Building Apps and Running a Business with AI Agents

Lecture Close-Reading Brief · Nov 12, 2026 at 3:59 PM

Building Apps and Running a Business with AI Agents

Overview

In this presentation and podcast episode from *How I AI*, host Clavo interviews William Emo (founder of Hackba and creator of Mural Chat) about how modern AI tools enable a solo founder to build a native mobile app from scratch and operate a lean company using specialized AI agents [S0001]. The discussion covers William's motivations for creating a Norwegian language-learning application, his prompt-driven development workflow in Swift, and his organizational framework of Lord of the Rings-themed AI bots that manage business operations [S0001, S0010, S0072].

Central claims

- **Programming languages are decoupled from human staffing:** With AI agents writing code, developers can choose the optimal programming language for user experience rather than selecting a language based on the developers they happen to know [S0010, S0012].
- **Design vocabulary replaces traditional coding skills:** Building sophisticated software requires product taste, minimal design principles, and specific descriptive language rather than manual fluency in low-level syntax [S0020].

- **AI functions as an infinitely patient tutor:** Language acquisition and complex problem-solving thrive when learners utilize a non-judgmental, corrective AI interface that enforces total immersion [S0005, S0048, S0049].
- **Lean operations scale via agentic oversight:** A solo founder can manage multiple parallel business workflows by organizing AI assistants into thematic personas with broad tool access [S0061, S0073, S0078].

Argument and evidence

Claim	Supporting reasoning or reported evidence	Condition/limitation	Sources
Traditional language learning apps fail to provide immersion.	People in Norway are polite and switch to English when a learner stumbles, preventing real conversational reinforcement.	Does not apply in environments where speakers refuse to switch languages.	[S0004, S0006]
AI models enable solo creators to build native applications.	William built Mural Chat in Swift using GPT-4o Live and Codex without prior Swift experience.	Requires detailed product specifications and iteration on aesthetics.	[S0010, S0012, S0014]
Broad system access maximizes agent utility.	Giving agents read and write access to G Suite, Linear, Notion, calendars, and CRMs eliminates manual	Founder intentionally excludes write access to bank accounts and customer data.	[S0076, S0077, S0078]

	data entry.		

Key examples and their purpose

- **Mural Chat (Norwegian Learning App):** Illustrates how an AI voice interface can simulate an immersive village environment that refuses to speak English, continuously correcting grammar and sentence tense while tracking vocabulary flashcards [S0005, S0042, S0047].
- **The Fellowship of the Ring Bot Architecture:** Illustrates how role-based task distribution (such as Gollum for chief of staff, Legolas for marketing, Gimli for accounts, and Sam for customer success) provides a solo founder with functional workplace colleagues [S0072, S0073, S0074].
- **Three Pipes Internal HR System:** Illustrates how an AI agent can automatically parse emails, calendars, and meeting notes to record candidate interactions, summarize data, and rank interviewees [S0083].

Scope, limitations and counterpoints

- **Maintenance and Support Burden:** William initially built Mural Chat exclusively for personal use and hesitated to share it publicly because he wanted to avoid managing user expectations and support queues [S0021].
- **Cost and Token Budgets:** Running real-time voice models incurs financial costs; William notes that chatting with Mural costs approximately $3 to $5 per 30 minutes, which he handles by allocating a fixed token budget [S0050, S0056, S0057].

- **Existential Dependency Risk:** William expresses a psychological counterpoint regarding total reliance on automation, noting that his primary fear is waking up to find that AI agents have stopped working, which would leave him overwhelmed by managing parallel sales, hiring, and operations [S0093].

