

The Online Success Leaders Volume 1

(Gary Vaynerchuk, Jason Calacanis, Brian Tracy, Kara Swisher and David Cohen)
By
Alex Hammer
Author of "The Laws and Secrets of Success"

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David Cohen
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INTRODUCTION

These are the leaders of the new century.
The Online Century.

Is the Internet as revolutionary as the printing press? The discovery of electricity? The creation of the car and airplane?

What is the future of our online world? Virtual reality? Virtual personal assistants? Wearable computing (think Google Glass and Nike Fuel Band for starters).

This is a book of key influencers, early adopters and market makers. You know about Mark Zuckerberg and Larry Page. These are the Zuckerbergs and Pages who, while also well known, are not yet as National household names (ok, Brian Tracy may already be).

But they're close. And the impact they are having is immense.

Gary Vaynerchuk



Gary Vaynerchuk Wikipedia Bio:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gary_Vaynerchuk Gary Vaynerchuk Primary website:
<http://www.garyvaynerchuk.com/>

Visionary. Relentless. Fearless. Strong. Gary knows that he is a winner. It is in his DNA.

Let's start off with "The Gary Vaynerchuk Primer",
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hFT62TBhi90>,

a 15 minute YouTube video I did detailing the success principles that we can learn from Gary. Here is the transcript:

"The Gary Vaynerchuk Primer. Success principles from Wine Library TV to Vaynermedia.

What are some of the success principles of Gary Vaynerchuk that we can learn and apply to what we do? Here we go.

Gary is known for quite a few things, and he's the type of individual that you wouldn't want to try and pigeon-hole in any way. But perhaps the first thing that comes to mind for a lot of people is his love and advocacy for "the hustle".

Gary continually says that he is not afraid to get his fingernails dirty, he enjoys the journey. I think that all great successful people love what they do and they do it only for its own sake.

If you're just doing things just to get rich, first of all you're probably not going to make it, because the world is too competitive. If you don't love what you do, when the other person is working all night to get done what they need to get done because they love it, and you're just doing it because you're trying to force yourself to do it, at a certain point you're going to break down.

Gary's natural passion and love for what he does - there is a famous saying "follow your bliss - I think Gary, when he talks in interviews it comes across that he loves what he does, he is committed to what he does, he doesn't tolerate being around people who are not committed and passionate about what they do.

He's a no BS kind of person. In TechStars he's a fantastic mentor because he cuts through all the BS, he calls a spade a spade. He does it not to really knock anybody down, but to build people up in terms of what they need to do to be successful.

And he has that dual mentality that I think is critical to success. He said it on a recent interview. He said on the one side he's so competitive that he wants to rip everybody's face off, and I think that's a little bit of a paraphrase but not much, I think he said pretty much close just to that.

He said even in checkers he would want to rip people's face off. I can identify with that. I'm a very competitive person also, but you have to be able to channel it very well, which is what Gary does. He says that is balanced by the other part that he really is kind of like a servant mentality, he didn't use that term but he is always trying to create value and help people wherever he can.

If you look at him all the time, that's all that he is about. He's always on Twitter and other forums creating value. He does conferences, he does books. He's just so innovative, jam-packed with things that you don't find other places.

That's what we try to do in these series also, really look at things from a little different angle, and provide information that you can't find other places, because if you do that then you'll always have an audience.

I watch Gary every day when he has a new video if I can, and it's always new, it's always fresh, it's always different. He's very much into promotion, but you never get tired of watching him because some people it's kind of like you've watched them once you've watched them a million times. It's kind of like the example of twenty years of experience versus one year of experience twenty times.

You could watch Gary every day and it would be totally different. It wouldn't be totally different but it would be so much different that it would be like, I have to watch this.

NBC had "must-see TV". Gary is must-see video, because he is new and he is different and he is always providing value.

I recently watched his Elevate keynote. I pride myself on being very knowledgeable in the social media space, but he was just telling me thing after thing after thing after thing that I didn't know. Each of them was very important. You felt like you were in a heavyweight fight just getting "punch drunk", because in 18 minutes or however long the keynote was, he just provided such incredible value that it was - I don't know how much people paid to go there, you could watch it, it turned out, the video for free - Gary's just worth your time, because he is going to teach you things that you didn't know, and they are going to turn out to be things ahead of the curve.

To get back to that example, the recent interview, he has both, he has the, I'm going to rip your face off, no one is going to outwork me, no one is going to out hustle me.

He has the discipline to do what needs to be done every day, not just the fun stuff, and he has the commitment to stay with things even when they're not successful. So, for example, he talks about when he started Wine Library TV, how the first two years he had basically hardly any sales, almost zero. But he still stuck with it.

A lot of people don't really have the innovative ideas that he has. Even people who are extremely innovative, some of them don't have the commitment or what he calls the stomach, and I agree with that, to really know that you are ahead of the curve, and what you're doing is providing value, and that if you do that, and reach a certain scale, that people will notice you.

Gary didn't start out being famous. He's famous not because he contacted a few people, he's famous because he continually provided value in ways that other people didn't.

So in this interview Gary talked about building a bridge. He said one half of the bridge is just being fanatical in terms of competition, ripping people's face off, to make sure you don't tolerate any kind of second rate things. This is kind of like Steve Jobs. I don't think Gary is like Steve Jobs. He's not a nasty person - but he might be just as demanding.

If I worked for Gary, and I would love to work for Gary, I love what I do now also, it is very successful. Gary is the kind of guy who is going to make everyone better. And I think he's actually ahead of Steve Jobs in a way. I think Gary has the same attention to detail, in being innovative, but I think he has found a way to do it such that it is very palatable also.

I don't think Gary's the same kind of control freak that Jobs was. I mean Jobs was an incredible, incredible once in a lifetime type of person, and Gary's not at that level of success yet. But Gary's in hypergrowth mode. He talked in a recent interview about going in the last - he gave a couple of interview so the numbers are close, I'm not sure exactly which one - but he said he's gone from twenty to twenty-five employees, to two-hundred and fifty employees in the last twelve to eighteen months.

You don't do that without really knowing what you're doing and being way ahead of the curve, so he's an extremely strong manager. But he has very strong people skills. If you look at him in his interviews he's totally no BS, he's going to get in people's faces in a minute, he's not afraid to do that, but he's also going to patch things over, he's going to be funny, he's got a very engaging personality. So, he really knows how to work both sides of that coin.

