of money can be traced back to the barter system, a method of exchange that preceded the invention of money. Bartering involves exchanging goods and services without intermediaries, such as a currency. People would trade items based on mutual needs, which allowed them to acquire the goods they needed without having to produce everything themselves. However, the barter system had its limitations. Establishing a mutually agreeable exchange rate was often

To be smart about money and wealth accumulation, especially its evolution into Digital Currency, is to discover why it happened. The digital transformation of money – a significant leap in its evolution – is primarily due to advances in technology, increasing globalization, and a desire for more efficient, secure, and inclusive financial systems. Money has always played an indispensable role in human society, acting as a medium of exchange, store of value, and unit of account.

difficult to establish a mutually agreeable exchange rate, as the value of goods and services was subjective. Additionally, bartering was an inefficient means of exchange, as it required a double coincidence of wants, meaning that both parties had to have what the other wanted.

The Emergence of Commodity Money

To overcome the limitations of bartering, societies gradually adopted commodity money, which had intrinsic value and could be easily exchanged. This type of money was usually made from precious metals like gold, silver, or copper. The intrinsic value of these metals, determined by their scarcity and usefulness, made them ideal for use as a medium of exchange. Commodity money enabled people to overcome the double coincidence of wants problem, as they could now trade in a universally accepted form of currency.

The Introduction of Representative Money

As societies continued to develop, the need for a more efficient form of money arose. This led to the introduction of representative money, which was a certificate or token that could be exchanged for a specific amount of a commodity, such as gold or silver. Representative money allowed for easier transactions, as people could now trade certificates instead of carrying around heavy and valuable commodities. This system was the precursor to modern paper money and banking.

The Birth of Fiat Money

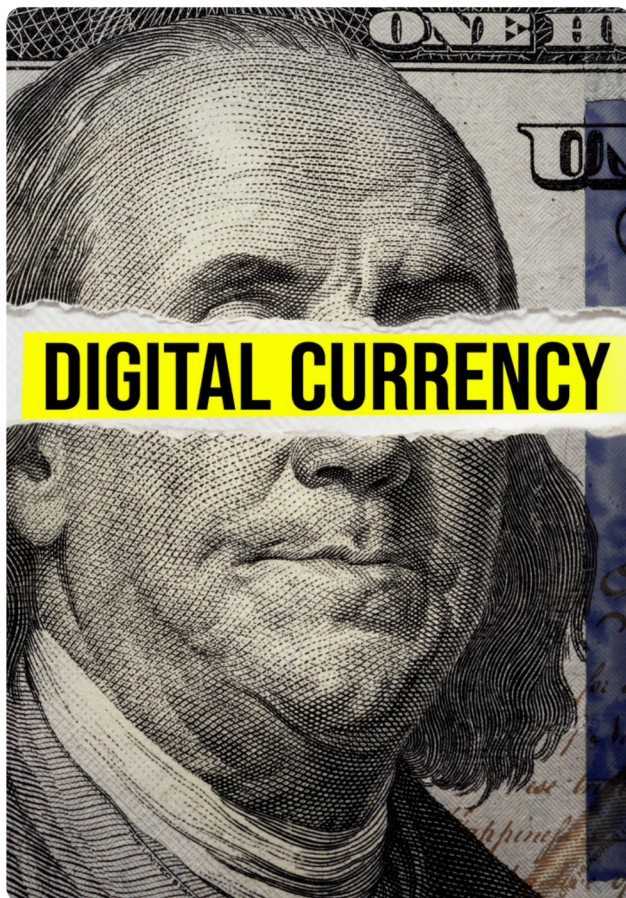
Fiat money, which is the most common form of currency today, emerged as a more flexible alternative to representative money. Unlike representative money, which was backed by a commodity, fiat money has no intrinsic value. Its value is derived from the trust and confidence people place in the issuing authority, such as a government or central bank. Fiat money can be easily produced and controlled, allowing governments and central banks to manage the money supply and influence economic activity.

The Rise of Electronic Money

With the advancement of technology, the way people use, and store money has changed significantly. Electronic money, or e-money, refers to digital representations of a country's fiat currency stored on electronic devices like computers or smartphones. Electronic money has made transactions faster, more convenient, and more secure. It has also enabled the development of new financial services, such as online banking and electronic payment systems.

The Emergence of Digital Currency

Digital currency is a form of electronic money that is not tied to any specific country or central authority. It uses cryptography to secure transactions and control the creation of new units. The most well-known digital currency is Bitcoin, which was introduced in 2009 by an anonymous individual or group known as Satoshi Nakamoto.



Digital currencies, also known as cryptocurrencies, operate on a decentralized network of computers called a blockchain. This technology allows for verifying and recording transactions without a central authority, making digital currencies more resistant to fraud and manipulation. There are several reasons why digital currency has gained popularity in recent years. Some of the key advantages of digital currency include decentralization.

Digital currencies operate on a decentralized system. Unlike traditional money, Bitcoin was not controlled by any government or central authority. It was built on blockchain technology, a decentralized ledger that records transactions across many computers and provides transparency and security.

Bitcoin, and later other cryptocurrencies like Ethereum, offered an alternative to traditional money. These digital currencies promised anonymity, and security and eliminated the need for intermediaries like banks. They also offered the potential for financial inclusion, offering access to financial services for people who are unbanked or underbanked.

