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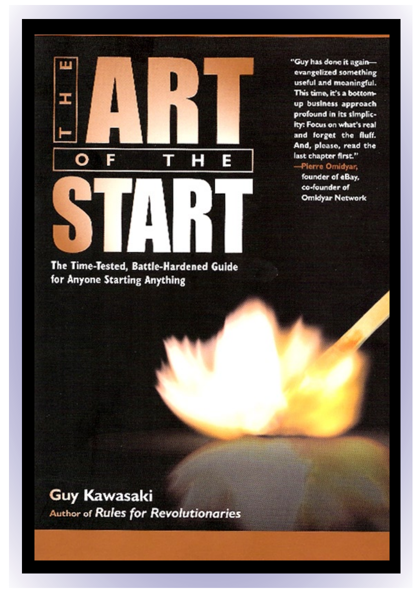
The Art of the Start

The Time-Tested, Battle-Hardened Guide for Anyone Starting Anything



Guy Kawasaki

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Reviewed by Susan Williams

Introduction

For entrepreneurs, or anyone inspired to start something -- be it a new business, new product, new service, or a new organizational division – it's easy to get bogged down in theory and unnecessary details which hinder the process of starting and doing.

Inspired entrepreneurs often dream big visions while spending money and time trudging through detailed market research reports, competitive analyses, and long-term forecasts.

In **The Art of the Start**, author Guy Kawasaki helps people simplify the art of starting a new endeavor and avoid the potential pain of paralysis. His study of attitudes and people's states of mind focuses on priorities and guidelines for doing, rather than dreaming.

PART I: CAUSATION

Before starting any project, it's important to know the most significant tasks to accomplish. Kawasaki lists five: 1) make meaning 2) make mantra 3) get going 4) define your business model 5) weave a mat.

Making meaning is not about power, prestige, or money. It's about making the world a better place, finding out what's worthwhile and what increases the quality of life. Making meaning can be a powerful motivator to begin a project and start something that will help the greater good.

"The causation of great organizations is the desire to make meaning," says Kawasaki.

Kawasaki asks entrepreneurs if their organizations never existed, why would the world be worse off? The answer to this question is *what makes meaning*.

After finding the meaning in starting something, entrepreneurs need to discern what kind of meaning is intended for a startup venture. This "why" of starting is also known as the mission statement, one of the first tasks assumed by entrepreneurs. The pitfall of many mission statements is that they're all-encompassing, crafted to make a large number of employees or shareholders happy. As a result, people face an often frustrating task, leading to mediocrity. Instead, people should avoid writing a mission statement, and create a mantra. A mantra is a "sacred verbal formula repeated in prayer, meditation, or incantation...". This sort of "mission" brings more power and passion to the way people do their jobs.

Some examples of strong and powerful mantras include those of Nike and Starbucks. Nike's "authentic athletic performance" or Starbucks' "rewarding everyday moments" communicate a more memorable mantra than do mission statements. These mantras are a constant reminder of what kind of meaning will be made. These phrases are not tag lines for promotional purposes, but guidelines about how products or services will be used, or how an organization will help the greater good.

The next step is not to write a business plan, but to implement. This may mean building a prototype, creating a web site, or writing software.

"It's not how great you start, it's how you end up," says Kawasaki.

The process of mulling over strategies, formulas, or research and development in order to put statements down on paper is a waste of time when trying to start up a new venture.

To get going and "get doing" is to catalyze passion. If people are passionate with their opinions, then they are

Key Concepts

Guy Kawasaki summarizes nine ways to start something great:

1. **Positioning.** Specify why customers should be interested. Focus on differentiation through clear tactical and strategic purposes that customers understand.
2. **Pitching.** Constantly explain what a business is trying to do.
3. **Writing business plans.** Formalize intentions. Write succinctly, articulate a position, give a pitch, and show the cohesiveness of the founding team.
4. **Bootstrapping.** Manage cash flow, maximize customer involvement, and produce results-oriented habits within a low budget.
5. **Recruiting.** Hire excellent people who are prepared to change the world.
6. **Raising capital.** Pitch a viable business scenario to investors.
7. **Partnering.** Combine two parties to accelerate cash flow, increase revenue, and reduce cost. Deliver strong results quickly.
8. **Branding** Promote a great product or service. Move customers to believe in the cause. Foster a community of evangelists to spread the word.
9. **Rainmaking** Generate business through a method that holds people accountable for achieving specific goals.

