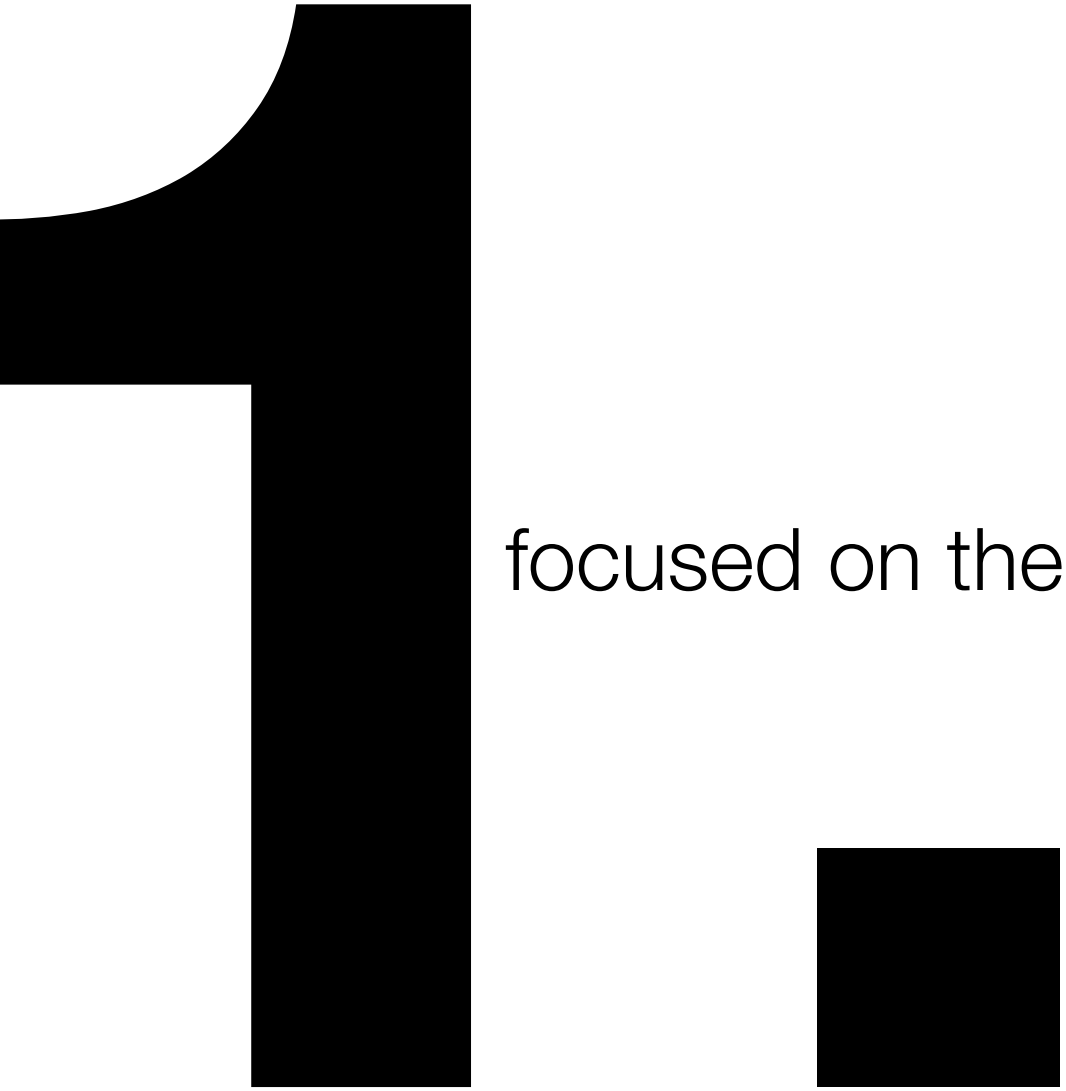
# 10 things I've done wrong

*...so you don't have to.*

*by: tara 'missrogue' hunt*

## who am I and why I'm qualified to talk about this stuff:

- co-founder + CEO Buyosphere.com
- been raising $$ for >1yr
- raised $200k F&F
- believed the hype
- lived in SF for 4yrs
- made a crapload of mistakes already
- serial entrepreneur (but first startup)



focused on the ‘big picture’ too much

# the original* pitch deck

*since 2008 when I put this deck together, I've done 75+ versions...

“The hard part is to figure out the fewest possible features that could possibly accomplish your company’s goals.” ***Eric Ries***

