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Nick Foles's Pre-Game Text From Drew Brees Is a 3-Word Secret for Succeeding Under Pressure



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Nick Foles (<https://www.inc.com/justin-bariso/super-bowl-mvp-nick-foles-post-game-interview-powerful-lesson-leadership.html>) had all kinds of weapons at his disposal for the Super Bowl in what turned out to be a total team performance (<https://www.inc.com/scott-mautz/a-6-year-study-reveals-surprising-key-to-team-performance-9-ways-to-enable-it.html>). Two incredibly skilled running backs to hand the ball off to; a daring, determined coach; a cadre of talented receivers; a fantastic offensive line; and an athletic defense.

But no weapon may have been as potent as a pre-game text he received from his friend, New Orleans Saints quarterback (and future hall-of-famer) Drew Brees. The two quarterbacks went to the same Texas high school (a decade apart) and became fast friends because of the tie. Foles told the press (<http://profootballtalk.nbcsports.com/2018/02/05/drew-brees-pregame-text-to-nick-foles-reminded-him-that-its-just-football/>) about the text he got from Brees:

"A lot of the messages I'll keep to myself, but the big thing was going into this game, he just reminded me that it's just football. There's a lot going on, pre-game, a longer pre-game, a big half-time show, but at the end of the day when you're out there, the game will settle down, and it'll just be football."

It's just football.

NEXT
ARTICLE

Even on the biggest stage of Foles's life, with literally millions of armchair quarterbacks waiting to throw their beer cans at the screen, it's just football. Given what Foles has been going through with his wife having serious health problems and a terrible prior year with the St. Louis Rams that nearly made him retire, it's just football.

Foles went on to say that the sentiment of the text was true and that it settled him down. A settled Foles meant he leveraged one of his greatest strengths, what fellow Eagle players have called "tremendous poise." That poise led Foles to Super Bowl MVP honors.

That's the power of keeping things in perspective.

The fact is, Brees's advice is a powerful reminder to keep things in perspective before any big event you're facing. The sentiment "it's just football" underscores the point that we can't elevate any event in our life, no matter how seemingly big, to a point where it impedes our performance in that very event or destroys our ability to enjoy it.

Big speech to give? It's just a speech.

Big meeting next week? It's just a meeting.

Big interview tomorrow? Well, you know...

Now, I get that this is easier said than done. Even if it's just a meeting, it's an important one and you still want to do your best, no? So what else can you do to calm your mind and help keep things in perspective in advance of (and during) a big event so that you can just...perform?

1. Create muscle memory.

Nothing stills the mind like knowing you're prepared. I mean like preparing to the point where rehearsal, repetition, and background work has your "output" so ingrained that muscle memory kicks in even when stress is running high. Not surprisingly, Foles prepared like a fiend for the big game.

As a professional speaker, I always employ this tactic. I rehearse until I could do the talk backward. Then, even if I'm nervous before getting on a stage in front of thousands, I know I'm ready and a calm takes over because I've done everything I can to be ready. At that point, it's easy to say to myself, "It's just a speech," because I know it's just a speech where very little is likely to go wrong.

2. Find your anchor.

New, scary experiences make us feel like we're untethered; like we're drifting in the wind when we yearn to have our feet on the ground. In such times, recall what *won't* change, even from a bad outcome, like your connection with your family, your core values, your desire to become the best version of yourself, etc. In other words, all the things that really matter.

Foles was clear that his wife and daughter were his anchors all the way up to game time.

3. Come from a place of service.

It's easier to focus on executing with excellence when you're worried about how the outcome will serve others rather than being distracted by how it will reflect on you.

Big speech to give? It's not about you, it's about the audience.

Big meeting? It's about serving the team and helping them succeed or advancing a higher-order goal, not just about looking good.

Big interview? Are you focused on how you could best serve the job/company versus yourself?

When you're focused on bringing an attitude of being in service to an event you're more forgiving of and less distracted by errors you're making along the way and will less harshly judge yourself--people appreciate being served after all. Foles is so focused on serving others that he's talked about being a pastor after football.

So if you want to crush your next pressure cooker outing like Nick Foles did, give yourself some pre-game MVP messaging (Most Valued Perspective).

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Brexit, Bots, and Mass Migration: What European Businesses Can Expect in 2018



By Zoë Henry [@ZoeLaHenry](https://twitter.com/ZoeLaHenry) (<http://www.twitter.com/ZoeLaHenry>)



CREDIT: Getty Images

London (<https://www.inc.com/zoe-henry/london-mayor-sadiq-khan-says-london-open-for-business.html>) is still the center of entrepreneurship in Europe, but it may not be for long.

Last year, more than \$19 billion was invested in E.U. startups, (<https://www.inc.com/inc5000eu>) up from \$14.4 billion in 2016, according to the "State of European Tech" (<http://news.atomico.com/presenting-the-state-of-european-tech-report-2017/>) report from the London-based venture capital firm Atomico. And while the lion's share of that (\$5.4 billion) still went to the U.K., Germany and France were close behind, with the latter challenging the U.K. for the total number of deals closed. Meanwhile, with the advent of the U.K.'s break from the European Union, or "Brexit," capital continues to flow into lesser-known cities including Amsterdam, Munich, Vienna and Barcelona, as more than 21 percent of founders moved to another country--particularly, to Central or Eastern Europe--to launch their businesses, the report found.

Back in the U.K., access to foreign talent is understandably top of mind. As many as one in four British companies are setting up offices in continental Europe, according to recently published data (https://www.svb.com/uploadedFiles/Content/Trends_and_Insights/Reports/Startup_Outlook_Report/UK/SVB-SUO-UK-report.pdf) from Silicon Valley Bank.

