

Twitter Thread by Jesse Pujji



Jesse Pujji

[@jspujji](#)



In February, I launched my first DTC brand.

I put my name, \$, and reputation on the line.

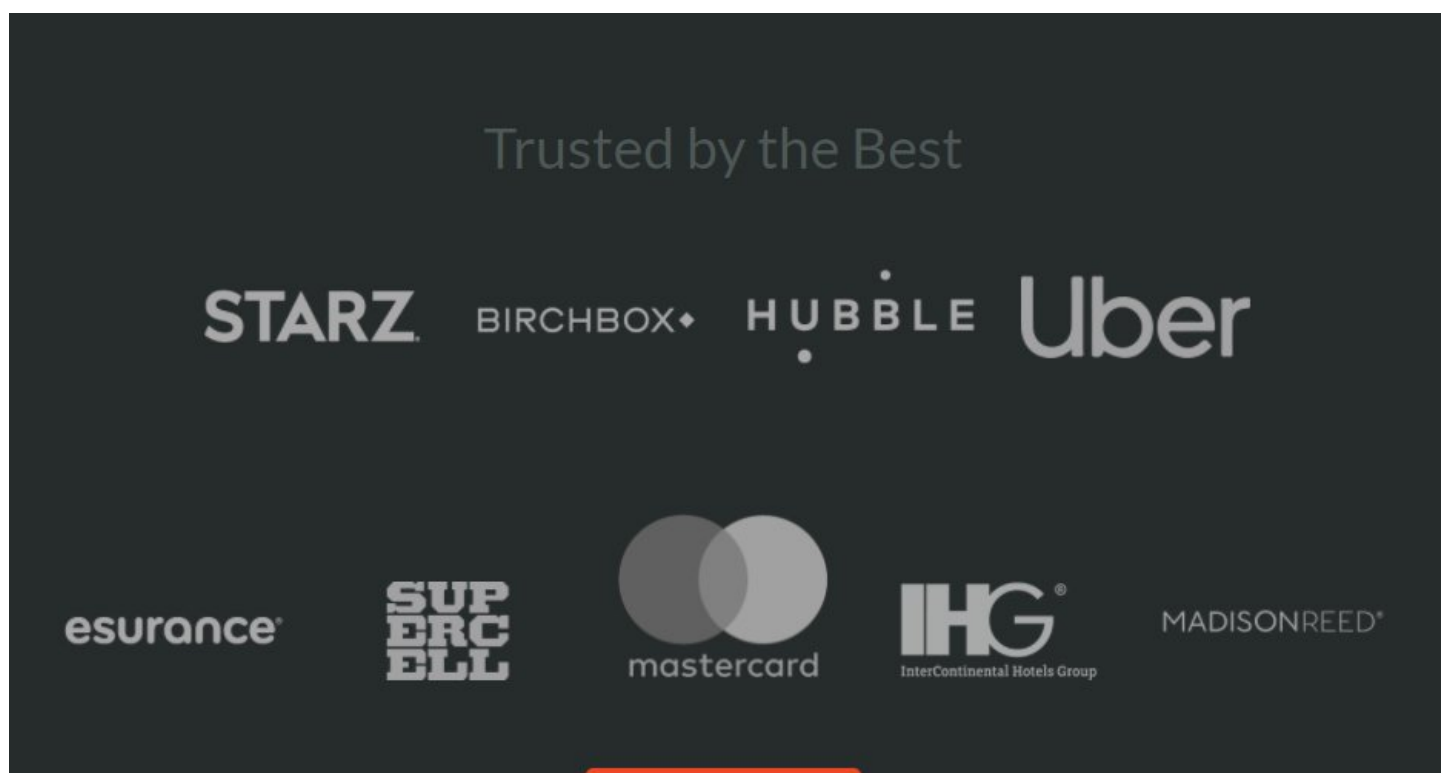
It was an utter failure.

Here is the story and what I learned ■■■■■■

1/ After ~10 years of running Ampush as CEO, I stepped into the chairman seat.

Ampush had helped countless brands build and scale customer acquisition including: Dollar Shave Club, Birchbox, Stitch Fix, and many others.

I had the obvious idea: why don't I start a brand?



2/ I was eager to get back to “early days entrepreneurship.”

I spent 2020 both decompressing and anxiously thinking "what's next"

Investing? Another company? Something else?

I love the process of building businesses so I went for my dream: A venture studio.

But now what?

3/ After going in circles towards the end of 2020, the new year started.

I realized: I have to stop thinking.