The Emergence of Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs)

While cryptocurrencies offer several advantages, they also have issues, including high price volatility and the potential for misuse due to their anonymity. Several central banks worldwide are exploring or have already implemented their digital currencies, known as Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs), to address these issues while leveraging the benefits of digital currency. These are the digital form of a country's fiat currency and are backed by the country's government.



BOUNCING BACK: STRATEGIES FOR RECOVERING AFTER LOSING A BUSINESS

AN INTERVIEW WITH ALEC ANTOINE
BY SAORI SHINJIRO

Building a business from scratch requires tremendous effort, dedication, and resilience. However, despite our best intentions, not all entrepreneurial ventures succeed. The experience of losing a business can be devastating, leaving entrepreneurs feeling defeated and uncertain about their future. However, it's important to remember that setbacks can also be opportunities for growth and learning. In this article, we will explore effective strategies for recovering from the loss of a business and regaining entrepreneurial momentum.

- **Reflect and Learn from the Experience:** The first step towards recovery is to reflect on the reasons behind the business failure. Take time to analyze what went wrong, identifying both internal and external factors that contributed to the outcome. This reflection is essential for personal growth and to avoid making similar mistakes in future endeavors.

- **Seek Support and Build a Network:** Navigating through the emotional and practical challenges of losing a business can be overwhelming. Surround yourself with a support network of friends, family, and fellow entrepreneurs who can offer guidance, advice, and encouragement. Joining professional networks and organizations can also provide valuable connections and resources for future opportunities.

- **Embrace a Growth Mindset:** A positive mindset is crucial for recovery. Embrace a growth mindset that views failures as stepping stones toward success. Recognize that setbacks are a natural part of the entrepreneurial journey and that learning from them can lead to personal and professional growth. Focus on building resilience and developing the skills necessary for future endeavors.

- **Assess Personal Finances and Seek Professional**

Help: Losing a business often brings financial challenges. Take the time to assess your finances and develop a plan to manage any debts or obligations. Consider seeking professional advice from financial advisors or accountants who can provide guidance on restructuring or managing financial burdens.

- **Leverage Lessons and Identify New**

Opportunities: Recovering from a business loss presents an opportunity to reevaluate your goals, skills, and passions. Use the knowledge gained from the failed venture to identify new opportunities that align with your strengths and interests. Consider exploring different industries, markets, or business models that may provide a fresh start and increased chances of success.

- **Acquire Additional Skills and Education:**

Invest in yourself by acquiring new skills and knowledge that will enhance your entrepreneurial abilities. Consider enrolling in courses, attending workshops, or pursuing certifications related to your areas of interest. This continuous learning will not only increase your marketability but also boost your confidence as you embark on new ventures.

- **Start Small and Test New Ideas:**

When recovering from a business loss, it's wise to start small and test new ideas before committing significant resources. Validate your concepts through market research, prototyping, or piloting. This iterative approach will help you gauge market demand, refine your offering, and minimize risks associated with larger-scale investments.

- **Develop a Comprehensive Business Plan:**

Before launching a new venture, develop a well-thought-out business plan that outlines your goals, target market, competitive landscape, and financial projections. This plan will serve as a roadmap, helping you make informed decisions and secure funding if necessary. Seek feedback from mentors or advisors to strengthen your plan.

Losing a business can be a challenging and disheartening experience. However, by adopting a positive mindset, seeking support, and embracing the opportunity for personal and professional growth, entrepreneurs can recover from failure and emerge stronger. Remember, resilience and perseverance are key ingredients to success, and with careful reflection, planning, and execution, entrepreneurs can bounce back and thrive in their future endeavors.

INNOVATIVE INCOME

GENERATING
STRATEGIES FOR
CHURCHES BEYOND
TITHES &
OFFERINGS

BY DR. MIKEL BROWN

*"IT'S NOT
WHAT
YOU'VE GOT,
IT'S WHAT
YOU USE
THAT MAKES
THE
DIFFERENCE."
-ZIG ZIGLAR*



Raising funds for church needs is not always an easy task. Besides the usual sources like tithes and personal contributions, churches usually must find several other funding streams for projects, and that can become an even more difficult task, but not impossible. Whether it's for building expansion or paying off huge debts, churches need funding to survive, and or thrive. The one issue with thousands of churches is that they come across as if they are begging. This makes the church look needy and it puts the church at a disadvantage. No matter how you look at it, the church that Jesus said He would build was not meant the beg, borrow, or steal. For this reason and more, today's churches must have strong financial backing for the ministry to remain viable.

I discovered through the word of God that the church is not poor and destitute, but the people that God placed in the offices to operate it are. Wealth is a product of a person's ability to think; poverty is a product of a person's inability to think for themselves. Making money is a gift from God, and

He did not exclude this ability from His church. While it is true that the primary purpose of a church is not to make money but to provide spiritual guidance, support, and community service. Any money they generate is typically used to support their mission and charitable endeavors. That being said, there are several ways that churches might increase their resources, while still staying true to their primary goals. That's where this book comes into play.

Indeed, churches, as community hubs, have the potential to contribute to local economies and social upliftment in many ways, including establishing businesses. It's important, however, to ensure these business ventures align with the church's mission and ethical guidelines. Social Enterprises are a wonderful concept because these are businesses that have a dual purpose - making a profit and achieving a social goal. A church could establish a business that employs vulnerable people in the community, like the homeless or formerly incarcerated individuals. We are all people; God has given us multiple opportunities to refocus and set our lives on the right path. The mission of the



church is not just to reach out but to reach in as well. The gospel is not just for the down and outer, but the up and outer.