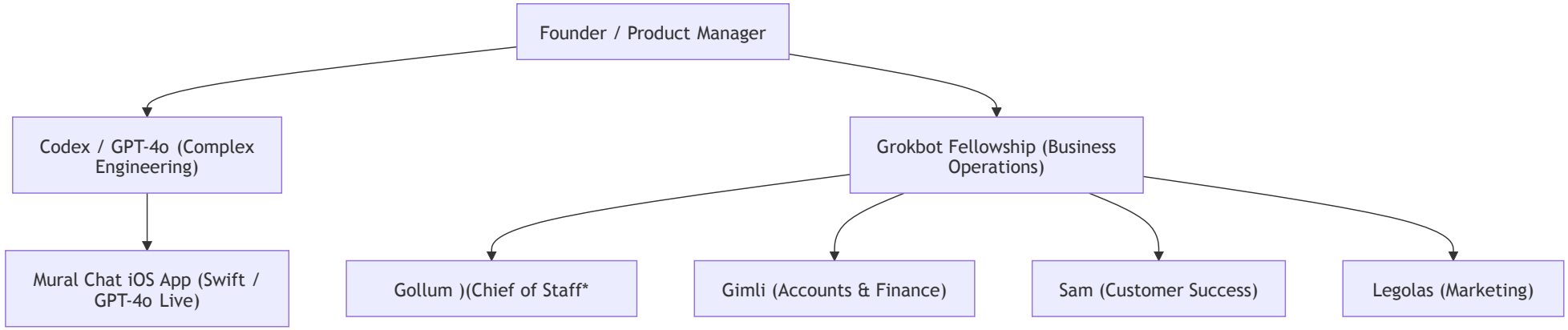
Audience questions and replies

- **When did you start learning Norwegian?** William explains that he maintained a 1,000-day streak on Duolingo, took a short grammar course, and passed the Norwegian language exams before deleting Duolingo because it could not support fluid, real-world conversations [S0044, S0046].
- **Is the app expensive to run?** William clarifies that it costs about $3 to $5 for 30 minutes of interaction, and he funds a small OpenAI budget to let users experiment freely [S0056, S0057].
- **What is your prompting strategy when an agent fails?** William states that he first reboots the agent, becomes more specific with instructions, asks the agent to review its own output, or pairs a Grokbot with a Cursor agent for validation [S0089, S0090, S0091].

Useful points to retain

- **The Growth Mindset Meta-Skill:** Approaching complex tasks—whether learning a language or building an app—with the foundational confidence that the problem is solvable allows creators to ask the right questions and iterate toward success [S0001, S0049].

- **Low Ego in Learning:** Embracing mistakes and accepting corrections from an infinitely patient AI tutor accelerates skill development without personal embarrassment [S0049].
- **Structured Project Silos:** Organizing work into dedicated projects (such as operations, growth, sales, and content) within AI workspaces maintains clarity across diverse business functions [S0065, S0066, S0067, S0068].


Founder / Product Manager
Codex / GPT-4o (Complex Engineering)
Grokbot Fellowship (Business Operations)
Mural Chat iOS App (Swift / GPT-4o Live)
Gollum)(Chief of Staff*
Gimli (Accounts & Finance)
Sam (Customer Success)
Legolas (Marketing)

[Interpretive comment: The diagram above outlines William's operational separation between heavy code generation and specialized persona-based business management [S0069, S0073, S0074].

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S0001 00:00:00

I tried building this app, but it just wasn't a great experience. Bombed the hackathon. I think it probably came in last. The meta skill that you have, which is like a growth mindset, which is I can learn Norwegian. Like I can learn something. If you just have this confidence that this thing is a solvable problem, learning a language is a solvable problem, building an app is a solvable problem. And if you can just ask the right questions and get the right feedback, you can get there. I want to speak Norwegian with someone, something first that wouldn't judge me and something that would correct me. Now I know it's kind of quaint in some parts and some conversations that you want to be skeptical about what AI has access to. For me, I just let all that fly out the window. The only thing it doesn't have write access to is the bank. You run a business and like me, like to keep that business lean with agents. So tell me a little bit about how you run your business with agents. I don't get frustrated. I get scared because I'm so dependent on agents now that I fear for myself. What if agents go to zero tomorrow? What am I supposed to do? Welcome back to How I AI. I'm Clavo, product leader and AI obsessive here on a mission to help you build better with these new tools. Today, I have William Emo, founder of Hackba and creator of Mural Chat, a real-time language learning app that he built for himself to learn how to speak Norwegian of all things. William's going to show us how he went from knowing nothing about native development to hacking together one of the coolest native apps I've ever seen, plus how he uses an army of Lord of the Rings-themed rockbots to run his business as a solo founder. Let's get to it. This episode is brought to you by WorkOS. AI has already changed how we work. Tools are helping teams write better code, analyze customer data, and even handle support tickets automatically. But there's a catch. These tools only work well when they have deep access to company systems.

