Twitter Thread by Brian Bourque



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22 startup principles to scale your company in 2022:

1) The obstacle is the way

Every hard problem you solve is a moat that others will shrink from.

Most people don't have the stamina for hard work.

Challenges completed are insurance policies against competition.

2) Sell your story, not your product

Your company isn't a product, it's a story.

Great stories attract great employees and great customers.

Sell your story.

3) Focus on leverage

Points of leverage are areas where inputs can disproportionally affect outputs:

- A better conversion funnel impacts all sales
- A better sales process impacts all revenue
- A better onboarding process reduces churn

4) Focus on customers, not competitors

Success comes down to whether people will pay you to solve their problems.

Competitive intelligence is useful to understand where other attempts to solve a problem fall short.

But the customer's actions speak loudest.

5) Put your best people on the biggest opportunities, not the biggest problems

Your best people want to move mountains for you.

Let them.

Great contributors are attracted to opportunity, not fixing someone else's mistakes.

6) It’s better to save your a** than your face

Dealing with problems openly creates trust among employees and a sense of community.

Vulnerability shows that you value honesty over appearances.

If people can’t bring problems to you, your company will fail.

7) There’s no formula for dealing with hard things.

Hard things are hard because no one’s figured them out yet.

Don’t get stuck on a single approach.

Find smart people and collect the best ideas...

Test them out.

8) Fail quickly

Marketing campaigns bomb.

Product features go unused.

The great ideas are on the other side of a giant chasm of bad ideas.

Pass through quickly...

9) Experimentation beats speculation

Humans are unpredictable.

Speculation is often useless, so let your customers tell you the answer.

If a model suggests viability, test it.

Quickly.

10) Make probability-weighted decisions

Potential impact = potential outcome x probability of outcome

Optimize for greatest potential impact, taking into account the potential downside of failure.

Some low probability risks have big upside and low downside.

11) Normalize uncertainty

Many people are uncomfortable when goals or dynamics change often.

Uncertainty leads to a baseline of anxiety, which wears people down.

Train your team to accept uncertainty as a sign of personal growth.

Wear it like a loose garment.

12) When in crisis, lengthen the time scale

Before pulling the fire alarm, ask yourself:

Will this matter a year from now?

Startups chase ambitious growth goals, which leads to short-term focus.

Small missteps often seem more important than they really are.

13) Define and live your values

Values tell people what you're about, what you expect from them and how your company sees the world.

If your employees don't know what you value how can they live up to them?

If you don't embody them, who will?

14) Normalize "i don't know"

People who act like they know everything are usually full of sh*t.

It creates a bad culture.

Normalizing humility is profoundly positive.

15) Discuss mistakes constructively

Internal retrospectives on areas where you missed the mark show people that the goal is to improve, not look good.

Self-reflection produces better outcomes in the future.

16) Know when to optimize for speed vs quality

Some things just need to get done.

Distinguish between things that can be dealt with quickly vs those that must be done perfectly.

Too many people waste time on unimportant details.

17) Work to your team’s strengths

Ambitious people sometimes misjudge people whose personalities don’t match their own.

Take the time to understand what each person can do best, and help them do it better.

Don’t project your own identity onto your team.

18) Define outcomes and let your team figure it out

Smart people hate being told what to do.

Tell them where the company has to get to by when and let them find the way.

Course correct along the way...

19) Ask for help often

There are a lot of smart people in the world and most people love to share their opinions.

Ask away...

The worst that can happen is you might learn something.

20) Your customer is always the hero

No one cares about your brand.

They care about what they can do for themselves with your brand's help.

Don't lose sight of this.

21) Don’t quit

Hard work compounds.

It may feel like an endless string of tiny wins, large setbacks, and marginal progress.

But when all your efforts are focused on a single goal, the compounding force over time is profound.

22) There is no blueprint

Everyone loves rags-to-riches stories, hoping for that one insight that made all the difference.

It’s the work that makes all the difference.

If you love the work, you’ll find a way.

Good luck!

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Happy Holidays!