

Make

Your Year

The New Year's resolution is meant to inspire change. To drive you to action. To set the tone for the year to come. But it is a flawed device. Consider its implications: *There is one time a year, the resolution says, in which you can truly make change.* It's like a train that departs annually. Didn't make it to the station on time? Hopped on for a little while but then tumbled off into the passing fields? *Oh, well—ride out the next 11 months on your butt, and try again next year!* ¶ To this, every entrepreneur says: *No. No, no, no. Doesn't work that way.* Entrepreneurs know that change must be constant; that there is no true "New Year's resolution" but simply the resolution on January 1, to be followed by the resolution on January 2, and then repeated 363 more times. Having a bad day? Fine. Start fresh tomorrow. ¶ But the New Year's resolution does get one thing right: It's healthy to find a moment, step back, and take stock. And as the calendar turns over, there's no more natural time to do that. So in the coming pages, we give you the tools and inspiration to take everything up a notch. You already work hard. You are already innovating. You're not starting from zero. But you can always achieve greater goals or jump-start new passions or grow your business or find a little more sanity in your work. Remember: January is neither the beginning nor the end of something. It's just part of the journey. A year is a lot of time in which to seize opportunities.

It's Never Too Late (or Early)

These entrepreneurs prove you can start a business at any age. By Kate Rockwood

AGE AT LAUNCH 12 years old

Madison Robinson (now 19), founder, FishFlops
Bona fides: Has sold more than 400,000 pairs of her whimsical kids' shoes

"I first showed my dad sketches of flip-flops with sea characters on the soles when I was 8, and we finally went into production when I was 12. My dad handled the finances, but I stocked the warehouse, packed shipments, sketched designs. I could miss only three days of high school each semester, so I saved those for the big things, like a trade show or a TV interview or a pitch meeting. I'm now majoring in business at Texas A&M, which I think is going to help me. I want to push into the tween and adult markets."

AGE AT LAUNCH 21 years old

Jeff Platt (now 31), CEO, Sky Zone
Bona fides: 165 trampoline parks in five countries, with \$248 million in revenue in 2015

"When I was a junior in college, my dad wanted to create a professional trampoline sport. He bought and set up a facility to house tournaments in Las Vegas, planned a schedule, and...there wasn't much interest. But local kids were willing to pay \$8 a pop just to bounce! So he offered that instead. We opened a second location in St. Louis three weeks after I graduated. My mother was diagnosed with cancer a month after that, and Dad looked at me and said, 'This is in your hands.' I moved from copilot to CEO overnight, and worked, worked, worked—120 hours a week. I realized I didn't want to manage day-to-day operations of the stores, shifted the growth strategy to franchising, and got totally reinvigorated."

AGE AT LAUNCH 32 years old

Courtney Adeleye (now 36), founder, Mane Choice
Bona fides: The haircare line is sold at Rite Aid, Sally Beauty Supply, and Target; it hit \$6.5 million in revenue in 2015

"I had used a dye that made my hair brittle, so I decided to lay off the chemicals. When it started growing out, it was totally new to me—I'd been using relaxers since age 10. I turned into a mad scientist, mixing conditioners in my kitchen. I posted hair videos to YouTube as a hobby, but people online were asking where they could buy the conditioner. So I bought 100 empty bottles and a \$200 machine to pump product in my kitchen. I filled orders by hand until one Black Friday I sold \$45,000 in orders in a single day—and then I finally invested in a bigger machine."

AGE AT LAUNCH 48 years old

Lisa Tomasi (now 53), founder, YouGiveGoods
Bona fides: Counts big-name brands (NFL, Morgan Stanley, Coldwell Banker) as partners and has shipped a million-plus pounds of food to local food banks

"Raising my daughters was my full-time job for 20 years. Becoming an entrepreneur took me by surprise. In 2010, after the earthquake in Haiti, we planned to donate money, but friends who were volunteering said they really needed supplies. What if there was a site where you could buy products nonprofits needed? I couldn't get the idea out of my head. The biggest challenge was stepping out of mommy zone. I learned to not be afraid of people's doubt. We launched in 2011 with friends as users, and now we have hundreds of partners."

