Twitter Thread by Harjeet



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1/ Today I prepared for talking about common mistakes startups make (founding -> growth stages) by writing it in tweet form. I ramble too much when public speaking and hoped it would make the core ideas clearer in my mind and more concise. Think it worked. Here are the tweets

2/ Earliest mistake is picking the wrong co-founders. You have to be value-aligned (don't have conflicting personal goals) and respect each other. With both of these, any other differences are irrelevant - can be worked out. Without them everything else you do is irrelevant.

3/ If you launch, next mistake is chasing top-line vanity metrics (sign ups) instead of growing the number of users who *really* love you. @paultoo advice - better to have 10 users who depend on you than 100 who a lukewarm. This requires patience and killing your ego.

4/ If you raise a seed round, it's tempting to ignore retention. With money, there are always ways to grow top-line (buy ads, launch a new location). Strong fundraisers can do this for multiple rounds (though investors are more savvy to this now). Eventually, the bottom falls out

5/ Once you're growing without churn, you find you have a diverse set of customers and can't make them all happy -it's easy to fail trying. Commit to a long term strategy for going public and build for the users who get you there, even if you lose the others. You have to focus.

6/ With growth, retention, and focus - now you have to scale team. Two types of mistake, hiring too slow and too fast. Product focused founders likely to hire too slow (don't want to delegate, like the details), business-minded founders likely to hire too fast.

7/ Hiring too slowly doesn't kill you, it just caps your upside. Your competitor builds a team faster and signs up more customers with a slightly worse than yours but still good enough product. You're left with a nice, small business.

8/ Hiring too fast kills you via bad decision making. You lose rigor in hiring process (bad people -> bad decisions), there's no effective onboarding/setting people up for success (good people -> bad decisions), growth stalls, conflict rises (good people leave)

9/ Avoid all of these...and there's still myriad other ways you could fail so don't attach too much of your identity to the outcome of your startup :-)