Twitter Thread by Mindaugas



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1/ As I prepare to launch the biggest thing of my career ■ I've been reflecting on my journey to this point. And the simple truth is - design changed my life.

But not in the way you think as I did not become a designer.

2/ Instead, I found an incredibly welcoming community that rallied around and helped when I did not have much to offer.

3/ On a very cold and rainy November morning in 2012, I arrived in Dublin, Ireland with less than 1k euro in my pocket, having never worked in tech and very few connections in the city.

4/ Before that, I spent a very turbulent 9 years in Canary Islands working in hospitality, with a short stint in London in between where I got some experience in sales and recruitment.

5/ I arrived in Dublin kind of lost but had one goal, I wanted to start a company so I could make enough money to realize my dream of opening a restaurant (LOL) Funny how that turned out.

6/ To get started, I worked in a hotel to get myself set up in the city and find a place to live. It was awful, terrible pay, never-ending days and stolen tips, but that's another story. It got me set up and I quit after 3 months to go back into sales.

7/ This job was also awful but it taught me a lot and I started to understand some of the skills I had that were actually transferrable from my experience in restaurants. I then decided to go back to recruitment, something I enjoyed before but did not spend enough time on.

8/ The design story starts here. At first, I was hiring software engineers, BA's, PM's, etc till one day my colleague who ran the design desk asked me to help source a few design profiles.

9/ I remember this day as if it was yesterday, I was immediately captivated opening the portfolio and mind blown that there were teams of people working on the experience of products I used and recognized.
At first, becoming part of the community was not easy.

10/ But I quickly learned to lead with vulnerability and transparency, essentially not pretending to know what design was. I was also genuinely curious to learn more. This seemed to resonate, I was slowly becoming a part of the Dublin design community.

11/ I also went completely against the typical tactics most other recruiters were forced to use. Instead of annoying people with pointless phone calls, I would schedule them in the evening and do them at home. Or offer to meet candidates for a coffee instead.

12/ This resonated too, I was quickly building great relationships which started opening some doors.

13/ But design recruitment at the time in Dublin was a very small market, however, I had a hunch more companies would catch on to the value of design and ramp up hiring 12-18 months later, I asked my boss if I could spend 3 months building relationships instead of chasing…

14/ …business that did not really exist. That ask was shot down and a seed was planted in my head that I should maybe do this on my own. A few months later, without thinking through it all, I jumped ship and set up on my own.

15/ It was here I really realized the power of relationships and community. I started this thing with no money but the community carried my dream of building a business for much much longer than it should have actually lasted.

16/ The first day I set up my company email, I received an intro to what turned out to be my best client. Intros to amazing candidates followed and kept coming. But filling roles was a long cycle and money was running out quickly, the next year was extremely tough.

17/ I was riddled with anxiety, could not sleep thinking about finding money for all the bills and rent that were piling up.

18/ Yet the community acted as my therapist without realizing it, every interaction was lead by asking how I was doing and how they could help, I don't think I ever told anyone how those simple interactions kept me from completely falling apart.

19/ There's a lot more to the business story, maybe I'll write something about that one day.

20/ The whole experience lead me to build many more wonderful relationships, which eventually turned into joining InVision where I helped run some of the global design community initiatives and now joining On Deck to build the design fellowship. This journey has been wild.

21/ Why am I sharing this?
1. I want to improve my writing this year.
2. I promised @EricFriedman I'd ship something by Monday.
3. This is a good reminder of how choosing an unclear path can sometimes work out.
4. I'm terrible at sharing personal things.

22/ Now back to all things launch, see you on Tuesday ■

Shout out to @starsoup7 and @eriktorenberg for asking great questions this week and stirring up some memories