6 Tips for Designing the Best Tech for First-Time Entrepreneurs

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Becoming an entrepreneur can seem like a daunting move, and for good reason. Half of all businesses fail in their first five years. While the internet is full of guides, tips and tricks to help you make your idea a successful one, there really is only one thing you need to do: design a great product.

No amount of spin, marketing or financial wizardry will be able to replicate the success that a great product will. The key to being an entrepreneur is making something that people want to use. Here's how you can do it.

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1. Focus on a solid design objective

The last thing anyone wants is something that's been designed aimlessly. Before you even start the drafting process, have a clear set of rules laid out for how you're going to be designing your product.

Apple's former head of product, Jonathan Ive, has a famous set of design commandments that are a good starting point for any first-time entrepreneur, but you need to set objectives of

your own. Focusing on size, color and dimensions isn’t enough. What exactly do you want your product to achieve? What do you want it to evoke in the user? Questions like these can help you refine your design down to its absolute essentials.

2. Think like your buyer

Even the best products won’t be used by everyone. Who do you envision wanting to engage with your business? What do they like, and how can your designs pique their interest? It’s important to always keep the needs of your potential buyers in mind, as they’re the ones who will decide if your product is successful or not.

For example, Gabb Wireless’s mission is to make a phone safe for kids, so they incorporate kid-friendly features parents would expect of their child’s phone while also appealing to kids through the phone’s sleek and attractive design. Everyone who may use your product needs to be accounted for in its design, so be sure not to leave anyone out.

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3. Create inclusive designs from the start

Even if your product is designed primarily for use by a certain demographic of people, that doesn’t mean you can slack off when it comes to making it accessible for everyone. If your designs aren’t inclusive, you’re alienating potential customers from the get-go.

Microsoft, one of the design titans of the 21st century and a company I serve as an analyst under, has a set of design-inclusivity guidelines that can be helpful for any first-time entrepreneurs unsure of what that may look like for their

product. If things are still unclear, reach out to more established designers and see what tips they can offer for making your designs work for everybody.

4. Focus on connectivity opportunities

In 2020, every company is a tech company, whether they want to be or not. It doesn't matter what kind of business you're running – you need to be integrating your products and platforms with existing tech as much as you possibly can.

If your product is a physical one, consider finding ways to make it a part of the Internet of Things, a market poised to exceed $13 billion in value over the next five years. If you're a digital business or a service-based operation, make your online presence as seamless and integrable as possible. You want your users to be able to move on and off your platform with as little disruption as possible.

5. Get key input from non-designers

Unless you're a career designer yourself, it can be tempting to take your idea to a designer as soon as possible in order to make it a reality, but designers aren't the only people you should be talking to. While they may be able to give you some valuable insight regarding look and layout, designers simply won't be able to answer all of your questions regarding functionality.

Your product is going to be sold, so you should consult with salespeople. If your product is going to have tech powering it, bring some software engineers into the conversation. Someone's going to be marketing your product, too, so talk to marketers. Product design isn't just about look and feel; it's about making something that works on as many levels as possible.

6. Keep everything scalable

In times like these, there’s no predicting when, if, or how growth will come to your business. Simply put, your product needs to be scalable for huge audiences and small ones alike. This guide by Concepta is a good place to start, but every product will have its own scalability challenges to face. Make sure you’re ready to host user numbers large and small or adjust production appropriately. Your ability to make it off the ground may depend on it.

Related: How ‘Design Thinking’ Can Help You Map Your Global Strategy

Becoming an entrepreneur is quite the plunge to take, but having a great product by your side makes it that much easier. By following some of these principles, you can be sure to produce something that will get you started on your journey in no time.

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