



Jenn Murray's

Savvy Side Projects

Practical tips on how to execute your
web projects more productively,
efficiently, and profitably!

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Introduction

SIDE PROJECTS. They're a normal part of our industry. We tackle them to pad our portfolios and sharpen our skills. But they also allow us to earn extra income, build our personal brand, and provide helpful resources to the community.

The downside to side projects is that, well, they're something we pursue on the side. And let's face it - our lives are very busy! We have day jobs, families, and countless other obligations.

So the question is: **How can we work smarter - not harder - when it comes to executing and utilizing side projects?** In other words, how can we work more efficiently? More productively? Even more profitably?

It was those questions that led me to create the [Savvy Side Projects website](#) as well as this eBook. (The latter containing bonus content not found on the website.) I wanted to offer a resource that answered those questions. That provided practical tips that anyone can implement, no matter their goals or skill level. (All the while adding to my own portfolio because, after all, that's being savvy!)

If this short eBook, authored by little 'ole me, saves you time and frustration...if it allows you to create more, more quickly...if it helps you to polish your skills and firmly establish your brand...well, it's been my humble pleasure!

Best Wishes in All You Create,

Jenn Murray

Pad Your Portfolio

SIDE PROJECTS ARE a great way to fill your portfolio. Maybe you're new to the industry and need to establish a portfolio for employment purposes. Or, on the flip side, maybe you're a veteran looking to spread your creative wings. Whatever your specific goals, side projects are the perfect way to give your portfolio a little *oomph!*

The hardest part, of course, is coming up with ideas. Below are some possibilities to get the brain juices flowing. (Note: You may also find the Provide Resources chapter helpful in this regard, too.)

Team Up With Other Professionals

Side projects don't always have to be solo projects. Sometimes it makes sense to combine forces.

For example, maybe you're a front-end developer that excels in creating amazingly intuitive websites. Meanwhile, your college buddy is all about the backend complexities of e-commerce stores. By combining your skills, the two of you can become a different entity entirely and broaden the scope of potential projects.

In addition, put the word out in your network that you're available to pitch in on projects. There's always a chance that a fellow designer - or a design agency - could use some reinforcements on a project. Not only could you acquire some immediate work, but you could establish some key relationships moving forward as well.

Gift a Design

Whether you're a newbie or a veteran in the industry, we're all professionals who deserve to be adequately compensated for our work. But that doesn't mean we can't occasionally gift our talents in a way that benefits both ourselves and the recipient.

For example, there are a lot of charitable organizations out there doing amazing things - yet don't have the budget for website redesigns, landing pages, etc. Maybe they're just starting out or maybe they're facing lean times. Either way, providing a design could positively impact their efforts while also padding your portfolio.

A few tips, though, when it comes to this area:

- **Only do 1-2 pro bono projects a year.** Doing more than that may result in a reputation of doing work for free - rather than being a charitable designer. And as far as the bottom line goes, those are two very different things.
- **Choose something you're passionate about.** Do you love animals? Helping out at the local food bank? Working with underprivileged kids? Selecting a cause close to your heart will make the project that much more enjoyable and fulfilling.
- **Choose wisely.** Do your homework before approaching the organization. You may be passionate about the work they do, but if they operate in a way that will make the design process a nightmare - including trying to take advantage of you - it's not worth pursuing.
- **Have a contract.** Just because the work is being done pro bono doesn't mean a contract isn't needed. In fact, it's even more important! The scope of work needs to be defined in detail to help avoid a scope creep nightmare. And don't be afraid to stick to your guns. If they try to add a ton of additional items to the original scope, don't feel guilt-pressured to agree. They're already getting incredible value for free.
- **Ask for alternative types of "payment."** This statement isn't meant in a shady way. But the organization can provide other types of value besides money. You could ask for a set number of referrals, an ad in one of their publications, or some other item that gives you exposure without interfering with their brand. Just be sure to include those items in the contract, so they can't back out later.

Do a Redesign

Side projects don't have to be 100% original. You can showcase your skills just as much - if not more - by improving a website that currently exists.

