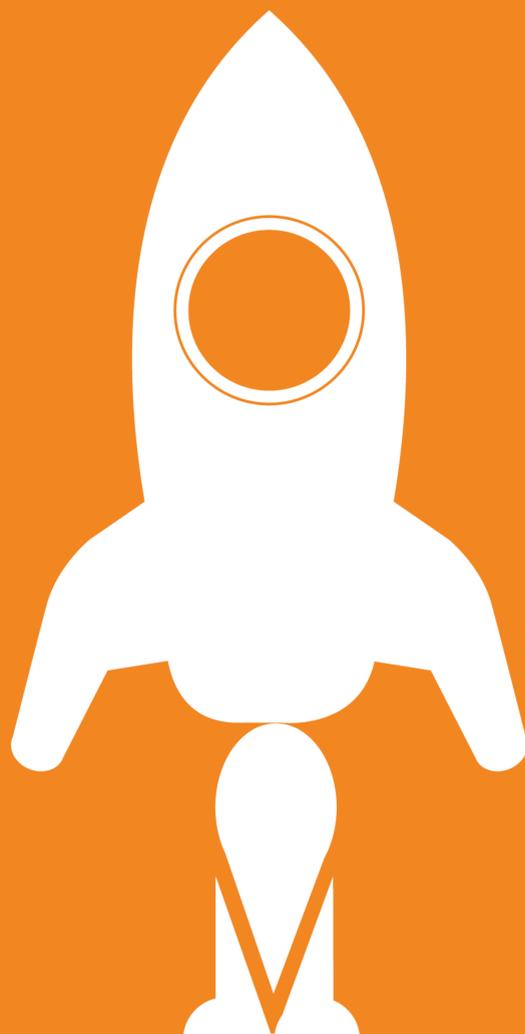


LEARNING TO LAUNCH

Stop failing. Start launching.



Fred Rivett & Mike Gatward

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INTRODUCTION

Before we start we want to clarify exactly what this book is, and who it's for. This book isn't for everyone.

This book **IS** for those who want to get better at taking an idea from concept to launch. Those who have never launched but desperately want to do so, or used to be in the habit of launching but have gone rusty and need to get their launch game back on.

This book is **NOT** for those who already know how to build and launch. This *is not* a book about marketing, growth tactics or becoming the next billion-dollar unicorn. This book will not tell you which programming language to use, which platform to build on top of, or how to increase your conversion rate.

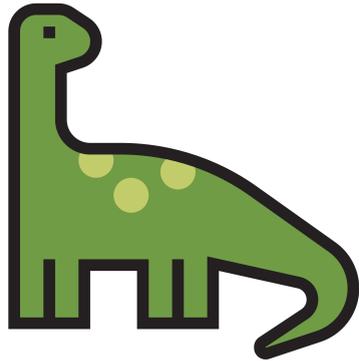
Our belief is that focus is key. We know from our own experience, years of working on side projects and failing to ship anything at all, that trying to do everything at once is a sure fire recipe for failure.

It's our belief that those who are already successful in business, who the tech press write about, and who write these sort of books wait too long to do so. By waiting, they forget what it was really like to have never shipped a project.

So why so should you listen to us? We haven't made it yet, we're still on the same journey you're on. We spent years failing to launch, so after another failed project eighteen months ago, we decided to make a change.

In the past year we've shipped seven projects whilst working full-time jobs and learnt a tonne along the way.

But let's not get ahead of ourselves and spoil the action. Want to know more? Read on...



CHAPTER 1

OUR BACKSTORY

It had happened again. We had failed, again. Almost two years ago, we had tried to create a website builder specifically aimed at plumbers. But after working on it for over three months, we threw the towel in. Yet again we'd failed to launch *anything at all*.

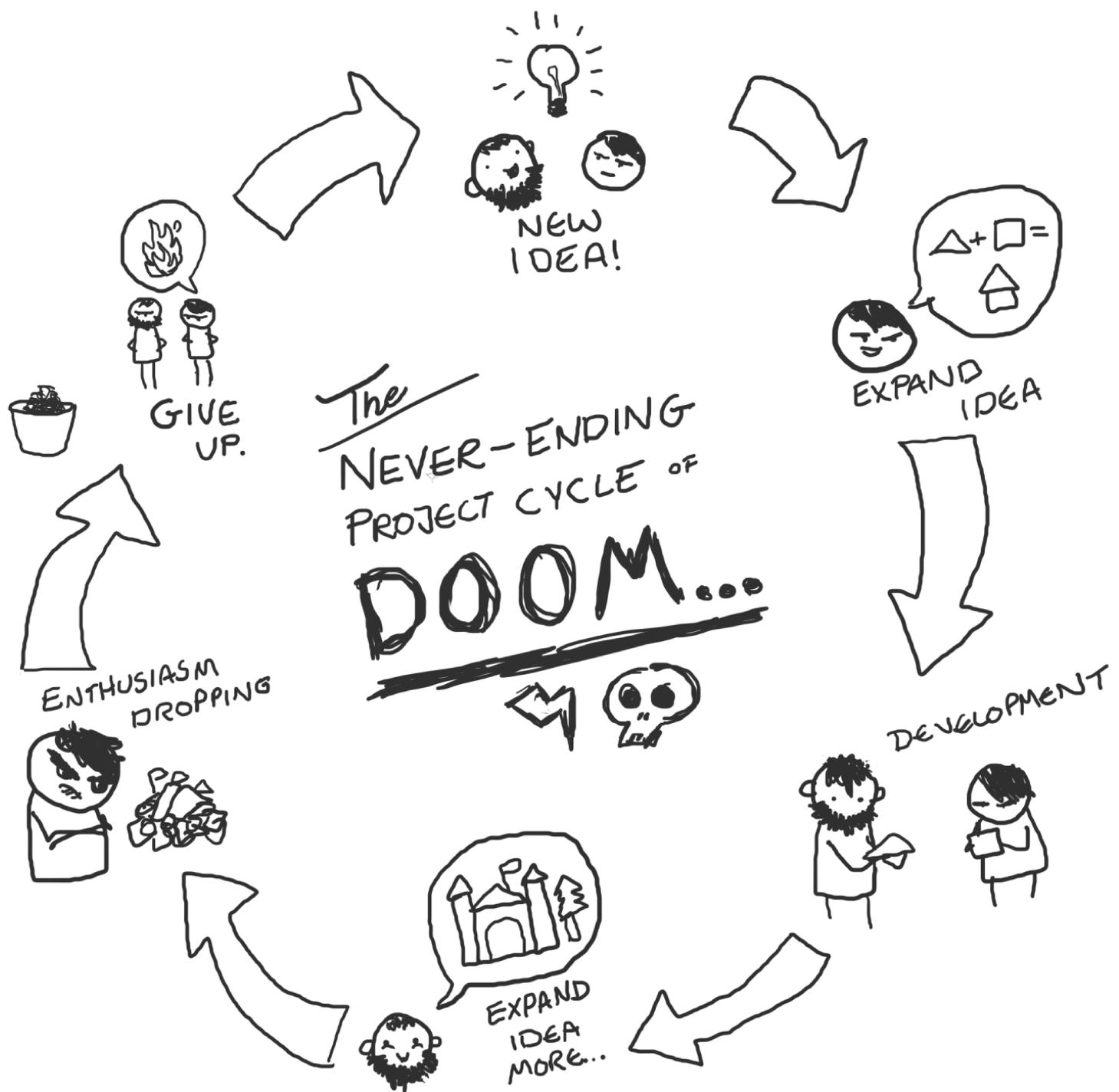
But we've got ideas! And we can make things! Surely that's enough? Surely if we just keep working, one day we'll get there? Wherever *there* is? Surely, if we just keep doing what we've been doing, it'll all work out in the end?