"What's happening in Europe right now is similar to what you are seeing in the U.S., with Silicon Valley realizing it's not the center of technology anymore," says the Paris-based investor and serial entrepreneur Romain Lavault, referring to major corporations' growing interest in middle-tier U.S. cities like Los Angeles, Austin, and Chicago (<https://www.inc.com/business-insider/amazon-hq2-city-finalist-5-billion-headquarters.html>). (Amazon, for instance, is considering placing its second headquarters in one of these cities.) "Now, there is a more de-centralized startup ecosystem in Europe," adds Lavault, who is an investor with the E.U.-focused venture capital firm Partech Ventures.

While this doesn't bode well for the U.K. and its startups, existing European startup hubs including Paris (<https://www.inc.com/zoe-henry/emmanuel-macron-vows-to-make-france-a-startup-nation.html>), Berlin (<https://www.inc.com/zoe-henry/delivery-hero-ipo-berlin-business-hub-2017.html>) and Stockholm (<https://www.inc.com/zoe-henry/stockholm-sweden-hub-fast-growing-private-companies-2017-inc5000-europe.html>) are poised to benefit. Here are three other top trends for European businesses in 2018.

1. Economic tailwinds

In 2018, macro-economic factors could help E.U. entrepreneurs to grow their bottom lines. Earlier this month, the E.U. bloc raised its forecasts for economic growth, insisting that it would see its fastest expansion since the end of the global economic crisis. (<https://www.wsj.com/articles/eurozone-set-for-pickup-in-economic-growth-1518003272>) The overall economy is projected to expand by 2 percent in 2018.

Meanwhile, the relative strength of the European startup ecosystem has been bolstered by a series of recent exits, including the Finnish mobile game developer Rovio, which went public at a €896 million (\$1 billion) valuation last September, (<https://www.inc.com/erik-sherman/an-angry-birds-ipo-might-tempt-investors-but-discr.html>) as well as HelloFresh, the German e-commerce meal subscription business (<https://www.inc.com/zoe-henry/germany-election-2017-angela-merkel.html>) that raised €320 million (\$396 million) in its November public offering. Still, it's worth noting that there were significantly fewer exits last year than in 2016--550, compared with 700 the previous year, according to Tech.eu data. (<http://tech.eu/features/18476/tech-eu-european-exits-report-2017/>)

This year, some analysts are suggesting that public offerings will outpace 2017, according to a *Bloomberg* report. (<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-12-21/these-are-the-european-ipo-that-investors-are-eyeing-for-2018>) Music streaming service Spotify is likely to be a bright spot, as it plans to go public in a direct listing on the NYSE sometime before the end of the first quarter. That could herald more E.U. IPOs in 2018, including the Dutch payments processor Adyen and Symphogen, a biopharmaceutical firm based in Denmark.

Of course, to truly compete with the U.S. and Asia, Europe needs more (and importantly, bigger) startup exits in the near future, with those entrepreneurs then reinvesting in their local business communities. "It's still rare to sell your company for more than \$200 million in Europe," explains Partech's Lavault, suggesting that larger companies have historically been reticent to acquire startups.

2. Artificial intelligence, Amazon 2.0

Some sectors are expected to surge in 2018. In particular, analysts are bullish on artificial intelligence and so-called "deep" technology, including the U.K.-based semiconductor maker Graphcore, which recently raised \$50 million in funding to take on stalwarts Nvidia and Intel. Meanwhile, the electric jet startup Lillium, based in Munich, raised \$90 million in Series B funding for its so-called "flying taxi" last September. "There's a growing deep tech resurgence [as] academic institutions are beginning to commercialize their ideas," says Mattias Ljungman, co-founder of Atomico, nodding to schools such as University College London and the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich.

Meanwhile, Paddy Cosgrave, the Irish entrepreneur and founder of the international technology conference WebSummit, notes that more than 80,000 artificial intelligence startups applied to his network's incubator in 2017--a record share.

E-commerce could be another winner. As Amazon continues to expand globally, a number of E.U. competitors have emerged to take on the e-commerce giant in niche categories, including the U.K. specialty furniture maker Made.com. The London-based company generated nearly £100 million (\$139 million) in sales--and turned a profit for the first time--in 2016. Another firm to watch: Na-Kd. The Swedish fashion retailer last month raised \$45 million in Series B funding, and plans to use the cash to expand further across the Eurozone. (Lavault's Partech was a lead investor in the round.)

3. U.S. brain drain

What may help the E.U. in the months to come is a different sort of "Trump Bump," whereby American entrepreneurs increasingly look to places such as Canada, France and Germany as potential locations to launch their businesses. "We've never seen so many resumes from Silicon Valley entrepreneurs who want to relocate to the E.U.," says Lavault, attributing the change to the controversial U.S. President. Indeed, a growing number of business owners are now taking advantage of programs such as the French Tech Visa, (<https://www.inc.com/zoe-henry/france-launches-new-startup-visa-program-2017.html>) which allows entrepreneurs, engineers and investors to set up in France at a low cost.

Meanwhile, as Trump trims back on legal immigration--and the H-1B visa program, in particular--some entrepreneurs have responded by setting up operations in Canada, (<https://www.inc.com/zoe-henry/canada-courts-american-startups-trump-immigration.html>) where a recently-introduced visa program lets foreigners obtain work visas in as little as two weeks.

There's also the possibility that Brexit won't happen after all, suggests Cosgrave. "All of the moons are aligning to stop this from happening, and get us to a second referendum," the entrepreneur tells *Inc*. Indeed, a second referendum (<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/11/world/europe/-britain-second-referendum-brexit.html>) is feasible--although it would require the support of British Parliament and would need to be proposed by a coalition backed by conservative lawmakers. In other words, even as Theresa May endeavors to negotiate the terms of divorce, it's still a long shot.