I have to start DOING.

I'd build the venture studio from the ground up. So now, I needed an idea.

4/ I have seen so many brands grow from obscurity into huge success.

What I wanted to learn:

- How cheap/fast can I stand up a store
- What does it take to get a supplier?
- How do 3PLs work?
- Will my expertise in growth help me win?

I brainstormed ideas with my wife...

5/ I wanted something >60% margins, subscription, that solves a real problem and would crush on FB/IG.

She jokingly said: “you are always calling your uncle (a GI Doctor) about your digestive issues, why don't you look in that space?”

I laughed but then...

6/ I started researching.

Digestive medicine and supplements are a ~\$10BN industry growing at 8-9% per year.

The “grandma” brands like metamucil, benefiber, align are all 9+ figures with 30%+ EBITDA margins.

There is NO “clear winner” brand in probiotics, but many doing well.

7/ I called my uncle, the GI Dr

Me: “whats the miracle drug to solve digestive issues?”

His response: no drug, there's a bodily function.

Me: ???

Him: Pooping.

As long as you keep the conveyor belt moving, acid reflux, bloating, hemorrhoids, you name it, it's solved.

8/ My mind raced.

"OK, so then what's the happy meal for pooping regularly?"

"The best thing is a balanced diet etc etc but most don't do that, so I recommend a mix of: soluble fiber, magnesium and a probiotic with these strands"

BOOM - I had my products.

Now I needed a name.

9/ After a few hours of late night internet scrolling, I stumbled upon a term to describe a real feeling.

A feeling when you take a certain type of number 2, a feeling we all know and love, a feeling so special doctors made up a word for it...

10/ Poophoria. Poop + Euphoria

I had a name, an angle and a product.

I was ready.

How come no one was having fun with gut health?

People love poop jokes!

I'd seen pooporri, squatty potty and tushy all create amazing businesses around the same concept.

This should WORK!



11/ In March, I started assembling a freelance team:

I hired an awesome Shopify Dev from Growth Collective
Some former Ampush folks for design and growth freelancing
Got a writer from the onion (!)
And of course, I hired two GAs from [@growthassistant](#)

Then I needed a supplier...

12/ This was one of the tougher worlds to navigate.

I wanted to be very “lean startup” so I looked for a supplier who could move fast but also didn’t need an original formula, yet.

The supply chain here was all over the place...

13/ I googled, cold called, asked friends, and networked nonstop.

I got answers ranging from cost of \$20 to \$5 per wholesale and from 2 weeks to 21 weeks to deliver.

There was no way to really vett these companies. I was sure some were probably trying to rip me off.

14/ Finally, I found something that looked very legit and had its own channel for physicians only.

I tried to sign up. Rejected.

I found the GM on Linkedin and had a mutual friend, hooray!

They introduced us.

They agreed to supply and could move fast at a reasonable price.

30-DAY MONEY BACK GUARANTEE + FREE SHIPPING

Poophoria

Shop ▾

Learn ▾

Contact

Take The Quiz →



Amazing Poops, Every Day.

Reduce bloating, improve gut health, and get your bowels moving.

15/ It was now April. 2 months in

Time to build the brand, website, social and labels.

The team kept asking me who the customer was. My response: “everyone poops”

What’s our price point? “Lets charge a lot and then test”

The team worked hard to get to launch...

16/ One funny moment was when the 3PL asked me for a UPC code...

I called the supplier: "can you provide a UPC code?"

"Uhh no you're supposed to have that."

Some googling later and I discovered GS1! For \$30, get your own UPC code.

Yes, I love the internet!!

17/ Finally, around Memorial Day 2021, we were ready to launch Poophoria.

I had super sophisticated campaign structures, tons of testing, original creative etc.

Two products: Harmony and Rhythm

I called FB and asked them to raise my limits beyond \$250 a day, I'm a pro right?



Poophoria

Sponsored · 🌐



Harmony premium probiotics contain the top doctor-recommended "good bacteria" which help keep you regular, reduce gas and bloating, improve digestion, and enhance your mood all day long.

Enjoy perfect daily poops. Guaranteed.