So, in terms of the success principle that I was talking about in that interview, he compares it to a bridge. You can build bridges with people and products and companies by doing both. By being so competitive that you're going to rip people's face off, but at the same time having that servant mentality where you're going to help people however you can, whenever you can.

He's always on Twitter. He's always - in books and in his seminars and his lectures - providing value, at a group level, on a personal level. He's all about answering people's questions and being helpful, he's very accessible. So he's doing both sides of the coin. When you're very good at both of them, in terms of the competitive aspect and the service aspect, then you draw that bridge really tight, because you anchor it on both sides. And I agree with that. That's a success principle that anybody can use.

So, delving into this a little bit deeper, he has the hustle, he's getting things done right away, he's getting them done quickly, but he also has the patience, he stuck with Wine Library TV, and he's always ahead of the curve. I'll give you a couple of more examples of that. He's not afraid to reinvent himself. He was doing very successfully in the wine business, and he was getting a lot of offers to go on major TV channels with a wine show, which could have made him a lot of money, but he said he didn't want to get pigeon-holed. He didn't want to be known just as the "wine guy", as successful as he was being at that. He wanted to be something more.

I think that is a characteristic of all successful people. They don't want to pigeon-hole themselves to one thing. They want to continually reinvent themselves and get to the next level.

I feel that way in our business. We've done a lot of extremely innovative things that have been successful, but we're always looking for what's next.

Gary is the same thing. He likes to get into industries that he says are fat and lazy. And I think part of the reason why he's gone from twenty-five to two hundred and fifty employees, there's a lot of social media companies who are doing fantastic things, and I think that social media in general is a very disruptive field so it attracts

people who are disruptive, but he is the disruptor of the disruptors. And that's allowed him to have hyper-growth from twenty-five to two-hundred and fifty employees. I mean, next year, who knows, he may not be able to keep it up or he may have twenty-five hundred employees or ten thousand employees, because once you get that momentum.

Even now he's not resting on his laurels. He's not afraid to reinvent himself. As I indicated, he's a very strong manager, he's got very strong people skills, but he's spending a significant amount of time, I don't know how much, but you can see it in his interviews and his work, on new things. Like Wayne Gretzky said, don't skate to the where the puck is, he skates to where it is going to be. Gary Vaynerchuk is the same exact way. That is why he is so successful.

He talks a lot about services that are up and coming, such as Vine, a service that he's on, Medium, he mentions Snapchat, Namely, as some of the ones he's been very bullish on.

He's not afraid to reinvent himself. I saw an interview this morning in which he said he's only at 7,000 subscribers on Vine, some people are at hundreds of thousands, I think there's a few people in the millions, but he says success at one area doesn't always necessarily translate immediately to success in another area, you still have to pay your dues, you have to study it.

He's not content just to do his books, which are incredible. I read that he got a reported over \$1 million deal for ten books. His books are fantastic, you don't find that type of information other places.

He's spending a lot of his time now, or at least some of his time, learning these new services. He puts a timeframe in interviews I've seen usually of two to three years. You don't want to be too far ahead of the curve because, for example, at Apple, they did the tablet, the Newton, years ago but it didn't catch on. He says usually a two to three year time frame. He believes a lot of these services, like Vine, and Medium and Snapchat, and I'm sure also a lot of the companies that he is investing in, over a certain period of time are going to be very successful. He is getting in on the ground floor. That's how you really build yourself to the future. Steve Jobs was the same way. One thing led to the next. First he reinvented the computer, and then he went on to music, and then he went on to publishing, before he died he wanted to reinvent TV. Obviously he did the same thing with the phone.

So one thing leads to another. And Gary Vaynerchuk, I think potentially, I think he's only in his late 30's, some people they go up and then they go down but I think Gary's a pretty humble guy, I think he's paid his dues, I think that ten, fifteen years from now he could be the next Steve Jobs. We'll have to wait and see.

So, a couple of other things about Gary. He has a few other concepts that I think are fantastic. One is something that he calls "better than zero". This ties into his notion of not being afraid to pay your dues. He will go on any show that will take him to promote what he's doing. He's incredibly balanced also. He is family first. He loves football. He loves the Jets. He's in a fantasy football league. He likes wrestling. This allows him to identify with the common average person. He can talk at a very technical and business level, like he does sometimes at conferences. But he can also talk at a very mainstream personal level, so I think he is good at building bridges that way.

But his "better than zero" concept is that whatever you do, even if it's not a lot, is better than nothing. Whatever exposure you can get.

He talked this morning about getting twentyseven viewers at the beginning. Twenty-seven people who at the beginning viewed Wine Library. He was ecstatic, because he knew the next day he would shoot for 49.

It's kind of like the grow where you're planted idea. It's all about the pursuit, the chase, the journey. Gary is successful because he's doing what he loves, he's happy where he's at but he's not satisfied, and that passion is coming through to always get to the next level. I think that drives him.

A couple of other factors just to wrap it up. Gary is also a dichotomy, he stresses, in terms of trying to please everyone to provide value, but not caring about anyone what they think. His family is the most important thing to him, he says, but at the same time he says what he wants to do can even supersede that at times, because he believes in what he's doing. He doesn't care what his family thinks, he said. I mean, he works very well with his family, as a partner and he loves them. Same thing he says with his friends, his associates, with the industry.

He's not afraid to be kind of a loner when he has to, to stand out. To go back to Jobs again, I think all the great leaders are like this. If you're afraid to stand alone. If you're afraid you're going to be criticized, you're afraid that it's lonely. If you're afraid that you don't have the stomach for it, you won't be successful. These are some of the major success principles that I think you can take away from Gary. Finally, I just want to talk a little bit about his self-promotion. He talks a little bit about his Dad and his brother, they're a little more introverted, they allowed him to be the more extroverted one.

Gary's phenomenal at promotion, and I think that is a major part of his success, but it's not promotion just for him, it's promotion of increasing value.

As I mentioned, every time you watch a Gary Vaynerchuk video it's new, it's fresh, it's different, so you can watch him every day. You can read every book that he comes out with, every conference that he does. If you want to be successful like Gary Vaynerchuk, promote yourself like crazy, but don't promote yourself just to promote yourself. Promote yourself when you have something important and valuable to say."

