

THE ART OF THE START

The Time-Tested, Battle-Hardened Guide for Anyone Starting Anything

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MAIN IDEA

Starting a business is much more of an art than a step-by-step or a thoroughly predictable process.

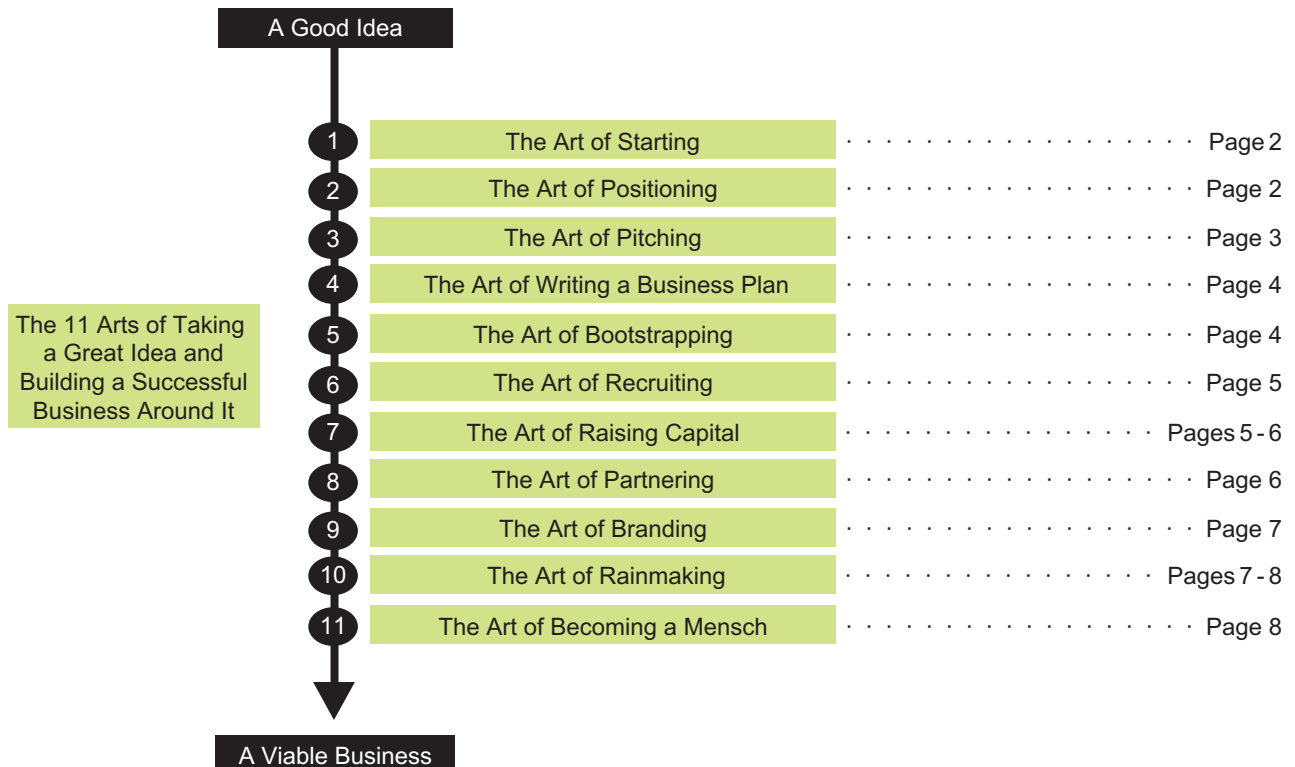
To be precise, success in taking an idea and building it into a new business is actually the cumulative result of eleven distinct arts:

1. The Art of Starting – Actually getting out and doing what needs to be done rather than merely thinking about it.
2. The Art of Positioning – Identifying a niche that you can serve and then finding ways to dominate it.
3. The Art of Pitching – Being able to tell your whole story in 10 slides, 20 minutes and thirty-point font.
4. The Art of Writing a Business Plan – Encapsulating your ideas of future greatness in twenty pages of wishful thinking.
5. The Art of Bootstrapping – Being able to think big but get by on less resources than would be ideal.
6. The Art of Recruiting – Attracting the right people defined as those who “get” your idea and are willing to work for stock options.
7. The Art of Raising Capital – Being able to interest others in investing in your idea.
8. The Art of Partnering – Coming up with ways to piggyback on others to increase your own sales.
9. The Art of Branding – Learning how to convert your early customers into evangelists.
10. The Art of Rainmaking – Getting your product out there and then building on whatever viable uses emerge.
11. The Art of Becoming a Mensch – Being willing to help those who have nothing to offer you in return.

To succeed in getting a new business off the ground, you'd better be able to bring all these arts to bear or it's going to be an uphill struggle. The entire process is always much more of an art than an exact science, so enhance your odds of success by building competencies in all of the various arts involved.

“My goal is to help you use your knowledge, love, and determination to create something great without getting bogged down in theory and unnecessary details. My presumption is that your goal is to change the world – not study it. The reality is that ‘entrepreneur’ is not a job title. It is the state of mind of people who want to alter the future. (It certainly isn’t limited to Silicon Valley types seeking venture capital). Great companies. Great divisions. Great schools. Great churches. Great not-for-profits. When it comes to the fundamentals of starting up, they are more alike than they are different. There are many ways to describe the ebb and flow, yin and yang, bubble-blowing and bubble-bursting phases of business cycles. Here’s another one: microscopes and telescopes. In the microscope phase, there’s a cry for level-headed thinking, a return to fundamentals, and going ‘back to basics’. In the telescope phase, entrepreneurs bring the future closer. They dream up ‘the next big thing’, change the world, and make late-adopters eat their dust. Lots of money is wasted, but some crazy ideas stick, and the world moves forward. The reality is that you need both microscopes and telescopes to achieve success. The problem is that this means gathering information that is spread among hundreds of books, magazines, and conferences. It also means talking to dozens of experts and professionals – if you can get, and afford, an audience. You could spend all your time learning and not doing. And doing, not learning to do, is the essence of entrepreneurship. The key to success is to survive the microscope tasks while bringing the future closer.”

– Guy Kawasaki



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