# The advantages of Minimum Viable Product (MVP)

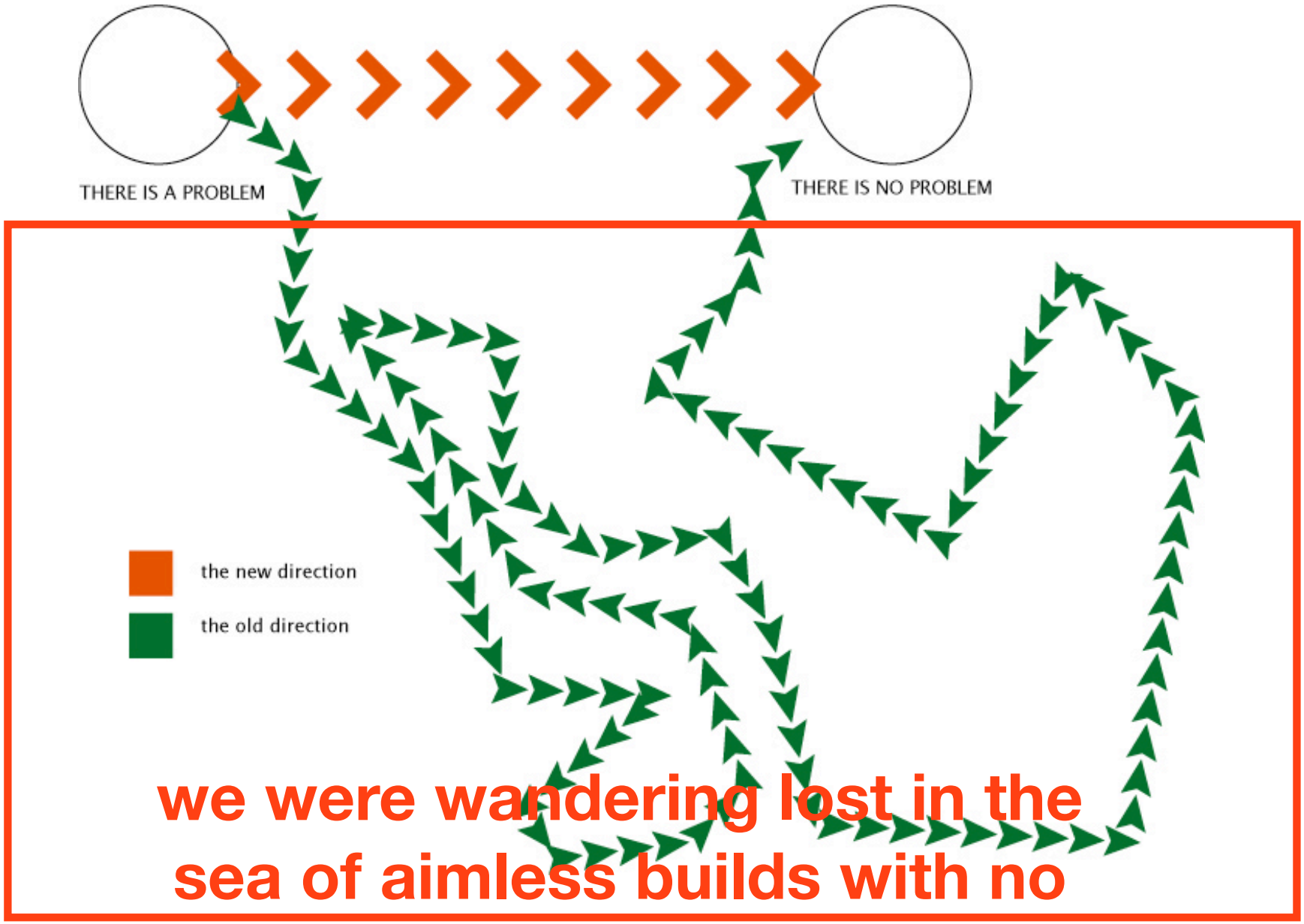
1. test your assumptions
2. minimal wasted time/energy
3. iterative based on real customer needs

# The trouble with Minimum Viable Product (MVP)

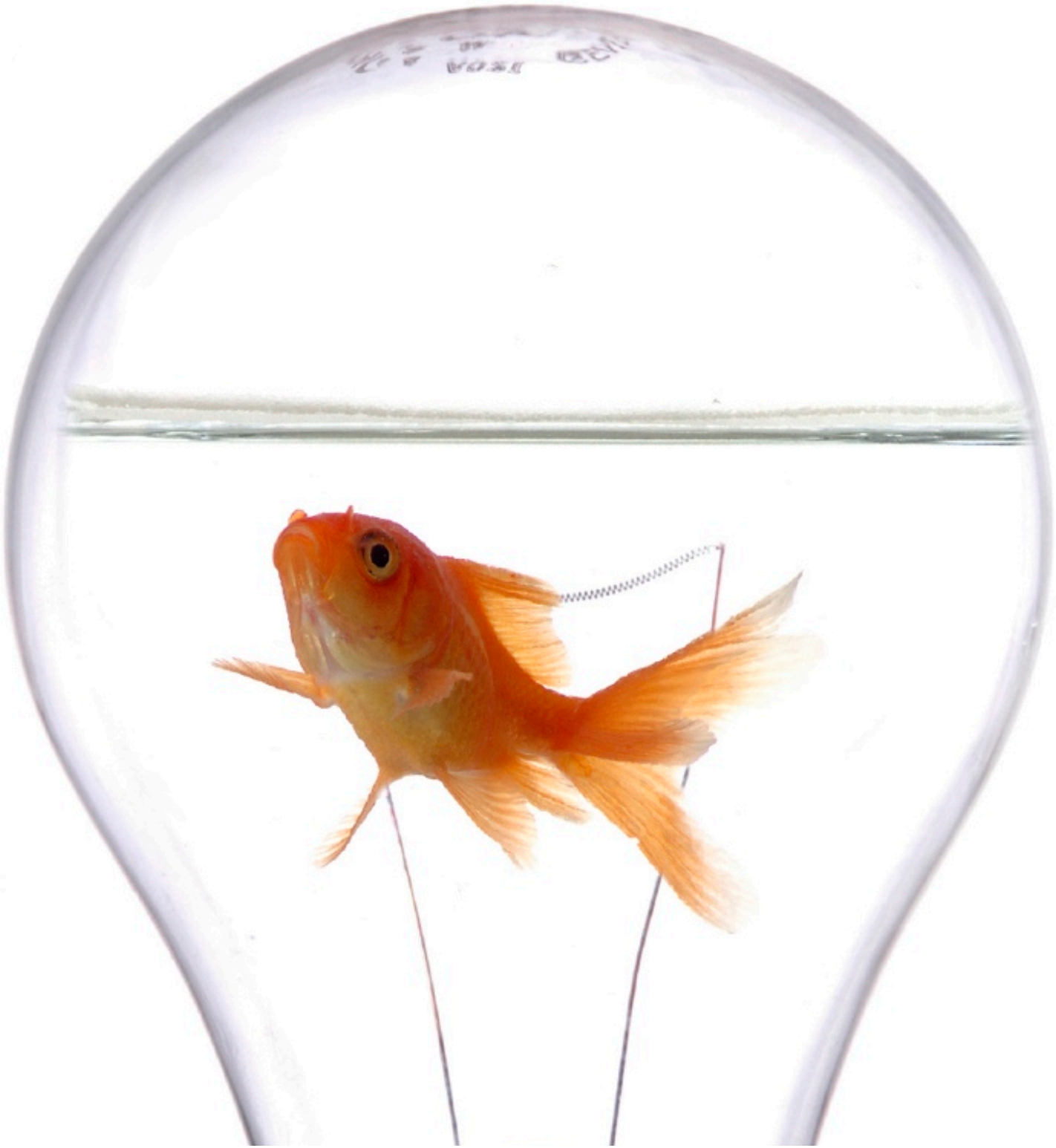
1. it has to be viable
2. it has to be viable
3. it has to be viable