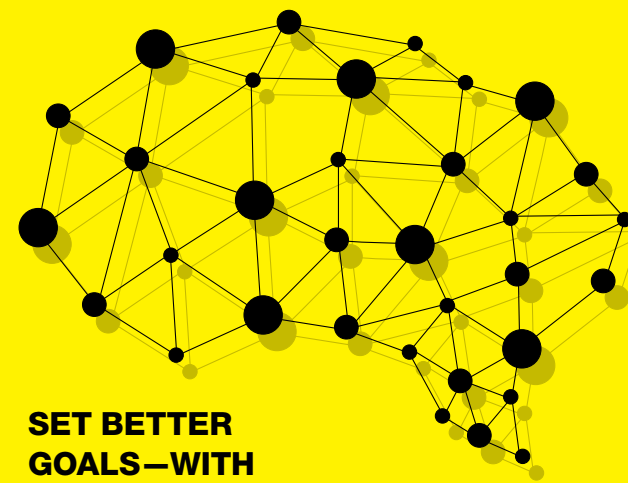
AGE AT LAUNCH 61 years old

Mark Snow (now 67), founder, SafelyFiled
Bona fides: Snagged a patent for his senior-centric digital design

"I worked for a large organization for a long time, basically starting new companies for them. When I was in my late 50s, they gave me a handshake and got rid of me. I had so much experience starting businesses for other people, I realized I could launch my own. The idea came to me for Safely-Filed: a storage system for paper and digital documents. An advantage of being older is that you have relationships you've built over years. I raised \$600,000, and we're now in the final stages of working out two massive partnerships that could bring our user numbers to millions."



➤ FishFlops founder Madison Robinson in the brand's slippers.



SET BETTER GOALS—WITH SCIENCE!

Seven psychology-backed ways to hack your brain and achieve your business intentions.

1. GET BOLD.

Want to push your performance to the max? Make a stretch goal, rather than one that's easily attainable. Penn State psychology profs found that big, lofty goals are correlated more strongly with improved performance than small goals. The higher the bar, the harder we push.

2. NARROW YOUR FOCUS.

So you want to pitch 20 new clients, build out the product line, and scout a second location? Time to pare down that to-do list. In a study in the *Journal of Marketing Research*, participants who picked just one goal achieved success at nearly double the rate of those who chased two or three at a time.

3. GRAB A PEN.

Got a goal? Write it down. In a study at Dominican University, people who wrote down their objectives achieved roughly 50 percent more than people who merely thought about them.

4. THINK IN RANGES.

A study published in the *Journal of Consumer Research* shows that setting a goal within a range (say, raising revenue 8 to 10 percent) makes you more likely to stick with it than if you aim for a flat number. Even better: "You'll be more likely to try to set a goal again in the future," says

lead researcher Maura Scott, a professor at Florida State University.

5. MAP IT OUT.

A goal is great; a game plan is even better. In a study in the *Journal of Applied Psychology*, participants who spent two hours mapping out how they planned to achieve specific goals were more likely to find success. The researchers wrote: "Goal clarity increases persistence, making individuals less susceptible to the undermining effects of anxiety, disappointment, and frustration."

6. ENLIST A FRIEND.

An accountability buddy can work just as well in the boardroom as it does at the gym. Research shows that when people share weekly progress reports with a friend, their likelihood of success of reaching a goal climbs to 76 percent.

7. CUE THE IMMEDIATE GRATIFICATION.

Our brains naturally want to push off daunting tasks and let our future selves deal with them (the psych term for this is "present bias"). But a 2016 study in the *Chicago Booth Review* offers a way around your inner procrastinator: Give yourself small rewards in the near future and spur greater achievement of long-term goals. A slice of cake every time you cold-call an investor? A Friday-night Netflix binge every week you advance the ball on your big goal? Whatever keeps you inching toward the finish line! —K.R.

Watch Your Back, Trust Falls!

Are your team-building go-tos stale? Likely. Freshen up with these action-packed adventures.