Check him out:

Gary on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/garyvee>

Gary on Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/gary>

Gary on LinkedIn:
http://www.linkedin.com/today/influencer?aut_horId=10486099

Gary on Google+ :
<https://plus.google.com/u/0/+GaryVaynerchuk/posts>

Gary on Vine: <http://vineqanda.tumblr.com/> Gary on Pinterest:
<http://www.pinterest.com/garyvee/>

Gary on Instagram:
<http://instagram.com/garyvee/>

Gary on Medium:
<https://medium.com/@garyvee>

Gary on SoundCloud:
<https://soundcloud.com/garyvee>

Notable videos of Gary:

Gary Vaynerchuk - Keynote Speech at Inc 500 Seminar 2011
127,000 views
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lcqCAqZtedI>

Don't Be This Guy
103,000 views
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kOMPU__lQk

Jake and Amir: Crush It! 806,000 views
"Gary Vaynerchuk brings the thunder. And not the scary kind that makes you cry."
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFlt9fKhD78>

Web 2.0 Expo NY: Gary Vaynerchuk (Wine Library), Building Personal Brand Within the Social Media Landscape
701,000 views
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EhqZORU95d4>

Authors@google: Gary Vaynerchuk
199,000 views
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2c_L60HcpY

Jason Calacanis



Jason Calacanis bio on Wikipedia:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jason_Calacanis Jason Calacanis Primary Website:

<http://calacanis.com/>

Jason is a visionary, and an online thought and market leader. From This Week in Startups (TWIST) (and the rest of the ThisWeekIn world), to LAUNCH, to Mahalo, to Weblogs, to AngelList Syndicates to Silicon Alley Reporter...

"The Jason Calacanis Primer",

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m_JxEyVFwVY,

is an approximately 15 minute YouTube video that I made detailing the success lessons that we can learn from Jason from these leading contributions.

Here is the transcript:

"The Jason Calacanis Primer: What are the success principles that we can learn from the career - thus far, he's only in his early 40's - of Jason Calacanis?"

Jason is a very skilled individual, and has done quite well for himself. He is skilled in a number of areas, but there are a few distinctive things that really stand out about Jason that are very instructive in terms of success principles that we can learn from him and his career.

To me, the hallmark quality of Jason, in terms of his success, is his personal growth. Jason is very open about his career, his successes and his failures, and he seems to have really grown into his skin over the last period of years. I would say that the Jason Calacanis of today, covering, probably, in my mind, the last three to five years, is markedly markedly different than the pre Jason Calacanis of that period. I think that early in his career, as he was becoming successful, he didn't seem to be as comfortable in his skin as he is now. He seemed to court controversy, he had very high profile confrontations, and he seemed to go out of his way - I noticed this myself also - to pick fights even with people who he was much much more successful than, and had no need really to do that.

I think that, not just cosmetically but Jason seems to have really really advanced in his selfconfidence and comfort level. I think because of his substantial success. Part of it he may just have realized on his own, part of it people may have mentioned to him.

Jason is a tough person in a good way, and he's a fighter in a good way. He's a hustler in a good way, so you would expect him to be rough and scrappy. And that's a big part of his success. He touts coming from Brooklyn. I lived in New York, Manhattan, and Long Island for ten years, I know it can be kind of a rough crowd. They say if you make it in New York you can make it anywhere. And then being from Brooklyn, on top of it, that has kind of the reputation of being a little bit the toughest of the tough.

Jason's been quite open in terms of coming from not a wealthy background, having to really work so hard to work his way up, and really scrap from the bottom. He's totally proven himself but what most impresses me, even more than his great success, and I think is a major factor in his success, is his willingness to let go of some of the past. He used to kind of be the type of person as I mentioned that would bring up grudges, over and over again. I think he's totally stopped doing that.

He talks about his family life being more settled, and even the way that he talks about his employees, and his businesses, you can tell that he's just more focused on enjoying his success, and not being at all bitter about things.

I give Jason a lot of credit for that because I think it's a real success principle of how you can let your success smooth out some of your rough edges, and make you even a better person.

I think Jason has developed into the kind of person who is funny, I never would have said that five or seven years ago.

He always had the potential to be that. He's developed into someone who is personable. He's developed into someone who is likeable. And I think that he's winning people over with his charm. I think he's made the internal adjustments to be able to do that. I think he's done it quite successfully.

Ok, so what are some of the other success factors in Jason's success? I mean, he's brilliant when it comes to strategy. I'm going to get into that in a minute. One of the things that I think is critical is that I think that Jason has been able to reinvent himself many times. He's not locked into just one thing. He thinks in a multi-faceted fashion. He's juggling a lot of things at one time. He's focused, but he's also thinking many steps ahead.

So, for example, he had success at Silicon Alley Reporter. He's very tough. He talked about how he got sued for a huge amount of money and how he bounced back from that. He built up Weblogs which he sold to AOL. He worked for AOL for awhile, worked with Netscape. He founded Mahalo, which is still going but they went through a major pivot, they were a curation for content (search), the anti-Google in a way.

There's a famous story which I heard Jason say once. He went and pitched Michael Moritz. Obviously Jason was also an entrepreneur in residence at Sequoia as well. And he put up a chart, saying that search was broken. He showed how when you do a Google search you get thousands and thousands and thousands, if not millions, I don't know the exact number, of search results. He talked about how it could be fixed by being curated, and that was the whole idea behind Mahalo. They ran into some cost problems. Mahalo has had some decent success, but it became very expensive to do what they were doing, even though I think Jason made a lot of adjustments. He talks about some of the adjustments that he made.

And Mahalo is still going along fairly strong. They have transitioned a lot to video. So Jason went to Silicon Alley Reporter to Weblogs to Mahalo, with success at each point along the way. When the curated content competing directly with Google didn't pan out as quickly or as well as maybe they thought it might, he switched over to video. He's making a major mark in video now, and I think video is still early in its infancy.

He has, just on YouTube, and I know that's not all they do because he's written about some of the problems he has with YouTube. He didn't accept their Series 2 funding after being funded for the first round, having three hit programs with them.

They have over 13,000 videos just on YouTube, Mahalo, and most of their videos tend to be rather short. Some of them are two minutes. Some of them are five minutes. I've seen videos up to about 15 minutes, maybe a little bit longer. So, he still has that going on.

