

**Start-up**  
Journal

**Reading  
sample**

**LEUCHTTURM**1917



# Start-up

## Journal

**In 15 steps to your own company**

Your personal combination of workbook and notebook contains valuable advice, practical templates and helpful methods.

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Idea

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Branding

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Pitch  
Deck

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Growth  
Hacking

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Valuation

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Fundraising

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**Tim Jaudszims** is the author of the Start-up Journal. As a Business Angel, founding start-ups is his profession and passion alike. He has seen over 2,000 pitch decks, met with more than 400 teams, made various investments and successfully launched five of his own companies.

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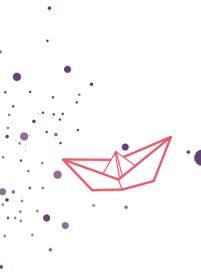
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In a digital world, we tend to get  
distracted.

This analog journal helps you to collect,  
shape and sharpen your thoughts.

And to decide whether you want to start  
your own company – or move on to the  
next idea.

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3 min.

## FOR STARTERS

Congrats! You're thinking about starting your own business. An adventurous journey lies ahead of you!

Either you've read tons of books and blog articles about "Lean Start-ups", marketing, business model generation, financing, etc., etc. Or you will.

That's fun – and hard work. I believe that there are two categories of content:

- a) Inspiration and benchmarks
- b) Relevant experiences and actionable hacks

The first and former mainly refers to storytelling about all the Googles, Facebooks and Amazons. They are inspiring, ignite passion, and push you to start something. But these cases are like stars in the sky – sparkly and far away from the here and now. Personally, even as an experienced start-up founder and investor, I find them hard to apply and to actually learn from them.

With the latter, you'll recognize that most of the tricks and wisdom are simple – if not downright unspectacular. Because it's mostly logical. You might just need some guidance and tools. That is what this journal is meant to do for you.

But overall, you'll experience that reading is just a start. You learn the most by doing, testing, and failing.

Why on earth would you need an analog product like this? And why would you want to follow any advice from a complete stranger from Germany?

Let me explain.

You probably know a lot of great blogs, books, and articles about starting up or entrepreneurship. So, let me ask you this: How many of the inspiring tips and tricks did you ever try to apply or implement? If you're like the rest of us: close to zero.

Why is that?

Mostly because it is tough to bring an abstract idea to life. Because it's somewhat tricky to transfer success factors from a great story to your specific situation. Because when you have that very first spark, pen and paper are too far away or you don't know how and where to enter it digitally. E-mail, Notes, Word...? All loose ends lead to never getting started in the first place.

That is why this book looks like a journal where you can not only read about proven concepts, processes, and tools, but really work with them. It's never been easier to jot down your thoughts and progress from there: Answer straightforward questions and fill out the templates. Move from general to specific. This creates practical knowledge and gets the ball rolling.

And one last reason for why you will profit from this analog form: You filter less when writing by hand. This allows your thoughts to flow and keeps them from being nipped in the bud at an early stage. Don't worry: nobody will judge. This journal invites you to let your ideas flow freely, while sorting and structuring them at a later date. This process of diverging is critical for more output and a more in-depth understanding of any topic or challenge.

*“For those who are after potential and not illusions.”*

I compiled a broad array of what I consider to be valuable and actionable tricks, tools, and ideas from a couple of dozen books, blogs, and my personal experience. I hope that this makes it a lot easier for you to form and validate your ideas and get drawn into making fewer mistakes. If you have any questions, feel free to ask!

Best regards,

Tim  
tim@changejournal.com

# KPIs

from the

# START-UP WORLD

**New  
entrepreneurs**

**0.33%**

of population that starts a  
new business in the USA<sup>3</sup>

**Success  
likeliness**

**2.1x**

for a 40 yo founder vs. a 25 yo founder  
according to Kellogg Insight<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cbinsights.com/research-unicorn-companies>, March 2019.