KITCHEN COOKOFF

Degree of difficulty:

After camera company Lytro restructured, employees needed some bonding time. The Mountain View, Calif.-based team headed to the Kitchen Challenge at Parties That Cook, a competition inspired by *Iron Chef* and *Chopped*. "It really played to so many different types of personalities," says Lytro HR manager Jenny Garcia. After judging, teammates feasted on their meals over wine. "It was one of the most popular things we've ever done."

LOCKED UP

Degree of difficulty:

Escape rooms—those self-contained scavenger hunts in which puzzles are solved in order for participants to break free—are good for more than just birthday parties: They're also a way for colleagues with diverse skill sets to collaborate. "Our brains all work in different ways," says research scientist Amanda Weidner, who took her team of faculty and staff from the University of Washington to Seattle's Puzzle Break. "Even if you weren't the puzzle solver, you still had a role and felt like you contributed."

SURVIVOR: CORPORATE EDITION

Degree of difficulty:

Patrón took employees to Las Vegas' Camp Rhino for an obstacle course, putting staffers through a gauntlet of challenges such as hanging rings, climbing walls, and tire rolls. The intensity has its advantages: "If somebody couldn't do the monkey bars, another team member would hold their legs and help them," says Melissa Aupperle, VP of operations for Destinations By Design, who organized the activity for Patrón. "It was more strategizing how to get everyone through as opposed to finding their strongest players." —Amy Wilkinson

WHAT'S THE BEST MOTIVATOR IN LIFE AND BUSINESS? THE POWER OF A SMALL WIN, SAYS HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL PROFESSOR Teresa Amabile. Small wins serve as catalysts for productivity, creating happiness and momentum. We built a daily calendar for the month of January to help you ramp up to a winning year. See how many you can check off this month. —Vanessa Van Edwards and Jared Keller

<p>01</p> <p>Ah, the glorious, hazy glow of a new year. Enjoy it while you can—we're going back to work tomorrow.</p>	<p>02</p> <p>Check government websites for new legislation. Tons of new laws on everything from sick leave to taxes (asset depreciation) take effect the first business day of the month.</p>	<p>03</p> <p>Update your résumé. New year, new you.</p>	<p>04</p> <p>Write five recommendations for colleagues on LinkedIn. The season of giving isn't over just yet.</p>	<p>05</p> <p>Redo your official head shot. Your New Year's revelry should have faded from your face by now.</p>	<p>06</p> <p>Take an industry colleague out for a drink. It's never too early for networking (also, TGIF).</p>	<p>07</p> <p>Do nothing—well, almost. Finally, a chance to stop and take stock of the coming year after all the holiday craziness. Make a list of professional goals for the year...not resolutions.</p>
<p>08</p> <p>Open a Goodreads account. Reading can clear your mind, and a shareable list helps you develop a routine. Try starting with Joshua Ferris' <i>Then We Came to the End</i>, a novel about office culture.</p>	<p>09</p> <p>Make those big-ticket purchases. Section 179 tax deductions encourage entrepreneurs to invest in equipment and other capital investments. Better to get an early start.</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Organize your important documents. Everyone has a drawerful of paper somewhere—time to get your shit in order.</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Get verified on Twitter. It's as easy as filling out a form on the company's website and waiting...and waiting...and waiting.</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Newsletter make-over time! Unsubscribe from one (or many) you never read anyway, and sign up for one you actually will.</p>	<p>13</p> <p>Write five quick thank-you notes to colleagues and mentors. A little kindness goes a long way.</p>	<p>14</p> <p>Go running. A long jog can often kick-start creativity more than any brainstorming session.</p>
<p>15</p> <p>Cook yourself a fine meal. What a month so far! You deserve some spoils.</p>	<p>16</p> <p>Celebrate Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday. Watch his "I Have a Dream" speech and feel inspired.</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Add a quote to your email signature. A small creative flourish can make a big impression.</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Order new business cards. The New Year's make-over continues.</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Find five fascinating articles to tweet. Thanks to social media, everyone's a one-person media company. Ensure your relevance in your field by making yourself a useful curator.</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Write your first blog post on LinkedIn. Share some tips, successes, or failures. Cross-post it to Medium if you insist.</p>	<p>21</p> <p>Build a Digg Reader. A well-informed mind is a sharp mind. Get in the habit of scanning the thing to stay on top of the world.</p>
<p>22</p> <p>Watch an inspiring movie. Might we recommend perennial classic <i>The Secret of My Success</i>? There's always <i>Office Space</i> if you're in a bit of a dour mood.</p>	<p>23</p> <p>Give your Facebook profile a facelift. It may seem tedious, but a quick cleanse of questionable content might help down the line.</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Reorganize your inbox. Inbox zero, here we come.</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Find a conference to attend this year. Then buy a ticket and consider it an investment in your future.</p>	<p>26</p> <p>Follow 10 new accounts on Twitter. And don't just use the recommendation module.</p>	<p>27</p> <p>Write a letter to your state or U.S. representative. Someone will read it—eventually.</p>	<p>28</p> <p>Read a piece of fiction. You've done some great work this month so far. Take a breather and get engrossed—then mark it off on your Goodreads list.</p>
<p>29</p> <p>Go to the gym. Yes, it's membership time—and don't worry, most of the New Year's resolution folks will have bailed by now.</p>	<p>30</p> <p>Add five new skills on LinkedIn. Let your talents shine.</p>	<p>31</p> <p>Make a to-do list for the month ahead. Wash, rinse, repeat.</p>	<h1>31 Small-Business Wins for January</h1>			