He's very focused on This Week in Startups. I don't know how many episodes it has been. I think it might be about three or four hundred. They also are starting to do more videos of the TWIST roundtables and topics.

I've watched quite a few of the episodes. Relatively, it's a small percentage, but I'd say I've seen thirty to forty episodes perhaps. One thing is that he just has fantastic guests, so when he has a certain guest on I just don't want to miss that person.

Jason, no matter who he has on, he's very insightful. He's a tremendous interviewer. This probably goes back to his Silicon Alley Reporter days. He's kind of the king of content. He understands basically how to present things, in messages, and present himself well as well. But he's not locked into just one kind of content. He's done blogs. He's done journalism. He's done video. He's very big on mobile. He talks a lot about Path and other apps that he likes.

He kind of runs the gamut. He is extremely informed, I'm going to get into that a little bit how I feel that plays to his strengths.

In addition to This Week in Startups he's had a lot of success in the past doing conferences. Now he's doing the Launch conference. He's done very successfully with conferences in the past. Obviously, the work with Michael Arrington notwithstanding.

Jason is a very successful guy, and has a lot going on at one time. He's a major angel investor. He has forty-one investments on AngelList. So, he's involved in

quite a few areas, and he's always focused on what's next.

If you listen to him, for example his email newsletter which he has is incredible, and I want to talk a little bit about Jason's strengths with strategy. The first point was that Jason has had a lot of personal growth over the years. He's taken the determination, the grit that he has but he's smoothed out some of the rough edges. The second point was that he has reinvented himself many times. He's very open about his successes and failures. It allows people to trust him more. He seems to have a lot of selfconfidence that if one thing doesn't work out he can do another, or if one thing is going well, he can do its optimum but also do other things as well.

Now in terms of strategy, Jason Calacanis is a strategy phenom. He's extremely informed. A lot of people are informed but they don't understand exactly how all the pieces fit together. Jason Calacanis is a genius because he understands what goes with what. He understands not only what things are but what they mean.

If you read some of his treatises, I call them treatises because they've been like Moby Dick in length - although I think he's starting to realize a little bit that less is more - I think that sometimes you have to go into depth and he's very good at that, but Jason is an expert to know what Microsoft needs to do to be successful, Yahoo! needs to be successful, Google, because he understands what each company is doing, what their shortcomings are and their strengths.

Jason has an extremely analytical mind, and as I mentioned it's extremely well integrated. I don't know if Jason has any interest because he's a serial entrepreneur, but I could easily see him being a CEO, not only of a Mahalo or This Week In type businesses, but a major tech company as well. He has the management style, he knows how to relate to people, but even more importantly, or on top of that, he understands strategy.

He understands where the market is going, who the competitors are, what the major factors are, and he's a strategy genius. And he's so well connected, I'm going to talk about networking in a second, but he's such a strategy expert.

He's so original. He's so innovative. If you read his newsletters, I think that's why he has so many subscribers, because he comes up with things. For example, he was describing recently how Microsoft could buy all the major app companies and get a foothold in mobile and be relevant. I think Microsoft only has a 4% market-share in mobile now, and Ballmer is going for the door.

He did the same thing with Yahoo and Google. He understands what these companies need, and how to do it.

I talked about him being a great networker. He has stories about how he has done about a hundred parties, where he would treat three to five or ten people to dinner. Even when he had no money, he would just buy appetizers and share it among the group to save money. Jason's all about paying his dues. He's always been going that extra extra extra mile. Like Mark Cuban helped Jason, Jason talks about how people were impressed with him because he would bang on any door.

I feel that I try and be the same way.

A lot of people are not impressive right at the beginning. Some people are. I think that if you just show that you're in it for the long run, and that you're committed to what you're doing, then people eventually do take positive notice. That's what moves mountains. There are so many people who are going to give up, are going to fail, or not be around in six months. Jason has shown that he has staying power. He's going to be totally committed to what he's doing. I think people respond to that.

In terms of networking, Jason knows all the top people. They like him. I think his This Week in Startups is brilliant because he continues to bring in the top people. The same thing with his conferences. So he has a lot of avenues to perpetuate that.

The final two things I want to say about Jason. One is that I think he has his values and his priorities straight. He talks a lot about family. He was saying on one of his recent shows that there is a lot of work to be done, but over the weekend the most important thing was to take, I forget if he has sons or daughters, but I think it was a son, to LegoWorld. He's always showing pictures of his dog also, he's very proud of his dog. He was saying, those are the memories which last a lifetime. Work will get done.

I think he's great the way he does that. He really I think pushes employees, and pushes himself, to be productive, but he realizes that you have to be a balanced person. I think that the way he presents himself, he's just much calmer and confident and family-oriented in his approach, not that he wasn't family-oriented before, but I think that he has a good balance with how he is doing things.

The last thing that I just want to say about Jason, that I think is a major success principle, is promotion. Jason also has a great sense of style. If you look at This Week in Startups at the beginning with the music. And how he does his commercials, it's the funniest thing in the world. Like he does those monkey impressions for SurveyMonkey. He makes things kind of fun. He doesn't take himself too seriously, but he really builds up the value of his advertisers.

He mentioned that he can afford to just go with companies that he really believes in, but Jason is about not just promoting himself, but promoting other people, making them look good and creating value for them. I think that's why Jason is so successful. He's a promoter but he promotes not just himself. He promotes everyone around him to make them better. These are some of the success principles of Jason Calacanis."

Check him out:

Jason on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/Jason>

This Week in Startups:

<http://thisweekinstartups.com/>

This Week in Startups (YouTube):

<http://www.youtube.com/thisweekin> Jason on AngelList: <https://angel.co/jason> Mahalo: <http://www.mahalo.com/>

Launch Festival:

<http://events.launch.co/festival/>

Brian Tracy



Brian Tracy Wikipedia Bio:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brian_Tracy Brian Tracy Website:

<http://www.briantracy.com/>

I'm fascinated by success. In fact I recently published "The Laws and Secrets of Success" <http://www.amazon.com/Laws-SecretsSuccess-Mysteries-Accomplish/dp/1492870250>

Brian Tracy, along with probably Napoleon Hill and Jack Canfield, are probably the top individuals on the planet on the topic of success.