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involved and interested. Market research, often studied in depth before implementation, can more easily be achieved by using a prototype delivered quickly to market. When getting going, nothing will be perfect, but by getting out there, new startups can revise their strategies and reap benefits while people already want to buy their products or services.

After they get going, entrepreneurs can take the time to define a business model, by asking who has money and how money will get into the startup organization. Asking who has money can help define and identify the customer. Asking how a startup – especially not-for-profit organizations – can generate funds simplifies the creation of the right sales mechanisms and ensures revenues exceed costs.

"The point of...tasks is to understand and appreciate the totality of what your organization has to accomplish, and to not let anything slip through the cracks in the early, often euphoric days."

In the development of a business model, it's important to be specific and simple. Rather than beginning with ambiguous, grandiose goals, entrepreneurs must be able to describe potential customers precisely. They should be able to summarize their business model in less than ten words using simple terminology. It is also fine to copy a good idea, since businesses have been around for many years, and often demonstrate what works and what doesn't.

The final great idea for starting things is to weave a mat of milestones, assumptions, and tasks. Having a "heavy woven net" helps to understand the scope of the undertaking, test assumptions, and correct any flaws in thinking or implementation.

The first step in weaving the mat is to consider seven startup milestones: 1) prove your concept 2) complete design specifications 3) finish a prototype 4) raise capital 5) ship a testable version to customers 6) ship the final version to customers 7) achieve break even.

These milestones apply to all types of startup ventures. According to Kawasaki, these milestones are important to the survival of an organization, and that entrepreneurs should spend 80 percent of their effort on them.

After considering and implementing the seven milestones, it's time to test assumptions. For each milestone reached, an assumption can be tested. These assumptions can include factors such as market size, gross margin, length of sales cycle, prices of parts and supplies, as well as product or service performance metrics. Ideally, assumptions are linked to a specific milestone.

The process of weaving the mat helps define those tasks necessary to support startup services and products. Deciding what's necessary to design, manufacture, sell, ship, and support can include tasks such as office-space rental, securing key vendors, establishing accounting systems, or purchasing insurance policies.

While entrepreneurs are dreaming of creating innovative products and services, they should consider innovating internally instead of becoming just another creative employee of a large organization. One success of an internal entrepreneurial effort was achieved by Steve Jobs and the Macintosh Division of Apple. Were it not for Jobs, the Macintosh would not exist. Jobs created innovative designs, paid astute attention to detail, and was able to implement his dreams within Apple. When entrepreneurs want to achieve their goals internally, they need to remember to put the company first. Internal entrepreneurship is not about getting all of the attention, but working toward the betterment of the organization. If a good idea is not for personal gain, but for the benefit of a company, employees will be supportive.

While creating and innovating, entrepreneurs must stay under the radar, so projects can remain under wraps until

About the Author

Guy Kawasaki is the managing director of Garage Technology Ventures, an early-stage venture capital firm for high-technology companies. Previously, he was an Apple Fellow at Apple Computer, Inc. A noted speaker and the founder of various personal computer companies, Kawasaki was one of the individuals responsible for the success of the Macintosh computer. He is also the author of seven books, including *Rules for Revolutionaries*, *How to Drive Your Competition Crazy*, *Selling the Dream*, and *The Macintosh Way*. He has a BA from Stanford University and an MBA from UCLA, as well as an honorary doctorate from Babson College.

they're too far along to be ignored and others recognize the idea is needed.