S0002 00:02:02

Your copilot needs to see your entire code base, your chatbot needs to search across internal docs, and for enterprise buyers, that raises serious security concerns. That's why these apps face intense IT scrutiny from day one. To pass, they need secure authentication, access controls, audit logs, the whole suite of enterprise features. Building all that from scratch, it's a massive lift. That's where WorkOS comes in.

S0003 00:02:29

WorkOS gives you drop-in APIs for enterprise features, so your app can become enterprise-ready and scale upmarket faster. Think of it like Stripe for enterprise features. OpenAI, Perplexity, and Cursor are already using WorkOS to move faster and meet enterprise demands. Join them and hundreds of other industry leaders at workos.com. Start building today. William, welcome to How I AI. Thanks for joining. Thanks, thanks, thanks for having me. So I invited you on the podcast because I saw this app that you have up, Mural, I think it's Mural Chat. And I just thought it was such a cool use of AI and something that, you know, a year or two ago would have been sort of like unimaginable for someone to build on their own, like almost impossible. And you've shown that you can build this amazing app with this really interesting use case and do it all by yourself with AI. It's just, it's kind of unbelievable to me. So tell me what brought you to building this app. Like what problem were you trying to solve? What was driving you? Yeah, I think you're also correct that a year ago, it was technically impossible. It was impossible to build an app.

S0004 00:03:46

But with a poor experience, because I tried, I was at a hackathon in San Francisco and it was, I think it was an O-thing hackathon. I tried building this app, but it just wasn't a great experience. Bombed the hackathon. I think it probably came in last with it. And the main motivation behind this is I live in Norway and I up and moved from Dubai to Norway because I wanted an adventure. I didn't know what to expect. I just hoped everyone spoke English. So as I got here, I learned that people actually speak Norwegian. And to make it by, I mean, a lot of people speak English, but you need Norwegian to get by. But then Norwegians are also very polite in the sense that if you tried to speak Norwegian and amble it poorly, they'd speak English back, unlike the French.

S0005 00:04:39

So they speak, they speak English back to you. So this might, I couldn't learn Norwegian, right? And then I tried using Duolingo. I had a thousand-day streak on Duolingo. I was always like chasing the streaks. But I wanted to speak Norwegian with someone, something first that wouldn't judge me and something that would correct me. But also, I wanted the experience. I felt like being thrown in a Norwegian village where you have no other option but to speak Norwegian, that was just the experience I wanted.

S0006 00:05:08

I love this because in our house, we are trying to, my husband and my kids are trying to learn Italian, and they're doing it this very classic language learner way, which is a combination of Duolingo and like listening to, basically these like tapes, these audio lessons. And so they're in the car and they're like, you know, hearing somebody speak Italian and they repeat it. But the only way you can really learn a language is immersion. And I love what you call out, because it's so counterintuitive, which is you said, you can't learn this language because people are so polite that they will respond to you in English and so you can't actually get that reinforcement loop of like, did I say it right? What am I supposed to hear? And so you built this app to give you that experience. Tell us a little bit about, like, are you an iOS developer? Are you like a...

S0007 00:06:04

Fancy developer?

S0008 00:06:07

So first, I have a chemical engineering degree, but I taught myself to code to do some web development. So I did a lot of web development over the last five, six years. I can write some front end. I can write some backend code to save my life.

S0009 00:06:26

Building a mobile app, I can do it with something like React Native, for instance. But I wanted today, at least when I built Mural, I wanted a native experience. So I wanted like a premium feel to it, because I felt like I could build anything, but I wanted to optimize for the best user experience possible. And I wanted to use all the better iOS features. So I decided to build in Swift.

S0010 00:06:53

Well, it wasn't going to be me building it. I needed Codex to build it. So I was building in Swift for iOS and Kotlin for Android. And guess what? When we have AI agents building stuff, like the language doesn't matter. Like the language I know doesn't matter anymore. I just choose the best possible language for the tech that I'm building. So that's why I went with Swift.