17 Rules to Break in 2017

Follow the lead of these entrepreneurs as they throw the rulebook out the window and focus on what makes sense for their business. —As told to Amy Wilkinson

"Quit attempting to respond to emails within 24 hours. This reactive behavior is distracting and keeps you from the task at hand. In 2017, I'm going to get to emails when time permits and focus on the tasks that make the most impact on my business." —Sara Sugarman, founder and CEO, Lulu & Georgia (1)

"Stop trying to compete like crazy to be better. Instead, think about how you can approach things differently. I always remind myself of the Albert Einstein quote 'We cannot solve our problems using the same thinking we used when we created them.'" —Jonathan Neman, cofounder and co-CEO, Sweetgreen (2)

"Stay in the weeds! Many entrepreneurs are encouraged to eventually take a backseat and let their leaders tackle the details. Instead, I believe it's critical to stay tuned into those decisions, even if you're not the one making them anymore." —Alexa von Tobel, founder and CEO, LearnVest (3)

"Take a bet on inventory. At a time when many are playing it safe and shying away from assuming inventory risk, Margaux is betting that



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offering more size options will up the number of items sold." —Sarah Pierson, cofounder, Margaux (4)

"Break the rule of perfection and focus on progress instead. When you obsess over every misstep or criticism, you become your own roadblock to growth." —Ariel Kaye, founder and CEO, Parachute (5)

"Mix work with pleasure! I've grown my business in Los Angeles and immersed myself in the creative community. After we've worked together, it can be a bonus to become friends." —Clare Vivier, founder, Clare V. (6)

"Don't be a 'me too' brand. Entrepreneurs should break away from the formulaic approach of growing a business. Instead, focus on yourself—your strengths, weaknesses, and vision for the company." —Ariel Nelson, cofounder, Jack Erwin (7)

"The old adage of thinking outside the box? Think *inside* the box. Get to know every boundary, every corner. A creative entrepreneur sees opportunity using the same set of resources and demands as everyone else." —Jeni Britton Bauer, founder, Jeni's Splendid Ice Creams (8)

"Take more vacations. As entrepreneurs, we are natural workaholics. I always challenge my entrepreneur friends to break the #TeamNoSleep stereotype and take some time for self." —Kelechi Anyadiiegwu, founder and CEO, Zuvaa (9)

"We break communication rules that traditional consumer packaged-goods companies have followed for decades. We don't talk at our community; we have a dialogue with them." —Tristan Walker, founder and CEO, Walker and Company (10)

"In 2017 we're going to stop saying yes. As a startup, your first inclination is to say yes to everything. But you can easily lose focus this way.