It didn't, and as it turns out, it never does. In hindsight, it's all quite clear why, but at the time we were none the wiser.

We didn't realise it yet, but our process was deeply flawed. Every time we started a new project, we would be full of enthusiasm and excitement about its potential. As it turns out, this was both a blessing and a curse. We'd start out with a relatively small, simple idea but before we knew it, feature after feature would be added until it became so huge that we had no hope of getting it out the door.

A few months in, with an ever growing scope and no sign of any light at the end of the tunnel, enthusiasm would fade. Eventually we'd throw the towel in and call it quits, thinking 'it was never meant to be'.

Bullshit. It wasn't that at all. That's just a lame cop out we used to excuse ourselves from our failures. We had failed and it was our fault, we just didn't understand *why*. We didn't know what we should do. We found ourselves trapped in a repeating cycle of failing to launch, or as we call it "The Never Ending Project Cycle of Doom".



After our latest failure, we started thinking about why we consistently failed to launch. Sure, you can't expect to succeed at everything you do, but failure had resided at our doors so often we'd started charging rent.

“Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.”

– *Albert Einstein*

After some thinking, we realised something: the problem wasn't the ideas – it was us. We were doing it wrong, and that gave Mike an idea – to build and launch six projects in six months.

“What!?”. At this point, Fred was pretty sure Mike had lost it. We'd spent the last few years trying to launch several different projects, and failed each and every time. *Clearly*, we were no good at it. So why did Mike suggest, that, instead of focussing on launching just *one* project, we try to launch *six* projects, and all in *six months*?

We were giving ourselves just one month to launch each project, which was the first time we'd actually set ourselves a deadline for one of our side projects. Even though we were both used to working to deadlines in our day jobs, we always saw building our own things as “we will launch when it's ‘done’”.

Our theory was that if we could consistently reach the launch phase then when we moved onto more ambitious projects we'd be ready for them. Basically, we were learning to walk before attempting to run.

How could we give up now, having never achieved our dreams of launching a product, of building our own business? Continuing as we were just wasn't an option.

As crazy as it sounded, we were desperate. It was time to learn to launch.

Learning to launch: How we finally broke our duck

SixBySix, on the surface of it, looks like the simple plan to work on six projects in six months. But really, it wasn't about working on projects at all, it was about working on *ourselves*. The projects were just a byproduct of that.

“The best investment you can make is in yourself.”

— Warren Buffett

And that's how it should be. How life should work. Progress should happen, it should be the norm. We should be able to look back on the past year, and realise we're not still in the same place.

“When you look back at yourself six months from today and don't feel embarrassed by your naiveté, there's a problem. That means you're not learning, growing.”

— Nathan Bashaw

Most people waste away their days, either ignorant about their mortality, or apathetic, caring more about the short term niceties, living in their comfort zones, than ever fulfilling their potential. So many of us go through life on autopilot, we never really think about what we want, and rarely fulfil even a small percentage of our true potential.

Progress is never automatic, it takes effort, investing in yourself, in who you want to become, and requires a conscious decision and determination to see it through. It requires you to stop hiding behind excuses and circumstances and get stuff done.

So that's what we did. We took a step, and tried something new.

That's what this book is about. It's us, sharing our experiences, what worked for us and what didn't, and encouraging you to do the same. It's our challenge to you, to stop procrastinating, stop making excuses and finally build and launch something. It's a handbook to help you go from idea to launch.

It's time to commit to making progress, to taking the next step. To ship something, to strengthen your launch muscles, and ultimately, to learn to launch.



SECTION 1

WHY, WHO AND WHAT



CHAPTER 2

IT STARTS WITH WHY

Why do you want to learn to launch? No, seriously, think about it for a couple of minutes, write it down, and now tweet us.

It's likely that the reason you first thought of has now changed because you've been asked to share that with someone else. Don't worry, we all do this. If we're asked to think about something, we only look at the surface level, but when we're asked to tell someone else, we look deeper and think it through more so that we don't make a fool of ourselves.

A while back, Fred stumbled upon the 5 Whys, which puts this into a simple framework for really understanding the root cause of an issue. It simply asks "why?" repetitively like a child would, leading us deeper and deeper into the true cause of what we do.

Understanding your why

Fairly early on when we started working together, we realised

that we didn't always see things the same way. Fred would tell Mike an idea he was really excited about, but Mike wouldn't share his excitement, and at the time Mike wasn't able to explain why. So Mike began thinking it through, trying to work out what it was that motivated him to take on a project. Eventually he came up with three reasons why a project might take his fancy:

1. He wanted to use it
2. He thought lots of people would want to use it
3. There is a good chance of making money

For Mike to want to work on a project, it would need to meet at least one of the above criteria, and the more the better. After explaining it to Fred, he totally agreed and we've been using it for the last couple of years to decide on projects we would both enjoy working on.

Just having these three criteria has really helped us process through our ideas and understand where each other was coming from.

As you progress, your motivations will likely change, and that's fine. For us, we've noticed that our reasons for wanting to work on a project are different now from when we started. At the beginning, just making something for ourselves was enough to motivate us. More recently though, we're finding that we're drawn to projects where we think lots of other people will want to use it.

Even as a solo maker, understanding the motivations behind what you do can really help clarify which projects to take on. The more people involved though, the more benefit there is to clearing up your 'why', so that you're all on the same page.

Money makes the world go round

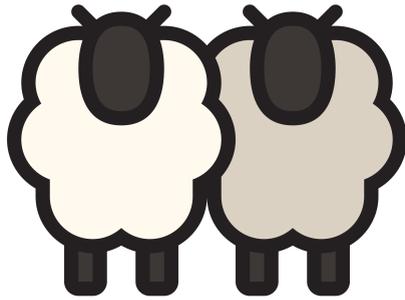
If we're honest, we're all motivated by money to some extent. Whether it's just so you can provide for your family, or to help build a business empire, money is something we all need.

The key point to remember is that while your long term goal might be to make money, the most important thing right now is not to become rich and famous, but to get better at launching. For us this meant ignoring financial gain entirely and focussing solely on shipping.

Ultimately there's nothing stopping you making money on your first project, but be careful not to add any unnecessary complications that may hinder you from achieving your immediate goal, launching your project.

“Sometimes I get caught up in the big plays that I fail to see that “disposable apps” are a great way to just test something out, especially for small or niche audiences. You don't have to swing for the fences every time; sometimes a bunt is all it takes to move runners around the bases.”

– Chris Messina



CHAPTER 3

TEAM UP OR GO SOLO?

When building and launching anything, a key question to answer early on is, should you team up or go solo?

The answer to this question will vary depending on a lot of factors. Some people work best alone, while others enjoy working as part of a team.

When trying to decide if you should team up, there's one useful questions to ask yourself:

Do I have or can I learn the skills needed to complete this project?

If you don't currently have the skills required to to complete your project, and you don't think you'll be able to easily learn them, then you are a perfect candidate for teaming up!

To be clear, this does not mean that if you *do* have all the skills required that you have to work on it alone. We actually prefer to team up on projects, as it helps share the load as well as have someone to help keep you motivated when the times get tough.

Working as a team has played out quite well for us and definitely has its benefits, so if you do decide to team up here's some pointers on what to look for in a potential teammate.

