3 Tips for How to Succeed When Your First Idea Isn’t So Great

After years in the finance industry, Ryan Harwood knew he wanted to change his life and go into work with a smile on his face once again. He also knew he wanted to own his own business. But there was one major problem. He didn’t know what industry he was passionate about or what kind of company to create.

Here are the surprising steps Harwood took to launch PureWow, the uber-successful women’s lifestyle content site Gary Vanyerchuk recently acquired.

1. Forget your first brilliant idea.

After interviewing several friends about their industries to try and find his own niche, Harwood realized his interests and skills always led him back to the tech and media worlds. By combining these two interests, he came up with the idea of founding a lifestyle site.

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Originally interested in starting a men’s content site, Harwood’s preliminary media market research quickly made him change his mind. Women had a voracious online content consumption rate compared to men, shared content with friends more frequently, and the ad revenue for female-focused media was substantially larger. Armed with this data, Harwood tossed the idea for a men’s website out the door, and PureWow was born.

2. Focus on your skills.

With the idea for a women's lifestyle content site in place, Harwood needed to craft the voice of his company. He knew he would never be able to create authentic, engaging content for the upper millennial, female audience of PureWow, so he looked to people who could. He immediately got busy – 15 days in – and hired two female editors to create the voice and curate the content strategy of PureWow. Meanwhile, he spent his time focusing on what he was good at, the business side of starting a media company.

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"I knew I was never going to be the content guy," Harwood said. "I knew that immediately. I don't meddle in the content because I know nothing about the art of the content. Instead, I spend much more of my time on sales, marketing, product, technology, finances of the business, all of that. And it's really important to me that you're having fun."

3. Be your own kind of leader.

From the beginning, Harwood knew he was passionate about creating a culture where people were happy to come into PureWow. To cultivate this positive workplace atmosphere, he had to form his own leadership style.

"Take the best parts of multiple leaders you admire and respect and make it your own," Harwood said. "Be really nice to everyone that comes your way. Stick with a goal day in and day out, no matter what comes your way. And have fun. I come to work with a smile on my face, and I know liking your job is a rarity."

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Watch highlights of Harwood’s talk at the **2017 Propelify Innovation Festival.**

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