This year, it's either a 'Hell, yes' or a 'Hell, no.'" —Katie Doyle, cofounder, Brass Clothing (11)

"Rule to break: Focus only on revenue, not profitability. Instead: Focus on profitability as you scale. When you don't understand how much you are spending to grow your business, you get into a cycle of raising massive amounts of money so often that you can't focus on your core mission." —Karissa Bodnar, founder, Thrive Causemetics (12)

"More flavors' is a general rule in beverages these days if you want to grow market share—and we will continue to ignore it. Having a recognizable signature taste is a rarity. Why dilute a good thing?" —Grady Laird, cofounder, Grady's Cold Brew (13)

"People say to never hire a friend, but hiring friends has enabled me to have multiple trusted resources on the team to help with confidential projects and provide honest feedback." —Kari Saitowitz, founder, The Fitting Room (14)

"Credit cards get a bad rap, but for many entrepreneurs they are the only unsecured debt available. During the economic downturn, they kept us going. You should pay your balances in full each month when you can, but you'll be thankful to have them when you can't." —Neal Gottlieb, founding twin, Three Twins Ice Cream (15)

"Operate responsibly within the means of your balance sheet but dream way outside its lines. Give yourself two hours to freely think bigger. Your mind and business will thank you later." —David Mandelbaum, cofounder and CEO, Panatea (16)

"If you're playing by any rules to begin with, you may be already losing. Find what works for your business and develop around it." —Andres Hinojosa, cofounder, JoyBird (17)

Fix Your Command Center

Six easy swaps to make your workspace happy, healthy, and productive. —A.W.

- 1 Reduce clutter by uploading your sticky-note to-do lists into a productivity app like Wunderlist, where you can set reminders and assign tasks. (Bonus: It syncs across all your devices, so you'll never forget your list at work again.)
- 2 Pick a bulb that matches your work. Bluish lighting is good for analytical problem-solving, says environmental psychologist Sally Augustin, a principal at Design With Science. Warmer lighting is best suited for calming and soothing environments.
- 3 According to Augustin, office artwork should be "effortlessly fascinating." "These are things that draw you in and give the part of your brain that has to focus a break," she says. Try realistic nature art in a temperate climate, like a forest pathway.

- 4 "Paint walls a green that's not very saturated but relatively bright, like a sage," says Augustin. Research shows green encourages creative thinking, and light, bright hues are great for doing knowledge work.
- 5 Your morning buzz should perk you up, not weigh you down—and sugary drinks can carry 500 calories. Registered dietitian LeeAnn Weintraub recommends chai tea instead. "You get that spicy flavor without having the high-fat coffee drink," she says.
- 6 If the 3 P.M. munchies have you reaching for a salty snack with crunch, bag the chips in favor of pistachios, says Weintraub. "You get the fiber and protein that are going to make them more satisfying."

FOUR TOOLS TO BREAK YOUR BAD HABITS

BY CLINT CARTER

Bad posture? To rectify your absent-minded slump, the discreet Alex headset clips to your ears, wraps around the back of your neck, and vibrates gently when it detects a slouch. (\$99; alexposture.com)



Social media obsessed? The humble Saent button syncs with an app on your computer to help you reclaim the time you waste browsing. Give it a tap when you feel your brain wandering, and any sites you've flagged as a distraction will be blocked for 10 minutes to two hours, depending on your preference. (\$65; saent.com)



Forget to hydrate? Proper hydration improves blood flow to the brain and makes workers more productive. To keep the H₂O flowing, LED lights inside the Spark water bottle pulse periodically, reminding you to take a drink. (\$55; hydratespark.com)



Texting at your desk? The Logitech K780 Multi-Device Wireless Keyboard syncs with up to three Bluetooth devices. Reply to urgent texts or make Evernote entries on your iPad without disrupting your workspace. (\$80; logitech.com)