Find someone who compliments you

No, we don't mean someone who tells you that your bum does not look big in those tight fitting jeans. What we're saying is find someone who adds to you, who can bring another dimension to your work. After working together for more than eight years, only recently did we realise why we work so well together.

A big part of it is that we're really quite different. At our core, we're both ambitious, driven people who enjoy making stuff and aspire to run our own businesses. But outside of that, we see things very differently.

It can be nice when you always agree with someone, but rarely is it useful. Different opinions bring about healthy discussions and create much better outcomes. Working with someone who will question your assumptions will lead to much better decisions and results down the line.

"Yes men" make us feel good in the short term but can have disastrous effects in the long run. Find someone who won't just agree with everything you say but will question it until you both know it to be true.

The old adage says 'too many cooks spoil the broth' and it's true. Too many people trying to do the same job is a recipe for failure. In a team environment each person needs to know their strengths and their role. All great bosses hire employees that excel at the things they struggle with, and this should be no different.

Rei Inamoto, the chief creative officer for AKQA, says the perfect founding team is made up of a Hipster, a Hacker, and a Hustler:

“**The Hipster** is the creative genius, who makes sure the product is cooler than any other out there. **The Hacker** is the one working in the background, writing the code that enables the startup to do its thing. **The Hustler** is the one who markets the product and goes and gets the customers.”

– Rei Inamoto

Find someone you can rely on

First and foremost, find someone you can rely on. You see the true nature of a person when the pressure is on. Of course no-one is perfect and you shouldn't expect that, but if someone goes into meltdown at the first sign of pressure then they're probably not someone you want to be working with.

“All mankind is divided into three classes: those that are immovable, those that are movable, and those that move.”

– Benjamin Franklin

Then who?

Should I work with my friends?

Often we end up working with our friends. This is only natural, of course you're more likely to work with someone you know and like over someone you don't. Just make sure that you're not

working with them just because you're friends, they still need to bring something to the table.

So what are the alternatives?

Network offline

Get out to real world events, meet people in the industry. If you're an introvert like us, then this won't be easy. Our best advice is to look online for meetups, talks and conferences and then try and convince a friend to come with you.

Network online

It's never been easier to connect online. The rise of Slack communities like [Startup Chat](#) have made getting to know like minded people almost effortless. Get involved with a community, start helping people out, and you'll soon find people looking to team up on projects.

Offline or online, the important thing is to meet new people.

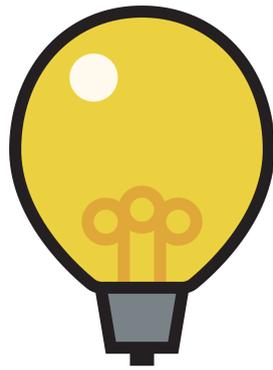
Rounding Up

Teaming up with someone else is great for staying motivated and on track. If you're working alone it can be hard to press through the tough times when there's little light at the end of the tunnel, but when you're working with someone else you can spur each other on to keep going.

Equally, teaming up brings added complications. The more people you add, the more complex the situation becomes. From finding times to talk to effectively communicating and allocating each person their roles, teaming up doesn't come scott free. It's up to you to weigh that up and see what makes the most sense for your situation.

The goal at this stage is to learn to launch, not to build the next unicorn. It's good to think through the benefits of teaming up or going solo, but these questions are more important in the long term, so don't get too hung up on this right now.

Either way, accountability and the community can have a big part to play. We'll talk more about this more in *Chapter 6: Surround Yourself*.



CHAPTER 4

CHOOSING AN IDEA

Have you ever looked back on an idea and thought “what was I thinking?”. Or maybe you look back and see a list of promising ideas that never saw the light of day and you sit there wondering what could have been.

We can relate to both. We’ll always remember our first real lightbulb idea. It was late 2009, Fred was sitting at his desk, on a course that he soon realised wasn’t really going to teach him anything that useful. Not that he knew everything – not at all – but the culture there wasn’t exactly one of pushing you to be your best, they were just happy that people turned up.

This day was different though. As Fred sat there, daydreaming (as he often does), he had a realisation – he loves reading. He really wanted a place to keep tabs on what he’d read, and maybe add a quick review on what he thought. He’d also quite like a way of finding out what his friends were reading and what they recommend reading next.

“Oh! What if there was a Facebook for book readers! That’d be awesome!”

That evening on the train home Fred rang Mike to chat about the idea. We were both really excited about what it could be. We even came up with a super awesome codename (#blackhawk) so that no eavesdroppers would pick up on our idea and run off into the distance with our millions.

Fred then spent the next week writing up exactly what the site would do, what each page’s purpose was and sketched out roughly how it would look. We had 6 or 7 pages of pure gold, or at least that’s what we thought at the time.

With our plan in hand we agreed to meetup at a nearby pub. We sat in the garden next to a quiet stream with a good beer and talked it through. We spent a good couple of hours there going through the notes and discussing what the site would be. When we finished we both left excited about our first real idea, and soon got stuck into the design and development.

After a couple of months, we had an initial design, some code and a clearer view of the path ahead, including how we’d monetise the site. We were making progress, things were taking shape. Remarkably we were still just as excited as that day at the pub by the stream. What happened next definitely wasn’t something we had planned for.

It goes without saying that when Fred had the idea, he did a quick Google to see if it already existed. You know, the ‘Facebook for reading’ search and then look at the top 3 results. But that’s about as far as it went. He wasn’t looking for a competitor, so he didn’t find one. We took this brief research as enough to say it hadn’t been done and ploughed on.

But, now a couple months into development, Mike raised the question about whether this *really* hadn’t been done before.

We'd spent the last 8 weeks working on this idea, but our initial research was limited at best. Fred told Mike that he'd done some research and hadn't found anything.

Mike did a quick Google. Oh crap. It's been done.

And there it was. Shelfari. Someone had done this already. We were late to the party. Very late as it turns out. Shelfari had launched 3 years earlier. And not only that, but they'd been acquired by Amazon too. Damn it. This idea *was* awesome. But we'd missed the boat.

And that sucked. We'd dreamed of our idea for months now and invested a good amount of time and effort into it. But it had been done, the dream was over, time to move on.

Looking back on it, there were a number of issues with our approach. First, there was the whole OTT *list all the must have launch features*. Then there was the locking ourselves away for months on end with our secretive idea, hoping one day we would be ready for the big unveil and that everyone would love it as much as we did. But the biggest issue was the fact that we gave up after finding out it had been done already.

Back then, if a potential project had already been done then that was a fatal blow, we would chuck the idea into the trashcan and move on. These days we've come to realise that competition is often a good sign. If your idea is solving a real problem then there should be others trying to solve it too. Noticing competition validates your assumptions that there's a demand for what you're doing.

Having never launched a project, the question of whether there was competition out there really didn't matter. Our biggest need was to learn to launch, and it's one we didn't learn until over six years later.

Your idea is worthless

Think back to your greatest idea. What was it? Did it fulfil its potential? How valuable did it seem at the time?

Ultimately, ideas themselves are pretty much worthless. The idea may have had legs but that alone means nothing until the work is done.

“Ideas are only a multiplier of execution.”

– *Derek Sivers*

We often have romantic views about how our idea will be the next big thing, that if only we had more time or money then we could create the next Airbnb or Buffer. But the truth is we tend to overestimate our ideas and underestimate the work it takes to make them a reality.