Internal entrepreneurs benefit from having their own building, their own space. A separate environment keeps the new ideas quiet and fosters an excited and motivated team. These teams usually consist of people who don't want to be ignored or forgotten, but rather a force of innovation that will ultimately attract corporate support.

"Good positioning is inspiring and energizing. It does not allow itself to get mucked up in money, market share, and management egos."

It's also useful to find a godfather, or a mentor, someone who is highly respected and safe from everyday politics. These godfathers can provide invaluable advice, insights, and often, protection.

When companies change their infrastructure, it's important that internal entrepreneurs anticipate these shifts and use them strategically in the introduction of new products or services. In a big company, entrepreneurs build on what exists, while garnering additional resources and support.

When the day comes that legal or accounting departments question a project's existence, internal entrepreneurs collect and openly present data on what's been spent and what has been accomplished. Letting the idea be "discovered" can often benefit entrepreneurs because its success may be already partially proven. If and when the new idea is successful, good internal entrepreneurs will consider integrating the project into the larger organization and then move on to create a new group to do something else.

PART II: ARTICULATION

By explaining what they do, companies can achieve the art of positioning. Positioning represents the core of an organization. It specifies why it was founded and why customers should be interested. These considerations need to be clearly articulated.

In the process of positioning, organizations with new ideas should focus on customer beliefs and employee motivation, rather than simply trying to put the competition out of business. The focus should be on differentiation. In addition to being self-explanatory, relevant, and differentiated, effective positioning needs to be specific and include the organization's core competencies.

To start a good organization, group, product, or service, it's not a good idea to try to be everything to everyone, as some entrepreneurs believe. It's better to find a niche and focus on concentrating services to a smaller market that larger competition is not already targeting.

For example, Microsoft, which sells personal computer operating systems, servers, PDAs, phones, and application software, did not start out this broad. Instead, it started in a small market sector, marketing a programming language called BASIC for an operating system called CPM.

Another recommendation for mastering the art of positioning is to spend the time and effort creating a good name. According to Kawasaki, good names often contain a first initial that comes early in the alphabet, avoid numerals, and include verb potential. One example is the recent use of the term "google" instead of "searching on the Internet". While names must be simple and easy enough to remember, they must sound different from others, sound logical, and not fall into the trap of being overly trendy or clever.

Positioning should be personal. Potential customers should not have to imagine how products or services fill their needs or benefit them. For example, rather than saying "reduce the size of the global ozone hole", say "prevent you from getting melanoma". Furthermore, personal positioning statements need to be described in plain, non-jargon, industry-oriented language.

After positioning, the art of pitching is essential to obtain buy-in for a developing product or service, to recruit an employee, or to secure an investment. Pitching is a constant. First, entrepreneurs should explain themselves in the first minute of a conversation. Once people know what an entrepreneur is trying to do, the conversation can move forward more efficiently, as the audience has the right focus and perspective. This means articulating a short and sweet explanation of what the organization does.

Second, pitching involves knowing the audience. Reading reports, investigating relevant topics on the Internet, and interviewing industry contacts can reveal what is important to the audience. This core information enables entrepreneurs to find the right hooks and angles to make a powerful and meaningful pitch.

Third, pitches should be short, because their purpose is to stimulate interest. A short pitch means keeping the number of slides and other visuals to a minimum and keeping the pitch under 20 minutes.

Most importantly, keep pitching. Entrepreneurs who constantly practice giving their pitch will be the most effective, as “familiarity breeds content”.

Because many potential investors, recruits, or internal decision makers expect a business plan, entrepreneurs need to understand the art of formalizing their intentions.

An important point to remember is to write well for the right reason, pitch, and then plan. The right reasons to write a business plan are to begin courting an investor, show the cohesiveness of the founding team, consider issues previously overlooked, and reveal areas where implementation may not work.

These reasons are enough to be able to articulate a position, give a pitch, and deliver a sound plan.

