

## Interview with Michael Hough, Founder at Advance Medical, Inc.

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Published January 20, 2018

<http://usaweekly.com/2018/01/interview-with-michael-hough-founder-at-advance-medical-inc/>

Starting a business is a big achievement for many entrepreneurs, but maintaining one is the larger challenge. There are many standard challenges that face every business whether they are large or small. It is not easy running a company, especially in a fast-paced, ever-changing business world. Technology advances, new hiring strategies, and now, political changes coming with the new administration, all add to the existing business challenges that entrepreneurs, business owners, and executives have to deal with.

Maximizing profits, minimizing expenses and finding talented staff to keep things moving seem to be top challenges for both SMBs and large corporations. We have been interviewing companies from around the world to discover what challenges they are facing in their businesses. We also asked each company to share business advice they would give to a younger version of themselves.

Below is our interview with Michael Hough, Founder at Advance Medical, Inc.:

### **What does your company do?**

Advance Medical is a world-leading health services provider of innovative, physician-driven programs offering advocacy and support to people in medical crisis. Founded in 1999, Advance Medical employs 800 dedicated health professionals, including 450 medical doctors who collaborate with leading experts across the globe in every sector of medicine to improve patient care. With offices in Barcelona, Boston, Lisbon, London, Shanghai, Sao Paulo, and Santiago de Chile, Advance Medical's team speaks more than 20 languages and has provided clarity and comfort to hundreds of thousands of people in more than 170 countries. Advance Medical's Expertise on Demand programs are available to more than 35 million people through partnerships with 330 companies, including Fortune 100 Employers, leading Insurers, and other Groups who have given Advance Medical's life-changing benefit to their membership.

### **What is your role? What do you enjoy most about your role?**

I am the North American founder and leader of Advance Medical. I sit at the connection between sales and account management and operations. I make sure that we walk-the-walk (and not just talk-the-talk) and are always delivering increasing value in our services to the marketplace. It is beyond rewarding to help people find solutions and a peace-of-mind when they are struggling with critical medical issues and the complexities of navigating the health system. Once you know how miserable and unfair being a patient can be, it is no longer a job, but a moral obligation to help.

### **What are the biggest challenges in your business right now?**

What keeps us on our toes is marketing. Healthcare is an environment dominated by the tectonic forces of a fledgling, well-funded, health-tech revolution. We work very hard at bringing forward-thinking organizations around to understand that when you ensure quality medicine is being delivered at the individual-level, there is a virtuous cycle of benefits: from lower expenses to improved employee presenteeism and employee relations. And the patient experience matters. For example, there is not an app that can show compassion to someone going through a cancer diagnosis.

### **If you could go back in time, what business advice would you give to a younger version of yourself?**

The “younger me” did not understand what I could bring to healthcare of which the other tens of millions of people in the field had not already. The world opened up the day that I realized that the people who know what needs to be done are not necessarily the ones doing anything about it. And the people who are indeed doing things to solve these complex issues do not necessarily know what needs to be done. My advice to a younger version of myself is to trust your gut more. It would have saved a lot of sleepless nights trying to reconcile what made sense to me and what everyone else was doing.