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SelfInformed

Published by the National Association for the Self-Employed

March 2019

Member Spotlight

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Writer, Editor and Teacher

Growing Your Business AND Generating New Business

One of the most important things that an entrepreneur can do is create a plan to grow their business. Strategic growth will allow you to connect with more customers, increase your income, and become a leader in your industry. However, many small business owners remain stuck, falling into the comforts of only working with their established client base. Growing your business can seem overwhelming, especially if you feel like you're out of leads. By using the right resources, you'll be able to grow your business without burning out.

Do Your Market Research

If you'd like to grow your business, you must first understand your consumers and your competition. Conducting market research will give you an objective look at your customer's needs so you can better address them going forward. There are two different types of market research. Combine both types to create a unique, holistic view of your customers, your market, and the other businesses in your area that offer similar services.

Primary Market Research

Primary research is simply the process of collecting new information. In market research, primary data can be collected through personal interviews, social media feedback, survey responses, or focus groups. While it can be time-consuming, it allows you to directly and specifically hear what your market needs.

Secondary Market Research

Secondary research is the process of interpreting information that other people have collected. Gathering government statistics, industry reports, trade publications, and other data will give you a broad picture of the trends in your industry. Take advantage of the research that others have collected!

Market Research Resources

Conducting market research might seem overwhelming, but there are plenty of resources online that will help you get it right. The American Marketing Association offers **interactive tools and templates** that will allow you to conduct your primary research in an effective and professional manner. For secondary research, the U.S. Small Business Association has a **handy page** with links to demographic information, industry-specific statistics, and more. They also offer an **online course** on market research and free business counseling.

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The Importance of Delegation

You might consider hiring a freelancer to help you conduct market research or complete other business tasks while you focus on perfecting your product or service. Gallup reports a **clear link** between delegation and business growth, yet many entrepreneurs struggle with relinquishing control and assigning tasks to others. **Learning how to delegate** will allow you to avoid burnout and focus on what your true strengths are.

Discovering New Leads

When it comes to business growth, setting yourself up for success is only half the battle. If you don't have leads, you'll have a hard time implementing your market research or scaling your business effectively. If you prioritized lead generation when you started your business, you might feel like you're out of options. However, there are plenty of places to connect with individuals who would love to work with you. Start with the following:

High-Quality Networking

If you're an introvert, networking might make you feel uncomfortable. It shouldn't! Networking is proven to be the **most effective way** of getting a new job, and those benefits reach beyond job seekers. Those at networking events are specifically looking for partnerships. Go with an open mind and let your business speak for itself. Some places to find networking opportunities include:

- Your local Chamber of Commerce
- Alumni groups
- Volunteer Events
- Online platforms like **Meetup** or **Eventbrite**

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Don't be afraid to ask around when looking for networking events. Old coworkers, friends, and former classmates can be great resources. Many will know of opportunities that you weren't aware of.

Trade Shows

Trade shows are a popular tool for lead generation, and it's easy to see why. **99% of marketers** reported that they found unique value in the trade show setting. Setting up a booth at a trade show will establish you as a leader in your industry, allowing you to connect with hundreds of people in your field who are looking for business. Because you'll be presenting at a booth with other professionals, it's a great place to showcase a new product and demonstrate what makes your business unique among the competition.

Attending a trade show as an exhibitor isn't the only way to generate leads. Trade show visitors have the opportunity to connect with dozens of exhibitors and each other. If you're visiting a trade show, be sure to talk with other attendees for even more prospects.

Conferences

While trade shows are designed for businesses to show off new products, conferences are for those who would like to trade ideas first. Attending a conference will allow you to learn from industry experts and get actionable business advice.

Conferences can be a powerful place to learn, but they can also be a great place to find leads. Take advantage of the networking events that your conference holds and participate in break-out sessions and discussions. Because conferences are designed to introduce people to others in their industry, they are a great place for **introverted business owners** to network with confidence.

Social Media

Social media is one of the most powerful networking tools that a business owner can use. Social media removes the physical barriers between you and your prospects and allows you to thoroughly research a person before you pitch them. It's also a great way to build your brand and engage with your current customers.

You can improve your chances of finding leads online with a strategic social media plan. **Use tools** like Facebook Audience Insight and take advantage of LinkedIn and Twitter's advanced search features that can help you find the best people to connect with. There are also plenty of **social media management tools** such as Hootsuite and TweetDeck that can help you maintain your presence on these sites.