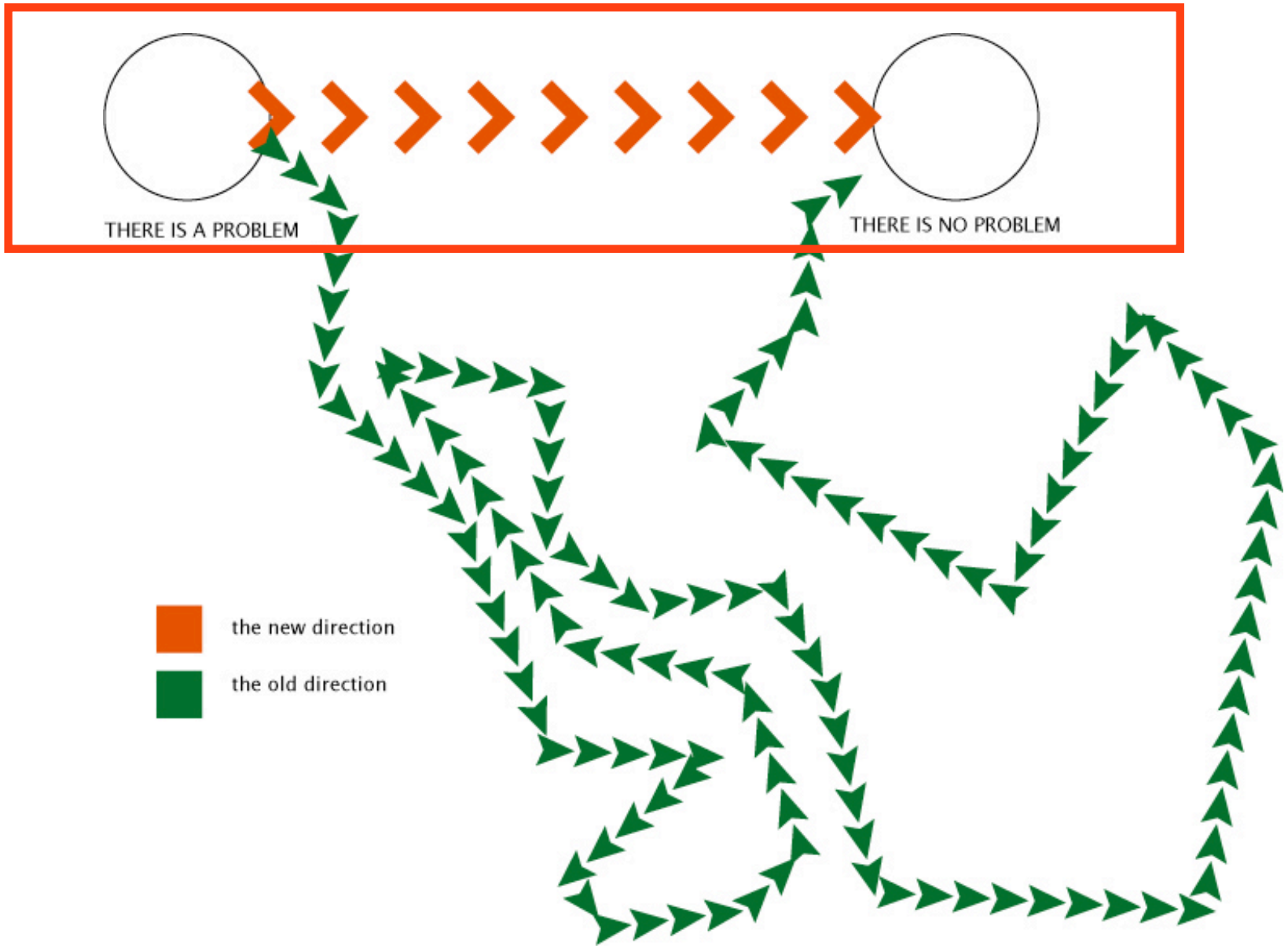
**key**: build something your customers can use.

**what we did wrong**: kept focusing on (our idea of) the final product and building minimum components of it rather than thinking about what our customers could really use.




we were wandering lost in the sea of aimless builds with no data and no reason






unfortunately, it took us a year and $200k to figure this out.
fortunately, we've figured it out.

# 3 ways to figure out MVP

1. Think about the problem you want to solve and ask yourself: “Could I accomplish this on an email list?” Try it. On an email list. OR think about how people solve it currently. Can you hack that?

2. Talk to as many of your intended customers as possible and ask them for little things they really need. Build something that keeps coming up from these conversations in a weekend.

3. No audience? No problem to solve? Twitter, for instance, didn’t start out to solve a problem, but they launched a pretty minimal product. It was engaging because it was super simple to use. Think: Instagram.

twttr
All public updates (over the last 24 hours)
Crystal missed the quake due to aerobics. feet prolly werent on the ground ;) (18 minutes ago)
asruge damn, i always miss the quakes (22 minutes ago)
chris Earthquake? no, i've got gas, thought that was me
Garett A bit of a shake and sway on the 35th floor of th
Ian McKellar Senses on Valencia (39 minutes ago)
Rob Twttr: human seismic detection service. Is there a
patch in usgs seismic servic (42 minutes ago)
Sharon yep dan you did. I get them emailed to me and
(about 1 hour ago)
Tess Yes earthquake (about 1 hour ago)
jason_g Hmm.. Quake, the garage rattled abit. (about 1 hour ago)
Biz Stone I felt the eartquake but livy didn't believe me until the twitters started rolling in (about 1 hour ago)
Johnny serious? (about 1 hour ago)
twttr
Use twttr to stay in touch with your friends all the time. If you have a cell and can txt, you'll never be bored again...EVER!
What your friends ar
Kevin Systrom babysitting
Jeremy home - boys to bec
Katie It's my birthday!
txt
(or)
What are you doing?
Send
timeline
follow along with what your friends are doing throughout the day
what up?
send updates from your cell or from the web about whats in yr head
Florian x [txt]
Garett x [txt]
goldman x [txt]
Sign in.
Mobile number (or email)
Password (or PIN)
Remember me
Sign in
New? Sign up!
twttr works best when updated from your mobile phone. To verify you are you, we'll need your number.
Mobile number
Get started

**STOP** thinking about the big picture*. **START** thinking about creating value **NOW**.

**a big picture is very good to have, but note that these things tend to shift, morph and become something altogether new over time.*

