Practical Advice do Help You Get Started

(An excerpt of **How To Start A Startup - CS183B - Lecture 12: Building for the Enterprise)**

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https://genius.com/Aaron-levie-lecture-12-sales-and-marketing-annotated
https://youtu.be/tFVDjrvQJdw?t=1989

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*These are my personal notes. It's **not** a full transcript of the essay/article. It's **not** an official summary.*
If you like these notes I strongly encourage you to read the original source in the link(s) above.

Spot Disruptions

> *Look for new enabling technologies, or major trends, like fundamental trends, that create a wide gap between how things are done and how they can be done.*

Looking back in time to our business (Box), the gap was basically....
- storage was getting cheaper,
- internet was getting faster,
- browsers were getting better,
... yet we are still sharing files with this very complicated, very cumbersome means.

The first advice (Spot Disruptions) is true whether you are building consumer or enterprise. The rest are more enterprise
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Start Intentionally Small

> *Start with something simple and small, then expand over time. If people call it a "toy" you're definitely onto something.*

Because you will not be able to compete with an incumbent because the incumbent is always going to go for the full solution. So you have to find, <u>what are the gaps in the full solution</u>, that are significant enough that the customer is going to want to solve the problem with a discreet technology.

Find Asymmetries

> *Do things that incumbents can't or won't do because it's economically or technically infeasible*

You want to do things that incumbents can't or won't do because either the economics don't make sense for them, the economics are so unusual, or because technically they can't.

Find the Almost-Crazy Outliers

Go after the customers that are working in the future, but that haven't totally lost their minds.

You need to find the customers that are at the edge of the business, their business model, their industry and find the unique characteristics of those customers. Leverage them as your early adopters.

Listen to Customers

But don't always build exactly what they want. Build what they need

This is a really key distinction around building enterprise software. Your customers are going to have a large number of requests. Your job is to instill those lists down into the ultimate product. This does not mean that you are not going to build exactly what they tell you to build. It is your job to listen to their problems, and translate those into what is going to build the best and simplest solution for them.

Modularize, Don't Customize

Every customer will want something a little bit different. Don't make the product suffer for this.

Build a platform as opposed to building all the custom technology and customer vertical experiences into the software itself. Make sure you really think about openness and APIs as a way of building experiences. Don't build that directly into the product.

Focus on the User

Keep "Consumer" DNA at the core of your enterprise product. This will always pay dividends

The magical thing about building an enterprise software company right now is you can keep consumer information at the center of the product. That will always mean that adoption is easier, that your product has a much better chance of going viral. It becomes easier to sell in the organization. Always make sure you bring consumer DNA into the product.

Your Product Should Sell Itself

Sales should be used to navigate customers and close deals, not be a substitute for great product

Leverage everything about the internet, leverage everything about users to get to your customers. But you still will likely need sales as a way to help your customers navigate your product, help your customers navigate the competitive landscape and ecosystem.