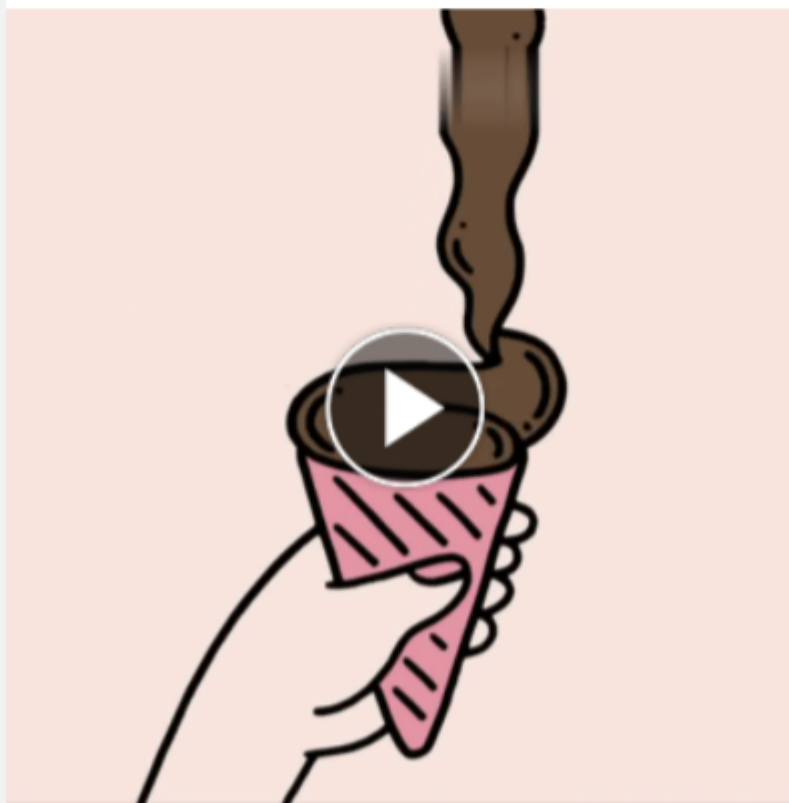
500+ 5-star reviews



Thousands of happy customers



100% money-back guarantee



GETPOOPHORIA.COM

Perfect poops. Guaranteed.