# 2.

focused on the wrong things

**wrong things:** anything that pushes people to do what you want them to do (i.e. spend time on your site)

**right things:** things that let people do what they want to do where they want to do it

**What to focus on #1:**

onramps and offramps

| onramps | offramps |
| --- | --- |
| *the ways we allow people to post to our apps from other places* | *the ways we allow people to post to other places from our apps* |
| Facebook connect | Facebook likes, comments, recommends, etc. |
| Twitter connect | Posting to Twitter |
| Mobile app | SMS/MMS |
| Email forwarding | Email sending |
| Bookmarklet/Browser add-ons | Browser notifications |
| Buyo buttons on other sites | Site widgets/embeds |

**What to focus on #2:**

analytics/engagement

you don’t need a crystal ball to tell you
what to do next, you need analytics.

| Heard | Arrived | Used | Engaged | Bought | Referred |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| PR, Search, WOM | Landing pages | Sign up process | Actions/ interaction | Pricing/ Payment options | Tell a friend/ invites |
| Is there a story? | Is the message clear? Is it compelling? | How easy is the sign up? | How easy is adding content/ interacting? | Can the user live without it? How simple is paying? | Is this so awesome they'll wanna tell friends? Do you make it easy? |
| measure: unique visitors from various sources | measure: bounce rate on entry pages | measure: completion/ abandonment | measure: events/tasks | measure: transactions/ shopping cart abandonment | measure: invites, tweets, fb posts, emails + other referrals |
| win: unique visitors growing steadily | win: bounce rate low + moving to sign up | win: sign up growth + filling up profile | win: engagement with actions/ interactions growing | win: growing percentage of paid customers | win: growing percentage of customers sharing + inviting others |
| unbounce.com<br>Google Analytics | clicktale.com<br>Google Analytics<br>Mixpanel<br>KISS metrics | Mixpanel<br>KISS Metrics<br>Google Analytics | Mixpanel<br>KISS Metrics<br>Google Analytics | Mixpanel<br>KISS Metrics<br>Google Analytics | Mixpanel<br>KISS Metrics<br>Google Analytics |

**framework courtesy of Alistair Croll + Sean Power in AMAZING book "Complete Web Monitoring"**

**What to focus on #3:**

user experience

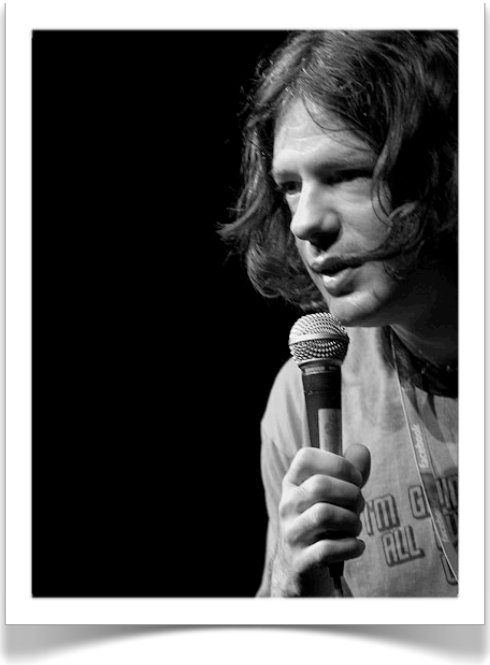
once you have a good sense of where you are losing people, **figure out what you are doing wrong and fix the experience**.

| Heard | Arrived | Used | Engaged | Bought | Referred |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **you get no traffic.**<br><br>are you talking to the right audience? solving a real need? bad optimization? research needed. | **you get lots of hits, but nobody signs up.**<br><br>is your message clear? are you talking to the right audience? | **you lose people in the sign-up.**<br><br>is the sign up process simple enough? do you have performance issues? | **people sign up, but then never do anything.**<br><br>are the instructions clear? Is posting too hard? do you have performance issues? | **lots of sign ups + use, but nobody is buying.**<br><br>is it something people like, but isn't a 'painkiller' enough to buy? | **people are using + buying, but nobody is sharing**<br><br>is sharing simple enough? obvious? are they just using your product or in love? |

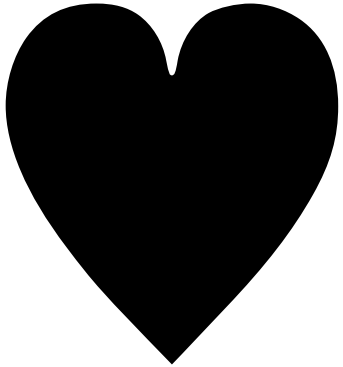
when you have a clue through analytics, you move onto talking to your customers individually (and through surveys) to get more data.

# 3.

didn’t spend enough time on culture from day one



*Aren't they cute?*



picking a co-founder is on the same level as picking a husband or a wife.

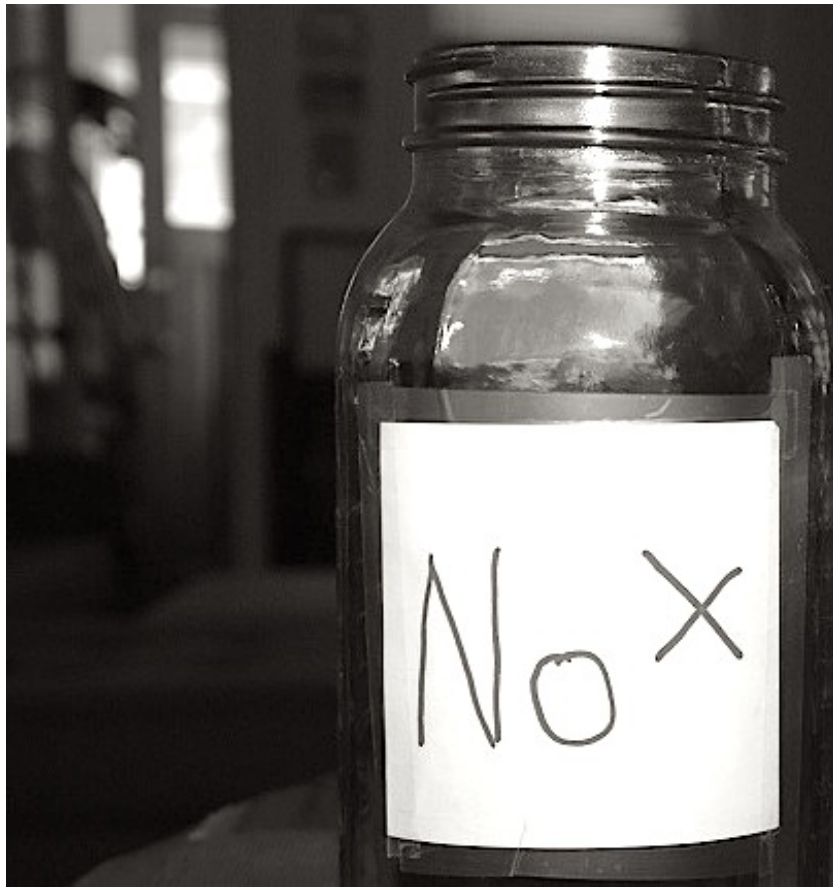
# Things to look for in a co-founder

1. complimentary skills
2. ability to ‘pull their own weight’ - these are co-founders, not employees
3. good conflict resolution skills (ability to kiss and makeup after the biggest fights you will ever have)
4. undying faith in you, the team and what you are doing
5. strong personality

if you ARE married or in a relationship, your husband/wife needs to understand you just brought a second (and 3rd) spouse into your life.