We all run into websites on a daily basis that are less than stellar. Select one that

isn't too large and create a redesign for your portfolio. Not only does it promote your abilities, it also shows you're skilled at taking something and improving upon it. That's impressive to both employers and freelance clients!

Build Something for the Design Community

Some of the most useful tools in the industry were created as side projects. Take [CSSArrowPlease](#), for example. Who loves figuring out the CSS for arrows? Um, no one! So Simon Hojberg created a site that simplifies that tedious and repetitive task.

You could also create a reference list of some kind (or pull related pieces of information together); automate a task; or just create something funny like Jessica Hische's [Should I Work for Free?](#)

Think about what you would find useful - or amusing!

Build Something for Your Local Community

Along those same lines, consider building something for your local community. Chances are you've been wishing your town/city/neighborhood had a website that offers X, Y, or Z - or just makes task R simpler.

I'm not necessarily talking about an "official" website. Maybe your neighborhood is blessed with a ton of great family-owned restaurants, for example, and it would be cool to have a website that featured the quirks of each one.

Think about the needs of your community, as well as your interests, and a few possibilities are sure to arise.

Build Something for You!

Maybe you have a specific need that no website or online service is meeting. Big or small, it could be an opportunity to kill two birds with one stone. Let your skills shine while making your life easier at the same time!

(And you never know...maybe other folks would find it useful, too!)

Build Something for a Niche Audience

Do you have a specific interest? Belong to a specific cause? Want to help a certain group of people? Don't be afraid of designing something that caters to that niche.

My own business, though not a side project, is a good example of this concept. It's built around the needs of what I call the DIY Designer. (In other words, solo entrepreneurs who can't afford to hire a professional to create their website, logo, social media graphics, etc.) It offers information and resources created just for them, delivered in a way they can understand.

You could do something similar with your own industry niche. Maybe you specialize in designing logos, for example. As a side project, you could create a site that explains - in simplified terms - the basics of creating a logo. (After all, most businesses don't realize there's a big difference between creating a logo in Canva and creating one in Illustrator. Until they go to resize it, that is!)

The same idea could be applied to a favorite sport, hobby, experience, or social cause - just to name a few possibilities.

Build Your Brand

SIDE PROJECTS CAN do more than simply pad your portfolio. They can also give the outside world a sense of who you are and what you do. This, in turn, can also differentiate you from colleagues and competitors alike.

Here are some specific thoughts on how to establish your personal brand.

Share Who You Are

A large part of building your brand is sharing who you are. Your personality, quirks, and experiences that make you, well, *you!*

Don't be afraid to share that side of you along with all the technical and design mumbo-jumbo. Jessica Hische, for example, has a great sense of humor. That comes through crystal clear in [her side projects](#).

Find a way for your personality to shine forth!

Share What You Do

You may possess the same skills and talents that others do - but you also have your own perspective and unique combination of experiences. Thus, you may be one of thousands of front-end coders out there, but there's only one *you*.

So the question is, what do *you* do? (Or what have you already done?) Because you're unlike everyone else. Have you solved a problem? Offered a more efficient solution? Have a design sense the world hasn't seen before?

Take those items, whatever they are, and work them into a side project. Become known as "the person" for whatever those things are - whether they're brand new or simply a brand new spin on things.

Earn Extra Money

LET'S FACE IT - who can't use a little extra cash? But then, maybe for you that "extra" income is a necessity rather than a luxury. If that's the case, it's even more important to work smarter - not harder. After all, the more efficiently you work, the more efficiently you earn. (Not to mention you only have so much time and energy to spare!)

The key to working smarter is to maximize, maximize, maximize! In other words, to do some (or all) of the following.

Look for Low-Hanging Fruit

Sometimes we get so focused on the usual ways of acquiring clients - like hopping onto a freelance site - that we overlook other opportunities.

Start by thinking about the people you know, the organizations you belong to, your workplace, and even the businesses you pass on your daily commute. Is there anyone who is primed for your services? (Whether they know it or not.) Who do you know that could help you obtain work? Have you forgotten to follow-up on any referrals? Really sit back and access all the possibilities.

Also, think about past projects. If you've completed a few wedding websites, for example, start positioning yourself as the go-to person for that product and service. You're already an expert in that area, with portfolio work to prove it, so build upon what you've already established.