Doctor-recommended probiotics

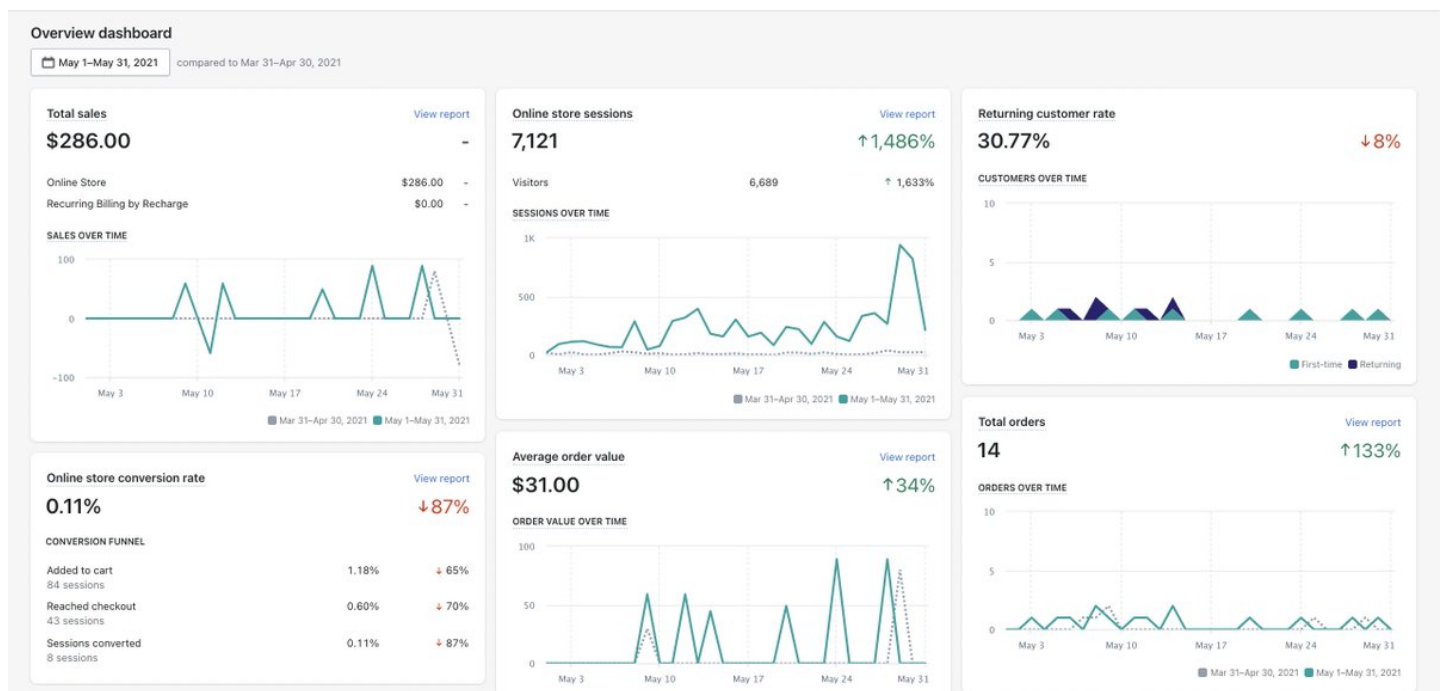
LEARN MORE

18/ Uh, wrong.

That weekend with a promo, we spent \$3k and got 5 customers... OUCH.

For the next month, I kept revamping creative, simplifying landing pages and then spending a few thousand dollars. All with limited success.

I called [@niksharma...](#) he told me I was a fool...



19/ “Jesse, you’re launching this like it’s spending \$20M a year. You have to give FB time to learn and find your audience.”

Other conversations validated this. “Keep the spend at \$100 a day and let FB figure things out for you.”

In the meantime, we launched affiliates...

20/ After another 45 days, we saw some improvements.

We lowered prices, offered a single purchase option, we saw OK retention and return rates.

Conversion rate was around 1.5%

21/ Launching on Amazon helped.

Still, the payback period was ~4 months. Not the worst but not “bootstrappable” (I wanted to be first purchase profitable.)

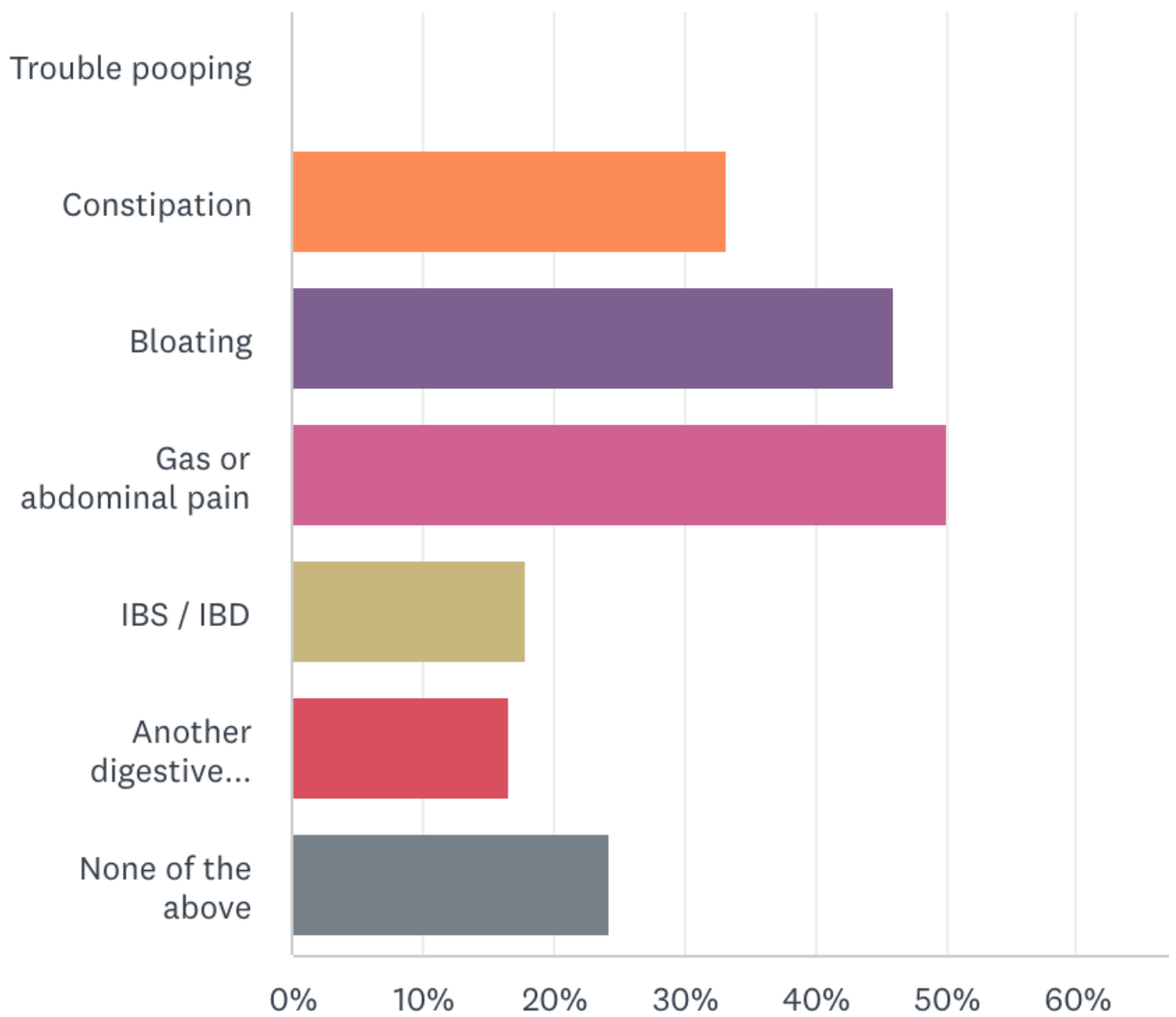
Affiliate was generating the best economics, but there was a catch.