What would your church do if money was never an issue? Well, I imagine more tracts would be circulated in the communities, many restaurants and services would be church owned and operated, we would most likely see Christian advertisements during significant sporting events, and so on. This country, most likely the world, would look different from today's world. I believe it can happen, and that it is happening in isolated churches today, but it is not a considerable amount to impact the world.

Churches and other religious institutions can start businesses. Still, there are numerous regulations and considerations they need to adhere to, especially in the United States where the separation of church and state is a constitutional principle. These considerations can affect their tax-exempt status, legal liabilities, and relationships with congregations and communities.

However, if the church is concerned about its tax-exempt status, there are ways around it. Churches in the U.S. are typically tax-exempt as 501(c)(3) organizations under the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) code. However, if a church opens a business unrelated to its religious mission, it may be subject to unrelated business income tax (UBIT) on its profit. In some cases, if unrelated business activities are substantial enough, the church could potentially lose its tax-exempt status. There are legal legs that the church can operate a business under which is for-profit as a separate entity.

Like all organizations, churches are exposed to potential legal liabilities when they operate businesses, but don't let that scare you. Taxes are not an issue because, like any other business, a

church can pay taxes and prosper. Jesus paid the temple tax with money that didn't come from His general fund but came from a fish's mouth. Some laws can range from employment laws to potential lawsuits stemming from business operations. Churches must follow all applicable laws and have sufficient insurance and legal protections in place.

Running a business involves financial risk; but on the other hand, so does running a church. If the church's business fails, it could risk its finances and property, which is why specific considerations must be carefully and gracefully included in the by-laws not to diffuse the potential of a ministry expansion. Many church leaders don't consider operating a church the same as operating a business, but it is. All risk needs to be carefully managed.

In addition, regulations may vary depending on the country and its laws about churches, businesses, and their interrelations. Therefore, it's essential for any church thinking about starting a business to seek legal and financial advice first.

When funding needed to be secured for a church project or ministry initiative, leaders and committees had little recourse outside of appealing to people attending church services. With eyes fixed on higher levels of giving amongst the community (the goal is growing the church and not just being a house of worship, right?), churches often found themselves in an endless cycle of writing grant proposals and waiting for the mail to arrive at their offices. Even when successful, more dollars were needed to cover the operational costs of operating any program because the church's share was never fully covered. And so the saga continues.

It's become a mission of ours to help churches become financially astute and to serve their communities better by helping them raise additional funds to implement new projects and programs.



In today's rapidly evolving business landscape, organizations must constantly strive to enhance their systems and processes to remain competitive and adapt to changing customer demands. The ability to identify problem areas and implement effective improvements is crucial for sustained growth and success. This article explores strategies for recognizing inefficiencies, optimizing systems, and enhancing overall business performance.

- Conduct a Comprehensive Business Audit: To identify problem areas, begin by conducting a comprehensive audit of your organization's operations. Assess key processes, departments, and functional areas to determine their effectiveness and efficiency. This audit should involve gathering data, analyzing performance metrics, and seeking feedback from employees at various levels. By understanding the current state of your business, you can pinpoint specific areas that require improvement.
- Engage Employees: Your employees are valuable assets when it comes to identifying problem areas. Encourage open communication and create a culture that values employee feedback. Conduct regular team meetings, one-on-one discussions, and surveys to gather insights and perspectives on system bottlenecks or areas that hinder productivity. By involving employees in the improvement process, you not only gain valuable input but also foster a sense of ownership and engagement.
- Utilize Data Analytics: In today's data-driven world, leveraging analytics can provide invaluable insights into problem areas. Implement systems and tools that capture relevant data points across various business functions. Analyze this data to identify patterns, trends, and potential bottlenecks. By leveraging analytics, you can make data-backed decisions and uncover hidden inefficiencies that hinder productivity and profitability.

- **Implement Process Mapping and Documentation:** Clearly documenting and mapping out business processes is essential for identifying problem areas. Visualizing workflows, inputs, outputs, and dependencies helps identify redundancies, bottlenecks, and areas prone to errors or delays. Work with cross-functional teams to develop standardized processes and create process documentation that is accessible to all employees. This clarity will improve overall efficiency and ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities.
- **Foster a Culture of Continuous Improvement:** Creating a culture that promotes continuous improvement is essential for long-term success. Encourage employees to proactively seek out problem areas and propose innovative solutions. Establish channels for feedback and suggestions, such as suggestion boxes or digital platforms, and recognize and reward employees who contribute to process enhancements. Emphasize the importance of ongoing learning, training, and staying updated with industry best practices.
- **Leverage Technology:** Incorporating technology solutions can significantly enhance business systems and processes. Identify areas where automation, digital tools, or software platforms can streamline operations, reduce manual errors, and improve overall efficiency. For instance, customer relationship management (CRM) systems can optimize sales and marketing activities, while project management software can enhance collaboration and task management.
- **Monitor and Evaluate Progress:** Once improvements are implemented, establish metrics and key performance indicators (KPIs) to monitor progress and measure the impact of the changes made. Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the improvements and make necessary adjustments as required. Continuously monitor customer feedback, employee satisfaction, and business performance to ensure sustained progress and identify new problem areas that arise over time.