S0011 00:07:18

And Kotlin. Even though I haven't written a row of Swift in my life, you know what's really funny about this is, you know, over 10 years ago, I did like a venture-funded startup, a real startup. And we picked the language we built that application in based on who we knew could write

S0012 00:07:37

That code. So we're like, well, we know a bunch of people that can write Python and we know a bunch of people that can do this. And so we're just going to build our app in that language to optimize for humans we knew how to write that code. And now I love what you said, which is you can just pick the best language for the user experience, the thing that you want to build. And it doesn't matter if you have someone on staff that knows that language or not, because you have our friend Codex on staff. Speaking of Codex, do you mind pulling it up and just showing us how you get organized around a Swift app? I've actually never, don't tell, sorry, we're doing an admission right here, I have not built a native mobile app ever, even in the age of AI. I have not built one. So I am learning as we go. How do you, how did you kick this off? How do you, you know, how do you work it? Background, because I have some software engineering background, I understand how to architect apps, I understand what's required if I need to make the front end, back end. Also the experience that I want, I think that was the most important piece here, is the experience I wanted for this app. I used to be a product manager as well. I was a product manager for four years, so I learned to work in epics and user stories, right? Because those are closely tied to user problems. So that's one way I found I've had the best results when building AI apps. So how did you start?

S0013 00:09:05

I first started with a very long prompt that was very specific. And this prompt opened with literally, I want a very aesthetically pleasing application.

S0014 00:09:15

Like, this is my equivalent of make no mistakes, but I want an aesthetically pleasing AI application that I can learn Norwegian with. And I described the experience I wanted, which was basically, I want this application to run on GPT-4o Live, because GPT-4o Live was just released, I think, a week after. So GPT-4o Live was the technology that I tested that enabled me to build this. I don't think I'll be able to build this without GPT-4o Live today. So I specified, we need to use GPT-4o Live.

S0015 00:09:50

And then we needed to use GPT-4o Luna for any other AI, any other AI tasks on it. I described also the experience I wanted. So I wanted an orb that was, you know, a pulsating orb

S0016 00:10:06

That I could talk to that felt like a phone call, like a familiar interface that we would use. And then I went on to describe the style. So I wanted something warm. I literally wrote, I want something that feels like fall, like autumn.

S0017 00:10:23

Use fall colors. And again, it should be really beautiful. Follow design best practices like you're a senior designer at Apple. So I'm just looking at it, I'm just giving you references of like, because I needed to get the taste that I wanted. Because I live in Norway now, I love to adopt a very minimalist style. So I was like, naked, like it should be really minimalist. No element on the screen should exist unless it absolutely has to.

S0018 00:10:58

And if something isn't necessary, we will remove it or put a toggle for it. So this was the base experience. And then I requested AI to review the design after it's done. Now the first design it produced was shit. It was in dark mode.

S0019 00:11:15

In dark mode. That's like, no, this isn't going to work. Maybe that feels like autumn in Norway, right? It starts to get really...

S0020 00:11:26

So yeah, I had to refine it. I was like, first, it should be in dark mode? Not everything belongs in dark mode. Use light warm colors, experience gradients, and use liquid glass as much as possible as well. So I want to pause really quickly, because what I think is so interesting about what you just said in that prompt and our conversation so far is look, you don't need to know Swift. Like you just don't. It's none of your business. You don't need to know that maybe you should use Swift, although AI could figure that out. But what you do have that I feel like a lot of people haven't invested in their own skilling is design and product language, like truly the ability to describe what you want with specificity. And when people talk about taste, they talk about taste, all like what is taste? We need taste and really what you need is design language and references in the world that you can point to. You need to know what liquid glass is, you need to know what minimalism is, you need to know what a gradient is. And I think the more rich your reference set is when it comes to design, the better. And then on the product side, the more you know how to articulate a user journey in a way that anybody can execute on an engineer, human engineer, AI engineer, the better that workflow will be. And so, you know, when people ask me like, how do you develop taste or how do you get good at prompting, I'm like, describe websites, like use your words to describe what makes brand A versus brand B special or what makes website A or app A better. And the more you practice that, I think the better you can be at prompting.

S0021 00:13:26

Agents to do a great job. Yeah, I agree. I look at, and soon as I put this out there, I didn't intend to share it with anyone because I wanted to build this for myself to use just by myself. And then I put out a tweet, thought, hey, I made this thing. I think it's really cool. I'm not going to share it because I don't want the burden of having to maintain it and having to deal with users' expectations. Not everything has to be a business. I already have a lot of problems running a business, I don't want another one. So I put it out there and people loved it. And not just people liked the experience, but I also saw a lot of people that had similar applications.

