



Zoom Opens Nominations for First U.S. Solopreneur 50 List, Recognizing AI-First Solo Business Leaders

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Inaugural grant and recognition program from Zoom highlights solopreneur success and scalability through AI integration and adaptation

SAN JOSE, Calif., Jan. 08, 2026 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Today, Zoom opens nominations for its **Zoom Solopreneur 50 List (ZSP50)**, a first-of-its-kind recognition and grant program celebrating the individuals who are redefining entrepreneurship by building and growing businesses on their own.

Nominations are open until **5 p.m. ET on February 13, 2026**. Individuals can nominate themselves or others by completing a short form at zoom.com/solo50.

The ZSP50 will honor 50 trailblazing “businesses of one” across the U.S. — independent creators, consultants, educators, inventors, and innovators using technology, ingenuity, and purpose to make an outsized impact. For business owners working alone, this is the opportunity to be part of a select group of doers with similar drive and grit.

“AI is expanding what a single person can accomplish,” said **Kimberly Storin, Chief Marketing Officer at Zoom**. “Solopreneurs are using AI to remove friction, move faster, reach further, and operate with a level of sophistication that used to be out of reach. The Solopreneur 50 recognizes the builders proving that scale today is driven by capability, not company size. Zoom is focused on enabling that future.”

Scaling Solos with AI

There are over 30MM small businesses in the U.S., 82% of which operate without employees ([U.S. Chamber of Commerce](#)). For an increasing number of solopreneurs, AI has become a core operating capability, enhancing decision-making, execution, and customer engagement.

Zoom, in partnership with Upwork, [recently surveyed more than 1,000 small businesses](#) (SMB), including solopreneurs, 64% of whom said they couldn't be in business without AI. What's more, 91% of small businesses saw a return on their AI investments within one year, and SMBs and solopreneurs report that AI has helped them reduce business costs (82%), increase customer acquisition (91%), and increase customer retention (87%).

Many solopreneurs can quickly adopt and iterate with AI tools, unencumbered by legacy systems or lengthy approval processes, allowing them to test, learn, and apply new capabilities in real time.

“Some of the most effective uses of AI aren't coming from big companies – they're solopreneurs,” said **Lisa Scheiring, Global Small Business Advisor** (informally known as the “**Chief Solo Officer**”) at Zoom. “They're not waiting for polished playbooks or permission; they're using AI to solve real problems in real time, from gaining continuous visibility into operations, to accessing expertise on demand, to turning a single hour of work into an entire marketing campaign. That speed and agility are real advantages, and it's reshaping what's possible for armies of one.”

The ZSP50 is part of Zoom's broader initiative to provide independent business builders with research, recognition, and real-world tools to scale their success.

The ZSP50 Program

The ZSP50 recognizes a growing community of individuals who operate and scale their ventures independently, with no full-time employees, across multiple sectors including but not limited to technology and design, wellness, media, and social impact.

Eligible nominees must:

- Operate a U.S.-based business with no full-time employees
- Have been in operation for at least 12 months
- Demonstrate innovation, independence, and measurable impact

A jury of experts drawn from Zoom's network will evaluate solopreneur nominees across five dimensions that reflect what it takes to build a durable solo business today:

- Originality of idea or execution
- Demonstrated financial performance
- Measurable business impact
- Authentic connection to culture and community
- Influence in shaping conversations, markets, or communities.

Honorees will be announced in Q2 2026, and gain exposure through Zoom's platforms and media ecosystem, access to a community of peers and mentors, and eligibility for financial grants awarded to the top-five honorees to accelerate their growth and impact.

For more information, visit zoom.com/solo50. Contact Zoom at solo@zoom.com with additional questions or inquiries.

About Zoom

Zoom's mission is to provide an AI-first work platform for human connection. Reimagine teamwork with Zoom Workplace — Zoom's open collaboration platform with AI Companion that empowers teams to be more productive. Together with Zoom Workplace, Zoom's Business Services for sales, marketing, and customer experience teams, including Zoom Contact Center, strengthen customer relationships throughout the customer lifecycle. Founded in 2011, Zoom is publicly traded (NASDAQ:ZM) and headquartered in San Jose, California.

Get more information at zoom.com.

Media Contact

rebecca.bernhard@zoom.com

press@zoom.us



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