Improving systems and identifying problem areas within your business requires a systematic approach that involves engaging employees, leveraging data, documenting processes, fostering a culture of continuous improvement, and embracing technology. By implementing these strategies, organizations can streamline operations, enhance productivity, and remain agile in a dynamic business environment, thereby ensuring long-term success and growth.



Learn How to Leverage *Money* & *Cryptocurrencies* to Increase Your Wealth

Building wealth in today's world requires a well-rounded understanding of traditional financial instruments and emerging technologies, such as cryptocurrencies. This comprehensive guide will provide insights into using money and cryptocurrencies to build wealth over time through strategic planning, diversification, and disciplined investment.

Develop a financial plan

The foundation of wealth building starts with developing a solid financial plan. This involves setting clear financial goals, assessing risk tolerance, and allocating resources accordingly. A financial plan helps you visualize and prioritize your short-term and long-term objectives, ensuring that you make informed decisions that align with your financial aspirations.



Create an emergency fund

Before diving into investments, it's crucial to establish an emergency fund. This is a liquid savings account containing three to six months' worth of living expenses, providing a financial safety net in case of unexpected events, such as job loss or medical emergencies. An emergency fund reduces the likelihood of needing to liquidate investments during unfavorable market conditions, thus preserving your wealth-building efforts.

Diversify your investment portfolio

Diversification is key to minimizing risk and optimizing returns. Allocate your resources across different asset classes, such as stocks, bonds, real estate, and cryptocurrencies. This approach helps reduce the impact of poor-performing assets on your overall portfolio. A well-diversified portfolio can withstand market fluctuations and provide more stable returns over time.

Invest in traditional assets

- **Stocks:** Investing in stocks involves buying shares of publicly traded companies, making you a part-owner of the company. Historically, Stocks have provided higher returns than traditional assets, though they carry a higher risk. To mitigate this risk, consider investing in index funds or exchange-traded funds (ETFs), which track the performance of a market index and provide broader exposure to the market.
- **Bonds:** Bonds are fixed-income securities issued by governments or corporations. They offer a relatively lower risk compared to stocks, making them a suitable investment for conservative investors. Bonds pay periodic interest and return the principal upon maturity, providing a steady income stream.
- **Real estate:** Real estate investments can generate rental income and potential appreciation in property value. Real estate investment trusts (REITs) offer an accessible way to invest in the property market by pooling funds to invest in commercial and residential properties.

Embrace cryptocurrencies and blockchain technology

Cryptocurrencies have emerged as a new asset class with potential significant returns. However, they also carry substantial risk due to their volatility. To build wealth using cryptocurrencies, consider the following strategies:

- **Buy and hold:** This long-term strategy involves purchasing cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin or Ethereum and holding them for an extended period, hoping their value will appreciate over time.

- **Dollar-cost averaging (DCA):** This approach entails investing a fixed amount of money in cryptocurrencies at regular intervals, regardless of market conditions. DCA helps minimize the impact of market volatility and reduces the risk of making poor investment decisions based on short-term price fluctuations.
- **Staking:** Some cryptocurrencies, like Ethereum 2.0 and Cardano, use a proof-of-stake (PoS) consensus mechanism. Staking involves holding a specific amount of cryptocurrency in a wallet, helping to secure the network and validate transactions. In return, you earn a portion of the transaction fees or newly minted coins.
- **Lending:** Platforms like BlockFi, Celsius, and Nexo allow users to lend their cryptocurrencies to others in exchange for interest income. This strategy can generate passive income but carries risks like platform security and borrower default.

Consider tax implications

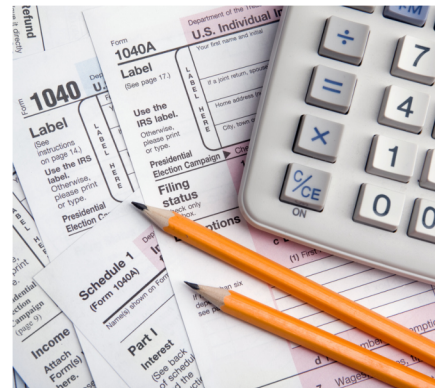
Understanding the tax implications of your investments is crucial in wealth building. Taxes can significantly impact your returns, so it's essential to be aware of the tax laws surrounding your investments.

In conclusion, understanding money and its evolution is vital for building and preserving wealth in today's rapidly changing financial landscape. The transition from traditional forms of money to digital currencies and cryptocurrencies signifies a shift in how people

conduct transactions and manage their finances. To build wealth effectively, individuals must adapt to these changes and embrace the opportunities they present.

Building wealth with money today requires a multifaceted approach that incorporates financial planning, risk management, and diversification across a range of assets, including traditional investments like stocks, bonds, and real estate and emerging asset classes such as cryptocurrencies. A solid financial plan helps establish clear objectives and align investment decisions with long-term financial goals. An emergency fund provides a safety net, ensuring unexpected events do not derail your wealth-building efforts.

Diversifying investments across traditional assets and cryptocurrencies can help mitigate risks and optimize returns. While traditional assets offer stability and a track record of performance, cryptocurrencies provide an opportunity to tap into a new, high-growth market. However, the volatility and uncertainties surrounding cryptocurrencies necessitate a cautious approach, with strategies such as dollar-cost averaging, staking, and lending being employed to navigate this asset class.



Lastly, being aware of the tax implications of your investments is crucial to preserving wealth, as taxes can significantly impact your returns. Staying informed about tax laws and regulations ensures you can make the most of your investments while remaining compliant with the law.