22/ Our affiliates were showing on search driven sites to “chronic” constipation researchers.

The CPAs were good but without thinking, we started using those customers to build lookalike segments.

23/ As we started hearing from new customers, we realized we were finding people with serious digestive issues NOT people who “just wanted to poop better.”

We doubled down on customer feedback and FINALLY (6 mos in) started speaking to our customers regularly.



24/ Turns out, we had attracted a lot of people with major issues which our supplements weren't built to solve.

On the other hand, lots of customers/potential customers just weren't interested in spending \$60 per month to "poop better"

Self-care is all about feeling your best. That feeling starts everyday in the bathroom.

If your not having a 10/10 bathroom routine or are experience constipation, bloating, or gas... we have a solution for you!

Poophorias supplements are specifically designed to help you save time on the toilet and have an overall more pleasant experience. Join thousands of customers already benefiting today!



Documenting my transformation. I really like this product so far. I take medicine that stops me up. Bloating is down, energy is up, and poop baby belly is going away.

THEGETWELL.CO

Probiotics to help with bloat

Proven to help constipation

SHOP NOW

25/ We spent 6 weeks trying every trick, quiz, optimized FB and IG ads... nothing worked.

We were banging our heads against the wall optimizing "ads and LPs" but not thinking from first principles.

Once we finally started talking to customers, we really learned some big things:

26/ Nearly 75% of our customers were women.

They didn't like talking about Poop. The corny name made the brand untrustworthy.

But digestive issues were real for them. It was emotional. Friends talked about it.

We kept hearing them use a few codewords for not pooping well...

27/ By September, it became clear that our offering/brand/product wasn't compelling enough.

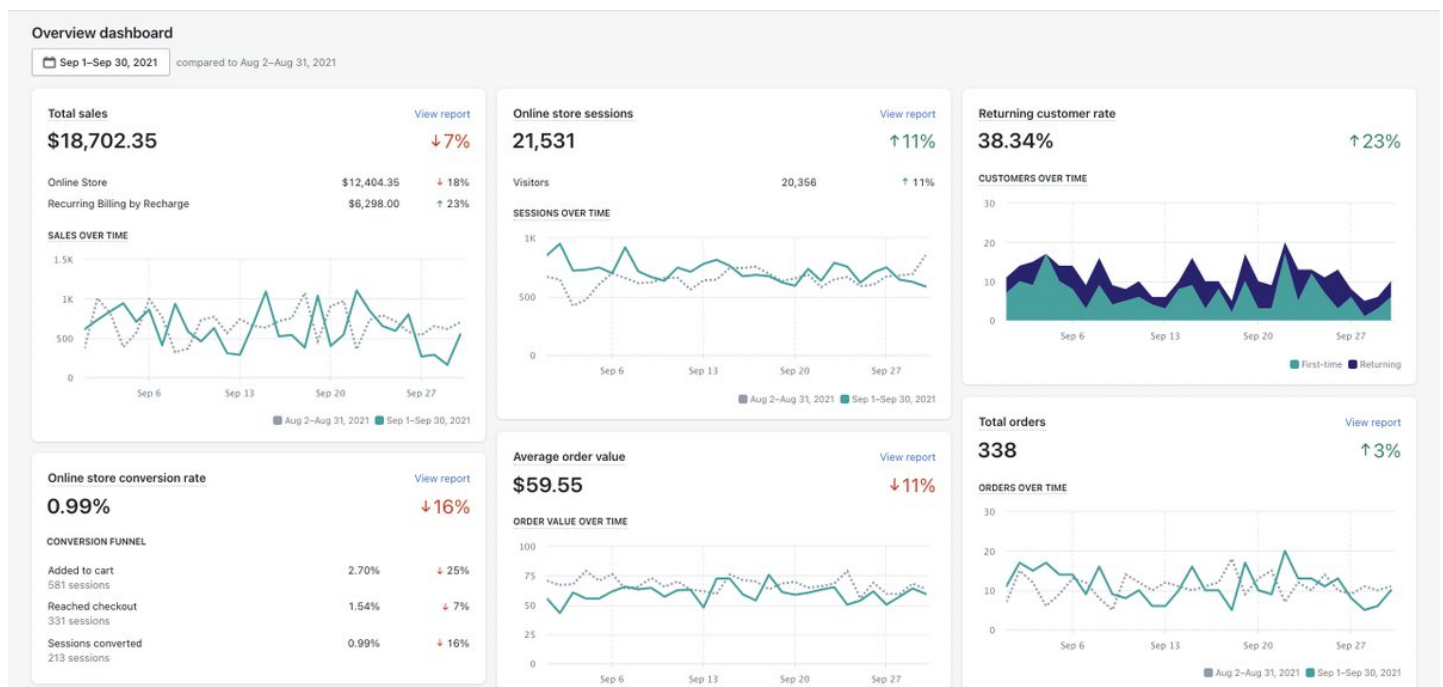
We wanted blended CPA <\$30 and we were closer to \$100.

