**How Solopreneurs Can Grow Their Businesses Faster and Smarter by Borrowing These Strategies From the Startup World**

Story by Dmitry Solovyev



Most [solopreneurs](https://www.entrepreneur.com/business-news/solopreneur-success-5-tips-for-growing-a-one-person/389253) and small businesses don't see themselves in the same league as startup founders. You've got clients who pay you. They've got pitch decks and kombucha on tap. Different worlds, right?

Wrong.

That scrappy, growth-obsessed mindset that turns garage projects into billion-dollar companies? It's not just for the tech bros in hoodies. It's available to you, too. And you don't need co-founders, investors or a trendy open office to make it happen.

Recent trends indicate a significant shift towards direct-to-fan engagement. According to Patreon's [*State of Create 2025*](https://stateofcreate.co/) report, over half of the $290 billion creator economy now comes from direct revenue streams such as subscriptions, courses and donations — not from platform-based monetization. Creators are moving away from closed ecosystems toward independence.

And with the rise of platforms enabling fractional work, [personal brands](https://www.entrepreneur.com/science-technology/3-principles-for-personal-branding-success/363527) and borderless services, solopreneurs can design businesses that fit their lives — not the other way around.

Ultimately, what defines this golden era is that freelancers, experts and merchants are becoming more independent than ever. They're leaving behind all-in-one platforms — where someone else controls the traffic and the audience — and instead are learning to orchestrate their own stack of services and [AI agents](https://www.entrepreneur.com/growing-a-business/your-next-assistant-may-be-a-bot/476536). This gives them full control over the entire business cycle: from customer acquisition and traffic buying to retention and reactivation. That's a real shift in power, and it's just the beginning.

That's why you can use the best startup strategies and apply them to your one-person show.

**The startup mindset: What solopreneurs can learn**

Your office? Kitchen table. Your team meetings? Talking to your dog. Your funding rounds? PayPal notifications. Your marketing department? Whatever free trial hasn't expired yet.

But guess what? The mental frameworks that drive startup success can transform your solo business — no ping-pong tables required.

[Lean startup](https://www.entrepreneur.com/en-ae/starting-a-business/adopting-the-lean-startup-approach/243728) principles, initially developed for tech companies burning through venture capital, work even better for solopreneurs risking their own money and time.

**Fail faster, win sooner: The experimentation edge**

Startups build-measure-learn their way to success. Your solo operation should do the same — minus the beanbag chairs.

The most successful startups validate ideas through rapid testing cycles. During a design conference, Airbnb tested its concept with a simple website renting air mattresses. Dropbox created a video demo before building actual software. You can adopt similar low-resource approaches to [test your ideas](https://www.entrepreneur.com/starting-a-business/10-ways-to-test-your-business-idea-without-breaking-the-bank/486249) before going all in. Slack pivoted from a gaming company to a workplace communication tool. Your willingness to change direction based on real feedback separates a growing business from a stagnant one.

**Tech leverage: Work smarter, not solo-er**

Modern solopreneurs multiply their impact through smart tech. Businesses using automation report a [30% productivity boost](https://www.venasolutions.com/blog/automation-statistics). And in 2025, [over 41% of companies](https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/ai-shakeup-why-solopreneurs-thrive-2025and-how-we-can-przegalinska-eddge) plan to reduce their workforce through AI automation. There's no reason why you can't achieve similar results without hiring.

Drowning in admin? AI bookkeeping tools handle finances while you focus on revenue. Task platforms organize your mental chaos. Forgotten invoices? Automated. Client follow-ups? Handled. For the price of a few lattes, you get capabilities rivaling companies 10 times your size.

**Minimum viable product: Launch ugly, win anyway**

Perfection is the enemy of profit. The first version of your small business or product should make you slightly uncomfortable and even embarrass you a little. If you're completely satisfied with your first version, you probably waited too long to launch it.

The [Minimum Viable Product](https://www.entrepreneur.com/en-ae/starting-a-business/building-a-successful-minimum-viable-product-the-how-to/421534) (MVP) approach focuses on core value — what's the simplest version that solves your customer's primary problem? Consultants should offer one specialized service before building comprehensive packages. Course creators could launch a pilot program before developing an entire curriculum. And so on.

Your MVP must address three questions: Does anyone care about this problem? Will my solution work? Will people pay for it? Everything else is a decoration you can add later.

The key benefit? Resource conservation. You preserve time, money and emotional energy by testing concepts before committing fully.

**Failures are features: Why stumbling makes you stronger**

Winners fail faster and adjust quicker. Your missteps become your map.

Companies adopting "fail fast" mentalities report [40% faster time-to-market](https://www.femaleswitch.com/startup-blog-2025/tpost/8rdtoh5i21-best-strategies-for-the-lean-startup-in) for successful products. Why? Because each failure eliminates wrong directions, narrowing your path to success. Every dead end tells you where not to go next.

Successful solopreneurs run rapid experiments — quickly testing multiple ideas to identify what works. They use objective metrics rather than gut feelings to evaluate results. When data suggests a change in direction, they [pivot](https://www.entrepreneur.com/growing-a-business/if-you-dont-learn-how-to-pivot-your-business-youll-watch/469027) without emotional attachment to original plans.

**Scaling like a startup: Growth strategies for solopreneurs**

While startups throw money at growth, you don't have the advantage of a blank check or [venture capital](https://www.entrepreneur.com/starting-a-business/how-to-build-a-thriving-business-without-venture-capital/480907). That's why you need to creatively and strategically think outside the box.

Consider these five proven growth tactics that work without a war chest of money or a marketing department.

1. Build a direct line to customers with automated sequences that nurture relationships while you sleep. Unlike social platforms that can change algorithms overnight, your email list remains yours forever.
2. Turn happy customers into your sales force with structured [referral programs](https://www.entrepreneur.com/growing-a-business/the-complete-guide-to-creating-a-customer-referral-program/411678) that reward them for spreading the word.
3. Create useful or entertaining material that people can't help but share. One viral piece can deliver more value than months of regular posting — focus on quality over quantity.
4. Partner with complementary businesses to tap into their audiences without competing. A wedding photographer teaming up with venues, florists and caterers creates a referral network that feeds everyone.
5. Automate personalized outreach on platforms like LinkedIn, create micro-tests of different audiences for your ads, or build simple landing pages for specific customer segments to maximize conversion rates.

The most common mistake is trying to scale by doing *more* instead of doing *differently*. Many solopreneurs fall into the trap of working longer hours, adding more services and saying yes to everything — and end up [burned out](https://www.entrepreneur.com/living/5-surefire-ways-to-thrive-without-burning-out/466331). Growth becomes chaos instead of progress.

Another mistake is avoiding "boring" things like systems, documentation or pricing strategy. I've been there myself — in the early stages of scaling my businesses, I constantly avoided the operational and structural work because it didn't feel exciting or creative. But those are the foundations that actually help you grow in a sustainable way.

And finally, trying to scale *alone*. You don't have to hire a team overnight, but bringing in the right help at the right time — even as freelancers or part-time partners — can change the game. You're still a solopreneur, but you're not a solo performer.

**The power of networking and community**

Not every solopreneur needs funding, but if you do, there are more options than ever. From [friends-and-family support](https://www.entrepreneur.com/starting-a-business/how-to-ask-friends-and-family-for-money-without-it-getting/479787) to presales, grants and platform-based financing, solo founders can raise capital without chasing traditional VCs. Many of these methods are faster, aligned with your audience and don't require giving up equity.

The most powerful startup tool isn't venture capital or a team of engineers — it's the willingness to think bigger than your current circumstances. And that doesn't cost a dime.