

**'The must read before you start up'**

FROM THE  
AUTHORS OF  
CREATIVITY  
WORKS!

# **DON'T FUCK UP YOUR BABY**

**THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO  
RAISING YOUR NEWBORN BRAND**

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## INTRODUCTION

# MANY, MANY CONGRATULATIONS!

**You** are going to build your own brand! Enjoy the moment. As writers of this book, we don't have a clue what your product or service is, but that doesn't matter. If you want to take the first step in building a successful business and launching your own brand, we are here to help you. This book was written to ensure you and your startup have an interesting journey.

Of course, you could still be a little unsure. We can imagine that you are somewhat hesitant because you have no idea what to expect as you launch your own brand. In that case this book will be of great use to you.

Maybe you don't want to start your own brand, but instead you have been tasked with helping someone to transform their idea into a brand. If that's the case, congratulations are also in order.

Congratulations are always flattering, but let's be honest, they don't really help you to succeed. And you can use some help, as a lot of startups fizzle out and die an ugly death. A lot of startup products and services never really get off the ground. What's the reason? Did the brains behind it have

a bad idea? Sometimes, but often that is not the case. In many cases, it's a good idea that has cost its initiator a lot of time and energy. In the end, however, they must throw in the towel. They have gained an experience but lost a dream. What a shame.

We don't know what your startup idea is. But if it's a good idea, we don't want you to feel like you've ruined it. You will never have that feeling if you are certain that you've done everything to succeed. That you have taken the right steps, but it has failed, nonetheless. This can always happen. But if you've done everything to succeed, you will be able to come to terms with it.

To fully develop a startup idea is a multifaceted process. Creating a strong brand is an important aspect of that process. We know which steps you must take to transform your startup idea into a new, potent brand. We would like to share these steps with you. We'd love to explain them, so you know what they are for, and how you can navigate them.

That's why we have written this book for you. For you and all others who will someday come up with a startup idea and want to transform it into a real brand.

**This** is a book for people with a startup idea and who have the ambition to really turn it into a success. But what exactly is a startup? There are several answers to this question. Some specialists, who take up an orthodox interpretation, state that only people who have the ambition to transform their startup into a big enterprise should be allowed to call themselves a startup. "No startup without a scale-up" is their mantra. In this book we take a less dogmatic approach.

The following applies to this book. Startup ideas can be big or small. They can be idealistic or commercial. Or both. Or political. They can be products, concepts, services. They can be simple and practical or complicated and theoretical. The initiator can have the ambition to grow his or her business to epic proportions, or nothing like that in any way. Not everyone strives to create a multinational. A successful one-man business or a company on top of your day job could be just as great a dream.

You're a startup to us if you want to launch your own business. It doesn't matter whether you envision having 1 or 1,000 employees. In the end, good startup ideas have one thing in common: they make people's lives a little or a whole lot better. That's what counts. And that is why they are worth developing.

The book you're reading now starts off on the premise that you have a startup idea and sense that you must position your idea well from the very start. It will be interesting for you to see how you can transform your idea into a fully-grown brand. You could view this book as a manual, teaching you how to raise your newborn brand.

A parenting manual?

Let's take a look at what that entails.

**It's** our day job to teach people how to build up strong brands. As lecturers at Fontys University of Applied Sciences in Tilburg, the Netherlands, we constantly assist students in helping startups become a successful brand. We give lectures and coach the branding process. As a result, we see a lot of startup ideas transform into startup brands.

What grabs our attention each time, and you will probably recognise this, is that startup ideas give the creator an enormous energy boost. We see starting entrepreneurs who combine two full-time jobs. One for a stupid boss and a second full-time job on the side for their own startup idea, all without getting burned out. Quite the opposite, in fact, they have never felt so good. Even though they are investing their savings and are about to part ways with a generous pension plan.

Apparently, when you have a startup idea something happens deep inside your brain, in a part with a difficult name. Don't get us wrong, we don't pretend to be neurologists, but we can imagine a hormonal shot of some sorts that allows you to take on the whole world. A euphoric feeling even. The energy that reminds us of... the energy that parents of newborn babies can have. Young parents and people with a startup idea have the same surprising energy. Do you have a startup idea? Then you have just become a parent!

Congratulations again!

## STEP 1

# DESCRIBE YOUR STARTUP IDEA

**First** things first. We've already seen that ideas can come in all shapes and sizes. They can be small and merely relevant to a couple of people. Or they can be enormous, and form the basis for a future multinational. And everything in between, so to speak.