Keep Your Leads Warm

Adding contacts from trade shows, conferences, or other networking events to your social media platforms will allow you to remain connected long

after you've met. Make time to check in with online contacts to **keep your relationship fresh**. Just make sure you're **doing more online** than simply following up with your prospects. Share articles, offer advice, and respond to the content that your friends share.

Keeping these connections fresh is a proven way to increase your business prospects. **84% of companies** use social media for recruitment, and 82% of companies say that social media is an important tool for recruiting passive job candidates. Because companies are actively using social media to find new employees, they also use social media to find new partnerships. Keeping in touch with contacts will allow you to take advantage of opportunities when they arise.

In Conclusion

Building a business doesn't have to be difficult. With the right market research, you'll be able to determine the specific needs of your consumers and scale your business accordingly. However, you don't have to work alone. Take advantage of networking events and connect with other business leaders through trade shows, conferences, and social media. You'll be able to find likeminded customers and collaborators who can help you expand.

The National Association for the Self-Employed offers plenty of resources to help you as you scale your business. Visit our **website** for expert advice on taxes, marketing, investing, and more.

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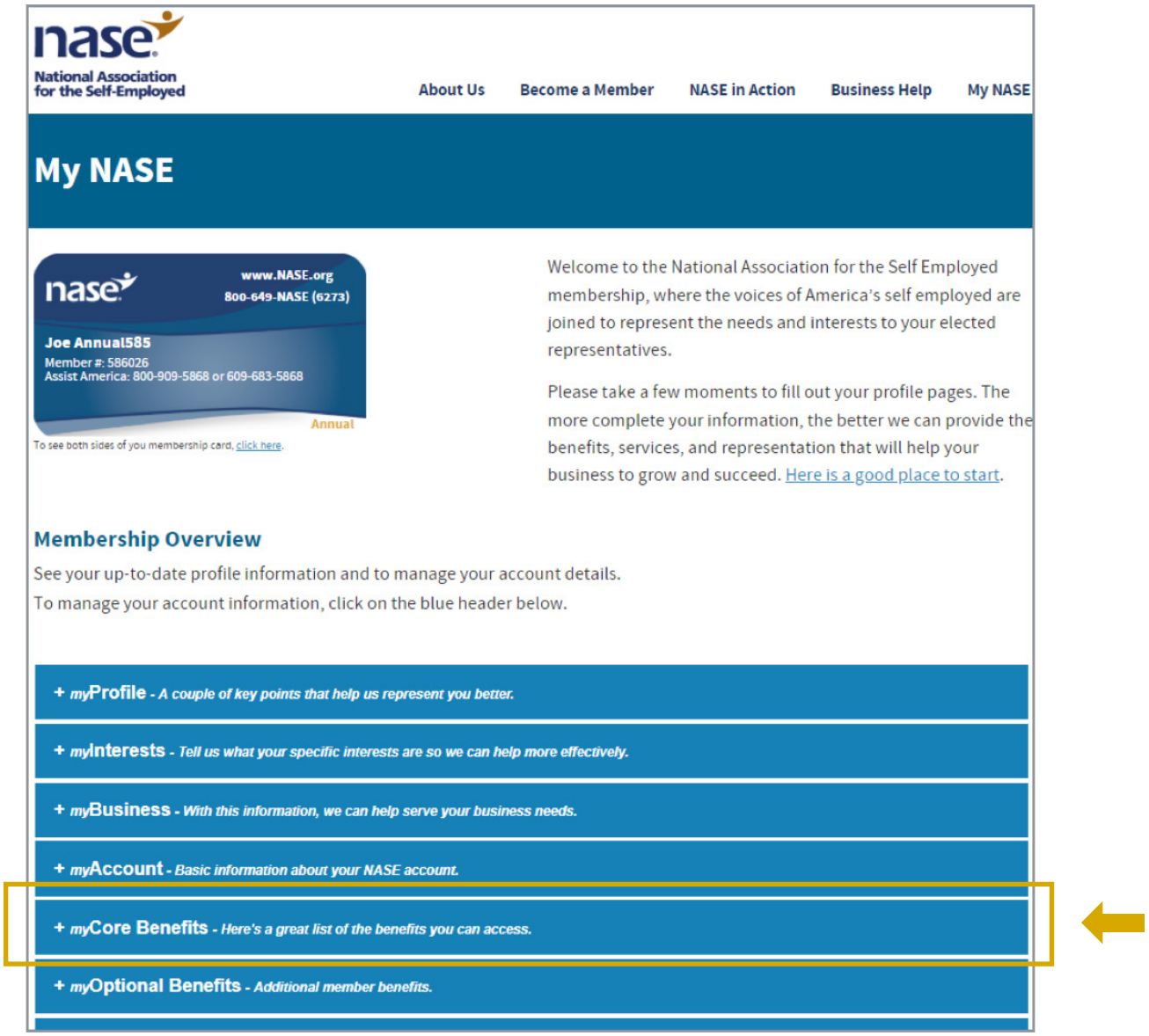
New!