“It’s the disease of thinking that having a great idea is really 90 percent of the work. And if you just tell people, ‘here’s this great idea,’ then of course they can go off and make it happen. The problem with that is that there’s a tremendous amount of craftsmanship between having a great idea and having a great product.”

– *Steve Jobs*

Remove the filter

Early on, when generating ideas, we would get into a critical, realistic mindset. As soon as an idea came up, we’d start thinking through whether it was plausible, how it would work out and whether anyone would actually use it.

This mindset led us to hesitate before sharing an idea, to create an initial filter, a bit of a 'will this make me look stupid' filter that all ideas had to pass through. Only then, if it had successfully gone through these mental hurdles, would it be shared and discussed.

Soon after starting to collect ideas for SixBySix, we realised that this mindset needed to change. We realised that a culture that promoted eager judgement and finger pointing, however subtle, was toxic for creativity.

When Mike first told Fred about his idea for SixBySix, Freds immediate response was "how are we going to come up with enough ideas?". It was a valid point. Over the last couple of years we had only worked on a handful of ideas, and now we were planning to come up with, create and most importantly launch six ideas in six months! Despite the challenge, we dove into it head first, trusting it would work out in the end.

Fortunately it was around that time that we discovered Disney's three room policy, which came to form the backbone of our approach.

Disney's 3 room policy

Walt Disney was one of the greatest creative minds of the twentieth century, so how did he achieve such great levels of creativity, and what can we learn as result?

At the core of Disney's creativity was the three rooms brainstorming process. Disney set up three distinct rooms, each with their own set of rules and mindsets. The simple idea was to stop criticism and realism setting in too early, before an idea had been thoroughly explored.

So what were the three rooms, and how can we learn from this?

Room 1: The Dreamer

The first room is the dreamer. In this room, only one mindset is allowed, the unfiltered dreamer with pure optimism running through their veins. Criticism and realistic thinking were strictly forbidden.

This stage can be great for thinking through problems you experience in everyday life, and dreaming about how they could be solved. Just remember, your thoughts here don't need to be possible or plausible, simply let your mind run.

This stage is less about the 'why', and more about the 'why not?'

Some of the questions asked here would be:

If there were no limitations at all, and we could wave a magic wand and do anything we want – what would we create?

What do we want to achieve?

Why do we want this?

What could this look like?

How would this make you feel?

What if we focussed entirely on this one part and ignored the rest?

Room 2: The Realist

The second stage, the realist, was all about the 'how'. Disney would take his absurd, pie-in-the-sky ideas and start to work out the practicalities behind them.

This stage is about drawing out the best parts of an idea and filtering out the totally impractical by asking a series of probing questions:

Is this idea actually possible?
How could we make this happen?
Who would use this?
How would we reach them?
What would we need to achieve this?

Room 3: The Critic

This is the time to pick holes in the idea, finding its weak points and vulnerabilities. This isn't a place for personal attacks however, but should be focussed entirely on the idea at hand.

In this stage you take the role of the critic, asking questions like:

What facts have we got to base this idea on?
Why would anyone care?
Who could stop us from doing this?
What would be the worst case scenario if this didn't go to plan?
How do I really feel about this idea? Does it sit well with my gut?
Is this the best we can do?
How can we make this better?
How would this look to a customer?
Is this the best use of our time?

So how does this work out in practice?

Making this commitment to give every idea a fair hearing meant that we both shared each and every idea we had. This totally removed the unspoken 'will I look stupid' filter as we knew each idea would be embryonic, leading to us sharing far more ideas, including many we would go on to build and launch.

We learnt that rarely is an idea developed enough to have any sort of form at it's conception. It needs time to breathe before it can be understood or valued. Sure, some ideas are downright

flawed, and you're pretty sure will never see the light of day, but even these can help inspire other ideas.

Ultimately we learnt a key lesson: *No idea is a bad idea.*

When coming up with ideas it's really important to note them down as soon as inspiration strikes. The more details you note down whilst the idea is fresh in your mind the better.

Make it accessible. The idea list should be in a place everyone has access to at any time of the day. Ideas can strike at any time so you should always be prepared. We were already using Google Drive for other things, so it made sense to use it to note down our ideas too.

Sure, some of our ideas are downright lame, whilst others have more potential, but having this document made deciding on our idea each month a lot easier.

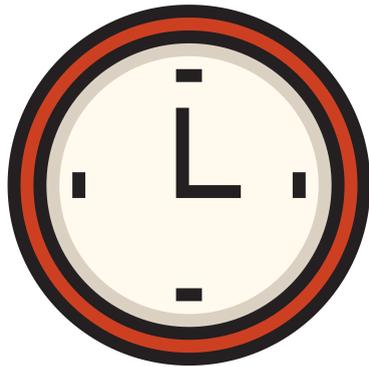
Ultimately, it can be difficult to gauge whether an idea is going to be a hit or a flop early on. Sometimes ideas that seemed world changing in the dreamer stage are torn to pieces by the realist and critic, whilst some of our most off the cuff, simple ideas often turn out to be the best. Sometimes one idea can spark another altogether better idea.

A good gauge on how good an idea is, is whether you'd want to use it yourself. Not every idea will be one you would use yourself, so this has its limitations, but choosing an idea that you can see yourself using is a great place to start.



SECTION 2

PREPARING FOR THE JOURNEY



CHAPTER 5

THESE THINGS TAKE TIME

Let's get straight to the point – we're terrible at estimating how long things will take. If you're anything like us, then you have a pretty optimistic view on how long things will take. Wash the car? Fifteen minutes. File your tax return? Fifteen minutes. Write a book? *Fifteen minutes?*

Ok, so not everything takes fifteen minutes, but you get the point. When we set out to build the first project of SixBySix, HowsItGoin, we thought it'd be pretty simple, and were hopeful we'd be able to launch on time. How hard could it be to allow a user to sign up, create a list of questions, answer those questions and then display reports on those answers? Sounds simple, right? Well, not really. HowsItGoin ended up going over our monthly deadline by more than three weeks, pushing our next projects way off course. All in, we had spent over 250 hours on HowsItGoin.

Hofstadter's Law: It always takes longer than you expect, even when you take into account Hofstadter's Law.

Everything takes longer than you first think. Tasks rarely follow the original plan, there are always unexpected bugs, additional features and complications you didn't see coming, which only come to light once you've started. The best thing you can do is acknowledge this and try to factor it in as best you can when planning scope and timescales. Planning is vital.

It's important to stand by your estimates. If you do not have enough time available to complete the work, then you should reduce scope. As scope decreases, so will time, but most importantly, quality will remain unchanged. If you reduce time without reducing scope, quality will suffer.

Sure, there'll be times where you miss your deadline, and it's up to you whether that's something you're willing to accept or not. The way we see it, there are hard deadline and soft deadlines. Hard deadlines are ones which cannot be missed, where the consequences for not meeting the deadline are serious. Examples would be the deadline for filing your taxes, or turning up to an exam.

Soft deadlines on the other hand, still have consequences if missed, but they aren't the end of the world. For example, missing your monthly weight loss goal, while it's not ideal, the long term consequences are minimal. We viewed the deadlines for SixBySix as soft deadlines, where they could be missed if it made sense to do so. The very act of having deadlines gave us a marker point, something to aim for.

Prioritise your priorities

Seven years back Fred went to college where he had no TV and a pretty poor internet connection. This led him to going two years with little to no TV at all, and it really surprised him how little he missed it.