It all came down to conversion rate.

Now that we had spoken to our customers, we knew we could build a better brand for them.

28/ We have ~200 subs and by cutting all the media spend outside of affiliate, we could get it profitable (\$5k per month) and grow slowly.

I shifted the team's focus away from it. We went from spend ~120 hours a week across 2-3 people to <5 hours per week of 1 person. BTW...



29/ Poophoria's awesome supplements are still available and will get your daily poops from 6/10 to a 10/10!

If you or someone you know has digestive issues:

Use code: POOPHORIATWITTER and save 25% til Sunday ;)

<https://t.co/g4mlfz4O2z>

You, too, can experience poophoria!

30/ So, What did I learn? A TON but the 3 biggest lessons:

- + Know your customer
- + Failure sucks
- + Just do it

31/ Know your customer - I had read about customer centricity but I had never started a real B2C business

I thought I could market and test my way out of any issue

Turns out, that's not true at all

Once we started talking to customers and getting curious... the game changed.

32/ Microwaving a brand usually doesn't work.

Find a real person, with a real problem and then figure out how to solve that problem.

Building a single persona to focus our efforts was extremely valuable in the coming v2.0 (turban tip to [@michaelduda](#))

33/ The hardest part of this?

My ego.

I realized how badly I didn't want to "fail"

For all my success in other ventures, I was v stressed during this journey.

[@growthassistant](#) was crushing it but I kept putting my time/worry here b/c of... Ego.

I didn't want to fail.

34/ Again, the Bias to Action is powerful.

While failure can be tough, I DID learn much of what I set out to do: I learned how to stand a site up on shopify, how 3PLs work, the nuances of supply chain mgmt, Amazon, etc.

This all came from action.

35/ As someone who only knew growth before, I feel much better about launching or buying brands now.

I also got several cool ideas for software and marketplaces! (coming soon!)

36/ Failure is tough but part of the game of building business and taking risks.

And while I've had successes (like [@ampush](#) and [@growthassistant](#)), I hope this thread goes super viral to encourage and

inspire anyone on their journey.

37/ Did you like this thread and learn something?

Then follow me [@jspujji](#) - I tweet threads about bootstrapping, entrepreneurship, leadership plus Weekly, I share one unique Bootstrapped Giant story like this:

<https://t.co/ffhswEohhA>

Two mediocre students did everything wrong while taking \$10,000 in credit card debt and turning it into a \$67 BILLION company.

The crazy part?

They were profitable from day 1.

This is the wild story \U0001f447\U0001f3fd\U0001f447\U0001f3fd\U0001f447\U0001f3fd

— Jesse Pujji (@jspujji) July 23, 2021

38/ Also, stay tuned for a new brand we are launching in the next couple weeks.

It's the culmination of our customer conversations and one we are feeling VERY excited about!

Thread will drop soon :)

39/ RT the first tweet to inspire more people to try, fail, and LEARN around the world!

<https://t.co/AVgceeVaes>

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— Jesse Pujji (@jspujji) November 10, 2021