S0022 00:14:06

And then I looked at the difference between what I built and theirs. And I noticed a lot of it just had to do with the experience, like how it felt when you looked at it, right? A lot of it was also in dark mode, like I rejected first, it had a lot of features, right? For me, I just wanted

S0023 00:14:27

Stage and a caption. A caption would be the only way you would understand what's being said if you're just hearing the language for the first time. That was my opinion. And that was the only thing I wanted. Can you show it to us real quick? We're going to put your Norwegian to the test.

S0024 00:14:45

Yeah, can do. Hear me?

S0025 00:14:52

야할 번때?

S0026 00:14:57

Was it that?

S0027 00:14:59

And you speak English?

S0028 00:15:02

And hold on. Why should it matter?

S0029 00:15:05

Yeah, please, please just speak English.

S0030 00:15:09

そしたさのさの。

S0031 00:15:14

Yeah, yeah, vi kan snakke norsk.

S0032 00:15:22

Yeah, yeah, yeah to promote them a feamine.

S0033 00:15:30

Ms not getれ them.

S0034 00:15:32

Ja, snakk i vei men.

S0035 00:15:37

they have date them men.

S0036 00:15:40

I am one, really impressed. I'm very impressed

S0037 00:15:48

at your, I mean, I know nothing about Norwegian, but it really impressed me. And too, I totally get it. Like, I get why that's the way you need it to learn, like need to learn. So can you just walk me through what that conversation we just heard kind of like was? Like, what were you talking about?

S0038 00:16:08

Basically, I was trying to, first, I was like, hi. And because Mural starts with hi and then figures out your level of language learning of speaking. So he said hi back. And then he said something complex and I said something mildly complex back. And I said, and I'm doing all right. And Mural asked me, so what am I doing? And I said, I'm in a meeting

S0039 00:16:35

With a friend. And Mural said something, but I ignored that. And I said, please, can you speak English?

S0040 00:16:42

And Mural said, no, I cannot. I cannot speak English back. I have to speak Norwegian. So I think I could pull up the past conversation. Yeah, yeah, I want to see.

S0041 00:16:56

So it was like, hi, like what you want to talk about today. I was like, oh, yeah, I was like, are you ready to start or do you want to think a little bit? I was like, and I said, can you hear me? I really said, yes, I hear you, what you want to talk about. I said, yeah, I'm in a meeting. And I said meeting wrong, I said ya og møte, but that's the wrong tense. So he says it's called i et møte.

S0042 00:17:27

Not en møte. So it corrected me as I said that, and then asked what's happening in the meeting. Then I said, can you speak English? And Mural said, I'm only going to speak Norwegian. What are you doing in the meeting? I said, please just speak English. And then you said, I understand, but I'm going to speak Norwegian, what are you talking about in the meeting?

S0043 00:17:54

And that I gave, quick, quick, quick question. When did you start learning Norwegian? Like how, how long?

S0044 00:18:03

So I started learning Norwegian. I mean, I had a thousand-day streak on Duolingo. Yeah, oh, see, I couldn't start

S0045 00:18:10

Yes, but I couldn't have this kind of conversation. I wouldn't know what to say. I'm stuck at, I'm a man or this is our phones, you know, so I would, I wouldn't be able to hold a conversation. And then I took the Norwegian, I took the Norwegian language exams.

S0046 00:18:31

And I took a course for like a week, like a short course for a week, just so I understood like grammar. I took the exams, I passed. As soon as I came out of like the exam hall, I deleted Duolingo because I was like, no, this is just completely useless. And I tried, and that was my, like, my motivation to build something like Mural started after that. So Mural's just helped me get better at practicing my Norwegian in different like settings. And, you know, this is, I could talk about like the weekend, I can also see like the words that I've learned.

S0047 00:19:11

And how well I've, you know, I've gone with, like with each one, every time it introduces flashcards, for instance, in case I want to practice like the words. Yeah, exactly. And I also have themes, because at the end of the day, you want to be able to speak these languages within a particular setting. And I can also take like a random theme about like, maybe AI uses something in the world today, it would search the internet and come up with a conversation