Brian is the author of 63 books on Amazon:

<http://www.amazon.com/Brian>

[Tracy/e/B001H6OMRI/ref=sr_tc_2_0?qid=1380990642](http://www.amazon.com/Brian-Tracy/e/B001H6OMRI/ref=sr_tc_2_0?qid=1380990642)

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<http://www.amazon.com/Absolutely>

[Unbreakable-Laws-Business](http://www.amazon.com/Absolutely-Unbreakable-Laws-Business-Success/dp/1576751260)

[Success/dp/1576751260](http://www.amazon.com/Absolutely-Unbreakable-Laws-Business-Success/dp/1576751260)

This book changed my life, and is one of the most powerful books I have EVER read.

Eat That Frog!: 21 Great Ways to Stop Procrastinating and Get More Done in Less Time

"more than 450,000 copies sold and translated into 23 languages"

<http://www.amazon.com/Eat-That-Frog-Great-Procrastinating/dp/1576754227>

and many many more.

According to his bio, Brian has “written and produced more than 300 audio and video learning programs, including the worldwide, best-selling Psychology of Achievement” and “has consulted for more than 1,000 companies and addressed more than 5,000,000 people in 5,000 talks and seminars throughout the US, Canada and 55 other countries worldwide.”

Brian has a much greater presence online than most authors and speakers.

For example:

Over 800,000 subscribers to his newsletter:

<http://www.briantracy.com/Newsletter/default.aspx>

Over 4 million Views to his YouTube Videos <http://www.youtube.com/user/BrianTracySpeaker>

Over 300,000 Facebook Followers:

<https://www.facebook.com/BrianTracyPage>

Over 160,000 Twitter Followers: <https://twitter.com/briantracy>

Popular YouTube Videos from Brian Tracy include:

5 Reasons Why Most Don't Become Wealthy Over 600,000 views

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0c2Rrj9ykr4>

24 Techniques for Closing the Sale

Over 291,000 views

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UDTo8Y6fAWM>

4 Principles of Marketing Strategy Over 174,000 Views

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hZLMv5aexto>

Become Self Confident: Building Self Esteem & Self Acceptance

Over 123,000 views

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qy7XzuD4cHg>

10 Ways to Finance and Start a Business Over 119,000 views

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dmyrCLjGtE>

Brian Tracy Webinar

<http://www.briantracy.com/files/pages/htwab2/>

Kara Swisher



The Online Success Leaders Volume 1

(Gary Vaynerchuk, Jason
Calacanis, Brian Tracy, Kara
Swisher and David Cohen)

By

Alex Hammer

Author of “The Laws and
Secrets of Success”

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kara_swisher Kara Swisher Main Website (includes author bio): <http://allthingsd.com/author/kara/>

If Kara hasn't published a scoop on you or your company, you're not an elite player in technology.

That's a fact.

Kara teams with Walk Mossberg as the industry's top technology journalistic/media duo. By far. They may well be the top two individual journalists in all of tech.

And they're working together.
NOT FAIR if you ask me.

Kara honed her journalistic chops at the Washington Post before joining The Wall Street Journal in 1997. <http://allthingsd.com/author/kara/> is where she can be found today in regard to her reporting. Swisher and Mossberg co-produce and co-host the All Things Digital Conferences, <http://allthingsd.com/conferences/>, a now multi-site collection of conferences anchored by the annual D conferences so well known that they are listed simply as D1, D2..., up through D11.

The D annual conferences are where the largest names in Tech appear as interview guests. These major names have included over the years (partial listing only, alphabetical):

Marc Andreessen, Tim Armstrong, Steve Ballmer, Jeff Bezos, Sergey Brin, James Cameron, Steve Case, John Chambers, Steve Chen, Tim Cook, Mark Cuban, Dick Costolo, Michael Dell, Barry Diller, Jack Dorsey, Larry Ellison, Stephen Elop, David Filo, Carly Fiorina, Jeffrey Immelt, Bill Gates, Melinda Gates, Al Gore, Don Graham, Reed Hastings, Reid Hoffman, Arianna Huffington, Chad Hurley, Robert Iger, Steve Jobs, Jeffrey Katzenberg, Mel Karmazin, Vinod Khosla, Ted Leonsis, George Lucas, Jack Ma, John Malone, Marissa Mayer, John McCain, Scott McNealy, Leslie Moonves, Alan Mulally, Rupert Murdoch, Elon Musk, Ray Ozzie, Larry Page, Mark Pincus, Sheryl Sandberg, Eric Schmidt, Terry Semel, Howard Stringer, Jeff Weiner, Meg Whitman, Evan Williams, Jerry Yang, Ed Zander, Jeff Zucker and Mark Zuckerberg.

Now that is power (and star power).
I think my head is spinning.

Swisher has also authored two books, each on AOL: "aol.com: How Steve Case Beat Bill Gates, Nailed the Netheads and Made Millions in the War for the Web" and "There Must Be a Pony in Here Somewhere: The AOL Time Warner Debacle and the Quest for a Digital Future".

At the time this book is going to press it appears that Swisher and Mossberg will be leaving the News Corp Universe and striking out on their own (with a new as yet undecided partner).

Kara has certain personal characteristics which I believe have made her a force in her professional pursuits. I detail these in the YouTube Video: Kara Swisher - Superstar, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fj4YeXHCoc>. The transcript: "Kara Swisher. Superstar.

I think that pretty much sums up the video right there, but we should probably go through a little bit more detail, obviously, to explain how we've come to our conclusion of Kara as a superstar, which she definitely is. And some of the qualities which she embodies which we can learn in regard to success principles.

Number one. The thing that stands out in my mind the most about Kara is tenacity. Kara has a relentless pursuit of her stories. She is wellknown throughout the tech industry, obviously, she knows all the big names.

She's especially, I would say almost feared, at a couple of companies. Yahoo! being one of them. She's written two books on AOL. Those are probably two of the companies which come to mind that she has most infiltrated I would say. I even read an article, I believe it was Yahoo! had actually come up with special procedures to try and circumvent Kara from all of the scoops she had gotten at that company. I'm sure there are other companies as well.

She is just dogged, relentless, tenacious, whatever you want to call it. I think that some people are just born with that quality. I think it relates to the next quality which I want to talk about, which is a sense of fearlessness.

