

GROSSUM GUIDE

FIVE IMPORTANT THINGS
TO CONSIDER BEFORE
DEVELOPING YOUR
WEB OR MOBILE STARTUP



GROSSUM GUIDE

5 IMPORTANT THINGS
TO CONSIDER BEFORE
DEVELOPING YOUR
WEB OR MOBILE STARTUP

DEVELOPING A STARTUP?

Whether it is your first time dealing with web or mobile development for a startup or you already have experience with it, there is always something to improve and things you never stopped to consider before.

TAKE A DEEP BREATH. YOU'RE NOT ALONE, AND WE CAN HELP YOU

We have compiled together a few things that you should take into account when you will decide to get started with IT development. It is our hope that these ideas will help you become better prepared when it comes to web / mobile software creation and make the process of creating your dream project a piece of cake..

Faithfully yours, Grossum Team

IN THIS ISSUE

- Release Early, Release Often – show results, get feedback and go improve!
- Be Ready to Change and Adapt – make sure your vision meets actual need!
- Keep Your Business Purpose in Mind – Squirrel! (No, focus!)
- Focus on App Budget, not Hourly Prices – you're making a product, not buying hour of development!
- QA Testing is the Way – test it! Now!
- BONUS! Proper IT Team: Whom Do You Need? – some advices on team members you'd love to have
- Keep Learning – well, yes! (not really much to say about it =))



RELEASE EARLY, RELEASE OFTEN

THE SHORTER THE FEEDBACK LOOP,
THE FASTER VALUE IS ADDED.
TRY DRIVING WHILE ONLY LOOKING AT
THE ROAD EVERY 10 SECS, VS.
CONSTANTLY.

Do not wait for full functionality to release your beta version. If you are a startup and your budget is limited, creating an MVP (minimum viable product¹) is a great idea. This step allows you to adapt to the market needs quickly and without huge financial inputs compared to having your entire project finished, then starting to test it out on real people, only to find out that some vital part of your project is already outdated.

Besides, people love it when there are more and more functions become available gradually. This actually would help your clients to gradually learn about various options and take full advantage of them as opposed to when they get their hands on a complex app / website / whatever you are creating, and they only use 2 functions out of 10.

In addition, the longer you delay your initial launch, the more doubts you might encounter whether or not your product is good enough for public.

“DON'T WAIT TOO LONG, OR YOU WON'T DECIDE” — MOVIE QUOTE - L'IMMORTEL, 2010

What you do is listen to your customers/potential customers' feedback and improve constantly. This influence not only the vision of the strategy you have but the development itself. Giving this specialty of the startup development a more flexible approach to development is more relevant.

Launch, look at your customers' feedback, change, adapt, launch again: AirBnB, for example, launched 3 times. Try, and try, and try till you get it.

BE READY TO CHANGE AND ADAPT

BY FAILING TO PREPARE, YOU ARE PREPARING
TO FAIL. // BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Sometimes it so happens that your initial idea transforms beyond recognition as you adapt to the market needs (or realize that you have an even better idea than what you have started with). And it is good!

¹ Minimum valuable product - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minimum_viable_product



Do not be afraid to adapt and experiment, listening to your customers' feedback.

Did you know that the billion-dollar startup Pinterest, instead of online board for content sharing by users, started out as a marketplace where users could look for products online and are notified about the product availability?

YouTube was originally planned to be an online dating website, inspired by another one called "Hot or Not."

All this to say, contrary to Yoda's "Do or do not; there is no try" quote, we urge you to TRY. Even if your initial idea does not work out, keep on trying – who knows, perhaps you are the one who will make this world a better place with your invention.

THE THING IS - YOU NEED TO FIND YOUR UNIQUE IDENTITY ON THE MARKET AND, YES, IT MAY TAKE A WHILE.

Does that influence the development? Immensely! Don't be afraid to change. You may have developed half or even full app or website, spent money and your time on it... But what's more important: to stick to your initial plan, not really getting the fullest advantage of your startup, or evolve and find that special spot that was meant to be yours? So remember, choosing flexible technology, quality assured code, and readiness to do whatever it takes to make your dreams come true will pay off in the long run.