Member Benefits

Visit **NASE.org** to learn more about the following benefits!

NASE members asked for a favorite benefits page, so our wonderful web developer made it happen. First step; go to **www.nase.org** and login.

Click on My NASE and scroll down to <u>My Core Benefits</u>

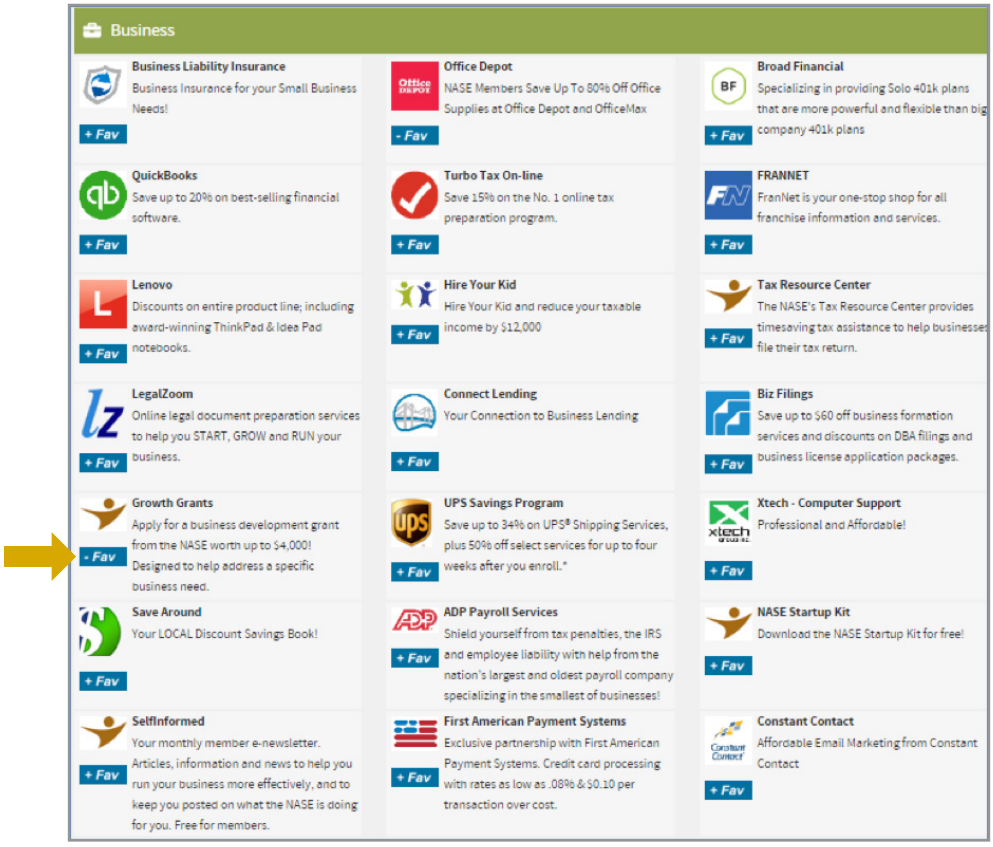


New!

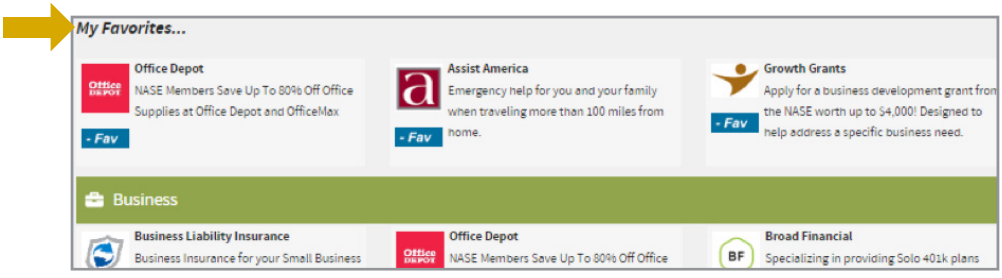
Member Benefits

Visit **NASE.org** to learn more about the following benefits!