Before starting SixBySix Mike used to come home after a day's work and spend most of his evening gaming. This certainly didn't do him any harm, but it definitely didn't help work towards his goal of running his own business. Since starting SixBySix, Mike's realised that not only does he hardly game at all now, but that when he does he can only do so for a short period of time before wanting to get back to something more productive.

Most of us default into the normality of watching TV, playing games or just chilling out without realising. It might sound obvious, but since getting serious about our goals we've become a lot more focussed in how we use our time.

It's a lot easier to reprioritise and remove the things that aren't helping you achieve your goals than it is to keep adding new activities on top of your existing schedule.

Quite often there's time we can redeem. Be it waking up an hour earlier each day or working during your daily commute, if you want to get something done enough you'll find the time.

Time is your greatest investment

Our financial investment in the different projects we made for SixBySix has been minimal, mostly due to hosting and domains being so cheap and the fact that we've built everything ourselves. This has meant that the most valuable resource we've invested into SixBySix has been our time.

Regardless of the financial investment you've made to your project, time will always be your most valuable resource. Money is essentially infinite, you can always get more of it from somewhere, time however, is not. Time is finite, you only get so much of it, and once spent, it's gone.

At the start of SixBySix we made the commitment to track our investment, how much time we spent on each project. Using [Toggl](#), we logged every hour we worked. At the end of each project, we released our Toggl report with our introductory blog post, showing exactly how much we had invested into that month's project.

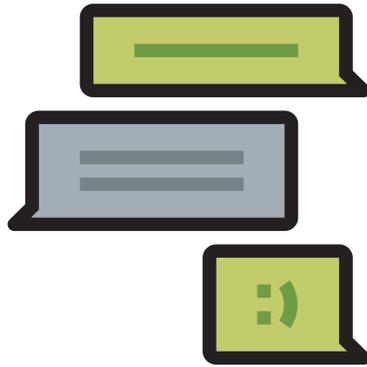
We even started tracking how long each blog post took, publishing it as a footnote with our posts.

Looking back over the results gave us some surprising insights into just how long things took. As mentioned above, Month 1, HowstGoin clocked in at a whopping 250 hours. This was primarily down to Fred being in between jobs and Mike taking 10 days off over Christmas, but either way it was way higher than what we expected to invest when we first started out.

Equally, looking back on our investment in the past year, we've spent over 1,200 hours all in. That's a lot of time.

We know time tracking isn't for everyone but whatever you do, remember that time is your most precious resource. Make sure you invest yours wisely.

Want to know how long this book took to write? Find out at the end.



CHAPTER 6

SURROUND YOURSELF

We often hear it said, “you become like those you surround yourself with”. We nod our heads, thinking about those we spend time with most often, those we work with or see on the weekend. But just as important are those we surround ourselves with digitally.

On the train home from his day job, Fred was listening to another podcast episode, feeling pretty tired, wondering how much he'd be able to get done before passing out. But as he listened, he started getting idea after idea of things he needed to implement, people he needed to contact and key thoughts for our business. As these thoughts kept flowing he took out his phone and started noting them down.

That evening, whilst walking home, he had a totally different mindset to that of just a few months before. He walked confidently, thinking about what we were going to do next, how we were going to step into new areas and up our game.

A key factor in this change of mindset has been getting involved in the great community of other like minded founders. Rubbing (digital) shoulders with others who have a similar drive and passion as you, with those who are either where you want to go or on the path to get there, really helps inspire you to believe it's possible. These are just passionate people making things happen.

So how can you make the most of the community of makers out there?

Join the community

We were fortunate to be starting SixBySix when Slack communities like Startup Chat and MakerHunt were being born. Being able to chat with like minded founders so easily has really helped us realise that we can do this, that our goals are achievable. These founders work crazy hard but still have time to help out where they can. Since joining communities like these we've met and partnered with guys like Dylan, been on podcasts with hustlers like Josh and Fred even landed a superb job at an exciting startup.

The barrier to communication these days is as low as it's ever been and this is a big opportunity. Think about where you want to be in a few months or years, find like-minded people who are there or on their way and join those communities. Get involved, welcome people, find out what others are doing. You won't regret it.

Read

Our community is full of content generation machines. Soak up everything you can. You'll never be able to read everything out there (hello FOMO), so find a few industry leads, people that

inspire you and read what they are saying. As a good friend of ours says, “leaders are readers”, so set aside some time to read.

Be it blog posts, books or tweets, surround yourself with thought leaders and you’ll soon be on the right path.

Listen to podcasts

One of the first podcasts Fred listened to was Justin Jackson’s Product People. At this stage we knew we wanted to start a company but we didn’t really know what that would be. Fred remembers listening to one episode, wondering what ‘SaaS’ was (he was pretty sure they weren’t talking about that CSS preprocessor), or how it was spelt so he could Google it. But despite these naiveties it reignited a fire, a passion to build a business, one that would solve real problems and that our customers would love.

Podcasts are superb as they allow you to be a fly on the wall listening to conversations from makers who have been where you’re trying to go. This is invaluable.

These podcasters will be the first to admit they don’t know it all, but the wealth of knowledge they have is huge. They’re full to overflowing with great insights they’ve learnt the hard way but are giving away for free. Don’t miss out on them.

A word of caution: Be careful not to become a consumer only. It’s important to take time to consume, to read, listen and interact, they will all help you learn. Just remember to take what you’ve learnt and create something.

Accountability is key

Whether you choose to join communities or not, there’s one

piece of advice that's had a big influence in our new found ability to launch – accountability.

“In leadership roles, accountability is the *acknowledgment and assumption of responsibility for actions, products, decisions, and policies...encompassing the obligation to report, explain and be answerable for resulting consequences.*”

[emphasis ours]

– Wikipedia

Simply put, accountability is acknowledging responsibility and being answerable for the consequences of our actions. This isn't as serious as it sounds, it can be as simple as telling someone else what you're working on.

The more people you tell the better. The more your reputation is on the line, the more likely you'll follow through. We wanted to tell everyone – our situation was so dire that we would take any help we could get.

This started with telling our friends and family, but also meant building in public – writing about our challenge to build and launch six projects in six months and blogging on every launch. Building in public can be daunting, sharing your ups and downs, your successes and failures, but it also comes with the added bonus of drawing a crowd. People gravitate towards transparency, the more you share the more value you provide and the more others will be interested. When you're starting out you have nothing to lose, so share everything you can.

That meant sharing detailed stats of our first Product Hunt launch, which in turn connected us with [Paul Kemp](#) who invited us onto his [App Guy Podcast](#).

As it turns out building in public has scientific backing showing it increases the likelihood of someone following through.

“Prompting people to monitor their progress can help them to achieve their goals, but some methods of monitoring are better than others. Specifically, we would recommend that people be encouraged to record, report or make public what they find out as they assess their progress.”

– *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol 142(2), Feb 2016, 198-229

There are always days when you won't feel like working, you won't feel like shipping, you won't feel your product is ready, and that's exactly why you need to tell someone. If you keep your project to yourself then when the going gets tough and you don't feel like shipping, you'll have nothing but your internal motivation to keep you going, and that's a dangerous place to be.

So do yourself a favour, stop what you're doing, and tell someone.



CHAPTER 7

START SMALL

If you're anything like us, you've got big ambitions. You dream of creating a product that the masses will love and the press will adore, all the while making you a handsome dollar. Having these big ambitions is great, but the dream big mentality can quickly lead us to attempting to build the next Facebook straight out of the gates. We end up biting off more than we can chew.