I think one story about Kara embodies that especially well. This was famously said by Larry Kramer, who is now the Publisher at USA Today, and a nice guy also. Kara, famously while she was a student, I believe it was at Georgetown, was reading some of the copy of the Washington Post. She was upset about it and she called Larry Kramer, and she's like basically, this is crap. I'm not saying she used that word, she's a very blunt person but basically she was saying it's ridiculous. I'm paraphrasing her. These weren't her words but it's ridiculous this copy that you're putting out. So Larry Kramer said famously to her, essentially, why don't you come down here and say it to my face in person, so she didn't say this but basically she's like, sure, no problem. She goes down there and she meets with him and she starts working for the Washington Post.

So, tenacity, fearlessness. Arianna Huffington talks about fearlessness. I think most great, successful people have very good judgment, so it's not just fearlessness in terms of I'm going to do something rash. I think there is a difference, obviously, between bold and rash. People who are very self-confident, they just don't take no for an answer easily, but they're not out to get themselves in trouble or go over the edge. But they are going to, within reason, do a lot more than is expected, and that most people would be willing to do.

Katie Couric is another example of that. I saw an interview with her. She got her first job basically the same way, she just talked herself into a meeting with some big executive and basically said, Hire me.

The top people, not only do they dig, dig, dig, dig, dig, until they get the information that they need, but they're also not afraid to present themselves at a high level. That's the next quality I want to talk about Kara. She associates herself with the top entities and the top people. So, for example, she worked for the Washington Post, right out of Georgetown I believe. Starting out right at the top. I think because she knew how to handle herself and how to position herself.

She's been for a number of years now at the Wall Street Journal (Alex note: currently All Things D), and she partners with Walt Mossberg. So she really just orientates herself with all of the top people.

And that leads to the next point, which is that she is an incredible networker. Obviously when you're running the D conference, the way it's structured, you're going to be meeting with all the top names. So I think Kara has kind of institutionalized her approach such that not only is she getting the top information, getting the top scoops, she's a scoop maniac, she's known for getting one scoop after another after another, but she's developed really good relationships with people who allow her to do that.

She has a very tough, tough tough exterior, a lot of people are kind of afraid of her, they use those words. Not afraid that she is going to beat them up, but afraid that she'll just expose whatever the story is, no matter how difficult it is to get it. And she'll call a spade a spade.

If you read her books or read her articles, she's just really point on. But if she likes you, and I'm sure she likes most people, but if she really likes you then you kind of have a friend for life. I think that's part of the loyalty factor.

I know even when Jason Calacanis was kind of - he's always been a very successful guy and a smart guy I really like him - but when he was going through more a confrontation period where some people were saying they didn't like him, she always backed him. And a lot of other people. I know Ted Leonsis, who was gracious enough to give us an interview, she's been good friends with him, and I think she just forms really deep, close professional relationships with people that really aid her.

She's very likeable, but she's very very tough..."

David Cohen

David Cohen Wikipedia Bio:
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Cohen_\(ent_repreneur\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Cohen_(ent_repreneur))

TechStars Website: <http://www.techstars.com/> David Cohen Blog:
<http://www.davidcohen.com/>
How would you like to take over an entire technology category?
Meet David Cohen.

David is the Founder and CEO of TechStars. TechStars, joined only perhaps by Y Combinator, is the king of the startup accelerator space.

I had an opportunity last year to conduct a long interview with David,

<http://techleaders20.blogspot.com/2012/06/in-dustry-leaders-of-tech-20-interview.html>, in which he detailed the factors related to TechStars dominance and success (among other factors).

Here it is:

Industry Leaders of Tech 2.0 Interview David Cohen: "Look for us to continue to pile up unfair advantages for our companies"

Industry Leaders of Tech 2.0:

1. David, you are the founder and CEO of TechStars, the elite startup accelerator. As indicated on [TechStars' website](#), "TechStars provides seed funding from over 75 top venture capital firms and angel investors who are vested in the success of your startup, as well as intense mentorship from hundreds of the best entrepreneurs in the world."

TechStars offers five programs (based in Boulder, Boston, New York City, Seattle and a Cloud program in San Antonio) on a "regular schedule".

Competition for admission is intense. As stated: "TechStars is the #1 startup accelerator in the world. We're very selective - Although thousands of companies apply each year, we only invest our money and time in about ten companies per program location. We have selection rates lower than the Ivy League, so you have to be among the best of the best to earn investment from TechStars."

A few of the superstars that TechStars utilizes as mentors in the program include: [Brad Feld](#), (Managing Director, Foundry Group and also a TechStars co founder); [foursquare founder Dennis Crowley](#); and [Jeff Clavier](#) (Managing Partner of SoftTech VC) among others.

In March 2011, [TechCrunch reported](#) that "Startup incubator TechStars has raised \$8 million in new funding for its programs in Boston, Boulder, New York, and Seattle. The new funding comes from more than fifty venture funds and over 25 individual angel investors. This brings the incubator's total funding to nearly \$11.5 million."

This was followed around six months later [with the news](#) that "startup incubator and network TechStars has raised \$24 million in new funding from the Foundry Group, IA Ventures, Avalon Ventures, DFJ Mercury, SoftBank Capital, SVB Financial Group, RRE Ventures, Right Side Capital Management, TechStars Alumni, and several individuals...this new funding will be used to offer every single new TechStars company an additional \$100,000 in funding in the form of a convertible note immediately upon acceptance into TechStars."

First begun in Boulder in 2007 , 8 TechStars companies have already been acquired, over 85% of TechStars alumni companies are still active and less than 8% have failed. In addition, "our companies average over \$1M in outside venture capital raised after leaving TechStars" ([SendGrid alone has raised over \\$27 million](#), [Orbotix \\$11 million](#), and quite a few others have raised over \$1 million with several raising over \$5 million each to date). The ten companies from Boulder, Summer 2009, have to date already raised over \$41 million collectively.

David, to begin, a few questions to try to gain some insight into this tremendous success of TechStars. What, most essentially, is the "secret sauce of TechStars", and how has this developed and evolved as TechStars has expanded its locations and funding?