Once You've Completed a Project, Approach Similar Organizations

Let's say you designed a site for a local humane society. Instead of moving on and hunting for an entirely new kind of client, get the most use out of the template/layout you just designed. After all, most humane societies will probably have similar needs when it comes to their website, right? Sure, you're going to

customize each one to incorporate their branding and any specific requests. But, overall, the designs will likely be quite similar.

Approaching organizations cold to sell them on a redesign can be intimidating, for sure. But focus on pitching the project as a win-win for both parties - because it is. If they're a non-profit desperately in need of a modern website, for example, you can give them one at a very reasonable price (being you're using a layout you already created) while efficiently gaining projects.

Also, remember that the more you become an expert in designing for a particular niche, the greater your chances of convincing similar clients to hire you. Word will likely spread mouth-to-mouth as well, so don't be surprised if after a while potential clients *call you*.

Ask For Referrals

Happy clients make great referral sources. If they've had a wonderful experience with you, they'll naturally want others to as well. So don't be afraid to ask them if they know of anyone else who can benefit from your services.

One of the best times to ask for referrals is right after a successful project has launched - although you certainly can also pose the question later on. Just keep the question casual and non-sales-like. It also doesn't hurt to work in a successful element of the project. (Especially if it's been awhile since the project launched.) For example, you could say something like:

Sarah, thank you again for the opportunity to redesign your online store. You mentioned that sales have increased by 25% due to the mobile-friendly design which is fantastic! Congratulations!

P.S. I currently have a few project slots open. If you know of any other local shops or businesses that would benefit from my services, feel free to let me know. Naturally, I would approach them with the same level of professionalism I extended to you. Thanks!

Simple. Complimentary. Polite. And non-sales-like.

Sell to Current Clients

The old adage is true. It's easier to acquire work from current clients than it is from new ones. That's because you don't have to sell yourself - you've already done that. And if you're a reliable professional that produces quality work, your clients will be open to additional services.

You may have already redesigned their website, but what other services might they need? Does their MailChimp template need a face-lift? Could they use landing pages for any of their marketing campaigns? If you've got graphic design skills, do they need any business cards, brochures, or flyers?

Even if they're currently using another service to produce those items, you can likely offer better. Remind them of the personal touch they gain by utilizing you in addition to the top-notch work. By all means, don't be pushy or too salesman-like. But the question is worth pursuing. You never know what might happen!

Get the Word Out

Quite often, the best projects or connections come from people we know. Perhaps they have a friend who needs a new website for their business. Or, maybe they own a design firm and need extra help on a big project.

You just never know what opportunities might come your way. Get the word out on social media; through friends, family, and colleagues; and take advantage of any free advertising open to you.

Provide Resources

SOME OF THE handiest resources in the web community were created as side projects. [CSSArrowPlease](#), mentioned in the first chapter, is a prime example. Making a tedious task easier via an automated tool is not only a great side project - it also gets your name out there and helps establish your personal brand.

So what kind of resources can you provide? The list is endless, really. But here are a few ideas to get the ball rolling.

Offer Inspiration

Designers are always on the lookout for inspiration. Color palettes, typography, icon sets, responsive layouts...the list goes on and on. Select an area you're passionate about and create something to help your fellow designers and developers.

You can aim for a wide audience, offering something most of the community could use. Or, you can go more niche and really hone in on one specific item. Either way, you can share your passion while empowering others.

Automate Tasks

This coincides with the [CSSArrowPlease](#) example above. Take a complicated, repetitive, or dreaded task and make it simpler. (And maybe even fun!)

Not sure what to automate? Brainstorm ideas based on what you wish existed. What processes, large and small, are you constantly repeating? What slows you down? Or drives you crazy? Then devise a way to turn that chore into a pleasure!

Build the Ultimate List

A list may not be the sexiest of ideas, but it is one of the most practical. Lists are a

great way to offer a lot of help in one, centralized location. It saves people time, energy, and needless frustration.