By combining a solid understanding of money and its evolution with a well-rounded investment strategy, individuals can successfully build and sustain wealth in the modern financial era. This requires continuous learning, adaptation, and a disciplined approach to managing one's finances. As the world of finance continues to evolve, staying informed and proactive will be the keys to building and maintaining wealth in the long run.





JASON MURRAY

CEO of iBelieve

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REACH**



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GROWTH POTENTIAL**



**IMPACT COMMUNITIES
POSITIVELY WITH BUSINESS
AND REAL ESTATE GROWTH
STRATEGIES.**

MONITOR WHAT YOU MONETIZE

TALISHA L BENNETT, MBA

Are you starting a business or do you want to monetize your hobby, your creative outlet, or even social media? Here are a few financial measures to consider.

One of the first Financial measures I believe you must take is, to keep your personal funds separate from your business funds as you begin to bring revenue in. Most small businesses start, quite literally, out of pocket. Your best practice would be to keep an accurate account of the funds used for your business and the funds you take out. This would be classified as Owners Capital and Owners Draw. This will ensure that you aren't losing money as your business' income begins to roll in. You will be able to accurately account for what your business is gaining or losing. Keeping funds separate is vital to seeing the overall success of your business and ensuring you are not put in a situation to pay taxes on more than what you should.

The second measure you must take is to **LOOK AT YOUR MONEY**. If you don't know what's going out or what's coming in you will not be able to accurately weigh the success of your business or see where you may be losing money or where you can gain a





greater increase. Looking at and tracking your finances may be assumed to be one of the most taxing parts of a business. Consider, where there is money there must be record-keeping.

The best way to see your money is to get a good financial program that is easy to use. You're not running a Fortune 500 YET, so start small, but dream big. There are many financial tracking programs available. Many of which are now available in app form. You can record your income and expenses conveniently and with confidence. I would suggest finding a routine as to when you track your finances. Expenses can become the most extensive task you find and if you wait too long they can quickly become a part of your business that you will choose to avoid. So, find a routine and stick to it. Depending on how your financial program is set up, you can, with most software, set up automatic tracking on your banking transactions. You will, however, still need to log into your program and ensure proper recording of income and expenses and SEE how your business is doing.

Last, but not least, the third practice that is very important to the success of your business, often overlooked or minimized by start-up business owners is, maintaining receipts. If I can say one thing that can help you realize the importance of receipts, it

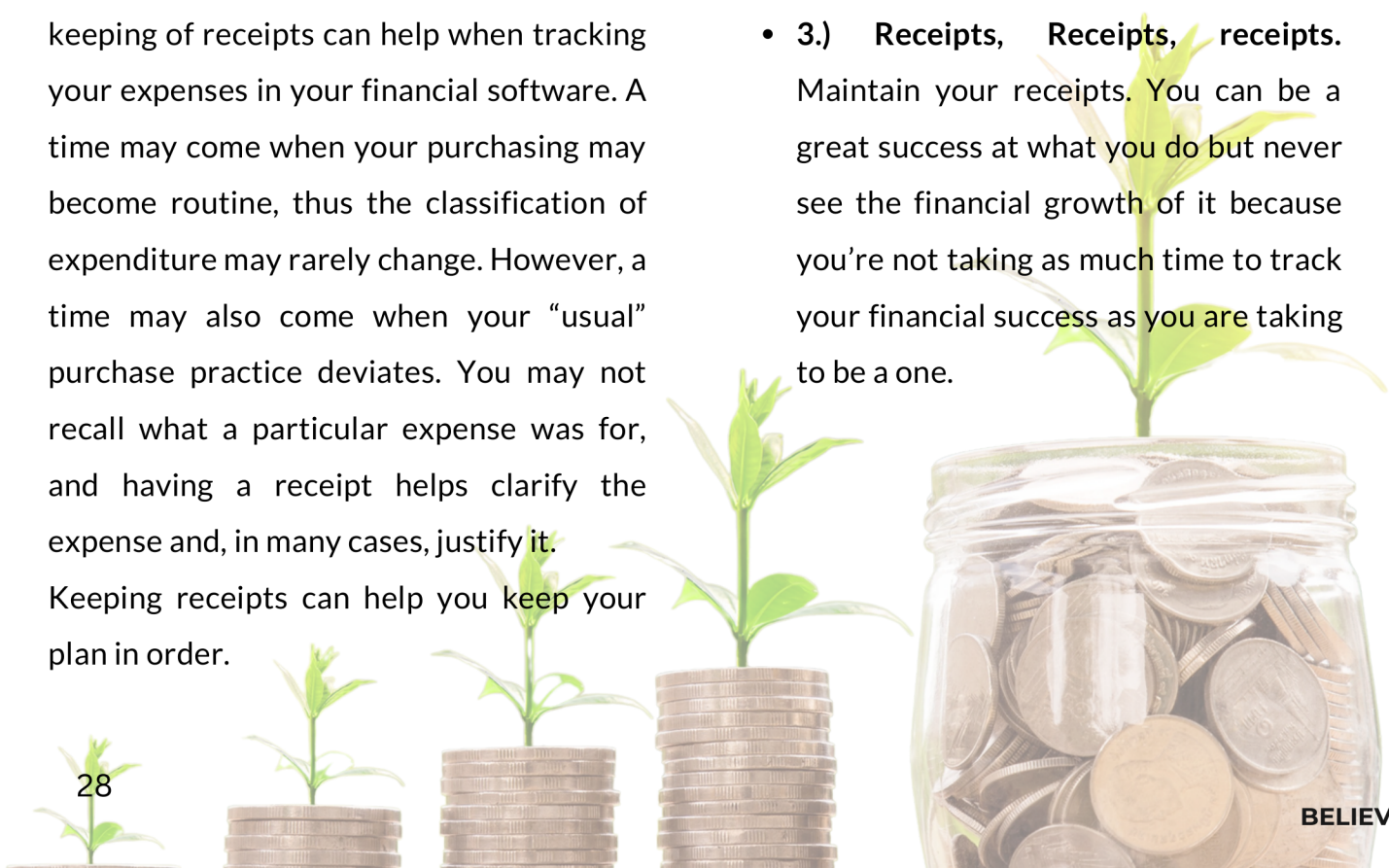
would be, that your receipts are your money. You cannot verify anything that you cannot prove. Oftentimes in business, we make purchases large, small, online, and in passing. There will be many times that you may see a transaction on your bank statement or in your financial program and not know what type of purchase was made or the nature of a deposit. Therefore, you may record transactions in ways that can affect your financial reporting simply because you have no idea what you may have purchased.

