

The things I learned from reading Rework by Jason Fried and David Heinemeier

By Nate Casey

Ignore the real world – this is the idea that the real world can be extremely toxic and totally affect the direction of your business solution.

Failure is overrated – do it right instead of failing to learn.

Planning is guessing – so much of the time you are just coming up with bullshit planning for investors mainly because they are trying to see if you are sophisticated enough to come up with BS. Almost all of the stuff I created for Blazetrak investors was absolute BS – but they loved every word of it. When we launched all of that stuff became superfluous.

Why Grow – they think you need an office and lots of resources – you get convinced that it is not a business until you have a bunch of rooms filled with people that spend half their time looking at Facebook and Porn rather than trying to build value for the business.

Workaholic – I believe in working hard – and starting business takes a lot of hard work. On the other hand you can easily get caught up in out-working one another – which is like cancer – everyone burns out and a lot of times you are not doing “smart work”. Do the work that needs to be done and do it well. Fire the workaholics!

Be a starter – stop being an entrepreneur and just start the damn business. We get caught up in the idea of being the idea guy. I can't tell you how many people have come to me and said; “I want to hire you or your web development company to do this or that for me... I am just the genius with the idea...I am an idea guy... I need you to execute it for me and I will give you X% when it becomes successful” whatever!

Make a dent – don't be afraid to do something new...to enter into the world of the unknown...that is how genius businesses are created. Investors will say “well this is a big risk because I don't have anything to compare it to” Yeah well – neither did Google or Twitter dumbass.

Scratch your own itch – We created Blazetrak because we needed it. We had a business before and we needed to find investors. The best investors for this business would have been people in the entertainment space. We dreamed about a paid way to access potential investors – guaranteed – and at least get feedback from them.

Start making something – At some point you have to stop talking about it and start building. I think it is what makes Blazetrak work – we decide to do something and we got to work on it. It is just the way we are.

No time is no excuse – people always say “I am so busy and don't have time” this is almost always true when people are not getting paid for something – which is why the world of starting a business is so

hard – you are not getting paid. I am guessing that about 99% of the time people say they are too busy it is just because they just don't want to do something or can't do something – they should just say "NO".

Draw a line in the sand – you have to believe in your business and be clear and consistent about your value – don't compromise.

Love it or leave it – don't even try to stand by bullshit mission statements

Outside money is plan z – you can easily get convinced that money is the only answer to starting a business – the best way to multiply your creative ability in building a business is by making the decision to start the business without investors and using your own money. Nothing makes you smarter, more prudent, and clearer headed to the truth – then spending your own money. Investors create:

- Lost control
- Customers coming second
- Almost always a bad deal
- Distractions

Also - Spending other people's money is addictive

You need less than you think – It is easy to think that you need more because you see big businesses using more. You don't need a lot of the things you think you need – or at least you can find more efficient and less expensive ways to do things if you are creative and resourceful.

Start a business not a startup – get to work making money instead of spending it.

Building to flip is building to flop – Running your business from the beginning as if you are going to sell at any moment is a recipe for disaster and builds complacency.

Less mass – staying agile and not becoming too big to manage is critical - wait 6 months to hire – only hire when you are at the breaking point on a task – learn to do it yourself

Embrace constraints – sometimes it is better for you to have some limits. Limits make you resourceful and often times will help you to find the right answer rather than becoming distracted by the allure of more expensive and unneeded solutions.

Build half a product not a half assed product – it is better to do just part of something perfectly rather than rush to get the whole done – and later find out that it is a house of cards.

Focus on the epicenter – if you are building a hotdog stand then focus on the hotdogs. If you are building a business – what is the critical solution? Don't get wrapped up in all the bells and whistles such that the epicenter becomes compromised.

Ignore the details early on – it is easy to get caught up looking at the details of a business and not focusing on the big picture. The details can kill the big picture.

Decisions are Progress – sometimes making a decision is more important than whether or not the decision is right or wrong – critical time can sometimes be more valuable than the outcome of the decision itself.