One example is the [Free Resources](#) page of my Design for the Business Mind website. Aimed at do-it-yourself designers, the list provides a long list of helpful links all in one place. Sure, the same resources can be found via Google. But for someone running their own business (on top of a day job and/or family), a one-stop-shop is a pretty awesome thing to have! Especially when you're basically self-teaching yourself design.

Offer Value

Value can take many forms. It can be information, free asset downloads, video tutorials, or any number of other things.

Think about what you would find incredibly helpful. Or, ask your fellow designers, developers, and colleagues. What would they find great value in having? What problems do they keep running up against? What hole of assistance currently exists out there on the web?

Even solutions to the smallest of problems offer terrific value!

Combine Information

Do you have a blog that you used to update religiously but now sits idle? Dig out some of your best posts, polish them up, and combine them into one resource.

The idea can also work for presentation slides and transcripts, articles that never saw publication, or anything else you may have "lying around." Find a common thread - whether that's a topic or type of work - and create a resource worthy of the web!

Offer Insight

We can always learn from each other's experiences. Maybe you're a UI Designer who has scaled some pretty tough mountains - mountains that other UI Designers are just now trying to climb.

Offering a personal story of your experiences, and how you dealt with specific

challenges, could be a God-send to others wearing the same type of shoes. Again, you can provide that insight in whatever form you're most comfortable with - text, video, even comic strip art. Bringing your own style to the mix just makes the story that much more personalized and impactful.

Create Community

The phrase "it's a small world" may apply to the web community at large - just like it does in other industries - but that doesn't mean specialized groups still aren't useful.

Granted, the point of side projects is to build something small-scale and manageable, so the suggestion isn't to build your own forum. But community can be cultivated in a lot of ways. For example, use your side project to attract people and then offer a link to a Facebook Group or specific Twitter handle. Thus, you can facilitate conversation about the specific topic surrounding your project.

In this way, you can combine community with any of the ideas mentioned above.

Polish Your Skills

KEEPING OURSELVES CHALLENGED - and our skills sharp - can often be a struggle at our day jobs. We're creating for clients and not ourselves; our position may not utilize our entire skill set; or maybe we need to improve our skills in anticipation of that next job offer.

Whatever the case, we often look to side projects as a way to fill the gap. Here are some tips for creating projects that further develop your mad skills!

Work With a Partner

Just because you want to sharpen your own skills doesn't mean you have to go at it alone. Teaming up with a partner can offer some positive benefits. The key, however, is to involve someone you work well with. This helps to ensure the project runs smoothly and efficiently. (Otherwise, your side project might become a nightmare project.)

So what are the benefits of having a partner? One, you have someone to support and encourage you. (And kick your butt when needed!) If you're diving into an entirely new skill set, it can be especially helpful to have someone there to pull you up if you get discouraged or disheartened.

Two, complimentary skill sets can make the project go faster. If you're a developer yearning to polish your JavaScript skills, and you join forces with a friend who wants to showcase her layout and typography abilities, the project will come together quicker. You can focus on the JavaScript while your pal creates the design.

Having a partner might not always be feasible - or make sense given the project - but it does have its benefits.

Choose Realistically

We all admire other areas of expertise. Maybe you're a front-end coder who is floored by the designer you work with. He or she always produces such stunning work!

While it's always a positive thing to expand our horizons, we need to do so in a healthy and practical way. If you're a coder that's blessed with inherent artistic talent, then stretching your muscles in that regard makes total sense. But if you know, deep down, you just don't have the ability to do that kind of work - though you desperately wish you did! - be honest with yourself. Because if you attempt to polish a skill that doesn't really exist, you'll just end up frustrated and down on yourself. (Which is crazy, because you're awesome in so many other areas!) So choose wisely.

Avoid Going Overboard

If your goal is to learn or practice a skill, keep the project at a manageable size. This will keep your stress levels low and allow you to focus on those specific areas of improvement.

Also, think quality (i.e. "I'm going to implement this skill in an amazing way!") versus quantity (i.e. "I have to make this site large and ridiculously artsy, too!"). In other words, don't feel as if you have to hide - or add onto - the skill you're focusing on. In fact, if the point is to showcase a certain skill, it makes more sense to create the project in a way that highlights it rather than hides it.