The keeping of receipts helps in two ways, you can see how you are spending your business income and where. Sometimes a simple comparison of receipts can save you money in the future by realizing a cost difference in an item or product. Two, the keeping of receipts can help when tracking your expenses in your financial software. A time may come when your purchasing may become routine, thus the classification of expenditure may rarely change. However, a time may also come when your “usual” purchase practice deviates. You may not recall what a particular expense was for, and having a receipt helps clarify the expense and, in many cases, justify it.

Keeping receipts can help you keep your plan in order.

If I can summarize all that has been written, I would say at the very basic point of starting your business or monetizing something you’ve been doing, even if it is while you are in the process of setting up the legalities of your business keep the following in mind;

- **1.) Keep your funds separate.** Track your personal fund usage that has gone into the startup of your business and any money that you’ve made thus far.
- **2.) Get a financial program that is easy to use and convenient.** You must LOOK AT YOUR MONEY. QuickBooks is a program that is widely used in the financial world and easy for many Bookkeepers and CPAs to tap into to help with your financial tracking.
- **3.) Receipts, Receipts, receipts.** Maintain your receipts. You can be a great success at what you do but never see the financial growth of it because you’re not taking as much time to track your financial success as you are taking to be a one.



Strategies to Maintain Product Relevance



In today's dynamic business landscape, where the economy and society are constantly evolving, it is crucial for businesses to adapt and ensure the continued relevance of their products. Staying ahead of the curve requires a proactive approach, innovative thinking, and a deep understanding of customer needs and market trends. This article presents effective strategies that can help businesses navigate the challenges of an ever-changing economy and society while keeping their products relevant.

- **Embrace Market Research and Consumer Insights:** To stay relevant, businesses must thoroughly understand their target market and the changing needs of consumers. Invest in market research to identify emerging trends, customer preferences, and shifts in the competitive landscape. Leverage data analytics and customer feedback to gain insights into consumer behavior and expectations. Regularly monitor social media, engage with customers, and conduct surveys to stay attuned to their evolving demands.
- **Foster a Culture of Innovation:** Innovation is key to product relevance. Encourage a culture of creativity and continuous improvement within your organization. Foster an environment where employees feel empowered to share ideas and experiment. Actively seek out new technologies, processes, and business models that can enhance your product offerings. Embrace agile methodologies to rapidly adapt and respond to changing market dynamics.
- **Maintain Agile and Flexible Operations:** The ability to respond swiftly to changing circumstances is critical in an ever-changing economy. Streamline internal processes, eliminate unnecessary bureaucracy, and adopt agile practices to enhance your company's flexibility. This will enable you to quickly adjust your products to meet evolving customer demands and capitalize on emerging opportunities.
- **Anticipate and Adapt to Market Trends:** Stay informed about the latest industry trends, technological advancements, and economic developments. Keep a close eye

- on your competitors and anticipate their moves. Embrace innovation and leverage emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, automation, and blockchain to enhance your product's value proposition. Continuously evaluate your product offerings and make necessary adjustments to align with market trends and consumer expectations.
- Embrace Sustainability and Social Responsibility: Consumers are increasingly conscious of sustainability and social impact in today's society. Incorporating sustainable practices and demonstrating social responsibility can significantly enhance the relevance of your product. Assess your product's environmental footprint and explore ways to minimize it. Communicate your commitment to sustainability and social responsibility through transparent messaging and initiatives that resonate with your target market.
- Foster Strategic Partnerships and Collaborations: Collaborating with strategic partners can provide access to new markets, resources, and expertise, enabling you to adapt and innovate more effectively. Look for opportunities to form alliances with complementary businesses, startups, research institutions, or even customers to foster innovation and expand your product's reach.

- Embrace Digital Transformation: Incorporate digital technologies into your product offering and business processes. Leverage the power of e-commerce, data analytics, artificial intelligence, and automation to enhance customer experiences, streamline operations, and gain a competitive edge. Embrace emerging digital channels and platforms to reach and engage with your target audience effectively.

In an ever-changing economy and society, the key to keeping your product relevant lies in embracing change, fostering innovation, and staying closely connected to your customers. By leveraging market research, embracing innovation, maintaining agility, and adapting to market trends, businesses can navigate the evolving landscape and ensure their products remain relevant and impactful in the long run.