about that. But at the end of the day, it all lives on the talk screen. I just go here, have a conversation with Euro and I just talk about stuff, whatever, and it just keep nudging me further and correcting me as I go, and it wouldn't stop correcting me on how I say things properly. As AI adoption grows, so do your company's security risks and requirements. New frameworks, audits, and vendors keep piling on, but your team isn't getting any bigger. Most compliance tools promise automation, but you're really stuck doing all the work by hand: chasing screenshots, validating controls, and playing catch-up when audit season comes around again. Vanta works differently. Their agent trust platform is built to scale with you, not slow you down. With over 1,400 automated tests across 400 plus integrations, Vanta collects evidence and monitors your controls year-round, cutting your audit prep by 82%. Plus, you can access the Vanta Agent everywhere you work, whether your team is in Vanta every day or living in tools like Claude or Cursor. Want proof? Over 16,000 fast-growing companies like Ramp, Replit, and Harvey save time and resources while scaling fast with Vanta. My listeners can get $1,000 off by going to vanta.com/howiai. That's v-a-n-t-a dot com slash howiai for $1,000 off. So we've had a lot of impressive people on How I AI, there are a lot of impressive things. One, let's put aside that you've coded this whole thing, which is awesome. Let me just say the meta skill that you have, which is like a growth mindset, which is I can learn Norwegian, like I can learn something. And I feel like this is the skill that really helps people go very far in the age of AI, which is like if you just have this confidence that this thing is a solvable problem,

S0049 00:21:43

Learning a language is a solvable problem. Building an app is a solvable problem. Like these are solvable problems that you have the tools. And if you can just ask the right questions and get the right feedback, you can get there. I think that is just like, that is the skill of the age. And also I would say being really low ego, which is like I'm okay getting it wrong as long as I can be corrected. And I think AI is such a great teacher, because I tell this to people about learning to code. I say it is an infinitely patient private tutor, like it's not going to make fun of you, it's not going to say you're stupid, it's not going to be embarrassing. So like the ability to use AI as a tutor for any topic, let it be patient with you and let it let you make mistakes, I just, I think it's the skill that is a real signal that somebody is going to be very high impact in this, in this next phase of the world. And so that is what I'm observing of you at a higher level. No, thank you, this is, this is so like it's like given me so many ideas. The other thing I just want to pause before we go into a couple other workflows is GPT Live. So for people that don't know what GPT Live is, it's OpenAI's kind of real-time voice model. And it does really good with real-time experiences, like interruptions, which make it great for this kind of language testing. The other thing GPT Live is really good at is voice control of apps, because it's so fast. So I think we did an episode, have to dig it out, of voice control through GPT Live in your app. So I think GPT Live is a totally slept-on model that people don't appreciate how much you can do with it. The only thing I have to ask you a question is, is this expensive to run?

S0050 00:23:42

So the honest answer, yeah, but I just chunk it into like my token budget, right? I made it open source so anyone can run it, and it currently costs around

S0051 00:23:58

Costs about

S0052 00:24:00

$5 to chat with Mural for

S0053 00:24:07

I think for

S0054 00:24:09

30 minutes.

S0055 00:24:12

So for about 30 minutes, it's going to cost $5 in

S0056 00:24:16

Now, it's going to cost between $3 and $5 for 30 minutes. But then I'm building this for fun, so

S0057 00:24:24

I'm just, I put $10 on my OpenAI budget and just let folks burn it to the ground. I think it's really like $10 now. Well, what I'll also say is that's less expensive than a one-on-one tutor, and you can't call your tutor to your house in the middle of the night and say, I'm ready to practice some Norwegian. So it's, it's so cool. Okay, we're going to do a couple more workflows, we'll get you out of here. So aside from building cool apps and learning Norwegian, you run a business and like me, like to keep that business lean with agents. So tell me a little bit about how you run your business with agents.

S0058 00:25:07

Yeah, so first of all, in

S0059 00:25:11

Sometime in June, when we started planning Q3, I put together a mandate internally and I called it 100x. And this was a way for us to go 100x

S0060 00:25:26

Our current revenue goals and the way we're set up as a company without drastically increasing headcount. And this meant that we needed to use AI as much as possible without using AI to generate content or cede any of our creative work to AI tools.

S0061 00:25:44

So first of all, I had to figure out everything I, you know, I currently do. I put together a list on Notion. That was my first step, a list of everything. So as the founder, and I'm a solo founder, so I do a bit of customer success, I handle most of the inbound help currently working, I think, about 11 to 15 deals in parallel at the moment. I handle the product team as well, because I used to be a product manager. And I do a bit of like accounting, HR, interviews, like hiring, just talking to folks. And we're a team of around 25 people

S0062 00:26:24

Internally. So I wanted a way to be able to manage a lot of things. First, I wanted to hire a chief of staff. I tried hiring someone, they didn't start. They quit on like just before they started for some reason. I think that was like a Hail Mary for me.