Showcase One Skill in Several Ways

Depending on the skill you're polishing, consider implementing it in your project in more than one way. Not only will this further hone your skill, but it will show employers and clients that you really know your stuff!

This can be as straightforward as blatantly having a page for each implementation. Or, you can get creative and integrate the variations a little more cohesively. Totally up to you!

Showcase Several Skills in One Project

If you're more focused on skill-sharpening than padding your portfolio, there's nothing wrong with tackling more than one skill in a single project. In fact, sometimes that might make the most sense. For example, you can certainly work on your typography and Bootstrap abilities simultaneously.

Just be sure you don't bite off more than you can chew. For instance, only work on one completely new skill set in a project. Otherwise, you might end up frustrated and overwhelmed. (And heaven knows, we usually get enough of that at our day jobs!)

The Side Project Launching Pad

WHEN IT COMES to side projects, don't think of them as solo projects. Instead, think of them as launching pads. Why? Because side projects can act as a foundation for additional materials that help meet your goals.

Take the [Savvy Side Projects](#) website, for example. I created the site for three reasons: to pad my portfolio, fortify my brand, and help others. After the site was launched, I could have just said "That's a wrap!" and moved on. Instead, I decided to build upon what I had just created. I took the site's content, added some bonus material, and created this eBook.

By doing so, I:

- Provided the site's content in another medium. (After all, sometimes it's helpful to have a "hard copy" during a flight or in other instances where Internet access is limited.)
- Provided additional value by offering bonus content.
- Created another item, in addition to the website itself, that people can share with one another. (Thus giving me additional exposure.)
- Added an eBook to both my portfolio and brand.
- Showed potential employers and clients how I can work smarter - not harder.

That's not a bad list of accomplishments considering all I did was add to what already existed! Plus, the time investment was minimal.

So how can you effectively build upon a side project? I'm so glad you asked!

Write an eBook

Side projects are wonderful springboards for written content. In regards to the eBook you are currently reading, 90% of the content came from the [Savvy Side Projects website](#). However, an eBook can be more than just repurposed content. You can also approach the idea from these angles:

- **Share how to use it.** Does your side project showcase a nifty developer solution or customized widget? Write a short eBook that focuses on implementation and troubleshooting. Besides benefitting your brand, it will also likely save you from answering some emails.
- **Share the story behind it.** Where did the idea come from? How did it come into fruition? What challenges did you overcome? People love to learn the story behind things. It adds another level of authenticity and realism to both you and your project. (Plus, openly sharing your struggles and triumphs is great for brand building.)
- **Share helpful information that relates to your project.** For example, let's say your side project offers pre-made color palettes. The users of your site might also be interested in how to use those palettes. Maybe they get basic color theory, but your experience has taught you some tips and tricks not everyone may be aware of. Share them!
- **Share a case study.** This is a great option for side projects completed as client work. Naturally, get any required permissions from the client. But offering a behind-the-scenes look at the process, and sharing positive results, benefits both you and the client.
- **Share something that changed you.** Each project we complete impacts who we are - for better or for worse. That impact can be big or small, but it's present all the same. Ask yourself, how did this project change me? Do I have a new perspective on something now? Did I learn a new method? Have I learned a better way to deal with clients? Etc. Then share that experience - or wisdom - with the world.

These are just a few ideas to get the brain cogs churning. But of course, there's still the challenge of writing an eBook! So here are some helpful pointers to keep in mind. (Because I'm all about removing excuses! You can do this.)

- **Write with purpose.** Don't write an eBook for the sake of writing an eBook. It needs to have a real, legit purpose. Otherwise, you'll be basically asking

people to waste their time. Substance is key.

- **Don't worry about the length.** I'm sure there are guiding principles out there about the length of eBooks. But, in my opinion, substance trumps length. As long as you're offering people real value, don't worry about reaching X amount of pages. (It's not like our culture's attention span is getting longer anyway!) Besides, obsessing on length might actually compromise the quality of the ebook as you'll be focusing on the wrong thing.

That being said, if you plan on charging for the eBook, make sure your price point makes sense in regard to both length and value.