After you click on My Core Benefits, you will see your membership listing



After you click on your favorite benefits, they will appear on the top of the benefits page.



Enjoy your new benefit enhancement!

Writing Up Self-Employment

Skip Press is a writer, editor and teacher who has been self-employed for nearly 30 years. Residing in Burbank, California, Skip aims to write something every day. Skip started his career with a typical corporate communications job but later moved on from that and began writing things like news and magazine articles, plays, screenplays, novels and much more. One of his biggest passions is teaching young people to write well and inspire creativity.

When and why did you join the NASE?

I joined the NASE a decade ago, while dealing with the aftermath of a divorce that put my children in jeopardy and gave me the necessity to double up my efforts to provide for them.

What inspired you to enter the field you are in?

I've known I'd be a writer since a day when I was seven years old and something happened that made me think this would be a remarkable life. Thereafter, I mentally saw just about everything in my life as something I might write about. I first truly learned the impact of a good story when I was 15 and I read a story I'd written in English class. The girls reacted with smiles and my teacher propositioned me after class.

When and why did you start your business?

When my son was born in 1990, I was not long out of a corporate communications job I had to leave because the CEO was involved in criminal activities that later put him in federal prison. I turned back to

journalism, sold a couple of screenplays, and then began writing books, and a couple of years later, teaching.

How do you market your business?

These days I get a number of referrals from clients, and return clients. I also get regular messages about opportunities from some websites that are set up to connect small business people and clients.

What challenges have you faced in your business? How have you overcome them?

The biggest challenge has been in dealing with emotional issues, whether it be domestic or work-related. Thankfully, I've had very few troublesome clients. But no one trains a freelancer how to deal with people who cannot write. People who come to you and then want a refund after you've done work that would be lauded by others. Also, I became a single parent just as my kids became teenagers, and that offered unique challenges that somehow we got through by learning to be more polite to each other.

Do you have any employees?

The documentary I'm currently making is a project I put together to help my son, who was out of a job and looking to move up in Hollywood. He's my one employee at the moment, although we've hired various people temporarily while making the project. In 2019, I might have to add an assistant and who knows, we may start a production company.

What's your schedule like, what's a typical day for you?

I usually wake up very early in the morning and deal with social media and email. I also do a lot of reading. After that, I start with whatever writing project I have on the slate. Later in the day, or in the evening, I might do some editing, right up until bedtime. It's not unusual for me to work an 80-hour week during the busiest times.

What's the best thing about being self-employed?

If you have ever enjoyed the luxury of being able to mostly set your own schedule, wear whatever you want, work in bed if you like, then you know something about what it's like being a successful writer/editor.

What's the best compliment you've ever received from a client?