It's good at the start to have a clear picture. Which startup idea are you going to work with? What do you want to turn into a newborn brand? What is it and what is it about? At the start of the journey, it's a good idea to write down a couple of sentences that describe your idea. Don't lose speed. It doesn't have to be perfect just yet. Not at all. Otherwise what would be the point of the rest of this book?

Example? Right. Airbnb.

Yes, nowadays this is a mega company, with a stock market value of almost 25 billion dollars. But Airbnb also started as a startup idea in 2007. After a lot of struggles and rejections this startup idea started growing from 2010 onwards into the established brand it is today.

At the time, the idea of the Airbnb's three founders could be described as follows.

*Conferences are regularly being held in San Francisco. As a result, hotels are often fully booked. So, the idea is to rent out our own space with an air bed and breakfast, to make some extra money.*

And this is exactly what happened. In 2007 the three founders decided to rent out 3 air beds including breakfast, amounting to a cost of 80 USD per person for three nights.

And now you. Take your first step on the next page. Don't hesitate and start the raising process of your newborn brand. Enjoy the moment!

## MY STARTUP IDEA IS:

Briefly describe to yourself your startup idea. You should use a maximum of five lines to describe this.

...

## STEP 2

# CHOOSE YOUR TARGET GROUP

**Your** startup idea needs to relate to people. A connection needs to be made. You shouldn't have to raise your voice in order to be heard, which is what a lot of companies do these days. You should instead talk to the right people. If you want people to connect to your idea, it's smart to think about which people you want to reach out to and how you want to do that. Entering into relationships is easier when you have a clear view on your target group. What the heart thinks the tongue speaks, but it's pointless blurting out enthusiastic stories concerning your idea to every Tom, Dick and Harry. It's hard to sell cars to people who want to stay at home.

So, who are the people that suit your idea?

Let's try and paint a clearer picture of the target group for your idea. You can insert this information in a stereotypical sketch of a person. This will then transform into what is called a persona: a detailed description of a fictive person that would be enthused by your idea. You can add as much detail to your persona as you want. You can add all sorts of things to it. Where someone is from. What kind of income he or she earns.

Interests: *Eating healthily, drinking white wine with friends on the terrace. City trips, but that will become harder now that the little one is here*

Active on: *Facebook and recently more on Instagram*

Is sensitive to: *The opinions of girlfriends*

And now you for your startup idea!



## MY PERSONA IS:

Name:

Nationality:

Age:

Sex:

Living situation:

Education:

Income:

Relationship status:

Cultural background:

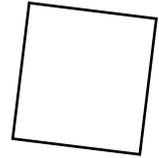
Political leanings:

Hobbies:

Interests:

Active on:

Is sensitive to:



**MY THREE CORE VALUES WILL BE:**

Write down the core values for your startup idea!

1. ...

2. ...

3. ...

**STEP 9**

DEVELOP YOUR  
**CORE VALUES**

The next step is developing your core values. On paper they look like nice words, but you haven't learned much if you don't explain the significance they have for your newborn brand. You don't need to write a whole book for such an explanation. 3-5 sentences, in which you briefly explain what the core value signifies for your brand will do. We've added examples below for the core values Personal, Trustworthy and Innovative.

If it so happens that you've chosen these core values, don't copy and paste. The focus will undoubtedly be different for your own brand.

**Example core value Personal**

*We think it's important to build up personal relationships. In our eyes, having chemistry with one another is integral to a perfect final result. We think it's essential to know who you are and what you want. So we often consult our clients and customise our products. We never want our customers to have reservations about going into business with us.*

**So**, core values bring clarity and help you make choices. They ensure that you stay authentic, maintain focus and that you're trustworthy. There is, however, a downside. They make you less flexible.

Imagine you've picked economical as your core value. That means you can never again ask for a shocking amount of money for your product or service. Not even if you really need the money. A core value rules out opposite behaviour. This can be hard in some instances. That's why we refer to this phenomenon as the downside of a chosen core value.

It's smart to identify the downsides of your core values before you make your final choice. From experience, we know that you sometimes take an overly idealistic approach for your core value, only to turn pale when you become aware of the downsides. Assessing the consequences of your choices usually leads to better decisions. So, go for it and get a clear picture of the downside. We will again assist you with three examples.

Imagine that you've chosen the core value Personal. What will you rule out in that case?