David Cohen:

It sounds really simple, and it is. It's all about the people. We take the very best entrepreneurs we can find, and put them in a room with the very best mentors. We have over 1,000 great people that have asked to be TechStars mentors that we haven't brought in. Like everything we do, it's about quality over quantity. The 300 mentors that we do have are literally the best. They engage deeply, and they're incredible. When you put these mentors in a room with really fantastic entrepreneurs the outcome is often pure magic. There's a saying about hiring top software developers. The top 1% are 10 times more productive than the next 10%, who are 10% more productive than the rest. At TechStars, we think the same is true of mentors and entrepreneurs. Filtering on the best at both levels has produced something really special.

Industry Leaders of Tech 2.0:

What separates the accepted from the nonaccepted TechStars applicant? Could you provide a few examples of factors that have been critical in making these decisions?

David Cohen:

Often, it's very little on the bubble. The #1 reason that people don't get accepted into TechStars is simply our focus on quality over quantity. Sure, we could fund 50 startups in every batch, but then they wouldn't each get the right amount of personal attention and 10 to 1 mentor to company ratio that we strive for. Instead we choose to put our full energy in to the top 10 or so, and treat them all like family. For us, it's not a funnel or a way to figure out which ones are good or bad. When you get into TechStars, it's for life. So we take admission very seriously.

Industry Leaders of Tech 2.0:

What are some of your roles within TechStars and how has that evolved? What does a typical day for you (if there is such a thing?) look like?

David Cohen:

Well, we're big enough that it's not just about me. I have an incredible team of Managing Directors that I'm very privileged to work with (Katie Rae in Boston, David Tisch in NYC, Andy Sack in Seattle, Nicole Glaros in Boulder, and Jason Seats in San Antonio). They're on the front lines working with the companies every day. I still love doing that but as the organization has grown I've had to focus more on the product and service to our companies as well. I enjoy both, and wish there was more time in the day. I'd say about half my time is spent working with companies, and half on TechStars or the investment funds around it overall.

Industry Leaders of Tech 2.0:

It seems as if every few months, if not more often, there is an announcement of a new tech startup accelerator or incubator. Can you talk about the role of the tech accelerator now in the funding of startups as it has developed and where you see that going? How are tech accelerators differentiated from each other and have we reached or are we approaching a saturation point for tech accelerators?

David Cohen:

I think there is at least one tech accelerator launching every day now. It's not even a trend any more, it's beyond that. There are about 350 accelerators in the world that I know about, and I'm sure there are more now. They're like colleges. Not in the "education" sense but in the "affiliation" sense - these programs will develop reputations (good and bad) and that will say something about your company. They will each have alumni networks trying to help each other. Overall, as long as they're well intentioned and are actually investing money and using reasonable (industry standard) terms, I think they can't really be bad for entrepreneurship. There are going to be some bad actors out there, taking more equity than they should, and/or providing no or less funding. At TechStars, we've led the charge on transparency and have published our full results since day 1 on our web site. We even released the tool for other accelerators to do the same thing. It's easy for an accelerator to be transparent, and the fact that one might not be should tell you something about them. How competitive is the landscape? Do you consider TechStars to be in competition with other tech accelerators, for example [Y Combinator](#) (which employs what might be considered a [similar financing model](#) as TechStars), for the best tech startups, and what does that competition look like?

David Cohen:

We're fortunate to have a strong reputation, the best mentors, and a recent #1 ranking by a Kauffman Fellows study. I think Y Combinator and TechStars enjoy this reputation effect and have access to some of the best companies. But we're not resting on our laurels - we know we have to deliver for our companies and help them become successful. Over time, the most successful programs will continue to get the best applicants. What assistance do TechStars companies receive after they leave the initial three month mentoring program?

David Cohen:

We're investors for the long term. We help like any investor would long term (introductions, product feedback, business model feedback, etc). We also have an incredibly vibrant alumni network and get together physically once a year. It's become a pretty amazing group. There are also very vibrant online communities for our founders and companies that are heavily used. I used the family metaphor earlier - and it's a good one because I think everyone feels this way.

Industry Leaders of Tech 2.0:

If things continue to go as well as they have, where might TechStars be in five years? [David Cohen:](#)

We might be in a few more places, but again our focus on quality over quantity will win out. We don't want to be everywhere. When we do something we want to do it with excellence. Look for us to continue to pile up unfair advantages for our companies - ready access to the best people in the world, efficiency in fundraising, better information, insight, and tools for them, etc.

Industry Leaders of Tech 2.0:

2. As if all of that growth isn't enough, TechStars also has also championed the [Global Accelerator Network](#) "in partnership with the White House Startup America initiative. The Network consists of only the highest quality independently owned and operated organizations from around the world that utilize a mentorship-based startup accelerator model. All Global Accelerator Network members have met rigorous standards to gain membership in the Network. Members share best practices, participate in regular networking opportunities, and have access to some of the best perks in the world which they may share with the companies they fund".

"The Global Accelerator Network consists of independently owned and operated regional organizations that operate a high quality startup accelerator programs. The Network provides professional development, networking opportunities, training, consulting and ongoing support for members...the Global Accelerator Network encompasses 57 program locations across 6 continents".

How did you come up with the idea for this type of network, how does it benefit TechStars in addition to the ecosystem of startup accelerators, how has it performed to date, and what are some of the competitive advantages, despite its independent nature, of such uniformity or scale?

David Cohen:

I was getting phone calls 2-3 times a day from people starting accelerators wanting to know what we've done and how we've done it. I wanted to help, but it was taking up a ton of my time. Rather than think of these folks as competitors, I decided to help because I believe that this accelerator phenomenon is good for entrepreneurs overall (again, assuming they are actually investor[s], and are not taking too much equity, and are being transparent with their results). If it's good for entrepreneurs, I want to support it. But over time this became too much for me to handle - and got a bit monotonous. So we talked to the folks behind Startup America in the Obama Administration, and decided we'd open source TechStars and help champion the Global Accelerator Network. Today I'm one of 7 advisors to the GAN and there are about 45 member organizations globally. See www.joingan.com for more information.

Industry Leaders of Tech 2.0:

3. David, the awareness of TechStars has been further developed through TV, with [TechStars](#) on Bloomberg, and video, [This Week in TechStars](#) and [TechStars TV](#) (I also love the powerful video on the TechStars homepage in which you start off the video by saying "TechStars is like an unfair advantage for your startup" and near the end of the video exclaim "This is where you'll find the best community for your startup on the planet").