Basically, a good business plan is an all-encompassing version of a pitch. If the pitch is right, the plan will be right. Entrepreneurs, therefore, should know their pitch before writing their plan. Many people won’t even read the plan, but will base their judgments, opinions, and decisions on the prior pitch. The actual business plan framework should expand upon existing audio visuals from the pitch, focus on the executive summary, and be kept to four paragraphs in length. These first few paragraphs determine whether people read the rest of the business plan. Executive summaries, therefore, are the most important paragraphs of an organization’s existence. To increase the effectiveness of the plan, entrepreneurs should keep it short and simple, less than 20 pages, and ensure that it’s written by one person, to maintain a fluid and single voice. It also means simplifying financial projections to two pages. These financial projections are usually significant and help the audience understand the scope of the business.

Finally, business plans need to be written deliberately but thought of in an emergent style. The deliberate writing shows that entrepreneurs know what they’re doing. The emergent strategy-making process shows startups can react quickly to problems and opportunities.

“So write as if you know exactly what the future holds, but react opportunistically when you encounter reality”, says Kawasaki.

“To develop a memorable pitch, imagine that your audience is at the end of a long day of boring meetings; everyone is barely awake, much less attentive; and people just want to go home.”

PART III: ACTIVATION

The activation phase of building a startup includes the art of bootstrapping, recruiting, and raising capital.

Startups should begin by thinking big and starting small. Entrepreneurs who bootstrap their companies characteristically use a model that offers low up-front capital requirements, short sales cycles, short payment terms, recurring revenue, and word-of-mouth advertising. This probably means bypassing more profitable sales that take longer to collect, or stretching out payments for all purchases. The short-term practice of managing cash flow is the way a bootstrapped organization starts.

The next important move for a company that is bootstrapping, is to get the product or service immediately to market before all the kinks are ironed out, and hiring inexperienced but enthusiastic, talented young people.

Often, startup organizations initially try selling through a third party, such as a reseller, rather than going directly to a final user. Entrepreneurs often believe they can tap into an existing market using this method. However, this technique isolates startups from their customers, requires large volumes of sales, and takes a long time to establish a distribution system. The best bet for a startup is to sell directly.

The final consideration in bootstrapping is to remember to execute, and create a culture that produces results-delivering habits. Successful execution requires communicating goals, measuring progress, and establishing a single point of accountability for specific objectives.

According to Kawasaki, “there are few factors more critical to the success of a startup than good people”. Achievers should be rewarded, whether via options, money, days off, or free lunches. Recruiting is an art requiring individual judgments based on a variety of factors to hire those who want to help change the world. Entrepreneurs must initially decide what sort of candidate is needed, and then determine if the candidate has strengths that fill gaps. Recruitment should be practiced every day, not only to find the right people from outside, but to make existing employees want to keep returning to work. Candidates need to believe the organization can change the world. If this belief and enthusiasm is lacking, these candidates most likely will not contribute to organizational success. Good teams work together which is why CEOs should look to their employees to find good people. Employees are a rich resource for recruitment, as it is in their best interest to bring in good staff members.

Startups need three kinds of "A" players: 1) kamikazes willing to do what it takes to achieve success 2) implementers 3) operators. These players must have skills that complement each other. It's important the candidates know the relevant products, services, or business. Securing the right candidates for the job means offering appropriate incentives. These could include the reward of working together with a great team to achieve a vision, the opportunity to be involved with the board of directors, advisors, and investors; and the opportunity to build a marketable future.

The assumption in hiring a candidate is that the candidate is the sole decision maker. Often candidates rely on spouses, parents, or friends to help them make the decision to join the team. Knowing this information is critical to the ability to hire the right person. This knowledge helps entrepreneurs "sell" all decision makers. Once everything else has been considered, such as reference checking, qualifications, and interview results, entrepreneurs need to follow their intuition. However, just in case their intuition is wrong, establishing an initial review period with incremental milestones is useful. The recommended review period is 90 days after the start date. At that time, both sides can discuss what may be going right, and what may be going wrong. And as mentioned earlier, recruiting never stops. "Every day is a new contract between a startup and an employee," says Kawasaki.