*Treating your target group as if they are anonymous or not taking them seriously. Not ringing back. Being uninterested. Ignoring complaints, massive mailings, or starting a letter with 'Dear customer'.*

Have you picked the core value Trustworthy?  
Then don't even think of doing this.

*Abusing the vulnerable position of your target group. Requesting unreasonable commissions for purchased products and services. Abandoning target groups and partners. Being unclear about whatever. Not doing what you promised.*

And if you've singled out Innovative as your core value then refrain from the following.

*Making an average product. Not thinking of a good solution. Not being proud of your own design. Designing something that looks good but isn't very practical at the end of the day. Coming up with something practical that isn't attractive or is worn out in no time. Developing something old-fashioned.*

Does the above sound pretty obvious? Maybe. But you wouldn't believe how often things go wrong.

### THE **DOWNSIDE** OF YOUR VALUES:

Describe what you will never do as a brand because of your core values.

1. ...

2. ...

3. ...

## INTERMEZZO

# ON THE RIGHT TRACK

Have you already been complimented by us? No? Well here you go. You're doing a great job! We're proud of you. You've already completed 9 steps. Your newborn brand is really taking shape. Cool!

If everything has gone to plan, the previous steps have ensured that you have almost completed the DNA and the character of your newborn brand.

Let's put it this way: the interior part is almost done, but you've still got a lot to do on the exterior. Let's say you're halfway. Maybe you've left the toughest part behind you. Screwing up your brand is becoming increasingly difficult. So let's crack on. On to adulthood!

## GET INSPIRATION FOR THE EXTERIOR

Your brand's interior is super important for success in the Black Box. But your target group won't be able to see the interior. They will only see the exterior. So, the exterior needs to be a perfect translation of its interior. And it's a bit of a challenge to achieve this.

The next steps are aimed at creating a mix of elements which together make for an attractive, recognizable exterior that corresponds to the interior. We shall see that this concerns matters such as choosing a name, colour and symbol and developing a slogan and a unique story. Yes, we're talking about communication tools.

What exactly would we like to achieve with these communication tools? Well, here's the thing. We looked at the complex web of emotions surrounding your brand when we determined the DNA and the character of your brand. With the aid of the archetype, we applied focus. All of this was aimed at the interior.

Now the desired emotions and feelings need to be brought to the exterior, in order to transmit them to the target audience through communication

tools. If this succeeds, the target group will get the required emotional click in the Black Box with your newborn brand.

Developing communication tools is a fascinating and challenging creative process. We can't wait to get to down to business. But with creativity the following always applies: you need insight and inspiration to arrive at something really good. Before we get to work, we will search for precisely that.

We now have a set of three questions for you to help you make the translation from the interior to the exterior. They may be unusual questions in your view, but believe us, they really work. Here they are:

- What type of music is your brand?
- What type of person is your brand?
- What sensory experience is your brand?

If you're able to clearly answer all these questions, you'll see that it will become much easier to make choices about the design of your communication tools. On the next few pages we will expand on these questions. And we will of course go looking for answers together.

**Up** until now we've mainly talked about feelings. In a way, we've treated it in a somewhat distant manner. This is the time to experience ourselves which feeling is exactly meant. We really want to feel it ourselves. This makes the design process a lot simpler and better.

Let's try and summon the right feelings and moods. There's nothing better to do this with than with music. Go figure. Blues gives you the blues. A film becomes completely devoid of emotions and therefore boring without a soundtrack. A lot of athletes boost their morale before the game with a good beat. Others seek peace with headphones and classical music and relax on a yoga mat.

Research has shown that music is a universal language. It can very specifically evoke emotions and feelings. You have no idea what lights up on a brain scan if you put on music. Because music works so well at evoking feelings, people have used music for as long as we remember to create a good atmosphere. Music is essential at a party, but also at a funeral or an election event. Every feeling has accompanying music. So...**What type of music is your idea?**

Ask yourself which music your idea can be compared to. You can think in genres, such as garage rock, happy hardcore, rap or R&B. Our feeling with this book, for example, has been upbeat poprock. Strong, but accessible and easy

to dance to. Challenging, but containing a message and a touch of humour. Hopefully you'll share that feeling with us.

You can also go a step further and link it with a composer, band or artist. Bach gives you a different feeling than Bob Dylan or Lady Gaga. Or you can even define a specific symphony or hit that perfectly summarises your idea. For this book, we've had endless discussions to establish if it's All for nothing by Kensington or the chorus to Breakfast at Tiffany's. We stopped when we started squabbling.