# Culture is key: our 8 cultural values

1. YES!!!
2. TRUTH & TRANSPARENCY
3. NOT TAKING OURSELVES TOO SERIOUSLY
4. STRIVING TOWARDS WIZARDRY
5. FRIENDSHIP & KINSHIP
6. WE'RE NOT GOOD ENOUGH
7. BREAKING THE MOLD
8. EVERYBODY IS A CONTRIBUTOR



# 4.

didn’t quit my ‘day job’ fast enough

# “I’m all in”

http://www.flickr.com/photos/craigweb/3245790994/

I was home after our incorporation about 25% of the time for the first 8 months of Buyosphere.

# 5.

drank my own Kool-Aid

I admit it. I have an ego the size of Germany.

just because you’re on TechCrunch doesn’t mean that anyone cares...

# So many things that were cool, but didn't matter

- chosen as a **ASTIA** portfolio company
- named as one of the **25 Women-Led Startups to Watch** by Fast Company Magazine
- We raised $200k in F&F convertible debt from really fancy people
- chosen as a **TechCrunch Disrupt** (SF) Finalist
- Featured on **Mashable**, **TechCrunch**, **ReadWriteWeb**, SFChronicle, Building43 (**Scobleizer**), WowElle and more...

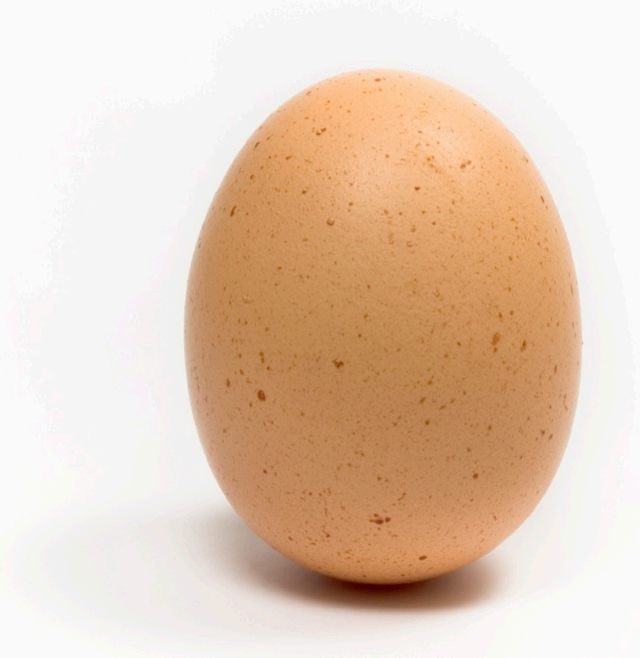
**what matters?** product/market fit. nothing else.

(Robert Scoble can offer you his first born and unless you find product/market fit, you have a ways to go.)

# 6.

underestimated the time it would take to raise money

How long we thought it will take to raise money
How long it actually took
12
8
4
0
in months
the amount of time we had to get VERY creative = 9 months
3
12
Seed money