KEEP YOUR BUSINESS PURPOSE IN MIND

SOMETIMES IT'S EASY FOR A STARTUP OWNER TO THINK THEY CAN BE BIG AND FANTASTIC, A STEVE JOBS OR A BILL GATES... BUT WHEN IT COMES TO BUILDING IT TO PROVE HOW AWESOME YOU ARE, YOU'RE ON A WRONG TRACK.

THE IDEA OF MAKING YOUR CONCEPT GET BIG AND USEFUL AND, MAYBE, CHANGE THE WORLD A BIT, IS WAY MORE THRILLING.

// FERNANDO SONEGHETI, CEO, PAYPARKING

While experimenting and adapting is a must in our fast-changing world, keep your business' purpose in mind.

If you have an ice-cream shop, you probably will not need professional consulting services available for the customers, unless your flavors are so complex that people would actually require more time to understand which ice cream to choose.



Often less is more and simplicity is valued. When your project has one goal, it will be more attractive and convenient for customers, not to mention it will greatly simplify the job of the marketers because a target audience will be more specific than general “People aged from 13 to 70, male / female / other, various nationalities”.

Of course, you can always change the purpose of the business as you develop and realize that something even better is just around the corner. Just remember not to keep jumping from one goal to another – because, in the end, your business will not be associated with any of those goals.

Here you also need to remember not to make too much. **FIND YOUR CORE AND MAKE IT AWESOME!**

FOCUS ON APP BUDGET, NOT HOURLY PRICES

SPEED. PRICE. QUALITY. PICK TWO.
// THE ECONOMIST

Junior, Middle or Senior programmer – that is the question. You might think, “Junior is cheap, but they don’t know much. Seniors are too expensive. **Let’s go for the golden Middle.**”

Sounds like a valid cost-saving idea, right?

It happens to work out sometimes. However, there are more stories how it actually is cheaper to hire a senior software engineer because he, due to having more knowledge, would be able to finish the project faster (and, therefore, would require fewer hours to work).

Good quality does not come low-priced either. We do not say that looking for your money, we say it because that is how the market works right now. Granted, you can make a website “for free” on WordPress.com or Wix, but that would only work if you want very basic functions.

If you decide to save on the development from the day one, perhaps you will be lucky and your developer will deliver what has been promised for a small price. However, chances are that after creating your first website you might think “God, why haven’t I thought this through? I need this and this and that, and it is not possible to do at this website that we’ve got.” So you end up with legacy code that keeps cycling in different developers’ hands and it’s like having a nuke as a pet.

Worst-case scenario: in the end, you might find yourself paying even more to have your entire app / project / website redone from scratch because you will want more functionality and more options.



QA TESTING IS THE WAY

QUALITY IS THE BEST BUSINESS PLAN.

Quality is number one thing that your client is looking for in your product. There is nothing worse than launching your product or service with fanfare only to have it develop bugs right away that could have been found by quality assurance experts and fixed before you went public. This is the very reason why at Grossum we implement several methods of QA – to ensure that the quality of the product is the best. We use Test-Driven Development and Code Review techniques.

Unfortunately (or fortunately), even senior developers remain humans. However, look at it from a different side: your senior dev can think outside the box, something robots are unable to do (yet, anyway).

You should remember that there are different tests you may want to run for your startup. Among them would be:

- tests that support your technical team and process (component and unit tests),
- tests that exercise the business process (discrete functional tests),
- tests that describe the quality of the product from a user standpoint (usability tests, exploratory tests),
- technical tests that evaluate the limits of the product (performance, load and security tests).

Besides QA testing, for a successful development you should consider getting separate servers for testing and production, repository (a central location in which data is stored and managed), continuous integration (a process when the code is integrated into a shared repository several times a day and verified by an automated build to make sure errors are caught early on), and tracking tools (for example, JIRA).



BONUS: PROPER IT TEAM: WHOM DO YOU NEED?