We can of course try and figure out which beat equals which feeling. It's all been looked into and established by now. But we think it's unnecessary. This question is about your idea and your intuition. You don't need an explanation. Happy Spotifying!

## Afterparty

A pitch is usually followed by a round of questions. Of course, there will always be surprising questions, but with a bit of preparation, you can also take this last hurdle with a smile. You can sit down beforehand and think up some questions your audience could ask. These can be all sorts of questions. It really depends on who your audience is. Commercial people ask different questions than technical people. And technical people ask different questions than creative people.

Obvious questions could be: what was your target group's feedback on your idea? How much money do you think you will make in the first year or first three years? What really sets your product or service apart from what's already out there? What are your solution's weak aspects?

Write down as many questions as possible that you can think of. And answer them. This really ensures that you can stand on your two feet at the afterparty and that your pitch is different from others.

That's right, an outstanding pitch requires a lot of work. Believe us, it's worth it.

## ADULTHOOD

# CONGRATULATIONS YOU JUST DID IT

**We** started this book with congratulations. Here we do it again. First we congratulated you with your idea, now we congratulate you with your fully-grown brand!

You've done some pretty hard work during the previous 18 steps. All the effort you put into it will now really pay off. Good job!

Are you finished now? No, of course not. New fun starts right here. Your brand is, let's put it this way, an adolescent now, ready to go into the tough outside world and enter into grown up friendships.

At this moment you have a clear picture of what your newborn brand offers and to whom. You gave it character. You have established the most important values. And by formulating your onliness statement you provided focus. You have your own colours, a shiny name, even a matching vocabulary and a great story.

On page 15, we kindly asked you to wait to go wild on all sorts of communication around your idea. Finally, the time is right for you to let yourself be seen and heard.

Keep focus on your target group, set your objectives, choose a strategy and pick your communication channels.

You're ready for it. Let's party in the Black Box.

We're sure you won't f\*ck it up. 😊

Good luck!

THE END

## WE JUST WANT TO SAY THANK YOU

**Well**, we feel it's a great honour that you've got this far. This feels satisfying and gives us energy to start working on a new idea. Maybe even a new book, who knows? Before that happens, we'd like to thank a couple of people. Our thanks go out to:

You as our reader. You were the best reader ever. If you ever happen to bump into us and you've got this book with you, we'd love to scribble this in your book. With a real pen and a proper signature.

Everyone who's given us feedback in the development phase of this book. Without your help it would have never turned out this way. If it's not good enough, it kind of is your fault, but in any case thanks a lot!

Our girlfriends. Good that you left us to our devices and that you granted us all the time needed to write a book and put up with the strange behaviour that comes with it. Maybe you too found it nice and quiet that we were busy with something else. But thanks, anyway.

Our parents. Once we were babies too. Apparently, you didn't need this parenting book to get to an acceptable result. You've done a great job. We reap the benefits every day.

Each other. Again, we didn't really argue and we laughed a lot. Let's keep it that way.

And last but not least we would like to say sorry to everyone who feels insulted or hurt by this book. Seems unlikely but even so. Before you know it, we are entangled in legal proceedings. Which we don't feel like.

A unique time is drawing to a close. We've enjoyed this adventure.

Enjoyable, that's what it was. Goodbye!

Joris & Coen

*"To fully develop a startup idea is a multifaceted process. Creating a strong brand is an important aspect of that process. We know which 18 steps you must take to transform your startup idea into a new, powerful brand. We would like to share these steps with you."*

**Newborn brands are just like babies to us.**

**You'll feel a great deal of love for them and will be immensely proud.**

**They'll also take up all your time and leave you with more  
sleepless nights that you can count.**

**That's the deal you're making.**

**If they become successful, and it's a big if, it'll all be worth it.**

**But the truth is that lots of newborn brands don't become big.**

**They get f\*cked up.**

**Like children, brands that aren't raised correctly struggle when  
it comes to success. You'll need to help your brand's personality  
blossom and develop its character.**

**Raising a baby to adulthood takes 18 years.**

**And, in 18 steps, you can raise your newborn brand into a success.**

**We've laid the pathway out for you.**

**Now, let's build the brand of your dreams, one step at a time.**

**Are you ready for parenthood? It's one hell of a ride.**

**Try not to f\*ck it up. 😊**



**B/SPUBLISHERS**