

Braden Wallake, The Crying CEO (2022)

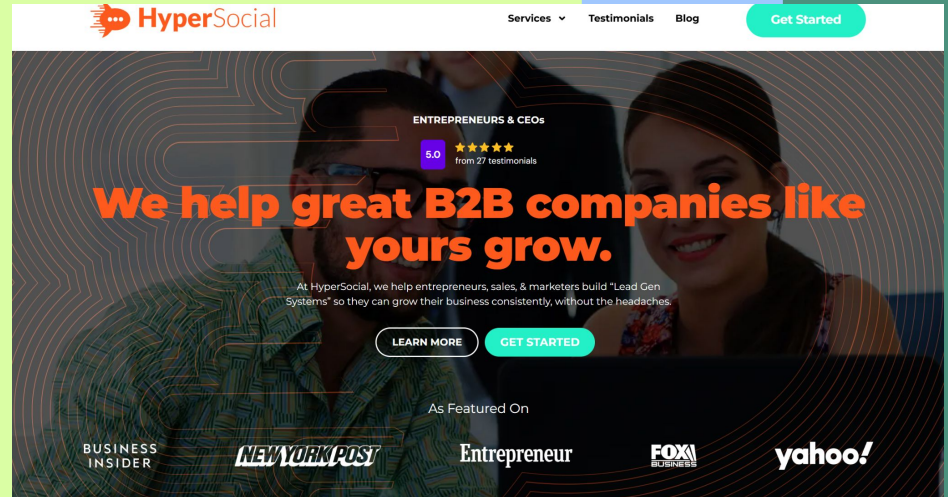


Sarah Bedore CMM 305 4/17/2026

Company Overview

HyperSocial is a...

- Small B2B marketing and sales agency
- Began in 2019
- Fewer than 50 employees
- Relies heavily on LinkedIn to implement their strategies and establish communication with the public



The Incident

- Selfie of himself crying
- Expressed the emotional toll this took on him
- Hardest thing he's ever done
- "It isn't professional to tell my employees that I love them.

But from the bottom of my heart, I hope they know how much I do."



Braden Wallake • 2nd

CEO of HyperSocial | CEO of HyperSphere | 5x College Drop...
20h • Edited • 🌐

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This will be the most vulnerable thing I'll ever share.

I've gone back and forth whether to post this or not.

We just had to layoff a few of our employees.

I've seen a lot of layoffs over the last few weeks on LinkedIn.

Most of those are due to the economy, or whatever other reason.

Ours?

My fault.

I made a decision in February and stuck with that decision for far too long.

Now, I know my team will say that "we made that decision together", but I lead us into it.

And because of those failings, I had to do today, the toughest thing I've ever had to do.

We've always been a people first business. And we always will be.

Days like today, I wish I was a business owner that was only money driven and didn't care about who he hurt along the way.

But I'm not.

Public Reaction

Negative Outcomes

- Self-serving nonsense that is tone-deaf, cringe, and absurdly narcissistic
- Criticized for crying despite him still having an actual job
- “if we all posted a picture crying we would never get hired, we are forced to be resilient in our industries.”

Positive Outcome

- “To those who would look to hire me, I’m only interested in working for people like Braden Wallake who has a positive outlook on life,”

What Went Wrong?

- Addressed his own emotions
- Professional Platform of LinkedIn
- Previous knowledge of layoffs
- Public Perception
- No initial aid in employee transition

- Internal memo for upcoming changes
- Release public statement to address the employees in a timely manner

Action Steps:

- Guidance and support in their transition into the job market
- Rebranding to build credibility and trust

What I did

- “No, my intent was not to make it about me or victimize myself, I am sorry it came across that way.”
- “Try to make better of this situation and start a thread for people looking for work, Here it is - Comment away. This is for YOU to start a new future. To highlight YOU.”

What they did

Takeaways

- Perception does not match intent
- Visual content reflects the brand as a whole
- The impact on employees/customers matters

GET STARTED

HyperSocial Wall of Love

Hear what our customers have to say about their experiences working with us!

ugh Culver
Under

Chris Schneider
Account Executive

Nancy Marcucci
Owner

Hi, I'm Nancy Marcucci, Owner of TAB True North in Greater Boston. I work with privately held CEOs and business owners to help them gain clarity, improve execution, and grow their businesses through peer advisory boards and executive coaching...

Read more

Eric Fierro
Business Develop...

Working with Emily and Braden has been the best experience with their combined knowledge and excellent organizational skills. They have helped me

Glenn Morreale
Director

Glenn Morreale, former owner of a distribution company with over 100 employees and now a director at The Alternative Board of Central NJ. I've worked with Emily, Churra on

Fernanda
Sales executive

Great team that helped our company to get more

References -

CBS Interactive. (n.d.). *CEO who posted crying selfie while announcing layoffs responds to backlash*. CBS News.

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/braden-wallake-crying-selfie-ceo-linkedin-hypersocial/>

Kiderlin, S. (2022, August 11). *CEO posts crying selfie on linkedin after laying off employees-and it goes viral*. CNBC.

<https://www.cnbc.com/2022/08/11/ceo-posts-crying-selfie-on-linkedin-after-laying-off-employees-and-it-goes-viral-.html>