S0063 00:26:40

So I decided to adopt AI tools and I tried different tools, right? I tried Claude first. I got used to Claude Cowork. And then for some reason, my account got banned.

S0064 00:26:52

I don't know why. I skipped it. I went back to ChatGPT and installed work.

S0065 00:27:00

And I decided to use projects. As I currently have on here, I set up projects for everything, basically, because I just wanted a siloed way to manage

S0066 00:27:12

To manage individual things I do. My company is called Hackba. So for every critical piece that I work on directly, I create a project for it. I have a project for Hackba operations. This is where I manage things like, you know, invoicing campaigns, not just. And if anyone sends me a message on Discord,

S0067 00:27:31

This is where that would likely fall into. And that task will be run from here. I have stuff for growth. So this is like, I also get like an operator brief every Sunday night of the week. So what's something we should stop doing, what's something we should stop doing and what should we keep doing? I also ask for the three highest-impact activities I should conduct this week. So that's a routine. So I use routines in low as well.

S0068 00:28:00

We built an internal tool for growth. This is what we use to, we use with our customers. We go from content ideation and all the way to distribution in bulk. I also support with the growth for bulk and content creation. So I created a project for it for sales. I did the same thing for a website, this is my podcast, everything outside code. I manage like interview briefs and all that in there, and just every other thing. So I use projects a lot with Codex. Now for Codex, I kind of reserve

S0069 00:28:36

Reserve like the complex work. So for instance, me having written Swift, so I kind of like wanted Astra to work a bit. So I wanted a frontier model on that stuff. That's what I do on

S0070 00:28:51

Codex. But on the flip side, I found Grokbot. And instantly, I think it was amazing, like it was a game changer for me because it gave me colleagues.

S0071 00:29:03

Whereas with ChatGPT, I got and like Codex, I got folders.

S0072 00:29:08

And on Grokbot, I got my fellowship, as I like to call them. If you've seen Lord of the Rings, you know what the Fellowship of the Ring is. So I just, I was first asked to create a chief of staff. I just called him Gollum.

S0073 00:29:25

Straight up, straight up. And then I asked Gollum to create everyone else. I needed all the bots for engineering, marketing, project management, account, sales, and customer success. And kind of, the personas are, you know, very close match, you know, like

S0074 00:29:43

Legolas is, you know, pretty, Legolas is the marketing dude, or the elf runs engineering. I have Gimli, the boss with the coins in accounts. Aragorn recruits everyone and, you know, sells, and Fellowship, he runs sales. And Sam always plays support. So he's customer success for this one. And yeah, our Frodo is in charge of getting the ring, is basically the product owner in this case. So our Frodo runs PM.

S0075 00:30:19

And yeah, so this, I set up the fellowship. And with my AI workflow, what I do, first of all, after setting up the fellowship and not just on Grokbot, but also on Codex, was to give it access to everything.

S0076 00:30:35

Now, I know it's counterintuitive in some parts and some conversations that you want to be skeptical about what the AI has access to and what it does and what, you know, it has read or write access to. For me, I just let all that fly out the window. The only thing it doesn't have write access to is the bank.

S0077 00:30:55

So I like, anything else can go wrong. I mean, I don't have access to customer data, right? So that's safe as well, but

S0078 00:31:05

The bank and customer data, aside from that, every other thing is all for grabs. So I gave it access to like G Suite, I gave it access. I just look at my browser window, I have like 15, 16 tabs open. And I just gave you access to everything that I could, you know, I could see from Linear, Notion, my calendar, Pipedrive, QuickBooks, everything that I had access to, I gave you access. And then for ChatGPT, like for Codex, I just enabled computer use and browser use. So if it cannot find it via API, just use my computer. That's all right, it's fine, whatever, I just give it access. It's like, allow once. I'm like, no, allow always. That's, you know, just use it. So setting those up, that was like the next thing. And that just instantly changed a lot of things for me, right? So I wasn't giving it information, I would just like

S0079 00:32:01

I could even

S0080 00:32:03

Put the typing in the input box. I would just like, give it my, like a thought, like I've been hiring and talking to like a lot of candidates.

S0081 00:32:13

I built a tool internally called Three Pipes. So, and the reason I built it is because I have a firm belief that at the end of the day, we're going to be left with systems of record, like a custom database that is designed around a problem.

