

IS YOUR IDEA A SHORT GAME OR A LONG GAME?

Choosing a business idea to invest your time and energy into is rarely easy. So if you're finding it somewhat difficult and stressful, you're not alone!

It's easy, for instance, to get stuck in a process of flip-flopping backwards and forwards between two or more ideas. One of the reasons for this is that as soon as you consider committing to an idea, the question pops up in your mind, "How long is this going to take to get off the ground?". And sometimes the truthful answer is a lot longer than you'd like. You might then be tempted to abandon the idea and start sifting through your other options. But before you do that, read on to discover what makes an idea a short game or a long game and what you can do to speed things up.

Short game or long game?

Ideas that take the shortest time to get traction and make money from are those that have one or more of the following features:

- Use some transferrable skills from your previous work
- Can benefit from industry/field knowledge you have already
- You have a track record in – eg previous clients/projects in this area or a CV that shows relevant experience for the new work. Note though that you can often show previous roles on your CV have relevance to the new work even if they're in a different field. For instance if you've been successful as a PA helping make projects happen inside a corporation you could show how useful that is to organizing events. And if you have worked on impressive projects or with big name clients, even if in a different role/field, that can help people take you more seriously elsewhere.
- You have a long term interest or life experience in the topic even if it's not been

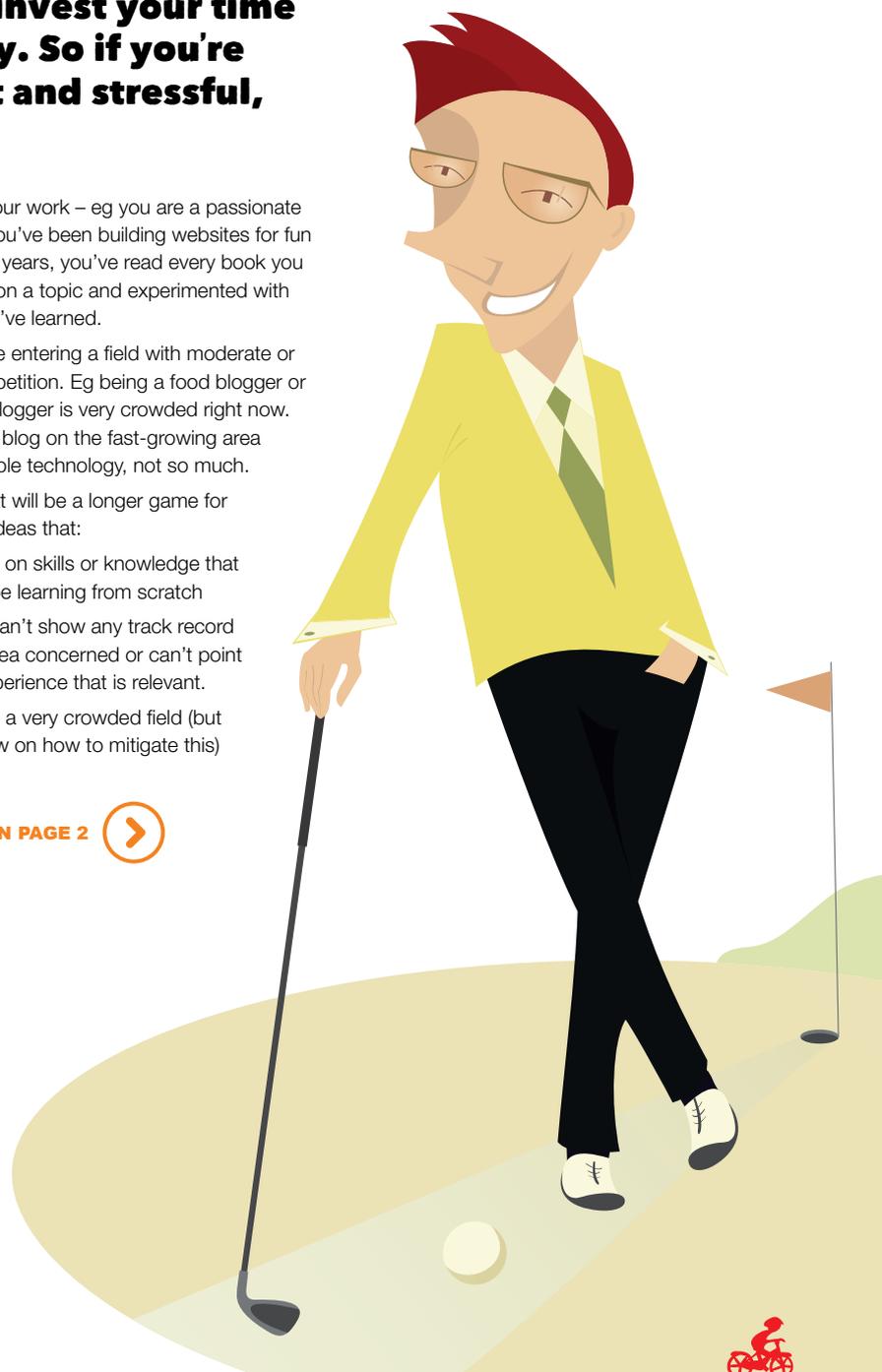
part of your work – eg you are a passionate foodie, you've been building websites for fun for many years, you've read every book you can find on a topic and experimented with what you've learned.