It's tempting to aim to create the next Facebook, Twitter or Snapchat, but we need to understand how rare these products are and how much work has gone into creating them. For us, when deciding on an idea, the bigger it was, the better. If we had an idea for a small web app we gave it little thought, but an idea for a telepathically controlled drone system built on the block chain that was consumed through virtual reality? Sure, let's jump right in and try and build that.

The problem was that we looked at the big successes out

there*, and in our naivety we tried to emulate that from day one.

Just to be clear, we think it's important to have ambitious long term goals, it's helpful to know what you're aiming for. But even more important are your short term goals, what you're going to do about it *now*.

Have long term goals in mind, and short term goals in focus.

We started working on big problems like social networks, real time cross-platform notifications and multi-device presentation software. These were exciting problems, and we had great ideas of what we could do. But we weren't ready for them. We were like someone who's never been to the gym going straight for the heavy weights, we hadn't built up the muscles required to build these apps.

Instead, start small

If you've never launched, then the most important focus right now has to be launching *something*. Just ship something. It doesn't matter if it gets seen by thousands, whether the press write about it, heck it doesn't even matter if anyone uses it. Step 1 is launch. Until you've done that, launching should be your only focus.

When you're a runner that's never finished a race you can feel like an imposter, and to an extent it's true, you are. Until you can prove you're able to finish a race, you're a wannabe. But once you've finished a race, once you've crossed the line just once, all of a sudden everything changes. Do you immediately transform into Usain Bolt, Mo Farah or Paula Radcliffe? Of course not. But that first hurdle is the biggest, going from zero to one will always be the most important step you take.

“Just building stuff and finishing it gets you ahead of 99% of the people out there.”

– Pieter Levels

Once you've learnt to launch you can then look to take your next steps. It's much easier to motivate yourself to work on something that's out there and being used by real people than it is to keep slogging away at something that still hasn't seen the light of day.

Our attempt to launch six projects in six months have forced us to narrow our scope drastically. We thought we had done this with our first project, HowsltGoin, but after launching 250 hours later, we realised we still had a way to go. The next month we launched FlashTabs in 79 hours, and then Outstanding Bar in just under 60.



We'd become so used to failing to launch that we required drastic action. Learning to launch meant launching multiple things, repeating the process until it became second nature. For you, launching one thing and building that up may be enough, and that's great, just make sure you're investing time in building the right habits and skills before you start swinging for the fences.

Set a deadline

One of the biggest, if not *the biggest* change we made was setting a deadline.

Before SixBySix, we'd spend countless hours, days, weeks and months working on projects, but never really knowing what we were working towards. We were busy working, hoping one day we would 'get there'. But we never did.

The combination of an ever growing scope and no deadlines meant we never launched, we worked and worked until we grew tired, and with no end in sight, we gave up.

Setting a short-term deadline of around 4 weeks changed all of this for us. It forced us to get real with our ambitions, to think about what was really possible and what we wanted to achieve.

A side effect of setting a short-term deadline was it forced us to set a fixed scope. Previously we'd work and work, and as we went we'd think up exciting new features, adding them to our ever growing spec. It meant we were never ready, never done.

Setting short term deadlines and the minimum scope we needed to launch fixed this, and it turns out Eric Ries has been advocating for this for years.

Minimum Viable Product

In his book, *The Lean Startup*, Eric spells out how he came to realise that there was a problem in their processes and went on to create the concept of a Minimum Viable Product (MVP) to help fix this.

An MVP is exactly what it says on the tin, the minimum you can launch that will still create value. Ask yourself "do we really need this, or could we launch without it? Is this a need to have or a nice to have?". Scale back your scope to the necessities, removing all the fluff that you *think* you need but really don't.

Once this Minimum Viable Product is launched, you're able

to see how real people are using your product and receive feedback from real users. These insights can then help to shape your implementation, leading to small tweaks or more radical changes, depending on what's necessary.

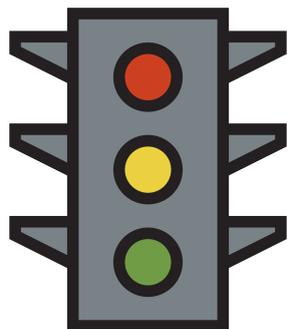
Skip Perfect, Start Rough

Your initial launch won't be perfect. In fact, it's not even going to be close. There will be rough edges and missing features, which can often lead us to delay launch, citing that we're just not ready and need more time.

“If you are not embarrassed by the first version of your product, you've launched too late.”

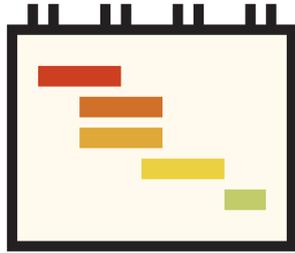
— Reid Hoffman

The perfectionist in us dies a little thinking of this, but Reid's right. It's time to stop making excuses. It's time to do it.



SECTION 3

THE RUBBER HITS THE ROAD



CHAPTER 8

THE PLAN

You're finally here. It's time to take what you've learnt, and put it into practice. This is where the rubber hits the road, you can finally get to work.

Over the course of SixBySix we fine tuned how we tackled each project, eventually nailing down the process into eight simple stages.

1: Remember your aim

It's important that, now you're ready to begin, you remember why you're doing this. It can be easy for the excitement of a new project to get you to make poor 'heat of the moment' decisions.

Your goal is to *learn to launch*. You want to get better at launching, you aren't looking to launch the next big thing. This means you'll be cutting out everything that might stop you achieving your goal. That includes nice to have features, long term growth plans, and very likely ditching plans to make money

at launch. It's important to cut down everything that might stop you from launching.

A lot of the agreed upon wisdom of how to do things is based on how to start a business, or the best ways to launch a product. Some of that wisdom will be relevant, but remember to view everything through the lens of your goal, *learning to launch*. You want to take small steps to begin with, so a lot of the longer term thinking that comes with these ideas won't apply right now.

2: Set a deadline

Now you know what your aim is, it's time to set a deadline. At this stage it's more important that you ship something. Set your deadline first, then choose an idea that fits your deadline.

We've found that deadlines of around four to six weeks work really well. It's long enough to get something meaningful built, but short enough that you'll stay within the honeymoon period, when that initial motivation is still driving you on.

We all have 24 hours in a day to try and get stuff done. You may have most of those hours booked up right now, but now's the time to prioritise your priorities. You'll probably want to prioritise time with your family and have a day job that pays the bills, but from our experience there's always time that can be redeemed.

Whether it's watching less TV, using your commute time or waking up earlier, rarely is the reason for not working on your side project because you don't have time. It's because you have other priorities. If this is a serious goal of yours, you'll find the time.

3: Choose an idea

Once you've got a deadline in place, you'll have a much clearer picture of which ideas are and are not going to be possible.

Hopefully you've been thinking through some potential ideas and have a rough shortlist of what you might work on. If not, think about reaching out to the community to find out if they've got any ideas they're not working on. Judging by the makers we know, there are always a bunch of ideas that don't make it to the build stage, and they're normally very generous with sharing them.

After launching our first few projects we hit a bit of a roadblock on what to work on next. We mentioned this in one of the Slack groups we're a part of, and it wasn't long before we were on Skype discussing teaming up on a project. And that's how FoundersKit started out.

Work on what excites you the most. If you can see yourself working on an idea and it fits with your timeframe then it's a contender.