S0082 00:32:30

That's what's going to be left, and an AI interface.

S0083 00:32:34

So I would build these tools internally and it just becomes systems of record. Three Pipes is for people and HR. So now I just tell my Grokbot, and the good thing is, I don't need a skill for this. I talked to a candidate and I just say to my Grokbot, hey, I just spoke to this person, get them into Three Pipes. It goes, covers my email, my calendar, looks at meeting notes, collects all that information, puts it in Three Pipes, gives me a summary, it's all done. And then scores the candidate as well and says, you spoke to 15 people, this person ranks number seven on that list just so you know, like FYI. And I skipped on that, I can switch context to something else, sales. So that's, that's like the one piece. And then the final piece of how I use AI and how I'm set up currently would be the skills that I have. So there are a couple important skills

S0084 00:33:31

That I do have. And I call this important because over time, while I've played with a lot of skills, the models have gotten a lot better that I don't need these skills anymore. So there are just very few that stuck.

S0085 00:33:43

A skill I use for growth marketing, like to create a growth marketing strategy based on what we know at Hackba, a skill to create a content strategy also based on what we know. And then my content delo skill,

S0086 00:34:02

Critical, critical skill in this, in the stack, exactly. I just, I think this is so useful. I mean, for folks that have stuck around this long in the episode, you've gotten like true gold, which is you have Codex for complex tasks, Codex projects to keep everything organized, Grokbot as you do this, very similar to me where like Grokbot has roles. So it's like your marketing role, your HR role, your sales role, you need an eye of Sauron that looks across everything for things going wrong. That's the last one, Eye of Sauron. And then you use just like skills very precisely, like very specific ones. William, this is one of my favorite, I'm not, I've done a lot of episodes, this has been one of my favorite, one of my favorite ones. I'm going to ask you our one question we ask every guest, and then I'm going to get you out of here to get back to all your awesome work. But when your Grokbot, your Codex, your Norwegian agent just is not

S0087 00:35:01

Replying to you, doing what you want, what's your prompting strategy? Are you polite? Do you yell?

S0088 00:35:07

What's the, what's the real truth?

S0089 00:35:10

So first, I just restart the agent. And she should very big

S0090 00:35:15

I just reboot, I reboot and I try again. And if it doesn't work, I try to be a bit more specific, right? Because I know how to do it already, I just don't want to do it because it's like low-level work. So I get very specific on do this first, test this first, and also review what you've done to be sure this is what I asked for. So just ask Kitty to like go over it again. And more recently, I've had

S0091 00:35:50

My Grokbot drive my Cursor agent. So while the Cursor agent would do like some random stuff that isn't really accurate, my Grokbot is sort of like that agent that goes and reviews all that again and improves it also. So that, that's been like one way. But the agents have just been like

S0092 00:36:13

Really good that if it doesn't get it, I just go on Twitter and I blame Tejas for not fixing it. Tejas, exactly, that team was great, you know, for not fixing Codex, like, yeah, I try, I just switch to agent and use something else and wait and update it. But yeah, that's, that's typically my strategy. I don't get frustrated. The frustration I feel is if it eventually doesn't get it at the quality I want, I get scared because

S0093 00:36:46

I'm so dependent on agents now that I fear for myself. I'm like, what if all these tags? What if, like, what if agents go to zero tomorrow? What am I supposed to do? How am I supposed to manage 15 different, like, sales opportunities in a week in tandem, having all these calls, still doing, like, hiring, all these things at once? I get, that's the only, like, panic attack I get, because I'm like, if this goes down, I'm screwed.

S0094 00:37:15

What am I going to do?

S0095 00:37:17

What, what a perfect end to our episode. William, this has been super, super fun. For our audience, where can we find you and how can we be helpful?

S0096 00:37:27

Yeah, I'm, I'm on LinkedIn. I'm on X at Ilo William Ilo. On LinkedIn, just find you, dude, it with

S0097 00:37:39

Headphones, like I fly small planes and off these. So that's, that's a way to find me. And if anyone's interested in growth, especially if you have a dev tool product and you want to reach an extra 5, 10k users, I'm always happy to chat about, like, how we could do that together, basically. Amazing. Well, thank you so much for joining How I AI.

S0098 00:38:03

Thanks, thanks for having me.

S0099 00:38:06

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