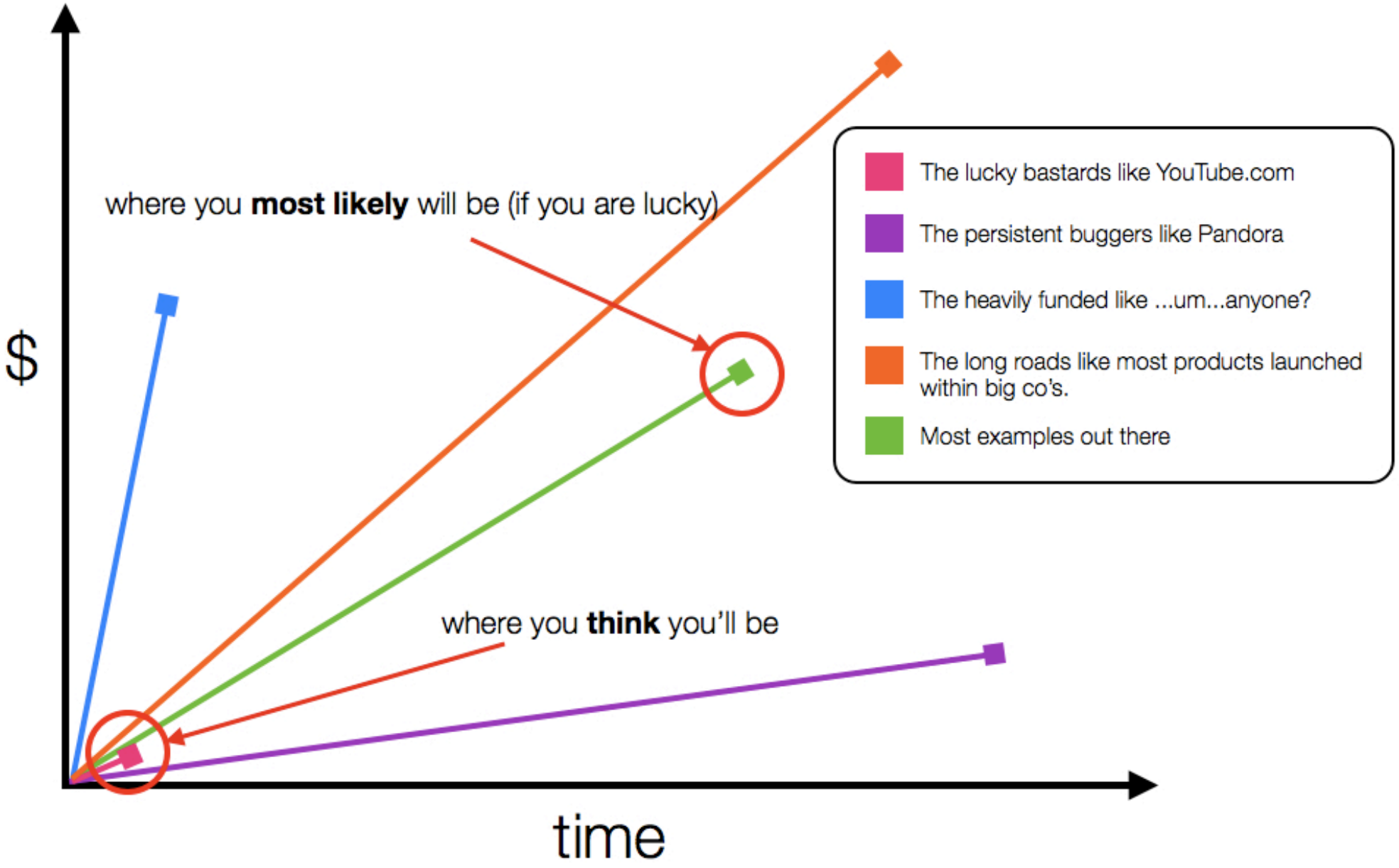
raise money

get to traction

if we got to traction, raising money would be simple

if we raised money, we could have more runway to get to traction (or at least hire A level people)

# the road to product/market fit



# 7

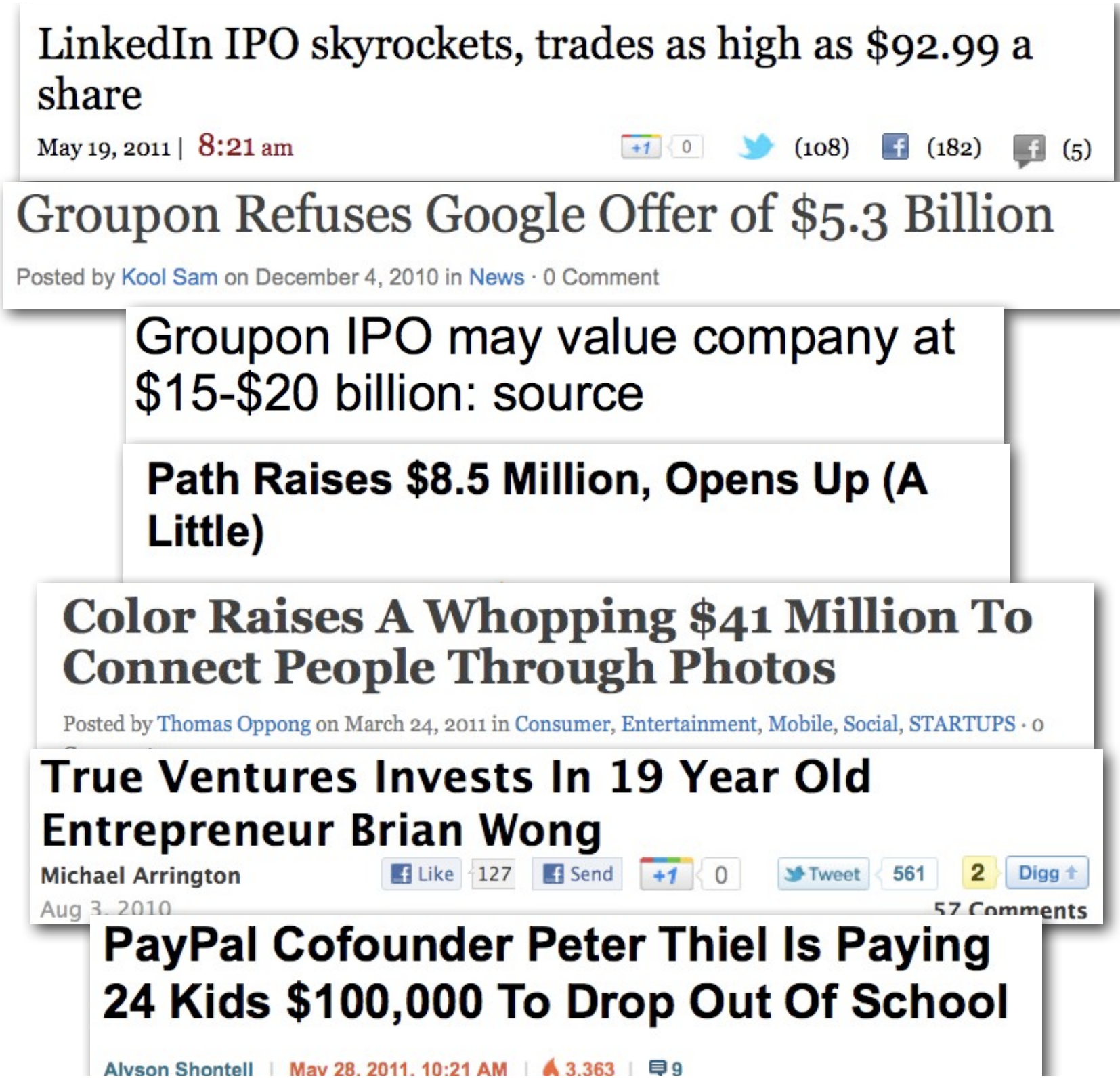
listened to the tech press

Business Week
AUGUST 14, 2006
www.businessweek.com
How This Kid Made $60 Million In 18 Months

250 BEST COLLEGES FOR YOUR MONEY
NEW DANGER IN YOUR 401(K)
HOW DATA JOCKEYS RULE THE WORLD
Forbes
AUGUST 30, 2010 | WWW.FORBES.COM
GROUPON IS THE FASTEST-GROWING COMPANY... EVER
THE NEXT WEB PHENOM
FOUNDER ANDREW MASON

Top Entrepreneurship Courses 2011
PAGE 66
Inc.
The Magazine for Growing Companies
GET SMART
When to spy on the competition
(And when you've gone too far)
PAGE 75
DO IT YOURSELF
King of the Online Sellers