Be a curator – decide carefully what stays and what goes in your business.

Throw less at the problem – sometimes it is easier to solve the problem by making the problem simpler. Gordon Ramsey usually solves restaurant failures by simply making the menus simpler.

Focus on what won't change – it is easy to get caught up with all the things that are changing in tech and business rather than focusing on the things that won't change like – people need food – or people want opportunity.

Tone is in the fingers – I used to buy new mouthpieces and instruments thinking that it would fix me as a tuba player – at the end of the day – it was me that needed to be better – equipment and new software upgrades seem like they will solve issues. Many times you just need to do better at working what you have.

Sell your by- products – if you make something well ...then often times you are creating something as a by-product that has value – Blazetrak is retailing opportunity and also creating an amazing database of aspiring talent that could be cultivated through an in-house publishing company or record company.

Launch Now – Most of the time it is better to get off the ground the wait for the right moment. Launch is risk – and at some point you just have to risk

Get Real – the illusion of agreements and BS paperwork – So many documents were created and never used. In retrospect a lot of money could have been made if we did something with our time rather than create documents that were never going to be used.

Interruption is the enemy of productivity – be smart about your time and try to organize time to do your work without interruption. Focus is very critical.

Meetings are toxic – They take up a lot of time and often create more work than is needed to be done. Start communicating in very concise amounts of time and end when the time is up. Solve problems or stop meeting.

Good enough is fine – sometimes you just have to get something solved on a basic level and move on rather than flexing your intellectual muscles and coming up with some type of crazy complicated solution that seems super smart on the frontend.

Quick wins – the Company that responds to a need the fastest wins.

Don't be a hero – A lot of times we get caught up thinking that we have to get something done rather than thinking whether or not it is worth finishing. We try to solve problems that don't really need to be solved just because our ego wants to triumph over the issue. If something goes on and on taking up your time – stop and ask if the battle is worth it.

Go to sleep – Not sleeping enough will dumb you down and make you irritable. Stop acting like a Hero and get some sleep. You will be a better person and better for your business if you sleep.

Your estimates suck - we all suck at figuring out how long something is going to take or how much it will cost. Break larger projects and goals down into much smaller parts. Create better more realistic short term list of goals – basically make the estimates more easily understood and possible.

Long lists don't get done – make smaller lists that are realistic rather than long lists that were never possible to complete in the first time – by the time you get towards the end of an original long list – you usually have a whole new set of priorities anyway.

Make tiny decisions – let smart small decisions add up to big ones. This will allow you to achieve a more concise result for the larger questions at hand.

Don't copy other companies!

Pick a fight – if you have a competitor then call them out on the things you are doing better – don't be scared as it will often drag customers your way.

Underdo your competition – a lot of times all you have to do to beat your competition is to focus on one thing and do it so much better and simpler. Customers have a core need and seldom think about all the bells and whistles you think they need. This is the genius of the Flip camera.

Worry about you not them – people will always want to tell you about competition – they don't want you to succeed – or have it better than they do. Just focus on yourself and don't be too distracted by what the competition is doing.

Say "No" by default – stop saying yes to everything – all those great ideas and strategic alliances and even customers that want you to do something differently – you can't be everything for everyone. It will thin you out and spread your quality thin. It will also make you spend a lot of time and go in directions that are not always necessary.

Don't confuse enthusiasm with priority – you may have a ton of great distracting ideas – stay focused on the idea at hand or you will never be successful.

Be at home good – you know how at times you find a product that seems like it would be so cool to have. You take it home and it does not seem or work as well as you thought when at the store. Build a product that solves problems and is as good at home as it is in the store.

Don't write it down – if there is an issue you will know it – let it keep coming back until you know it is worth dealing with.

Obscurity is good – you are alone and not a lot of people know about your site or shop or product. This is good – build and make things right – learn from your small community of customers and prepare for success

Build an audience – create a group of customers that are engaged by your company – they will help you learn and keep you on your toes – listen to them. They also bring more people your way if you do right by them.