I watched [this episode of TechStars](#) on Bloomberg which follows TechStars New York companies six months after demo day (and introduces "the two Davids") and one thing that struck me was how companies could pivot so quickly in a short program and the class still be so successful raising funding from investors.

How did and does the media exposure and examination of how the sausage is made effect TechStars overall?

David Cohen:

We made the TV show for two reasons. First, we wanted to let everyone see how valuable amazing mentorship can be. We wanted to encourage more people to become mentors to entrepreneurial companies. Once you've "made it" as an entrepreneur and had a successful exit or two, you can choose to go relax on a sailboat somewhere, or you can give back. Giving back makes a huge difference to our country, to job creation, and to future generations. We wanted to show people that they should do that. Second, we wanted to give people an honest look at how hard it really is to do a startup. It's not for the faint of heart, and I think that came across.

Industry Leaders of Tech 2.0:

4. David, you have a [strong background as an entrepreneur](#). "David was a founder of several software and web technology companies. He was the founder and CTO of Pinpoint Technologies which was acquired by [ZOLL Medical Corporation](#) (NASDAQ: ZOLL) in 1999. You can read about it in [No Vision, All Drive \[Amazon\]](#). David was also the founder and CEO of [earFeeder.com](#), a music service which was sold to [SonicSwap.com](#) in 2006. He also had what he likes to think of as a "graceful failure" in between."

What are some of the lessons that you learned as an entrepreneur, and how does this assist you in your work with the entrepreneurs of TechStars?

David Cohen:

Too many to count. Startups are one of those things that you only learn by doing. On the internet, one of my biggest lessons (and I have a failed company to show for it) is the value and importance of distribution. If you don't have a way to get your product in front of the right people, it won't work. I wrote a [blog post](#) about this. The biggest lesson though would be the value of mentorship. It's why I started TechStars. Inexperienced entrepreneurs greatly undervalue mentorship and network effects.

Industry Leaders of Tech 2.0:

5. David, I ordered and read your book, "Do More Faster" (let's just cut to the chase and admit that you are a genius, which you are), cowritten with Brad Feld and with many contributors across the themes of: Idea and Vision, People, Execution, Product, Fundraising, Legal and Structure and Work and Life Balance. In your chapter in the book "Be Open to Randomness" you write in part: "Take a moment and think back to all of the good things that have happened to you so far in your life. If you're like me and you contemplate that list, you'll realize that many of those good things came about in very random ways...Brad Feld is a great example. For many years, Brad has regularly held "random days" when he'll meet anyone to talk about anything for 15 minutes...Now, guess how I met Brad Feld. It was on one of his random days. And on that random day, guess what we talked about? TechStars!"

How random are random days? How much of a role does intuition play in randomness? Preparedness (in the sense of "luck favors the prepared mind")? The law of attraction?

David Cohen:

On random days, I'll literally meet anyone for any reason. That's pretty random! If you go in with the goal of "learn one thing" from every meeting, you'll find that you usually do! I think luck favors the available mind, sometimes!

Industry Leaders of Tech 2.0:

You also wrote the title chapter "Do More Faster". Briefly, you wrote in part: "I've been involved with a few companies that couldn't do more faster...It turns out that giving up your one obvious competitive advantage often proves to be deadly. If a startup can't do more faster, it usually just gets dead faster."

Constant iteration (for example "the lean startup model") which also features the "minimal viable product" (MVP) is pretty much the rage these days (and for good reason I think). What is the potential trade off, however, between very quick versus more considered action?

David Cohen:

We use Lean Startup concepts heavily at TechStars, and have been lucky enough to have Eric Ries and Steve Blank around the program a fair amount. I honestly haven't found any practical or meaningful tradeoffs when it comes to Lean Startup techniques.

Industry Leaders of Tech 2.0:

6. David, you are also a [blogger](#). In this recent post "[Brad Feld's random acts of kindness](#)" you write in part: "Brad has gone on to lead by example with his "give first, get later" philosophy in countless ways... The "give first" philosophy is what powers TechStars, in fact... So when Brad announced that he'd be donating at least \$5,000 for each of the 29 upcoming marathons he plans to run to "random" families via GiveForward, and activating his community to amp it up all I could do was smile and say "That's so Brad."" This type of service mentality is the same type of experience that I have had with Brad and frankly all successful people in life (I like to say that "talent takes one to the top but only character keeps one there"). I also believe in the law of attraction such that like-minded people of maturity are able to find each other and enjoy working together.

Can you talk about how you put all of the pieces together by finding and keeping the best people throughout the TechStars organization. Also, what does the blog mean to you?

David Cohen:

I'm very fortunate to work with such great people every day. Not just the mentors and companies we fund, but my co-workers. There's a mind boggling amount of experience and at the same time humility and goodwill inside of TechStars. People spend time on TechStars because they love it, and that's a great feeling. The blog is just an outlet for getting some thoughts out. I am living my professional life as an investor by one simple rule. Help

entrepreneurs. The blog is just an outlet to try to do that in another way that has wide reach.

Industry Leaders of Tech 2.0:

7. Finally, David, anybody reading through all of your accomplishments such as those detailed in this interview might well ask themselves, "How does one person become so productive?" So let's add a few more: "David is a[n] active startup advocate, advisor, board member, and technology advisor... He is also very active at the University of Colorado, serving as a member of the Board of Advisors of the Computer Science Department, the Entrepreneurial Advisory Board at Silicon Flatirons, and the Board of Advisors of the Deming Center Venture Fund. He is a member of the selection committee for Venture Capital in the Rockies, and runs the Colorado chapter of the Open Angel Forum."

So, what are some of the secrets to the success and productivity of David Cohen?

David Cohen:

Never sleep. Kidding. The secret is pretty simple and anyone who follows it can be incredibly productive. Do what you love. Don't do anything else. If you do what you love, then work becomes play and pure joy. You just want to do more of it, and that's how I feel. I am proud that I have a balanced life, in fact as I write this I'm returning from a family trip to Mexico. But when I'm working I work very hard and I try to focus and prioritize. And I love every minute of it.

David Cohen Interview - This Week in Startups <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KuWLGAbY Eaw>

Keynote by David Cohen of TechStars

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ok7YH8_4 8pc