- You're entering a field with moderate or low competition. Eg being a food blogger or gadget blogger is very crowded right now. Writing a blog on the fast-growing area of wearable technology, not so much.

Ideas that will be a longer game for you are ideas that:

- Major on skills or knowledge that you will be learning from scratch
- You can't show any track record for the area concerned or can't point to life experience that is relevant.
- Are in a very crowded field (but see below on how to mitigate this)

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Don't immediately abandon the long game

Firstly if you need money right now, then unless you have already started on an idea, or you are choosing a very short game (eg freelancing in exactly the same field you currently work in and have a good track record in and which has an established freelance market) then you are probably best off getting something just to keep you afloat. Trying to develop a new business while being scared of losing your home is more stress than you need. If you can get part-time work or similar that can pay you enough to cover your basics and leave enough headspace and time for developing something new, go for it. You don't need to love it but try to choose something that fits you OK and won't drain you.

Secondly, if your work up to now has not been fulfilling and you're determined to make a big shift, accept that it is going to take some time. What you're learning in the Academy will make it dramatically shorter than it will be for others but you still need to allow months not weeks for this to happen. Most people never find out

how to make the transition and stay unsatisfied. Sadly this often continues until the end of their working life because they were unwilling to take the first steps.

This is your life we're talking about here and it's worth investing the time to shift into doing what you really want to do. It's not going to be easy and you can't expect every moment to be fun, but it will be an adventure. In fact, the journey to discover what you can create in the world (and what you can get in return) will be without doubt one of the greatest, most exciting, and most growthful adventures of your life.

How to make the journey shorter

How can we make the travel time between now and when you're making some income as short as possible?

The first key is to try and pick an idea that excites you but which also uses some transferrable skills from your work history to date. If you don't currently enjoy your work you might imagine that your ideal new career will

bear no resemblance. I assumed this when I left my technical career but I've found that I use technical skills every day for running online courses and I love doing it. I am a geek after all! It was just the format I was using my technical skills in that I wasn't enjoying in my previous jobs – eg the corporate culture at Deloitte, the lack of freedom in a job in general.

The second key is to start small. Niche your idea on an area that both uses some of your skills/talents/knowledge/history as above and also meets a clear need. So instead of being a generic life coach, be a redundancy coach for people leaving corporations. Instead of being a generic project manager, be a PM around cutting edge technologies you have some experience of.

Thirdly, don't waste time on business cards, fancy logos, mission statements and social media strategies. Go email or call people up that you know (or who are friends of friends) and get them to hire you or buy your product.

Have fun with it, and let us know in the facebook community how it's going for you.