“The key to keeping your product relevant lies in embracing change.”





THE SLOW EDUCATIONAL AND ECONOMIC DEATH OF AMERICA

BY DR. MIKEL BROWN

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." — Nelson Mandela

We are a nation at risk. The United States isn't investing as much in human capital as other developed countries and its comparative advantage is falling behind as a result. U.S. students' math skills have remained stagnant for decades. There is an Economic Impact of Education on every country. These low scores mean that U.S. students may not be as prepared to take high-paying computer and engineering jobs, which often go to foreign workers. Silicon Valley is America's high-tech innovation center but one reason for its success is the cultural diversity of its foreign-born software engineers.

America's educational system is killing this nation's youth's potential to survive during the 21st century and beyond. With that being said, that means that the lack of educational prowess will affect the age group and their survival unless something is done to turn the devastating possibilities around. America's Standing in Global Education is constantly dropping behind other developed countries.

With paralysis overwhelming our most cherished levels of government and confusion dominating social media, the level of disinformation has become alarmingly high and quite concerning. With such distraction in the background, it is hard to discern what is truly happening to society, let alone know where we rank on any measure of social skill or leadership competence. This is especially the case when assessing our nation's level of educational knowledge.

While belief proudly promotes the U.S. represents the most productive workers and the most innovative minds in the world, we now risk losing our edge as a nation. In education, we used to take pride in being the first to guarantee access to universal education. We were also tops in doctoral attainment during the past half-century. Yet, we have slipped considerably afield from both standings. America now ranks 33rd out of the 44 advanced economies when it comes to the percentage of young people attaining a post-high school degree. We also now rank middling in science and math among OECD countries.

In preschool education, the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development just ranked America 35th out of 37 major economies when it comes to investing in early childhood education as a percent of GDP. Today, barely half of three- and four-year-olds are enrolled in early childhood education. In Germany, France, and the UK, for example, that number is more than 90%.

As we stalemate about critical decisions and argue endlessly about past-due debts, other countries are rapidly catching up. Here I am reminded of one of Obama's favorite quotes: "The countries who out-educate us today will out-compete us tomorrow." Education is truly at the forefront of our economic well-being. The most basic understanding of such, is that this is not merely an educational necessity, but

an economic imperative. We must re-direct energies to competitively rescue the fast-changing global economy of the 21st century.

Investing in education is investing in people. There are no two ways around it. If we are going to overcome the challenges facing our educational system, we must beat the world by investing in our children. This includes preschool education as well as K-12 public education and tuition-free community colleges.

Without a doubt, our schools need to be places where students will gain the skills they need to carve their place in the 21st-century economy. Let's argue more vehemently about a stronger educational enterprise for our children rather than who should wear a mask. In all seriousness, this is about leading the world in education, without the bravado that we were once the best. The rest is nonsense.



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DR MIKE BROWN



Should I own physical gold? This is a relevant question. Physical gold is one of the best forms of long-term wealth protection. It is ideal for your heirs since it will outlast any currency they may use in the future. Physical gold is not subject to the risks that come with paper assets. It cannot be hacked or erased.

Is it better to buy gold coins or bars? This is another great question. Gold coins are known to have more sentimental value than gold bars both historically and culturally. Simply put, gold coins can be more ideal for you than gold bars if you want to invest in something with a more historical and cultural value. Again, gold coins have more collectible value than gold bars.

Gold coins weigh about an ounce or less. Those popular among collectors and investors include the American Eagle made by the U.S. Mint, the Canadian Gold Maple Leaf, and the Krugerrand. What if a person is not interested in coins? Gold bars weighing in at one kilogram or less are often marketed to the average investor, but bars as large as one hundred ounces are also available, according to the World Gold Council. The Gold-Buying Process is easy but purchasing should be entered inadvisedly. One common way to purchase gold bars is through licensed retailers online. I would not consider buying gold from an individual because of the risk involved in purchasing flawed, blemished, or fake gold coins or bullions.

While there are many legitimate ways to invest in gold, there are also several gold-related investment frauds. These frauds might center on inflated claims regarding stocks of gold mining companies, claiming the stock's price is linked directly to gold prices. They may claim you can make a lot of money with negligible risk through a "financing agreement," or even that a company will store your gold for you. You should always be cautious of those red flags, but for more information on gold fraud, be sure to read this CFTC advisory:

Browse gold bar products on reputable retail websites such as the American Precious Metals Exchange (APMEX), JM Bullion, and Wholesale Coins Direct. Select the gold bars you wish to buy according to weight, quantity, and price.

There are five things to check before you buy.

- Cost per gram. The first thing you need to do before you buy gold is to find out its current price per gram.
- Level of purity. Gold is available at various purity levels, which can affect the gold price.
- Genuine certification.
- Other charges.
- Buy Back Terms.

Is it wise to buy gold now, especially in these inflationary times? Gold and silver, but especially gold is often considered A "Safe Haven" Investment. Gold's advocates have historically seen it as a safe-harbor asset that protects purchasing power against inflation during challenging economic times since it tends to hold its value long term despite any fluctuations.

When markets hit turbulence, investors often turn to gold and gold-related investments—such as gold mining stocks and mutual funds or exchange-traded funds made up of gold-related businesses, or gold exchange-traded funds. This assumes that gold's price will hold steady or climb even as the value of other investments drops.

