# Twitter Thread by Marc Köhlbrugge



**Marc Köhlbrugge**
@marckohlbrugge

## ■ I often get Q's like these:

## How did you get your first customers for WIP? How did you grow BetaList's traffic? Etc.

## Makers are looking to reverse-engineer success. I see it everywhere.

## I don't think it works that way and the answers to those questions are mostly useless. ■

I have built dozens of different products over the last couple of years. The vast majority failed. ■

Surely if I know the answers to these questions, but still fail over and over again, these answers aren't that useful. ■■■■

So what's a better question to ask? ■

99.9% of the questions I receive are about the products that did well. In a way that makes sense, because we quickly forget about those that didn't succeed.

■ This is known as survivorship bias.

Focusing on what survived, while ignoring what made it survive in the first place.

The real question, what you really want to know, is this:

What makes @WIP, @BetaList, and to some extent @AllStartupJobs succeed where my countless other attempts failed?

What separates a failed product ■ from a successful product ■?

Honestly, I don't know. I wish I did.

It’s like Steve Jobs said “I’ll know it when I see it.” ■

Same is true when we make products. We don’t know upfront what will work. But once we see an inkling of a product that does have potential, it’s not that hard to spot.

■ The wrong idea requires you to push and push until you’re tired and can’t take it anymore.

■ The right idea will pull you forwards.

■ The wrong product will have you begging people for feedback. You’ll cling to any comment remotely positive. (“Wouldn’t use, but nice idea!”)

■ The right product will attract people wanting to use it. People will give feedback without you asking for it.

■ The wrong product will have you focused on the technology, fine-tuning the design, tweaking the copy.

■ The right product will give you the confidence to ship something embarrassing, because you know despite all its shortcoming it’s useful.

So keep shipping. Assuming your current product will fail and you need to try a bunch more before you’ve found the metaphorical spaghetti that sticks to the wall. ■

This means you need to keep your initial products small. If it takes 10 tries to find something that works, you can’t afford to spend more than month trying out an idea. ■■

Persistence is not about sticking with what doesn’t work. Persistence is continuously experimenting until you’ve found something that goes work. ■■■

Happy shipping! ■■

—
Inspired by conversations in ■ @WIP

https://t.co/J4IDFyoUgD

Grammar mistakes, stupid ideas, etc courtesy of tweeting at 6am in morning (that’s before I go to sleep, not after waking up). Bye! ■

Oh, and when I talk about successful products and refer to my own, I mean that in the context of what’s successful for me personally. I prefer speaking from personal experience hence referring to my own products.