SO YOU HAVE A PROJECT - WELL, AT THIS POINT IT MAY BE JUST AN IDEA OF A WONDERFUL WORLD-SAVING SOFTWARE - AND YOU'RE LOOKING FOR PEOPLE WHO WILL BECOME A PART OF YOUR IT DEVELOPMENT TEAM. WHOM DO YOU NEED ON YOUR CREW?

DEVELOPERS

Yes, we know we are Capt. Obvious. You will need developers to develop your product. What kind and how many will depend on the complexity of your idea. For small projects, the best and most widely used solution is to get two developers (at least). This allows code review technique to be implemented - one of the agile software development techniques when two software engineers work as a team. One (who might be a junior or middle) writes the code, the other reviews (usually a senior) each line of the code. This helps to notice and fix the errors right away.

QA TESTERS

We are all human and errors, try as we do to eliminate them before they become big, happen. One missed semicolon, one extra space, or a new browser feature that was aimed to make web browsing better for end users crashes your beautiful code... The list can go on. Therefore, you absolutely need QA (quality assurance) testers. They are a part of that dark force that does all the bad things to your program or app in order to make it better.

PROJECT MANAGER

Your life will be much easier when you have a project manager who acts as a mediator between you and the developers. Usually project managers know the insides of developing process well and therefore they can guide you through the process step-by-step, answering your questions in a less geeky way than programmers themselves do. Also, they can give the developers a sometimes-needed kick in the behind to get them moving :) Many startup owners hire Chief Technology Officers (CTO) just to be "on a safe side," but it is a fake sensation. The most important decision one needs to make is to hire a responsible third-party contractor and then, while CTOs might be helpful, their role is usually performed by the PM on the contractor's side.

INTERNS

Technically, you do not need them... for now. Nevertheless, any project that interns can get involved in brings them experience, and you might get a very talented software engineer who knows your project's code and whom you can hire as an outsourced or outstaffed team member afterwards. Besides, people who are starting their programming journey can often bring "new blood" and new ideas for solutions for the challenges that arise.

WHO ELSE?

AS YOUR STARTUP GROWS AND DEVELOPS, YOU ALSO MIGHT NEED DESIGNERS, BUSINESS DEVELOPERS, AND COMMERCIAL PEOPLE IN THE LONG RUN.



KEEP LEARNING

Startup development is always a challenge. And you have to be brave enough to actually accept it and pursue success. Journey from the foundation to actual success is extremely difficult, but at the same time it's crucially interesting and exciting! Startup is a priori something innovative, it's a path no one has gone through before, which makes it that special.

We learned a couple of great startup stories on our way to creating this book, you can find the interviews of **Fernando Sonegheti, CEO, Payparking** and **Luciano Guasco, Co-founder, FanFuel** with different advices and just a story of their own adventure through the startup world.

DURING THIS JOURNEY, YOU NEED WHOLE RANGE OF DIFFERENT ACTIONS. WE WOULD SUGGEST REMEMBERING NEXT THINGS TO USE IN YOUR STARTUP DEVELOPMENT:

- be open to criticism and feedback, those are the best to learn from;
- be ready to change and adapt in order to find your spot on the market;
- remember to be simple and open to your customers;
- know your customer, try to understand how he/she decides whether to use your Product or not;
- be interactive, teach people about your product and how to use it, be interesting;
- develop your product gradually and let people test it, they may give great ideas on the way;
- don't focus on the level of the developer you want to use, think on how to implement features in the best way;
- always test and check your Product with QA team, you need to look great for the Client

AND PROBABLY THE MOST IMPORTANT ONE:

- find your passion, get inspired by it and rock this world! ;)

We'll be here to help or just to be happy for your success!

Read in the next issue of Grossum Guide: "Software development of the Project - from idea to launch"

Hope our experience working with different startups was useful for you in this book. We'll appreciate your feedback or questions that you can leave [here](#).

NEED HELP? - EMAIL US AT HELLO@GROSSUM.COM OUR PROFESSIONALS ARE ALWAYS AT YOUR DISPOSAL



www.grossum.com