At this stage it's worth considering if you can realistically get the work done in the time you've set. If you're anything like us you're probably optimistic about how long each part will take. Optimism is good, but make sure you give yourself enough time. Everything takes longer than you think and there will always be challenges and issues you can't foresee. Estimate as best you can, think about the complexity, effort and uncertainty of each feature but ultimately at the start this will likely come down to your gut feeling.

Pick a project that you think you can achieve in roughly half the time you've set yourself. This will give you the wiggle room necessary when unexpected challenges crop up and still enable you to hit your launch deadline.

4: Make your launch list

Your deadline will be the biggest anchor point in deciding what the project should look like and do, it forces you to set scope. Now you've got a deadline and chosen an idea you need to start breaking your idea down into the separate features that make it up. Once you've listed out the different features, you'll want to put them into two distinct lists; launch and post-launch.

The launch list will contain all essential features your idea requires. As you go through each potential feature, ask yourself, do I need this feature for launch, or is it just a nice to have? What will happen if I launch without it? How much time will it take?

All non-essential features go into the post-launch list. You may have a lot of great ideas about how you can make your project even better, that's great, but these aren't for now. It's important to not bite off more than you can chew. Instead, make sure you note these down, your future self will thank you.

As you go through this process keep in mind the core action you want someone to take. For FlashTabs it was installing the extension, so we added a prominent button front and center that allowed the user to install the extension without leaving our site. For FoundersKit it was signing up and paying for a years membership, so we directed people to that at every opportunity.

The scope you set here is the scope you will build. As with any planning there will be challenges you won't be able to foresee, small tweaks or minor features that need to be added. At the same time, you need to be strict. If new features come up after you've set your scope then you need ask yourself again, "is this feature a must have, a show stopper, or can I launch without this?". Always lean towards launching without the extra, out of

scope features. You can always add these in post launch, and you may well realise it wasn't so necessary after all.

5: Make a loose plan

Once you've set your deadline and listed your launch features, the next step is figuring out how you will get everything done. You may be interested in using this project to learn new skills, try out new tools or learn new languages. That's great and commendable, just beware of trying to do too many new things at once. Learning new skills will inevitably add complexity and time to the project, so take that into account when deciding on how you're going to build your idea.

The next step is to start prioritising what should be tackled first. So where should you start? This will vary from project to project, but a general rule is: start with the parts you don't know how to do. It can sometimes be tempting to do the easy tasks first, to feel like you're making some progress and tick off the quick wins. This isn't always helpful. Your aim is to launch, and any area that you're unsure of will be the biggest potential issue that might stop you from meeting your deadline. Target areas you're unclear on first, once this is done you'll have a much clearer picture of whether you'll be able to hit your deadline.

If you're in a team then you'll want to start thinking about who will be responsible for what. The key thing to consider here is the overall team productivity. For example, if you're working on an app, if one part of the system won't be ready for a while, think about working in parallel and merging your changes later. This might take a bit of extra work down the line, but it's much better to make progress than sit around waiting for someone else.

When we built HowsltGoin we knew we had a couple of complex tasks to complete on both the backend and frontend.

So instead of waiting for one to be complete, we worked separately on our areas until our work was ready to be brought together.

The main thing to remember when planning out your project is to stay relatively high-level. Right now you don't know what issues you will face, so deal with the bigger problems and leave the smaller issues until later.

6: Learn

By now you've got your goal in mind, set a deadline, chosen your idea, set the scope and identified and prioritised the areas you need to learn how to do. It's time to dig in and get started.

First up is learning the areas you don't yet fully know how to do. For us, when building out our second project, FlashTabs, that meant getting a working Chrome extension going before even thinking about building out the main functionality. There wasn't any point in us trying to build out the rest of the project until we knew we were capable of doing everything that was required. So we took the time right at the start to test out any possible roadblocks before going any further.

It can often be tempting to go for the most appealing parts first, but your focus should be on learning what you need to know to get your project out the door. Do this first.

7: Build

The build phase is the largest – it takes the longest and requires the most amount of time and effort. It's this stage where you'll likely face your darkest moments, when you'll find all sorts of excuses as to why you're too busy to get stuff done.

If you're part of a team, it might sound obvious, but remember to communicate regularly and help each other out whenever possible. If any team member is blocked this could seriously affect your ability to launch on time.

As you're building, you'll want to be testing as you go, so that when you come towards the end of the project you'll be in a pretty decent state to launch. Remember to share your progress with others. Let them have early access to what you're building, so they can give you feedback.

8: Launch

Next comes the time you've been waiting for, launch! This is where you'll put in place your final preparations, before hitting that big shiny red button.

Having a successful launch, and life post launch is a big topic and can easily make up a whole 'nutha book. However, our focus is to get better at shipping, though we do briefly cover the basics of what to do on launch day in Chapter 10.



CHAPTER 9

SO YOU'VE STARTED

We know that building and launching isn't easy. There are times when you get home from a long day at work, with a long list of other things you could or should be doing, and your little side project can feel like the last thing you want to do.

With any creative endeavour there's always a time when you need to push through. No-one said this would be easy (in fact, most people will straight up tell you it's not), but it can be great, if you persevere through the tough times and launch.

On the journey from concept to launch there will be unexpected challenges and times when you feel less motivated than others. The good news is that you've set yourself a short term deadline, a small, MVP scope and have told someone what you're doing. People are awaiting your launch, and soon, real users will start getting their hands on what you've made.

So now you've begun, how should you navigate day one to launch day? From our experience there's a few tips that can

help make this process simpler and increase your chances of hitting that launch button.

It's not glamorous and that's ok

Now you've started, you may be realising that the shiny dream you had isn't quite so idyllic as you first imagined.

You may have told others about your idea and been met with blank faces, you may be running into technical issues you hadn't thought about, or you may have just found out that someone else has already done this and they nailed it. Bummer.

Fear not, all is not lost!

Remember, this is just the beginning. You aren't trying to save the world right now or launch the greatest app the world has ever seen. Progress is the aim, and progress is what you're making.

It's harder than I thought

Whether you've launched before or not, each new project brings its own set of challenges. It's almost impossible to plan out all the issues that even a relatively simple project will contain, so don't be surprised when problems crop up you hadn't thought about. That's just how it works.

Should I add that one small feature?

As you're going through, you've probably realised there are features you need that you hadn't considered before. From our experience small features can often present themselves as minor additions that will take little time to add, but can often balloon out of control.

Back when we were first starting out with SixBySix, we faced the issue of how to deal with users editing content in HowstGoin. From the outside, this sounds like a relatively simple issue, an edit feature isn't a huge addition, it should be fairly easy to implement and is the sort of feature our users would expect to have. It turned out to be more complex than first thought, requiring changes to a large amount of the code, and nearly doubled our development time.

If you've started and discovered a new feature you think you need to add, run it past the community you're a part of. Consider whether this feature is a *must have*, or a *nice to have*, as well as what effect adding it will have on meeting your deadline. There will always be minor tweaks you didn't foresee, but try to avoid as many scope changes as possible now you've begun.

Keep going or give up?

You may be facing serious issues that are bringing up doubts over whether to push through and launch or throw the towel in and give up.

Back when we were working on FoundersKit, we had this very issue. We were about two months into the project, already a month past our initial deadline and only really about halfway through. We were at the stage of sending hundreds of cold emails to potential partners, which isn't something we were used to or enjoyed doing much. The initial excitement had faded and we were left reliant on pure determination to push through.

It's been done before

At this stage there wasn't really any light at the end of the tunnel, it was still a long way off. Combined with this, we joined the project without much research of whether this had been

done before, and it turns out it very much had. Finding out about the competition out there was a sucker blow, that sapped even more motivation from us.