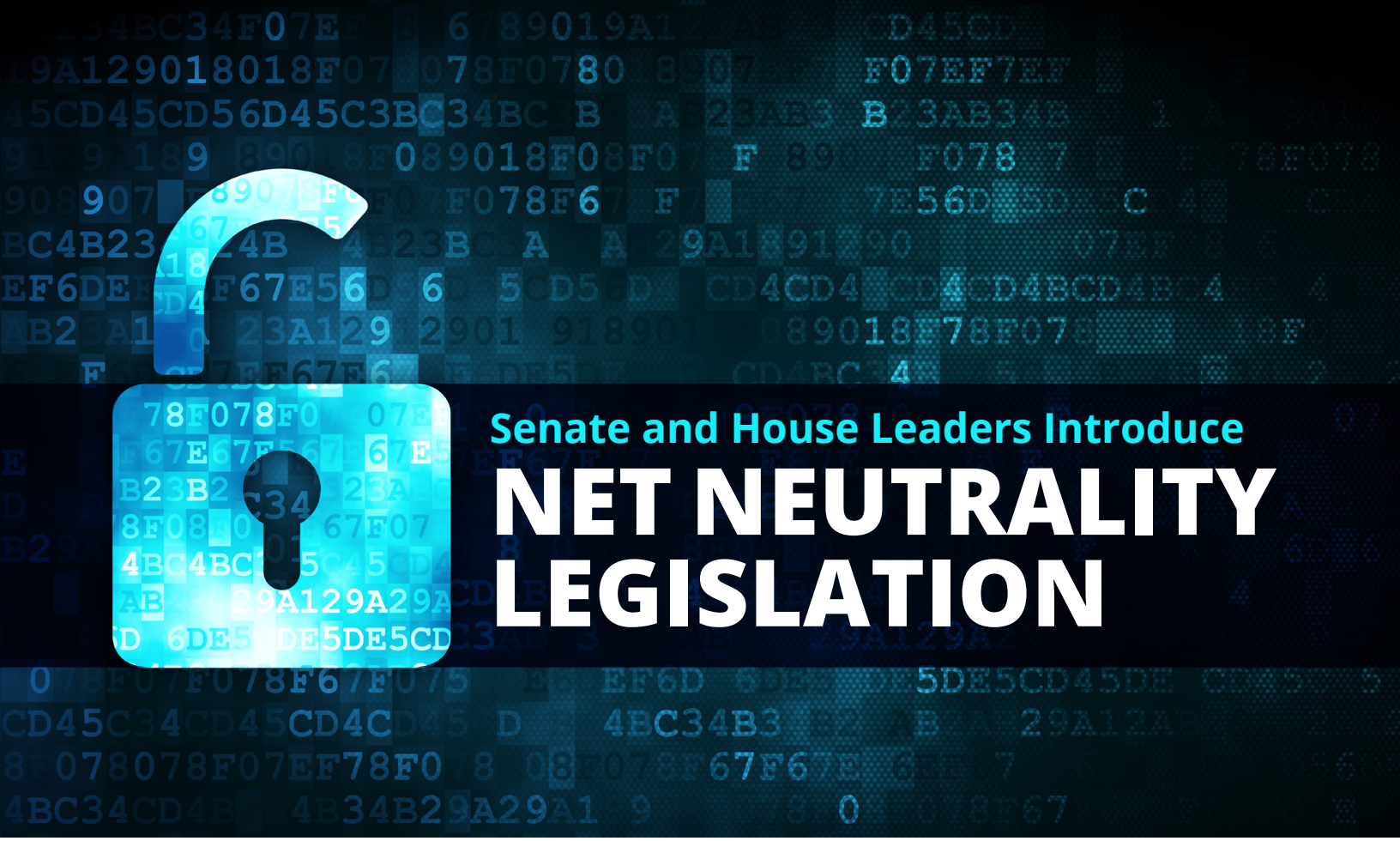
I recently spent a couple of months editing (through many drafts) a biography written by a young woman who overcame major social and psychological challenges to become a media success. Her repeated comment about my editing was "I can't believe how smooth you made this read! How do you do that?"

What's the most important piece of advice you would give to someone starting their own business?

If you find yourself being terrified, pat yourself on the back. I've never known anyone, including famous CEOs, who don't get freaked out about the future on occasion.

Any other information you would like to share?

I've been repeatedly amazed at how major executives in companies I've worked with have difficulty writing even simple documents. Also, because I grew up poor, I try to help young people who want to write get started. I've taught tens of thousands of people around the world how to write well, via books and classes. So I would advise anyone to do their best to better their communication, particularly written communication. I guarantee you it will put you ahead of the pack.



Senate and House Leaders Introduce

NET NEUTRALITY LEGISLATION

On Wednesday, March 6, Democratic leaders in the Senate and House introduced "*Save the Internet*" legislation that reverse the "Pai Rule", which to some allowed restrictive behavior, including blocking and throttling of the internet. The legislation also empowers the FCC to look at potentially harmful practices of ISPs (practices that could be unjust or discriminatory).

The bill was introduced concurrently in the Senate and House, a rare bi-cameral action. In the Senate, Sen. Markey, D-OR, led the charge and was joined by 44 Senate Democrats, in the House, the bill was introduced by Congressman Doyle, D-PA.

For background, in 2015, after a fight to keep the internet free, former president President Obama via the FCC enacted some of the strictest net neutrality laws to date, establishing the internet as a telecommunication service, keeping ISPs from having too much power over how it is monetized. For example, this would ensure that internet providers couldn't intentionally slow down or speed up your internet speed on certain sites, or charge you more for using some sites over others.

In 2017, President Trump and the FCC made quick work of those rules, swiftly overturning and repealing those laws in a 3-2 vote on party lines. The 2017 rule does require that internet service providers divulge their actions in regard to paid fast lanes and blocked content.

Since 2017, the Democrats and a handful of Republicans have supported legislation to rescind the FCC 2017 action, however, those efforts have stalled in the Senate.

While the *Save the Internet Act* is most certainly assured to pass the House, the Senate remains a challenge. While there are at least three Republican senators who have a history of voting in favor of stronger net neutrality protections, it's unclear how the 2020 election will impact those Republican Senators and their position on net neutrality.

The House Energy and Commerce Committee will host a subcommittee hearing on Tuesday, March 12 on the legislation.

NASE has not taken a position on net neutrality to date.

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