<sup>2</sup> <https://techcrunch.com/2017/04/19/in-2017-only-17-of-startups-have-a-female-founder/>;

<sup>3</sup> Kauffman Foundation 2016, <https://indicators.kauffman.org/>

## Number of unicorns

**330**

Start-ups with a valuation  
of >\$1B, worldwide<sup>1</sup>

## Female founders

**17%**

of all start-ups according to a  
Crunchbase study from 2017<sup>2</sup>

## Self funded

**82%**

of all start-ups are funded  
by founder and/or family<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> <https://insight.kellogg.northwestern.edu/article/younger-vs-older-tech-entrepreneurs>

<sup>5</sup> <https://smallbiztrends.com/2016/11/startup-statistics-small-business.html>

*"To begin, begin."*

William Wordsworth

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Just start with whatever interests you most,  
or with whatever appears easiest to you.  
The key is to get going at all.

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# START ANYWHERE

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4 min.

# 1 IDEA

When you start reading this, you probably already have an idea in mind. I assume that it isn't random, because you don't want to start just anything. Maybe there's a problem you want to solve or a lever you want to pull. Perhaps it's something that you want to dig into because you see business potential.

We all have great ideas. In the shower. In the middle of the night. There are many possible triggers that make us think there is something to potentially change or improve. But ideas alone are worth nothing. The value is in solutions that someone is willing to pay for.

Your initial idea is “only” a good guess that you have found a specific solution. I assure you, when you progress from here, your result is not going to be precisely what you had first envisioned. And that's a good thing. It means that you have learned and adjusted. It means that you, like everybody else, are not able to predict the future, but that you can make use of research and feedback.

Some guys see a lot of problems that others don't mind. Some problems are so specific that they only apply to a tiny group of people. And these people are most probably hard to find. You'd have to earn a lot with each of those very few to make it work.

On the way to finding a large amount of people (your target group) with a specific problem who want to buy a (new) solution from you, you will need to test, learn, and adjust over and over. There are many ways of testing your idea, the simplest being asking. Ask a lot of different people. The less you know them, the better. Friends and family tend to be too biased and too polite to call you on a shitty idea. And often, they aren't even part of the target group. Talking to a lot of different potential users gives you a better grasp of what matters – and oftentimes reveals what is not understood or wanted.

And don't worry that this kind of exposure may lead to someone stealing your idea. Some founders ask for an NDA (non-disclosure



agreement) when all they have is a concept or a rough prototype. Trust your team and your strength to bring that idea to life better than anyone else could! In my experience, overprotectiveness is connected to a mindset that is very unappealing for investors. If you are in protective mode, it's rather tough to listen to potential customers.

So, start with one hypothesis of an idea and then shape it into something viable and maybe groundbreaking by using insights and feedback. Or come to realize that the initial idea wasn't as good as you thought. But from there, you can move on and create a solution that is actually relevant and unique.

Also, challenging your idea again and again has a significant side effect: The more you pitch, the better you get. Eventually, when you have developed and adjusted your offer and start marketing and talking to investors, this pitch has to be spot on.

That's why this Start-up Journal revolves around shaping your initial idea for such a pitch. It helps you through the process of understanding your start-up options, leading a team, building and testing your product, storytelling and branding; researching, and creating a solid business case for funding.

*“Ideas are worth nothing.  
Execution makes all the difference.”*

Remember: it's entirely possible that you don't get it right the first time – the target group, the problem, the solution, or the right market. Especially when you don't start from an empty canvas, but with an idea in your mind. Don't worry! That's part of the game. The evocative idea in your head is now your inspiration, your fuel, and your thick skin when things don't turn out as planned. Be prepared that the execution of this idea might take more time, adaptations, grit, and money than you expected.

Don't let it discourage you. Write down and share that great idea of yours and enjoy the ride.

# Let your ideas flow!

## Idea 1

Start sketching and writing down your idea.

# Is it any good?

After a few days, challenge your idea:

Do you still like the idea?

Yes  No

How good do you think your idea is, now?

Poor 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Groundbreaking

Did you pitch the idea to at least five other persons? Did they like it?

Yes  No

Can you make the idea happen?

Yes  No

If not, what and who do you need?

.....

Imagine 12 months from now: Are you earning money with this idea?

.....

Do you think the idea is still worth pursuing?

Yes  No

Any other thoughts?

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.....

.....

# 6 BRANDING





8 min.

## 6 BRANDING

This is a tricky one.

I see a lot of really poor pitch decks, websites, and apps.

By bad, I'm not talking about my subjective opinion.

I mean logos, headlines, and texts that are barely worth reading.

It's a scenario when usability is not usable at all.

Actually, it's about being incapable of understanding something that is crucial to understand.

