

The Jason Cavness Experience

Emerging Trends for
Startups and Leaders

The
Jason Cavness
EXPERIENCE
Podcast



About Jason Cavness



Jason is an INJF tattooed Retired U.S. Army Officer and CEO/Founder of CavnessHR. Which provides HR to companies with 49 or fewer people.

He hosts The Jason Cavness Experience, a top 2.5% and top 81 tech global podcast with 300+ conversations.

His motto: “Be Great Every Day.”

Start Here: Emerging Trends for Startups and Leaders

The startup world moves fast and the way we lead has to move with it.

With over 300 conversations on The Jason Cavness Experience, I've seen clear signals emerge: trends that aren't just headlines. But patterns shaping how founders build, lead and adapt.

This eBook highlights five of those trends. Straight from the real stories and lived experiences of builders across industries.

Each section includes guest insights, a short reflection from my own path and a prompt to help you apply what you've learned to your own journey.

Be Great Every Day!

Jason

The Rise of AI and Advanced Tech

AI isn't coming, it's here. Founders who embrace it are moving faster and creating smarter products.

Whether it's using Gen-AI to automate tasks or integrating machine learning into platforms. AI is now a baseline requirement for driving innovation.

But it's not just about the tools. Founders need to adopt an experimentation mindset and see AI as an enabler.

Guest Insights:

Agnis Stibe: Associate Professor at the department of Business Innovation at The Business School of RMIT University Vietnam and an Extraordinary Professor of Artificial Intelligence for Society 5.0 at the University of Pretoria.

“If you're afraid of AI, lean into that fear. It means there's something worth learning.”

My Experience

Through CavnessHR, I've seen firsthand how AI can support small businesses. But to unlock this, I had to get past my own assumptions and start learning the tech myself, even as a non-technical founder.

Actionable Tip:

Explore one AI tool this week that could improve your startup's operations, even in a small way. Document what you learn.

Reflection Question:

What's one task in your business that AI could improve, if you weren't afraid to try it?

Prioritize Customer Discovery Before You Build

Too many startups build first and validate later, if ever. The most successful founders flip this. They talk to customers early, test assumptions and make sure they're solving a real, urgent problem before investing time and money into a product.

This trend isn't just about lean startup principles. It's about empathy, insight and discipline. Validation before code.

Guest Insights:

Julius Carter: Founder

“The founders who win don’t just pitch better. They understand their users better. They do the hard work of listening before building.”

My Experience

When I started CavnessHR, I was tempted to build features based on what I thought small business owners needed.

Customer interviews taught me they wanted clarity and someone they could trust with HR headaches.

Actionable Tip:

Identify 3 potential customers. Ask them what their biggest challenge is in the area you want to solve.

Reflection Question:

Are you solving a problem people care about or just building a solution you hope they want?

Content Creation and Digital Branding Matter More Than Ever

In today's landscape, visibility often beats ability, especially early on. Founders who create content, share their journey and build in public are building trust and audiences long before they launch.

It's not about going viral. It's about showing up consistently and authentically.

Whether it's through LinkedIn posts, YouTube channels, or livestreamed podcasts. Founders are becoming media brands. Content is no longer optional, it's a growth strategy.

Christina Brennan: Stand Up Comedian

“People don't connect with perfection. They connect with progress. Show up as you are and you'll find your tribe.”

My Experience

I used to think content was just marketing. But now I see it as relationship-building. Sharing clips from The Jason Cavness Experience. Behind-the-scenes moments and lessons from my startup journey has helped me connect with founders, investors and partners across the world. It's been one of the highest ROI things I've done.

Actionable Tip:

Commit to one platform. Post once a week. It doesn't need to be perfect, just consistent. Document your journey, share a lesson, or highlight someone else's insight.

Reflection Question:

What's stopping you from sharing your story and what could change if you started?

Building with Purpose and Social Impact

A growing number of founders aren't just building to profit. They're building to make a difference. Whether it's closing the racial wealth gap, improving access to healthcare, or democratizing education. Today's entrepreneurs are aligning business goals with meaningful missions.

Purpose isn't a buzzword, it's a strategy. It helps recruit talent, attract customers and build long-term resilience.

More than ever, investors and users are looking for businesses that stand for something real.

Guest Insights:

Rafael Masters: co-founder of Vulcan Augmetics

“We’re building affordable prosthetics for people who’ve lost limbs. It’s not just tech. It’s dignity, independence and access to life.”

My Experience

With CavnessHR, I'm not just trying to streamline HR. I'm trying to support small business owners who don't have HR teams and are often overlooked by traditional providers. This purpose is what gets me through the tough days. It reminds me that the work matters.

Actionable Tip:

Clarify your “north star.” **What societal or personal problem are you committed to solving?** Make sure your team and customers see it, too.

Reflection Question:

If your company disappeared tomorrow, what impact would be lost. Beyond just revenue?

Workplace Culture and Employee Well-Being Are Non-Negotiable

Startups that ignore workplace culture early often pay for it later. Toxic environments, unclear expectations and burnout don't just hurt morale.

They kill momentum.

Founders who prioritize team health, psychological safety, and culture-building from day one are building stronger, more sustainable companies.

Good culture isn't perks, it's trust, clarity and care.

Guest Insights:

Glenn Akramoff: Author of The Human-Centered Team

“Everyone deserves a good place to work. Culture doesn't happen by accident. Leaders build it on purpose.”

My Experience

From the start of building CavnessHR, I knew culture wasn't something to do later. It had to be foundational. My background in the military taught me that trust, clarity and respect shape how teams perform under pressure.

I applied that same mindset early: setting expectations, communicating directly and building an environment where people feel supported. Culture wasn't an afterthought. It was the strategy.

Actionable Tip:

Start small. Set up 1:1 check-ins, create clear expectations and ask your team what support they need. Repeat regularly.

Reflection Question:

How would your employees describe your company culture and is it what you want it to be?

Closing Thoughts

The startup journey isn't just about building products. It's about building wisely, leading intentionally and adapting fearlessly.

These five trends aren't just predictions. They're patterns I've seen play out through conversations with real founders, operators and innovators.

The guests on The Jason Cavness Experience don't just talk about change. They live it and their stories offer a roadmap for where leadership and entrepreneurship are headed.

Whether you're just starting out or deep into your venture. I hope this ebook gives you insights to reflect on actions to take.

Be Great Every Day!

Jason Cavness

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