The price of gold "reflects global uncertainties," former Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke said in 2011. "The reason people hold gold is as a protection against what we call tail risk, really, really bad outcomes. And to the extent that the last few years have made people more worried about the potential of a major crisis, then they have gold as a protection."

Another concern for people interested in investing in gold is, **How much do I need to invest in gold?**

Because gold is volatile in the short term and will not appreciate in the long term like a stock or a bond, financial advisers typically recommend investing no more than 10% of your savings in gold.

What does it mean to Pay a Premium? The price you see gold trading at on commodities exchanges (called its "spot price") is not the price you will pay. Individual investors typically buy gold from dealers—as opposed to buying it on the wholesale market. Dealers charge a premium above the spot price, which often includes a dealer fee, as well as charges for the manufacture and distribution of the yellow metal. Similarly, if you would like to sell your gold, you'd be selling to a dealer who will pay you a certain percentage below gold's spot price.

When you buy gold, you will need a place to store it for safekeeping. It is important to keep your gold safe and out of reach of children that are unaware of its value. A five-year boy found some gold coins from his parents and started playing with them. When the father saw what his son was playing with, he snatched them from the son and was trying to get his son to remember where he put the other coins that were missing. Fortunately for him, he was able to find them after a full day of searching for them.

Where will you keep your gold? Some might prefer using safes in their homes, renting safety deposit boxes at banks, or using precious metals storage services offered by banks as well as

companies outside the banking system. How quickly do you wish to access your gold—would you want to be able to grab it right away during an emergency? —may determine how you decide to store it. Let these concerns be strongly considered when you think about storing your gold.

You can purchase gold bullion in several ways: through an online dealer such as APMEX or JM Bullion, or even a local dealer or collector. A pawn shop may also sell gold. Note gold's spot price – the price per ounce right now in the market – as you are buying, so that you can make a fair deal.

Like I always say, **"You have to do your due diligence."** When it comes to any investment, doing your homework is worth its weight in gold.

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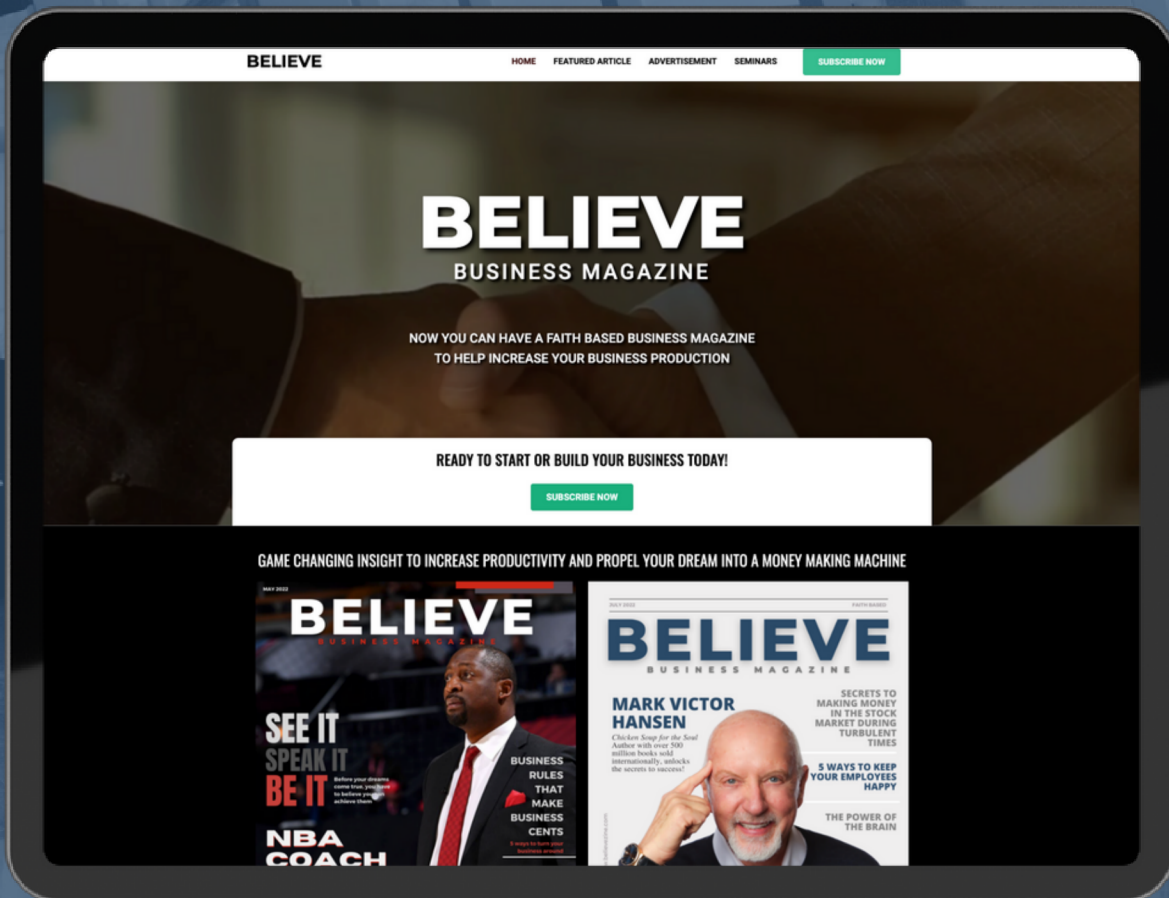
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