

10 Lessons From 10K Users

Action Checklist & Resources

by [Clayton Johnson](#) from [The HOTH](#)

Lesson 1: Light the fire from within to WIN

You must have a deeper reason to exist and do the things you do. This could be in a greater market sense, a drive to help make the world a better place, and a personal drive to put food on the table for your family. Whatever it is, you must create that vision and reason to help power your decisions, get through hard times, and grow.

To Do:

- Understand that if you have something valuable to give the world, then you have a moral obligation to reach as many people in need of your solution as possible
- Develop your big “why” - Why are you doing this? What is the big vision of your company?
- Develop your personal “why” - What do you get out of it as you achieve this big vision?
- Write down your big why and look at it every day

Lesson 2: Run lean & be profitable from Day 1

This is actually about doing “less” than doing more. The reason we were profitable from the beginning is because 2 things -

- 1) We had a solution that people already wanted, we didn't invent anything crazy new. Link selling was already very popular.
- 2) We didn't invest in anything before we sold stuff. We didn't have an office, a developer, business cards or anything. We just had a thread on Wickedfire Buy/sell forum with a paypal button.

To Do:

- When you create your next solution, product or business, create something that has a proven track record to work and make money (if that is your goal)
- Define your MVP (minimum viable product) eliminate anything unnecessary
- Try to make a sale as early as possible before investing time into creating anything (the easiest is service based businesses - no actual product needed)

Resources:

[The Lean Startup](#) - Learn to validate ideas before wasting time and money.

Free Tools:

- [Google Docs](#) (For process mapping)

- Google Sheets - Use this for order tracking
- Dropbox - For syncing other types of files, or storing important documents across different computers
- Skype - For company calls on Monday
- Google Voice - For free calls

Lesson 3:

Take risks and learn from them

Nothing good comes from fear, and almost everything good comes from overcoming fear. Taking good risks is the engine of growth, so do something that you know you need to do but your scared of. Here are some ideas that have brought big growth for us.

To Do:

- Spend \$100 on advertising (measure your results)
- Hire someone for sales
- Launch a new product
- Sign up for a booth at a conference
- Let someone else take care of customer support
- Outsource something you're not good at

Lesson 4:

Stand out and be different

Standing out against the crowd will make your brand recognizable, memorable, and will save you tons of money in ad spend. Create an image for yourself and your brand and push it.

Here are some examples of how you could differentiate yourself:

To Do:

- Look at your competitors and take note of everything they are doing, find a gap
- Create a personality for your brand that is different than anyone else
- Make your logo stand out and give it character
- Put your face on your marketing / videos
- Change your headline for a new "angle" on your product (or launch an ad set to test)

Lesson 5: Automate Your Business

Automating your business and pulling yourself out of day-to-day operations is a pre-requisite to growth as well as a sustainable and sellable business. Here's are the things you can do to start getting your business to run on autopilot:

To Do:

- Define your entire process from A-Z on paper
- Create checklists for each part of the process so that if someone checked off everyone, you know that your product / service would come out perfect each time
- Create training based on the checklists

- Give each job to someone else and completely remove yourself from production
- Look at each email you get, support ticket, or question and document the answers in one place.
- Make an external (customer) FAQ with the public answers to all the sales / product questions you get
- Make an internal FAQ with all the answers to how you deal with certain customers / situations that come up.
- Keep adding to the FAQs, checklists, and training until you have a very good system
- Watch the system operate, look for holes, questions, or mistakes, make tweaks as necessary

Resources:

[Built to Sell](#)

[The E Myth](#)

[Groove](#) - Our ticketing systems as well as our internal & external knowledge base

Lesson 6:

Make your first big jump in sales

The business grows when you make more sales. We've had lots of big "wins" in sales, so here are a few things you can do that will create a jump:

- Hire someone to do sales
- Run your first ad

- Launch an affiliate program
- Get featured on a blog (guest post)

Lesson 7:

Make failure your friend

Failure is how things move forward. If you're failing, you're moving and learning and that's good. Sometimes hard situations make it easier in the future. Here are some things you can do to remember that failure is your friend:

- Think creatively when you run into problems
- Ask yourself positive questions like "How could this benefit us"
- Ask yourself "How could we learn from this"
- Write about your problems as blog posts - Other businesses could have the same problems ([Groove](#) does this awesomely)
- Refer back to your why when you have hard times

Lesson 8:

Get the best ideas

(Know your customers)

Knowing your customer deeply is the foundation of how much you will succeed. Your customers will give you insights, ideas, questions, and problems for you to

solve that will turn into many many dollars in your pocket. And all you have to do is ask.

To Do:

- Run a customer survey
- Watch support tickets for problems (opportunities for new products / solutions)
- Talk with big customers 1 on 1, ask them what problems they are having

Resources:

Wufoo

<http://www.typeform.com>

<https://qualaroo.com/marketers-guide-surveys/>

Lesson 9: Grow your business

Once you start tracking everything you're doing, you will find out very quickly what area you need to work on if you want to grow. Lesson 5 was all about automating your business, which is a pre-requisite to scaling. The more you track, the more you will see the issues in your business (what gets measured, gets managed).

I would love this section to only be about scaling your advertising, but the reality is most businesses have problems before they can scale their advertising. Take a look at the business and find the missing holes:

For example:

If you have issues with cash flow, take a look at your billing process. Is it smooth and automated? Have you made it as easy as possible for customers to pay you?

If you have issues with production, are you watching how much time it takes for someone to do a task? What problems are they running into?

If you have a lack of sales, what is your sales process? How are you consistently getting leads and how can you get more, close more, and sell them more stuff?

Watching each part of your business and asking yourself questions about how you can fix it will bring the creativity you need to scale your business.

The most important thing after your business is automated is growth. You need to find out your numbers and have a really good idea of where you're at and what it's going to take to grow.

To Do:

- Start measuring every part of your business, any way that you can (start with areas you know are problems)
- Find solutions to improving the process until everything is automated and runs smooth
- Find a source for leads (newspaper ads, niche magazines, Facebook, media buys on niche websites)
- Find out how much it costs to get a lead on avg
- Find out how much each lead is worth on a 1-3-6-12 month timeline
- Scale your advertising

Resources:

[Clarity.fm](#) - Get expert business advice on anything you want to do

[Improvvely](#) - Measure ads and ROI

Lesson 10:

Focus on what matters

To get your goals accomplished, you have to know exactly what they are, what it takes to get there, and then you have to map out time to spend working on those tasks.

You'll find very soon what the detractors from your goals are, as they are all around us, and constantly trying to rob you of what you want. They are called distractions. They come in all forms - Phone calls, email, Bob interrupting you at work with his problems, lunch invites, text messages, the facebook newsfeed, new ideas from new articles posted online etc.

You need to get rid of distractions, and only work on the things that matter (your goals).

To Do:**Eliminate Distractions**

- Start eliminating everything that is a distraction
- Get rid of the [Facebook news feed](#)
- Put your phone in a different place while you're working (night mode / silent)
- Install [batched inbox](#) to prevent you from constantly checking email

- Use unroll.me to get rid of every email subscription you have that interjects you with new ideas that are not aligned with your goals
- Say no to all lunch meeting requests
- Work in a place where no one will bother you (put on headphones)

Define Goals

- Write out your goals and get specific
- Write out all the steps it takes to get there
- Schedule time on Google calendar each day to work on that area
- Go forth and crush.

Conclusion

These 10 lessons have helped us grow a tremendous amount. I hope that you can take this action guide and make explosive growth even faster than we have been able to. If you have any questions or comments, please leave them in the comments section of this post here: <http://www.thehoth.com/blog/10-business-growth-lessons-10k-users/>

Thanks!

-Clayton Johnson
HOTH COO
[@claytonjohnson](https://twitter.com/claytonjohnson)