Should we continue, do we push on now or do we just say “it wasn’t meant to be”? This decision is never easy and shouldn’t be taken lightly. You’re embarking on this process for a reason. Giving up is always the last play that you only do if all other options are gone.

Ultimately, we’ve learnt that competition at this stage really doesn’t matter. Sure, it can be disappointing to see that your idea isn’t unique, but realistically that’s often the way it is. Very rarely will your project be the first at something. Discovering competition alone is never a reason to stop working.

Despite FoundersKit not being totally original, it went down really well, and was one of the most successful projects we launched.

I’m past my deadline and I’m still not done

If you’ve overshot on your deadline then you’ve got a question to ask yourself. Should you continue on or should you give up?

The key points to consider here are whether you realistically believe you’re able to launch, and how much further investment the project will take to get off the ground. If the odds of launching are minimal and the cost is high, then quitting is an option, but it’s always the final play. Whilst you have other viable options we advise to follow those.

We chose to dig in and push on. FoundersKit was out of our comfort zone in many ways, it was the first product that we were going to charge for online, and included lots of tasks we weren’t used to. These were all good things that helped us ‘level up’, but at the time it was hard. And that’s just it, new things

are hard. Likely you're experiencing that now. If you are, know you're not alone, and you *can* do this.

If you do choose to stop working on your project, then the first thing you need to do is let your community or audience know. It can be tempting to go out quietly, but now is the time to explain why you're stopping. This will have the double benefit of forcing you to talk through the issue, which may help you see things clearer, and also enable you to provide value to your community/audience. We're sure there will be lessons learned from any failed endeavour, so be sure to share those.

Keep them up to date

A big part of your fuel for pushing through and launching will be those you've told who are waiting for your launch. Whether this is one person or a whole bunch, having this external pressure is key to success.

Now you've started, remember to keep them up to date. It doesn't have to be everyday, or really in depth, but if you're struggling for inspiration and the drive to push through, then drop them a message, send a quick email or tweet and let them know where you're at, and that you're still working on it.

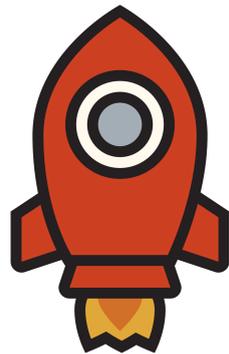
Nothing motivates like knowing you'll have gone back on your word if you don't follow through.

Keep your eyes on the prize

Ultimately, as you move through this process there will be ups and downs. It's important that as you go you remember your *why* (*discussed in chapter 2*) and what you're hoping to get out of it. That may be the short term adrenaline rush of shipping your

first thing, or your long term plans to build a business of your own.

Keep your eyes on your goal, push through and make it happen.



CHAPTER 10

LAUNCH

So you've done the hard work, you've pushed through and you're ready to launch. What next? First off, if you're anything like us, you may have to overcome imposter syndrome.

Imposter syndrome

In the last 18 months we've launched 7 projects, gotten over 2,300 upvotes on Product Hunt (sitting just inside the 100 most upvoted Product Hunt makers), written 32 blog posts, been on 2 podcasts and now written one book. Despite all this, we've been hiding a secret, we don't really know what we're doing. We're making it up as we go along.

“The best advice I've ever received is, ‘No one else knows what they're doing either.’”

— *Ricky Gervais*

And that's the fear many of us carry around. That we don't know what we're doing, and that one day we'll be found out.

That we're imposters.

Imposter syndrome played its part in our Never Ending Project Cycle of Doom. We didn't believe we had much to offer, and we were quite comfortable dreaming, designing and coding on our own without opening up our creations to the real world. Launching requires a certain level of vulnerability, of opening up your creation for other people to see, and the criticism that can come with it.

But at some point, that has to change. At some point, a maker has to launch their first project. For some, this may come easily, but for many of us that first step is one we put off and never take.

Wherever you're at though, we encourage you, launch. The feedback might be harsh, or it might be encouraging, but either way you'll learn and grow. So stop procrastinating, stop worrying what others will think of your product, stop making excuses. Get your product out there and launch.

Final checks

Launch day will likely be the biggest spike in traffic you'll see, so before directing anyone to what you've made, now is a the perfect time to double check that everything works correctly. You're going to want to check every action someone could take, from start to finish. If you've got a newsletter sign up, go ahead and sign up a couple of times to make sure you get the welcome email, and that the right tracking events fire off. Or maybe you've built a site that requires you login with twitter, make sure you login yourself a couple of times and try and get some friends to try as well.

It's launch time

A lot of first time Makers believe that if they build something great then people will just turn up wanting to use it. In reality it doesn't work that way. No matter how great your product is, you'll need to get the word out to bring in your initial users. Even Facebook had to get their first user. Everyone starts at zero.

Thankfully it's easier than ever to get eyeballs to your product. Here's a few methods that have worked for us for getting our first user:

Write an introductory blog post

One way to get attention for what you've made is blogging. All you have to do is write a short post, explaining what you've built, why you've built it, and anything that happened while building that your users may find interesting. Simply put, tell the story of your product.

Every time we wrote an introductory post, we would briefly explain the story behind SixBySix as well as how we went about building that month's project, both the good and the bad. We would round the post off by explaining what the project did, why someone would want to use it, and then encourage the reader to give it a try.

Unless you already have your own blog, post on a site like Medium, they handle the complexity for you. While it's not difficult to setup a simple WordPress blog, it still takes time in the long run, which is often better spent building awesome projects.

Whatever your choice, make sure to write content others will care about.

Share it

Now you're live it's time to share your project with anyone and everyone who might possibly care. There are two groups of people to reach when you launch: *people who know you* and *people who don't*.

Reaching the *people who know you* is pretty simple. Tell your friends, family and colleagues you see IRL; post on Facebook, Twitter, communities you're a part of and messaging services like WhatsApp. If you've already got an email list then it goes without saying you'll want to let them know too.

Once you've shared your launch with the people who know you, it's time to share with those that don't. Thankfully there are more ways than ever to do this these days. Depending on what you've built and who might use it, will obviously influence where you should share it.

We predominately launched on Product Hunt and Hacker News. Between these two platforms and our other smaller networks, we managed to drive over 56,000 users through to our projects. We're almost certain that none of our projects would have been picked up by any of the large media, meaning that without these platforms we would have struggled to get more than a couple hundred people through to our sites.

Life beyond launch

Launching your first project, or getting back into the launching habit is a big deal. You should be proud, you've invested a lot of time and energy into this and made something that wouldn't have existed otherwise.

But, days and weeks after launch, when the dust settles and the hype has passed, you might be asking, what comes next? Should you continue working on this? Should you build and launch something else, or stop altogether?

Ultimately it's up to you, it all comes down to what your *why* was in the first place, and whether your *why* is still the same having launched.

Our *why* was to get better at shipping, and use that to help build a business. In less than a year we went from failing to launch anything, to having launched six projects – [HowstGoin](#), [FlashTabs](#), [OutstandingBar](#), [FormFiller](#), [TheWorkingLunch](#) and [FoundersKit](#).

Our ability to build and launch has improved significantly, so our next steps are obvious, continue to ship side projects, while focussing on building a business.

Ultimately, if we don't push on, using what we've learnt to achieve our longer term goals, then this whole exercise will have been for nothing.

All in, we spent 235 hours on this book. For a full run down of what we spent our time on, check out our [Toggl report](#).



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