Twitter Thread by Shekhar Kirani



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Lots of startups get stuck
before they get to Product-Market-Fit.

What would be the reasons?

Here are some, I see on a daily basis. They are related to issues with founders or market (in no particular order):

1) Founders haven't studied or trained on basic things of startups: idea validation, market validation, customer value-proposition, team-building, product building, basic finance, and total money required to do few iterations.
A: Work for a startup for a few years and learn.

2) Founders are solving a problem that they face in their daily life at home or work and start solving for themselves before checking whether there are others who care about the same problem. After building the product, they realize the market issue.
A: Idea validation failure

3) Too headstrong and think every potential customer can't imagine the value unless they experience the product. Hence, start building the product.
A: If you are deep and know you are at the same league as in Steve Jobs, this makes sense

4) Founders talk to few friends and colleagues and start building a product. After building the product, they realize there is no high demand for the product.
A: Spend month(s) on the problem and not on the solution.

5) Founders take too long to build a product and market changes. For eg, I still see consumer desktop web pitches v/s mobile in India.
A: Cocreate the product with a set of dedicated users or customers.

6) Founders are constantly tooling their product as they are not happy with what they have built and never take the product to market.

A: Co-create the product with friendly customers. At least 5 in enterprise and a group of 100+ in the consumer category.

7) Founders pick a very small and niche market that one cannot build a good and profitable business.
A: Understand market sizing/TAM. If I have to guess, more than 50% fail here.

8) Founders pick a niche and potentially profitable market, but not venture category. Founders think they can raise and burn, but fail to raise.
A: Understanding how angels and VCs think of categories and investment. U can always do frustrated tweets saying "VCs don't get it"...

9) Founders don’t do competitive analysis to understand why their product has a better value proposition than alternative solutions in the market.
A: Very common mistake. Spend 24 hours on Google and you will find every competitor. Benchmark them before you jump on your product.

10) Founders fight among themselves and give up.
A: Most of the founding team come together based on friendship rather than competency. In addition to friendship, there should be a massive respect for competency between each other.

11) Founders identify a great market and exceptional value proposition. But, fail to recruit high-quality product/UX/engineers in building a great product. Or fail to double down on the go2market and dole away an opportunity.
A: It is a sin, in my opinion. Stupidity. Frustrating

What else? There are many other failures, but, most of it is again related to founders OR market-related. Love to hear your feedback.