Logos, headlines, and design are just elements of your branding. Every touchpoint and interaction with your users or customers leaves an impression. And the sum of these impressions makes the image of your brand. A bad experience leaves a painful mark on your user's heart, and no beautifully crafted logo can repair that.

Great brands reliably (over)deliver to exceed customer expectations, thereby creating trust and fans. You trust discounters not because of their beautiful logo (which they rarely have), but because they fulfill your needs. Over and over again. The strength of any brand can be measured by the customer's willingness to forgive smaller or bigger mistakes or bad experiences. When they disappoint once too often, a user is likely to switch the brand.

Since it's a long road to earn anyone's trust, it is understandable that appearances can make all the difference in the very beginning. What else do most start-ups have in the beginning?

### **Visual design as a cornerstone of your brand**

Many founders (want to) start with beautiful marketing materials to build a brand image. This is a good idea, as long as you have your basics covered: Like the fact that you are catering to an actual, current need and that your potential customers understand the solution you have to offer. Wrap it up in a compelling story and then, go ahead and make it beautiful. I'm a true believer in good design! With proper design, you can make a good product great. With a lousy product, the product stays bad even when the design is great.

I used to say: If you invest \$10k in product and experience design, it could increase the valuation of your start-up by a couple hundred thousand dollars! Because in the end, investors are human after all. They, like everybody else, can be seduced by better design. But don't overdo it! Design can also be misleading. Once an investor gets the feeling that the design is top, but the product and business model have no substance, then they won't invest in what is actually just a beautiful shell.

*“A brand is the sum of experiences your customers have with you – visual, physical, and in interactions.”*

The same applies to potential users or customers: They might like your design, but if the product doesn't work or there's no tangible benefit for them, they won't return or buy in the first place.

### **What's your name?**

I do believe that for good branding, you need a great name. A name that is “googleable”, ownable as a top-level domain name (URL), and appears on the most relevant social networks. This becomes increasingly difficult nowadays since virtually anyone can secure names for many reasons. If you keep in mind that everything in brand building is about leaving a memorable impression, then you might want to (re-)consider abstract fantasy names. Because you'll probably need an extra tag line, claim, or slogan to explain the purpose of your offer. Don't get me wrong: I'm not advocating giving every product or service a literal name. But, if you look at the limited attention span of consumers today and the fact that they have absolutely no need to remember your brand, then it might be smart to make it as easy as possible.

Here are some great brand names of younger German start-ups, which are quite intuitive and strong in conveying the benefit in one or two words:

Babbel (slang for speaking) – a language learning app

Kitchen Stories – a video content-based cooking community

# Brand Benchmark

What are your five favorite brands?

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....

Analyze three brands:

**1<sup>st</sup> brand:** .....

What makes this brand so unique?

.....  
.....

Which key recurring elements can you recognize?

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.....  
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What makes it desirable?

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What can you learn from it for your brand?

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**2<sup>nd</sup> brand:** .....

What makes this brand so unique?

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Which key recurring elements can you recognize?

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What makes it desirable?

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# Brand description

Which values define your brand?

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Which qualities would you like your brand to have?

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Which benefits would you like your brand to embody?

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Describe the tone of voice of your brand:

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How does your brand resonate with your target audience?

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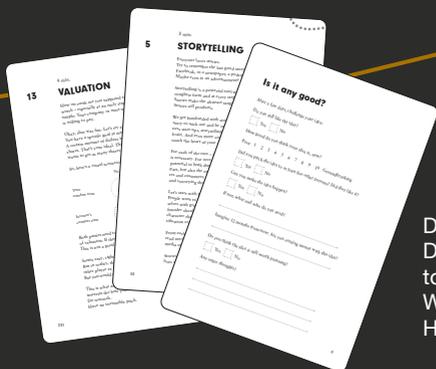
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# Start-up Journal



Does my idea stand a chance?  
Do I have what it takes  
to be an entrepreneur?  
Which factors lead to success?  
How do I recognize risks?

For those who seek real business  
potential, not illusions.

**The Start-up Journal** shows you how to start your own company in 15 simple steps. It helps you to develop your ideas, while managing risks and winning over investors and customers. It supports you with valuable advice, practical templates and helpful methods. It motivates future entrepreneurs to plan the next steps, give ideas a personal touch and enter it all in writing.

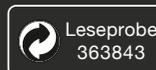
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