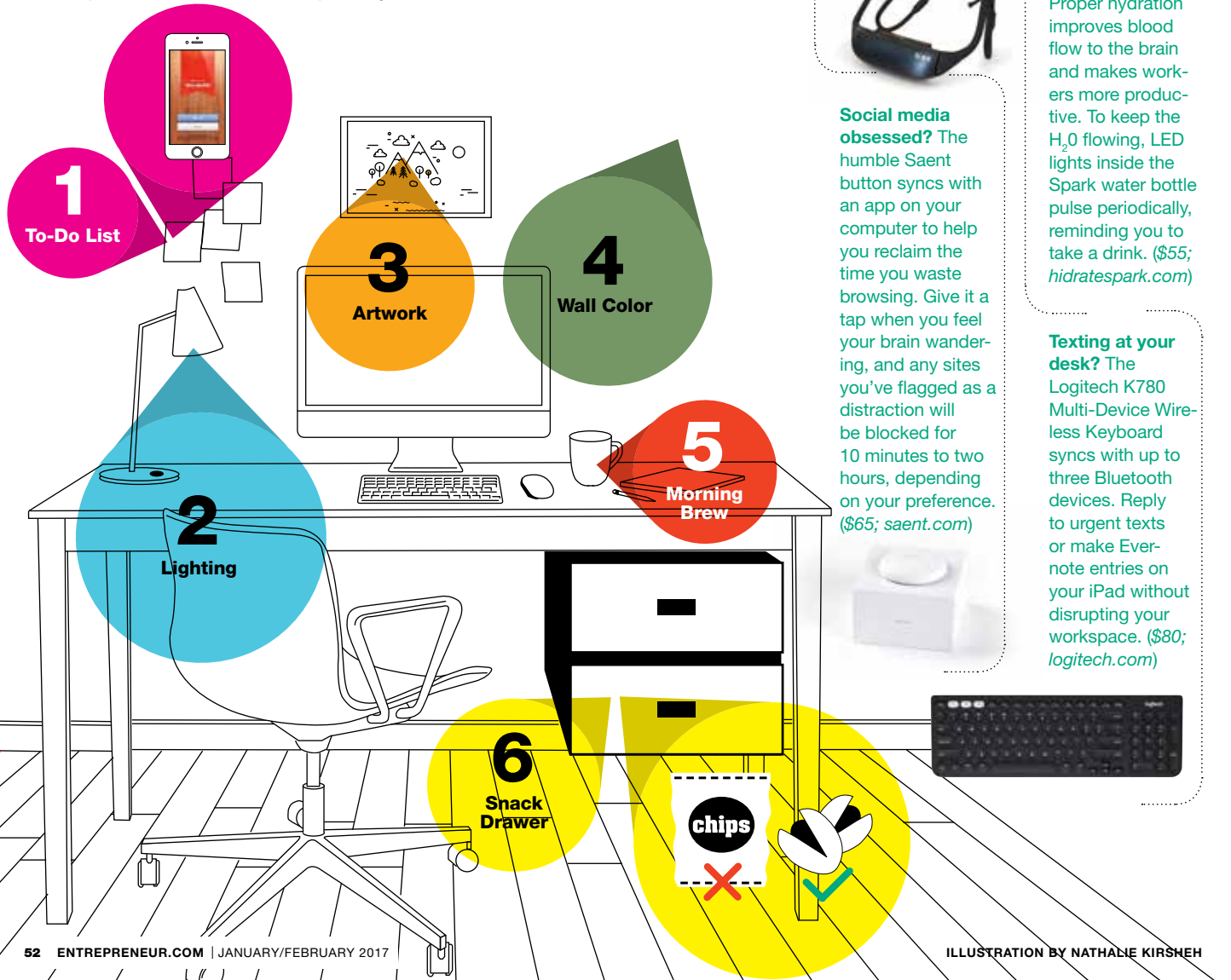
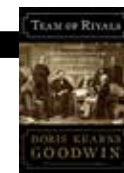
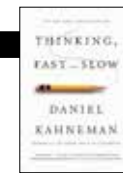


ILLUSTRATION BY NATHALIE KIRSHEH



Team of Rivals, by Doris Kearns Goodwin
"This Lincoln biography shows that he was a genius leader. He welcomed dissenting opinions and facilitated a collaborative environment. This has become a cornerstone of my managerial style and our company culture."
—Bill Creelman, founder and CEO, Spindrift Beverage Co.