Out teach your competition – focus on being better than your competition at helping people understand the problem you solve – create videos and tutorials – reach out and help people learn about what you do better than your competition.

Emulate chefs – they cook and then teach you recipes – with Blazetrak we supply opportunity but maybe we should also be teaching people about how to find opportunity and also how to leverage relationships in a profound way.

Go behind the scenes – teach the world how you do things – it is ok to let them know about the inner workings of your company – it will make them more engaged and make them feel like they are part of your culture and movement.

Nobody like plastic flowers – you make mistakes – let the world know – this is respected – trying to act too perfect is obvious and not endearing as a company.

Press releases are spam – people don't read them and they are a waste of time. Instead – get personal – interact with customers – call people write personal notes to the press and get them involved and interested.

Forget about the Wall Street Journal – all the business publications are great but will not do anything for the traffic on your site or improve your bottom line.

Emulate drug dealers – make your product so good and simple that people are clear what they are getting and become absolutely addicted.

Marketing is not a department – this is what we do every day. Everything we do is marketing – emails branding, talking on the phone- speaking to customers – everything – everyone is marketing the company.

Overnight sensation – is bullshit and can create an atmosphere of waiting rather than doing.

Do it yourself first – before you hire someone to do something – do it yourself first – you will learn who you need to hire and also how to manage them. You might also find out that you don't need to hire at all.

Hire when it hurts – only hire when you are absolutely at the breaking point regarding a particular function – that is when you know you need someone.

Pass on hiring great people – don't hire someone because they are great – hire because you really need them – hiring can be addictive.

Hire people you get along with and trust –

Resumes are ridiculous – they are also usually BS – hire someone first and foremost based on their ability to write and communicate.

Years of irrelevance – when people say they have X amount of years doing something – this is bullshit. Look for accomplishments not experience.

Forget GPAs – formal education is not worth considering in most cases and is not usually relevant to what you are hiring for.

Everybody works – people that do nothing but delegate are bad for business – they piss everyone off and get in the way.

Hire mangers of one – hire people that are great at coming up with their own goals and ways of bringing the business value. People that work autonomously are the best at getting things done and not distracting other managers of one.

Hire great writers!!!

The best are everywhere – don't hire based on geography – hire the best and let them work from anywhere.

Test drive employees – bring them on temporarily before hiring them full time.

Own your bad news – instead of others announcing bad news let the world hear it from you. They know that you are not perfect – this will always help with respect.

Speed is everything – respond to your customers and others quickly – even if you don't answer their questions or solve their issues – speed in responding is critical in retaining relationships.

Learn to say sorry – be willing to admit to mistakes and deal with them.

Put everyone on the front lines – make everyone in your company spend time dealing with customers. This way they truly understand the pain your company is helping to solve.

Take a deep breath – when you make a big change in your business – take some time to let it settle – a lot of times people will react – let them get used to it and see if it is better over the long run.

You don't create the culture – if you do things right then a culture is created organically.

Decisions are temporary – Don't create a problem to solve if the problem does not already exist.

Skip the rockstars – don't pay a lot of money for that super employee you think will change the game – a lot of times the rockstar is already working for you.

Don't treat them like they are 13 – don't breath down the necks of your employees – let them work – give them room – if they want to get on Facbook for a while that is fine – let them get the work done and make things happen – don't treat them like children – respect them and they will really work for you.

Send people home at 5 – let people have a real life and they will work their asses off for you.

Don't scar on the first cut – if something goes wrong once don't automatically create a policy to prevent it from happening again. Talk about it and move on – only create a policy if it becomes chronic.

Sound like you – just be who you are. If you start talking like someone else or trying to be something you are not, people see through it – as a business or as a person.

Keep these words out of your business lingo – need, can't, easy, fast

ASAP – stop using this on calls, meetings and emails – people know what you need is urgent – don't push them.

Inspiration is perishable – stop waiting and move on inspiration