Activating a new product, service, or organization involves the art of raising capital, usually from outside investors. These investors may be venture capitalists, foundations, or even family and friends. The art of raising money involves pitching, demonstrating a viable business, and disclosure.

"If you want to get an investment, show that you will build a business. Make meaning. Make a difference. Don't do it for the money. Do it because you want to make the world a better place."

To start, entrepreneurs need an introduction by a credible third party. These third-party sources can include current investors, lawyers, accountants, other entrepreneurs, and professors. To secure these introductions requires being connected. It requires knowing what an investor may be looking for. It also requires a demonstration that others are supportive of the business because of a proven team, proven technology, or proven sales. In schools, this may mean providing enrollment numbers and student test scores. In churches, it may mean showing attendance at services. Museums might present the number of visitors, and volunteer organizations may highlight contributions and the number of volunteer hours.

Disclosure is also essential, and needs to be implemented early in the process, preventing later credibility issues. Investors will eventually discover anything hidden; therefore, it's wise to be up front at the start. Entrepreneurs do well by showing investors they are aware of their competition, and know the market.

Winning an investor takes persistence. For each time of contact, there should be demonstrable and significant improvements in the entrepreneur's case. Through follow-up contact, supplemental information, answers to questions or the show of payment from other high-quality investors, potential investors are more likely to pay attention. However, getting a top-tier investor does not guarantee success. Investors may not sign on, but they can often be the source of new opportunities to increase sales or improve partnerships, and even find other investors.

Kawasaki asserts, "if you figure out where you're going, the money will come".

Entrepreneurs should also remember there are other sources of money besides investors and venture capitalists. There are other wealthy people who may be interested, but attracting them requires a different approach. These people cannot be underestimated, which means the same level of professionalism is required. At the same time, it's especially crucial to make the business pitch understandable in plain terms.

Once securing funding, a board of directors needs to be established to manage the money responsibilities. Two types of expertise comprise a good board: company-building expertise and a deep knowledge of the market.

Regular meetings must hold no unpleasant surprises, focus on how to improve the future, and provide useful metrics, such as number of customers or installations. Ultimately, the process of raising money is a difficult one, yet one of the most important in activating a business.

PART IV: PROLIFERATION

"...Good partnering...should accelerate cash flow, increase revenue, and reduce costs."

There are good reasons for partnering. To succeed, those who do the real work need to collaborate through a focus on strengths, win-win deals, as well as the establishment of ways to end the relationship. Effective partnerships deliver strong results in a startup. Partnerships help businesses enter new market segments quickly, open new distribution channels, and accelerate product development, all while reducing costs. These reasons for partnering affect the bottom line. It is not enough to partner simply because everyone else is doing it. The perfect situation occurs when one organization needs the other to increase revenue. Organizations that clearly define deliverables and objectives are more likely to partner for the right reasons. Basing partnerships on financial numbers and clear objectives greatly increases the probability of a successful collaboration. Both organizations need an internal champion to liaise between the businesses with the partnership's success as the only goal. These point people must be empowered to work across all departments and levels of an organization, cutting across people's environments and priorities. Then, to make a partnership work, both parties must win. According to Kawasaki, the only kind of sustainable partnership is through focus on win-win deals. There is a good approach to get a partnership discussion rolling. Before writing anything down, it's best to begin with a face-to-face meeting to discuss the key points of the deal. After agreement, a brief follow-up email outlining the partnership framework keeps detail clear and to the point. After both parties have reached closure via phone calls, emails, and meetings, then it's time to draft a legal document. Just as important as agreement on the partnership deal is a clause to enable an end to the arrangement when necessary.