SHARPEN YOUR CREATIVE EDGE
How Paul Bedrnitz of Kidrobot keeps the ideas flowing PAGE 40
Inc.
The Handbook of the American Entrepreneur
Perfect Your Elevator Pitch
PAGE 92
How to launch a cool, profitable, kick-ass Start-Up
An MBA You Can Love
PAGE 98



LinkedIn IPO skyrockets, trades as high as $92.99 a share

May 19, 2011 | 8:21 am +1 0 (108) (182) (5)

Groupon Refuses Google Offer of $5.3 Billion

Posted by Kool Sam on December 4, 2010 in News · 0 Comment

Groupon IPO may value company at $15-$20 billion: source

Path Raises $8.5 Million, Opens Up (A Little)

Color Raises A Whopping $41 Million To Connect People Through Photos

Posted by Thomas Oppong on March 24, 2011 in Consumer, Entertainment, Mobile, Social, STARTUPS · 0

True Ventures Invests In 19 Year Old Entrepreneur Brian Wong

Michael Arrington Like 127 Send +1 0 Tweet 561 2 Digg

Aug 3, 2010 57 Comments

PayPal Cofounder Peter Thiel Is Paying 24 Kids $100,000 To Drop Out Of School

Alyson Shontell | May 28, 2011, 10:21 AM | 3,363 | 9

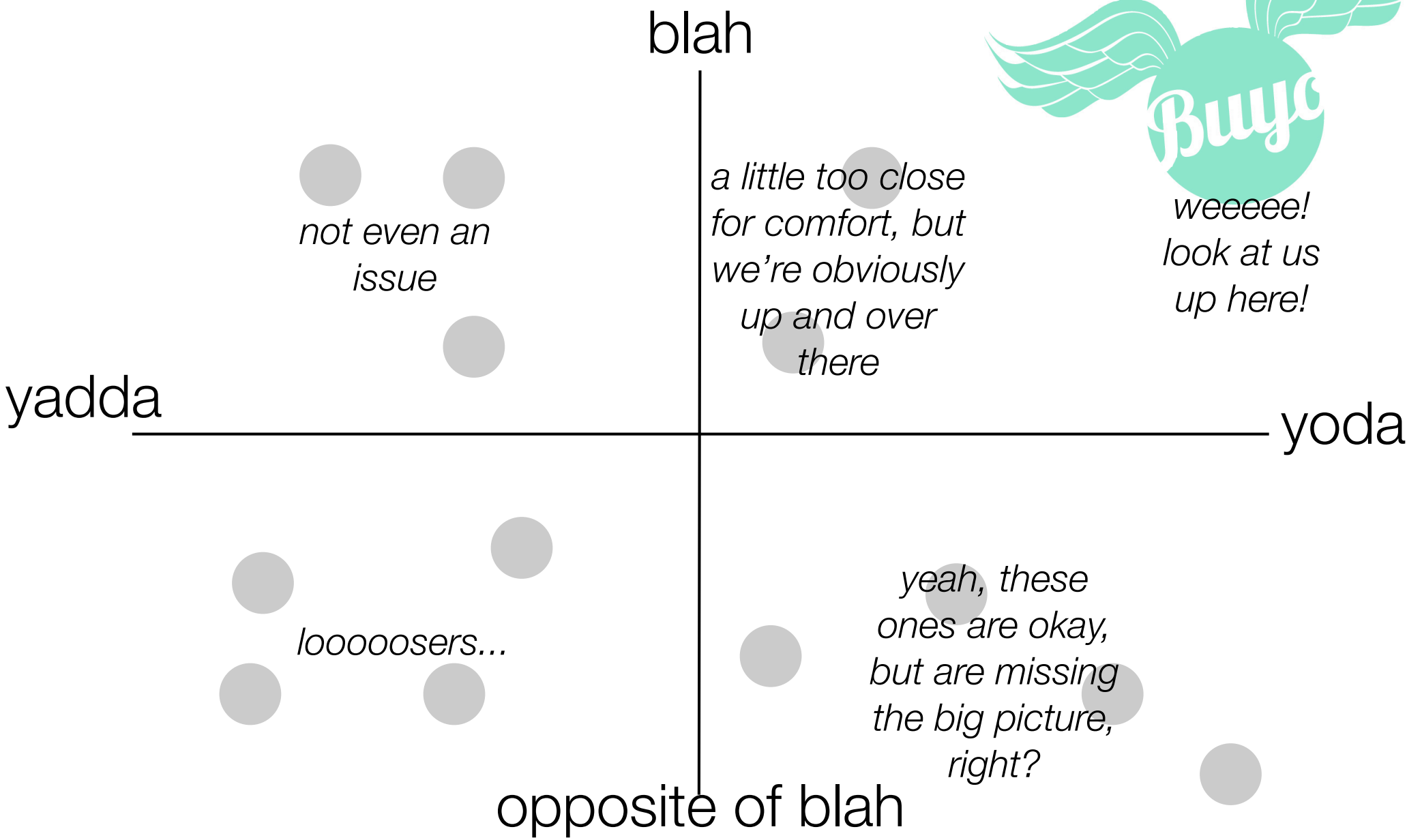
“So, to hell with all that noise. It’s just a big mass of envy, chatter and FOMO. Let’s get excited and make things.” ***Caterina Fake***

# 8.

focused too much on competition

panic!

# I made hundreds of these...



a quadrant has **nothing** to do with how you will fare against your competitors. (refer to point #2 on what matters)

**fact:** just because they've raised more $$ than you, it doesn't mean they will win. (we've watched at least 10 'competitors' raise oodles of dough and then shutter or pivot)

didn’t learn from competition

as we weren’t raising money, they were hiring big teams to make mistakes for us!