Thinking Fast and Slow, by Daniel Kahneman
"It presents the results of a series of psychological experiments that go a long way toward illuminating the irrational behavior many of us exhibit every day. Thinking in terms of how people actually behave informs almost all my decision-making in both my personal life and business."
—Anthony Casalena, founder and CEO, Squarespace



Siddhartha, by Hermann Hesse
"It is the essence of the journey-of-happiness-to-enlightenment story—money, beauty, the simple journey of seeking self. I can read it over and over and always come away feeling more at peace."
—Dr. Abdur Chowdhury, cofounder, Aura



The ONE Thing: The Surprisingly Simple Truth Behind Extraordinary Results, by Gary Keller
"It's about focusing every day on reaching one larger goal, and in doing this, everything else becomes unnecessary. To get real traction, you must focus on things small enough to change and big enough to matter, one step at a time."
—Tyler Haney, founder and CEO, Outdoor Voices

The Entrepreneur Book Club

Oprah isn't the only visionary with reading recommendations. Four leaders reveal the book that changed their life and business for the better. —As told to A.W.

How I Got Out of a Funk (and Saved My Business)

By Kimanzi Constable

WHEN I WAS 19 YEARS OLD, I DELIVERED BREAD TO grocery stores. But I dreamed of entrepreneurship—writing, speaking, coaching, and traveling the world while building a location-independent business—and worked up the nerve to walk away from my steady paycheck. I took a few online courses, hired some coaches and teachers, and educated myself on the worlds of digital marketing and branding. Over the next 17 years, I built my consulting and lifestyle business, Chaotic Organization, and authored multiple books on the topic of entrepreneurship. I learned countless lessons that helped me overcome difficult circumstances, self-limiting beliefs, and times when it felt easier to quit. I wish I'd remembered these lessons at the beginning of 2016, my 18th year in business. Because that's when I needed them the most. I went through a nasty breakup at the beginning of that year. I thought I could focus on my business, but the truth is, my personal life sidelined me. It started slowly at first—I missed some deadlines for clients; I canceled some strategy sessions. Then it got worse.

Depression, anger, frustration, and a lack of motivation took over, and I stopped communicating with friends and business colleagues. I was living in Medellín, Colombia, for a long-term consulting contract and didn't have access to family or friends, who were in Milwaukee. I shut myself off from the world and spent most days binge-watching *Breaking Bad* on Netflix. My business suffered, my professional relationships collapsed, and I was told that my attitude was repelling people. I lost hope. After three months of this, my best friend, Chaka, was worried enough that he flew to Colombia to check on me. The very first thing he said was that I was destined for great things, but I was ruining all the progress I had made. I realized he was right—and it became the spark I needed. I started taking some very deliberate steps after he left, working to get back on track and even grow my business. First things first: exercise. I gained 60 pounds in my slump, and the weight gain was defeating and affected my

energy level. After my friend pointed this out (ouch!), I stopped all the junk food and started making healthy choices. I forced myself to wake up at 5 A.M. to exercise six days a week, which gave me time to think, process my thoughts and feelings, and plan my day. After the first month, I lost 20 pounds, and my energy level was through the roof. I was accomplishing more and more each day, and my income grew along with my business opportunities. After my workouts, I spent an hour meditating, which helped me gain control of my emotions. In my old life, pre-funk, I worked nonstop. By slowing down and focusing, I felt I could see things more clearly.

Meditation allowed me to listen to myself and others, which helped me close deals and improve relationships with clients. I also started keeping a journal, which complemented my new meditation habit. I'd get brutally honest about my life and business. I wrote things I was afraid to tell other people—and the truth did set me free. Getting that morning routine in order did wonders for my focus, and I'd spend the beginning of my workday on activities that would produce income: call old clients, follow up with potential new clients that had reached out through social media, and send proposals to local business owners. It wasn't long before my income doubled. It's now been six months—and counting—since I recovered from the personal pain that was holding me back. It hasn't been an overnight process, but getting honest about my problems and working diligently to solve them has taught me that I can overcome any difficult situation that life throws at me, and that I can always heal and grow—in both life and business. **E**

Kimanzi Constable achieving the work/life balance.