"The reason is that an easy 'out' promotes the longevity of a deal because it assures both parties that they won't be trapped in an untenable predicament," says Kawasaki.

The art of branding is another important consideration when starting up a new business, product, or service. In addition to the standard Ps of marketing: product, place, price, and promotion; others must be converted into believing in the cause.

Great brands start with a great product or service. Making products or services cool, effective, distinctive, disruptive, emotional, deep, indulgent, and supportive inspire enthusiasm. With these characteristics in place, people will naturally migrate toward the venture. The innovation must also be simple. Complexity creates a barrier to good branding.

High prices make products less accessible, and are another barrier to good branding. A reasonable starting price can result in greater returns later. Achieving critical mass in branding is enhanced by recruiting evangelists to spread the word. Asking the best customers for help works. Once these customers have tools to use in evangelizing, their job is easier and more likely to happen. Fostering good relationships with evangelists means listening. If they believe a product needs to be altered to make it better, their opinions count. Listening also creates greater loyalty and willingness to help.

"Sow many seeds. See what takes root and then blossoms. Nurture those markets."

-- Mao Tse-tung

Another smart way to establish brands is to attract good publicity. To secure press coverage there must be news, truthfulness, and a source of information to help journalists write a good story. The news needs to be aimed at the appropriate and relevant audience. Through good and bad, entrepreneurs need to maintain strong, open relationships with the press. Most importantly, good branding starts from the inside. If every employee can evangelize, the word will spread outward.

Branding is an ongoing pursuit and leads to the next stage of the art of rainmaking. Like Native American medicine men who use rituals to make rain, entrepreneurs use their own rituals to generate business.

Entrepreneurs must have intimate knowledge of the product or service they offer, and know who will buy it and who will use it. Therefore, they need to get version 1.0 into the market and see where it flourishes.

Sometimes unintended products or services will flourish, in which case, the smart move is to adjust the business to reflect that information. It is a mistake to try to reposition those offerings because of unintended occurrences.

An example of how to deal with unintended consequences comes from Peter F. Drucker, a well-known entrepreneurship author. He cites that the inventor of Novocain intended it to replace general anesthesia for doctors, but doctors wouldn't have anything to do with it. However, dentists were interested, and quickly adopted it, so the inventor changed his focus to this unforeseen market.

Credibility must be established to generate business. Building credibility starts with personal and in-person contact, an effort that begins with lead generation. Good leads can be generated by conducting small-scale seminars, making speeches, networking, getting published, and participating in industry organizations.

In the process of selling their offerings, entrepreneurs need to ignore fancy titles and find the true key influencer. This person may be a software administrator or an office-supply buyer. Finding the key influencers involves speaking to secretaries, administrative aides, and receptionists. Then entrepreneurs must establish solid credibility and a well-honed proposition. Once able to access a decision maker, entrepreneurs who generate the most business present a reference account. Entrepreneurs who find the best reference accounts aim their efforts at those willing to consider the existence of the offerings. If a startup can enable people to do something they could not do before, an interested market can lead to establishment of references. Once the market is interested, it's important for entrepreneurs to let prospects talk, especially after mentioning product or service benefits. The prospect can then make suggestions as to how specific features might be useful, what they expect before they buy, and perhaps a hint about how to sell to them. A listening and flexible entrepreneur will have a clear understanding of how to tailor a sales proposition.

"The art of branding requires creating something contagious that infects people with enthusiasm, making it easy for them to try it, asking them for help in spreading the word, and building a community around it."

Prospects are usually open to something new if given the option of adopting it slowly, gently, and seamlessly. Entrepreneurs can implement this technique by asking customers to use offerings in a limited and low-risk manner. These low-risk opportunities include a brief trial period, using the product or service for just one project or department.

While making it easy for customers to feel comfortable buying products, they also must be comfortable ending their relationship, much like what Netflix has done. Netflix continually gives customers an easy way to unsubscribe to its service. The result is a positive last experience with the company.