# 10.

didn’t communicate

there is no such thing as over-communication when you are doing a startup.

but...there is

# 1 thing I've done right

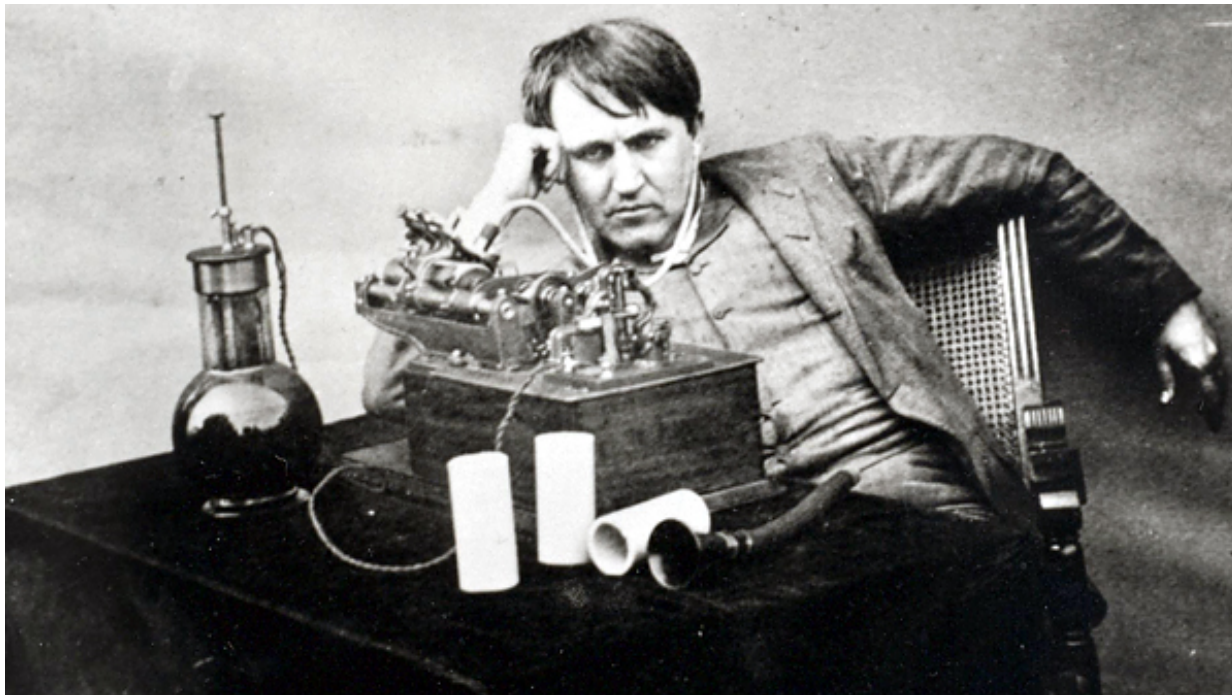
that you should also know about

# NEVER GIVE UP!

http://www.flickr.com/photos/milkyworld/3128291642/sizes/l/in/photostream/

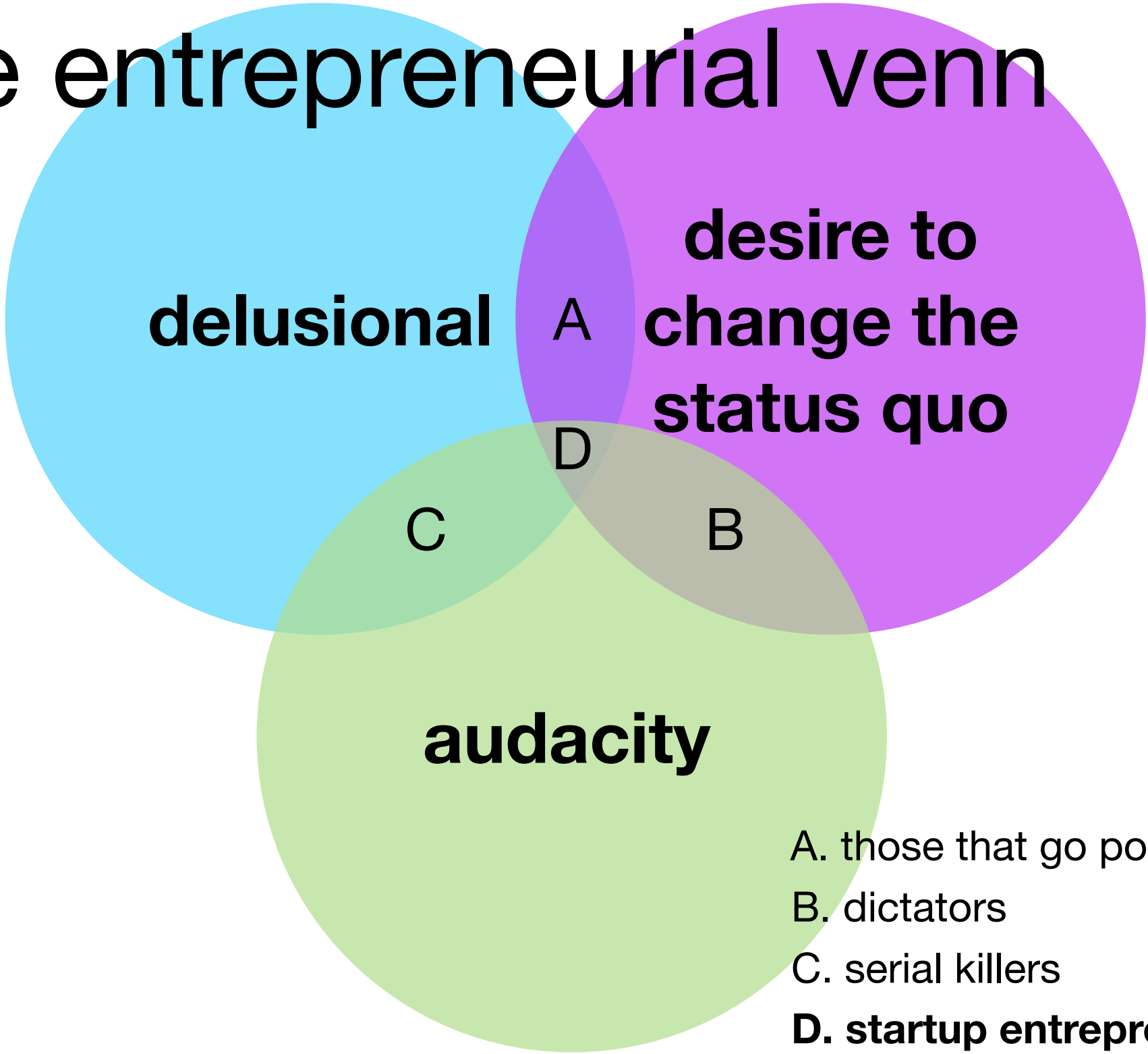
“Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up.”

***Thomas Edison***



WHEN LIFE GETS HARDER
YOU MUST HAVE JUST LEVELED UP
Troll.me

# the entrepreneurial venn




A. those that go postal

B. dictators

C. serial killers

**D. startup entrepreneurs**

thank you for being crazy, audacious dreamers. xo

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