- **Don't worry about your writing or grammar skills.** (At least, not at the onset.) Not everyone is a natural born writer - and that's perfectly okay. But what *isn't* okay is not sharing with the world. You have a plethora of experience and value to offer, and no amount of choppy sentences and irregular punctuation should stand in your way!
- **Team up.** Whether that means teaming up with a fellow designer that happens to have writing skills, or hiring a freelance editor to ensure you're pronoun-perfect, you don't have to go at it alone.

Also, remember the design community tends to be very supportive. Reach out to a few people who have published an eBook and pick their brain. (Respect their time, of course, and make sure you show appropriate appreciation.) Ask them if they faced similar challenges to yours; how they overcame them; what resources they used; etc.

If the idea still freaks you out, consider starting small. For example, create a few how-to-guides, one at a time, and then combine those into an eBook down the road.

Create Supplemental Materials

Depending on the project, sometimes it's helpful to offer supplemental materials such as worksheets, how-to-guides, or even video tutorials. Put yourself in the shoes of your project's users. What would they find useful? A short video detailing how to implement your code? A guide of practical tips for using the icons you designed? Etc.

When it comes to deciding what to offer, it can be helpful to gather outside

feedback. We approach our own projects with all of the background information already in our heads. Gleaning feedback from those not intimately familiar with the project supplies a fresh perspective.

Give a Talk or Presentation

The eBook ideas mentioned earlier in this chapter could also be used for talks and presentations. After all, meetups and conferences are always looking for new presenters, helpful topics, and fresh perspectives.

Haven't presented before? Start small with a local web design group. It's a great way to get your feet wet! The presentation length is usually shorter (around 10-20 minutes). Plus the audience will be smaller, too.

(Shameless Plug: If you're in the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania area, check out the [Refresh group](#). Also, the yearly [Web Design Day](#) conference features 10-minute lightning talk slots that anyone can submit ideas for - regardless of experience.)

Create Video Content

Video content can be anything from a series of tutorials, to an online course, to YouTube clips that advertise your project. Ultimately, it depends on your goals and the time and resources you have available.

Tutorials and online courses can definitely be time intensive. However, done right, they could boost your brand and earn you additional income to boot. Hosting them on your own website is an option. But if your target market is do-it-yourselfers, you can also take advantage of popular platforms such as [Udemy](#). Besides having a massive audience, Udemy provides guidance to help you create the best product possible - which can be very beneficial if you're creating your first course.

(Disclaimer: Udemy is not compensating me to plug them. I have a [friend](#) who went through the process.)

Whatever path you choose, just be sure to have a clear-cut purpose and a realistic timeline. And remember - slow and steady wins the race. Quality content can work for you well into the future!

Create Merchandise

If you're blessed with artistic skills, consider creating some merchandise to advertise your project. This works especially well if the project has a humorous or unique flavor to it. Capitalize on that by creating something that people will love to own and share.

If you happen to have a Redbubble store, design some artwork, T-Shirts, or stickers. (Side note: Be respectful towards the web community by offering a promotional discount, so they pay less than the average Redbubble customer.) You can also go the freebie route by offering a desktop wallpaper or other download on the website itself.

Use your imagination and whatever resources are available to you!

Think Like an Entrepreneur

IF YOU TREAT your side projects as launching pads - and I hope you do - then an entrepreneurial mindset can be a great asset. You don't need to *become* an entrepreneur. (This is still a book about web projects, after all.) But certain concepts can help you work smarter and more efficiently.

Aim for Passive Income

As web professionals, we typically work on projects that are paid by the milestone. Whether the project is for a freelance client or an employer, we're used to the cycle of producing, getting paid, producing, getting paid, etc.

Passive income, however, is the friend of those who want to work smarter - not harder. Anything that you can create and put up on the web means potential income 24/7/365. Plus, you get paid *multiple times* for something you produced *once*.

Passive income can include things such as:

- eBooks
- Detailed how-to-guides or supplemental worksheets
- Online courses
- Design assets (i.e. icon sets, textures, etc.)
- Merchandise (i.e. think Redbubble)
- Anything else that you can offer digitally

You could even create a membership section of your site that offers exclusive content - containing any or all of the above.

