Running a Thriving Business that Lasts
How to Build a Better Business

Since 1996, Aileron has been studying a better way to run a business by doing it ourselves and helping others do it. The ideas in this guide are the concentrated learnings of that work. They outline what we have observed can build a strong foundation for better ways of working, thinking, and leading that empower people, relationships and businesses to thrive.

For many business leaders, these ideas can differ from conventional wisdom; they may require hard work unlearning long-held thoughts that may be limiting your potential. We invite you to do that work – to think about your business and your leadership in new ways, to release what may be holding you back, and to embrace progress over perfection along your journey. In return, you’ll experience less frustration and more fulfillment, less stress and more success, and less chaos and more clarity.

Welcome to the better way.

“To me, there’s no higher calling than taking your capital and putting it at risk to create jobs. What greater thing could you do for mankind?”

Clay Mathile, Aileron Founder
Running a thriving business is not a mystery.

Your business is a system, and every part of that system is designed to produce the results you get. You’ll get better results when you intentionally consider all the parts of that system and how they work together, rather than relying too heavily on one aspect of it to fix a problem. Your systems are your superpowers. When you make them visible and intentionally evolve them, you can build a thriving business that lasts.

What systems power your business? Which are serving you and which are holding you back?
Running a thriving business improves lives.

We know work and life can exist in harmony, and when they do, people and businesses thrive. To that end, we know business ownership can be a source of joy and fulfillment, not stress and strain. We believe success is illustrated not by how much time you spend working, but by how well you use your time at work and how much you enjoy your business. We also see an 80-hour work week not as a sign of success to be lauded, but more likely as a symptom of an ineffective system that can be improved.

What would it feel like if your work and your life existed in harmony?
Working on the business is as important as working in the business.

There’s a delicate balance between managing the day-to-day and leading for the future. While modern work culture can overemphasize efficiency and execution, we know when to pause and prioritize thinking before doing. We leverage a disciplined, systematic approach to managing the business that aligns your energy to the areas that need it most and preserves your business for the long-term.

What would it look like if you worked on the parts of your business that need your attention the most?
We’re all in the people business.

We know that caring for the business means developing the people who power it. We believe people are driven by meaning, belonging, and a shared mission, and that when given all three, they show up every day as their best selves ready to do their best work. We support people with effective process, intentional culture, and conscious leadership, knowing that when relationships are rooted in trust, empathy, and genuine care, people thrive, and metrics follow.

*How would your business change if your people were getting exactly what they needed to thrive?*
Leading others starts with leading yourself.

The best leaders lead themselves first. We know that working on ourselves to grow our awareness and show up intentionally allows us to better lead at work and beyond. We act with curiosity, empathy, and humility as we seek to understand ourselves, others, and situations more deeply. We embrace that we don’t have all the answers and we’re not always right. This leadership style requires courage and authenticity, but it allows us to meet others where they’re at and influence the outcome of any situation.

What would it look like to lead with courage and authenticity?
Join us in building better businesses and better lives

The work of building a thriving business isn’t always easy, but it’s the work worth doing. We believe when you grow a thriving business, you’re not just changing your life – you’re improving the lives of your team members, their families, their communities, and the entire nation.

We invite you to join us in changing the world.

“It’s hard work. It really is hard work to run an organization of empowered people.”

Clay Mathile, Aileron Founder
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