Entrepreneurs must also understand they will be rejected. The rejection process, rather than to discourage, is an opportunity to let startups improve their art of rainmaking. When listening to the reasons for rejections, startups can modify their pitches and their interpersonal skills. They can eliminate jargon, and focus on a different market of customers. Understanding reasons for rejection and learning to make changes as a result, leads to startups with a greater chance of future success. The rainmaking process must also be well managed. As in any business, entrepreneurs need to encourage their entire team to make it rain. This means setting goals and expectations about how much each sale will yield weekly, monthly, and quarterly. The team can also become accountable for tracking leads, product ideas, and cold-call results. Finally, the team members who achieve the goal and secure revenues need to be recognized and rewarded.

PART V: OBLIGATION

Helping people do what's right, and paying back society are all components of a startup's obligation. Startups need to be good role models for upholding ethical and moral standards instead of doing things that may be detrimental to society. The true way to earn points in this area is to be able to "help people who cannot help you". Helping others brings joy to both parties and is a building block for doing what's right. Doing what's right may not mean doing what's going to save money or speed a process, but rather, what's not easy.

For example, say a jewelry retailer buys a shipment of 18-carat gold rings from a manufacturer who accidentally bills for 14-carat gold rings. The right thing to do would be to call the manufacturer and report the discrepancy.

Paying back society is another obligation entrepreneurs should heed in starting new ventures. Donating time, money, resources, expertise, or emotional support can help give people spiritual fulfillment, bring economic success, help families and friends, or contribute to beautiful surroundings.

When starting anything, whether a not-for-profit organization, a new product, new service, or a new operational division, the art of being an entrepreneur is a state of mind, one that can gain insight into how to make meaning and change the world.

* * *

A chapter-by-chapter summary and a bibliography are provided.

Remarks

Entrepreneurs dream of creating innovative products and services. This book describes the art of innovation, positioning, pitching, writing business plans, bootstrapping, and recruiting. It also points out that successful entrepreneurs are not necessarily lucky individuals with huge financial resources, large sales forces, or established brands.

Starting anything is definitely more art than science. It's an adventurous journey to create something meaningful.

In his advance praise for this book, Rick Warren, author of *The Purpose-Driven Life*, says, "...Kawasaki shares the lessons behind the scars of his entrepreneurial adventures and the wisdom he's gained in the process. He offers field-tested, practical help to anyone wanting to start a business, an organization, or even a church".

Anyone who is unsure as to where or how to start, this optimistic primer gives hope and lots of inspiration. It answers questions about no-nonsense problems simply and clearly, offering ideas and strategies to get started. Along with practical advice, this book contains a good deal of detail. Good natured and light, it generates passion and maintains a strong sense of humor.

This book is an essential guide for anyone beginning anything. Rather than simply studying what it takes to start something, Kawasaki offers specific principles and suggestions to do what it takes to get going.

Reading Suggestions

Reading Time: 7-9 Hours, 231 Pages in Book

This book is divided into charts, bullets, mini-chapters, answers to frequently asked questions, reading lists, and exercises. Within the chapters, after each subhead, Kawasaki includes step-by-step exercises to help entrepreneurs master that topic and get going. These exercises offer ideas to think about, help people ask questions, and encourage them to assign tasks. The end of each section includes frequently asked questions which can be a source of comfort for those unsure about what they're doing. Tables found on pages 51 to 56 explain the essentials for the three types of pitches. Page 63 offers a mini-chapter with tips to master the art of power pointing as part of successful pitching. The Frequently asked questions section in chapter 7 is the longest in the book, because it reflects the detailed knowledge and steps required to raise capital.

On page 160 is a chart outlining the top ten lies of partnering, a useful summary important for entrepreneurs to understand. It shows the difference between what a big organization might say about partnering as opposed to what entrepreneurs of startup businesses might hear. This concisely written book is well worth reading from start to finish.

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