Please note, however, that I'm *not suggesting you charge for everything you put out on the web*. One of the things that makes the web community so wonderful is its commitment to freely share information. (And considering how complicated and fast-paced our industry has become, that sharing of information ensures we're not all doomed!) On top of which, no one likes a Scrooge!

So how can you wisely implement your paid content? That brings us to the next topic.

Use the Sales Funnel Concept

In business, the sales funnel is used to move customers along a chain of products or services. They start by consuming free information (such as a blog or speaking presentation), then invest in some low-cost offerings (such as an eBook and accompanying worksheets), and then graduate to high-priced services (such as a website redesign).

Remember in the Earn Extra Money chapter how we discussed selling to current clients? How it's easier to sell to people who've previously bought from you? The sales funnel is built around that concept. The goal is to keep customers moving along the funnel so they (a) remain repeat customers, and (b) graduate to your higher-priced offerings.

Let's say you launch a side project and decide to create a presentation, two eBooks (one that offers the website content in book form and another comprised of additional content), and a membership portion of the site. By following the sales funnel concept, the tier of products and services could look something like this:

- People can attend the presentation for free.
- People can download the eBook containing the website content for free.
- People can buy the eBook with additional content for \$5.99.
- People can access the main website's content for free, but choose to become a member at the price of \$7.99/month to take advantage of the exclusive downloads and/or content. (Note: [Spoon Graphics](#) is a good example of this model.)

In this way, you're not being a Scrooge toward your fellow professionals - but you're still implementing a valid system to get compensated for your time, talents, and expertise.

Don't Fear Failure

Successful entrepreneurs don't fear failure. Instead, they view it as part of the discovery process. What works? What doesn't work? How can something be improved upon? Etc. As Thomas Edison once said, "I haven't failed. I just found 10,000 reasons that won't work."

The idea of executing side projects, eBooks, a sales funnel - all of it might sound intimidating. As you've read through the book, you might have tallied up all the reasons you're not capable of moving forward.

The list might look something like this:

- I can't write well enough
- I'm not very organized
- I'm not business savvy
- I have very limited free time
- How would people react to what I release? What would they think?
- What if it bombs? Or no one utilizes it?
- I'm not artistic enough.
- I'm not clever enough.
- I'm not technically gifted enough.
- I'm not *[fill in the blank]*.

Whatever your individual list looks like, this is fear trying to win the day through twisted logic. Because here's the real deal, my friends. **The only way you really lose is by not doing anything at all.**

If you attempt to write an eBook, for example, but through the process learn that you're better suited to making video tutorials - you just made a very important discovery! You've found your niche, and there's no doubt you'll shine moving forward.

Don't let fear keep you immobilized. Don't let it rob you of learning about yourself as you help others. And remember that the journey has to happen in order for you to reach the destination. In other words, don't focus on the outcome. Focus on the journey and the outcome will take care of itself.

At Some Point, You Just Need to Ship It

Good entrepreneurs aim to offer a quality product. After all, faulty or poorly-conceived products result in low sales. This, in turn, negatively impacts profits and the health of the business.

However, pursuing quality can inadvertently - almost without warning - lead to a never-ending search for perfection. A product may be well-conceived, well-tested, well-made, and well-packaged - yet remain in limbo due to an endless array of "tweaks."

But a product can't sell if it's never shipped. It can't produce profits, pay employee salaries, impact people's lives, or change the world. That's why good entrepreneurs know that, at some point, you just have to ship the product. Yes, maybe that color orange on the packaging will bother them forever because it's not exactly how they envisioned it. But is anyone else going to know that? Nope! They're just going to see the quality product before them.

The same can be said for this eBook. I could spend forever editing the content, checking my punctuation, and debating over the cover image. But at some point I have to say, "Enough is enough! I'm sure there are a few grammar mistakes that I missed. I could go over the content for the 13th time. But the reality is that I've made a quality piece of work and it's time to release it to the world!"

As a Type A Personality who has really high standards for her work, this is a concept I've had to acclimate to over time. (So if you're also Type A, give yourself some grace as you digest this idea.)

Perfection is a seductive concept, but the reality is that nothing is ever perfect. And an imperfect, quality product is better than no product at all!



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