



the

*How Great Founders
Do More with Less*

minimalist

Sahil Lavingia

entrepreneur



the minimalist entrepreneur

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DO MORE WITH
LESS

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PIATKUS

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INTRODUCTION

I started my career chasing unicorns. I joined Pinterest as employee number two, but in 2011, I left before my stock vested to build my own billion-dollar company.

我开始职业生涯的时候追逐独角兽。我加入Pinterest成为第二名员工，但在2011年，在我的股票归属之前离开，创立了自己的十亿美元公司。



I had spent a weekend building the prototype of Gumroad, a tool that helped creators sell their products online. No complicated setup. No elaborate storefront. Just a link for customers to pay and you're in business. More than fifty thousand people visited the site on the first day, and I was sure I was on the cusp of something big.

我周末花了时间来建立Gumroad的原型，这是一个能够帮助创作者在线销售产品的工具。无需繁琐的设置，也不需要精心设计的店面，只需要一个链接让顾客支付即可开展业务。第一天就有超过五万人访问了该网站，我确信自己正在接近一个重要的时刻。

The first step: raising money from VCs. As a nineteen-year-old solo founder, I found myself walking up and down the mythical Sand Hill Road, sweating through my jeans, having meetings in the same rooms where the decisions to fund companies like Netflix, Apple, Amazon, Facebook, and Google had happened. I ended up raising more than \$8 million in venture capital from renowned Silicon Valley investors, including Accel Partners (early investor in Facebook), Kleiner Perkins (early investor in Google,

Amazon, and Apple), Max Levchin (cofounder of PayPal), Naval Ravikant (cofounder of AngelList), and Chris Sacca (early investor in Twitter, Square, and Uber). They too thought they saw a unicorn galloping in the distance.

第一步：从风险投资公司筹集资金。作为一个19岁的独立创始人，我发现自己走上了神话般的山谷路（Silicon Valley的中心地带之一），身穿牛仔裤满头大汗，在曾经用来决定投资Netflix、苹果、亚马逊、Facebook和Google等公司的同一房间里开会。最终，我从著名的硅谷投资者那里筹集了超过800万美元的风险投资，包括Accel Partners（Facebook的早期投资者）、Kleiner Perkins（Google、亚马逊和苹果的早期投资者）、Max Levchin（PayPal的联合创始人）、Naval Ravikant（AngelList的联合创始人）和Chris Sacca（Twitter、Square和Uber的早期投资者）。他们也认为他们看到了一只远处奔跑的独角兽。

The chase was on. In short order, I built a world-class team—recruiting talent out of companies like Stripe, Yelp, and Amazon—and together we went to work on building a world-class product. I was confident that I'd soon be strolling through Allen & Company's annual Sun Valley conference, strategizing about the fight against malaria arm-in-arm with Bill Gates and Warren Buffett. I was never in it for the money, I told myself. I wanted to make an impact, but quietly. When I became a tech titan, I was going to be the kind of titan magazine profiles called “down-to-earth.”

追逐开始了。很快，我建立了一个世界级团队——从Stripe、Yelp和Amazon等公司招聘人才——我们共同致力于打造一个世界级产品。我相信很快我就能在艾伦与公司的年度Sun Valley会议上与比尔·盖茨和沃伦·巴菲特并肩战斗，策略制定对抗疟疾。我告诉自己我从来没有为了钱而参与其中。我想产生影响，但不想引起轰动。当我成为了科技巨头时，我会成为“接地气”的巨头杂志专题所称的那种人。

I didn't make it to Sun Valley that summer. Or the summer after that. The closest I ever got to Bill Gates was watching him speak at a Kleiner Perkins CEO summit. Gumroad's pitched flight into the stratosphere leveled off after we burned through about \$10 million in venture capital. After nine months of trying to raise more funding, we failed. In October 2015, I laid off three-quarters of the staff—including many good friends.

那个夏天我没去Sun Valley，接下来的夏天也没去成。我离比尔·盖

茨最近的时刻是在观看他在Kleiner Perkins CEO峰会上的演讲。在我们烧掉了约1000万美元的风险投资后，Gumroad的上升趋势停滞了。经过九个月的融资尝试，我们失败了。2015年10月，我解雇了四分之三的员工，包括许多好朋友。

Once the bleeding stopped, it was time to reassess. Gumroad was still operational, but I felt like a complete failure. With many in my circle still focused on raising money, hiring employees, and chasing their own billion-dollar companies— some successfully—I couldn't bear to stick around Silicon Valley. For much of 2016, I kept my apartment in San Francisco but spent most of my time traveling and writing fiction, convinced that even if I couldn't hack it in Startupland, I could still build a life for myself as a digital nomad. While I was inspired by Tim Ferriss's *The 4-Hour Workweek*, it didn't take long to realize that operating Gumroad as a lifestyle business wasn't for me. I was still trying to figure out what came next when I saw a tweet from Brandon Sanderson, one of my favorite authors, about a science-fiction and fantasy writing class he was teaching in Provo, Utah. In January 2017, I jumped on the opportunity to save rent and save face by moving to a place where no one knew me. There, I could figure out how to regroup even as I kept Gumroad afloat.

止血后，是时候重新评估情况了。Gumroad 仍在运营，但我感到非常失败。与我周围许多人仍然专注于筹集资金、招聘员工和追逐自己的亿美元公司—有些人成功了—相比，我无法忍受留在硅谷。2016年大部分时间里，我保持在旧金山的公寓，但大部分时间都在旅行和写小说，我相信即使我无法在创业圈里站稳脚跟，我仍然可以成为数字游牧民的一员。虽然我受到了 Tim Ferriss 的《每周工作4小时》的启发，但很快我就意识到，将 Gumroad 运营为一家生活方式的企业并不适合我。我仍在试图弄清下一步该做什么，当我看到我的最爱作者之一 Brandon Sanderson 在 Twitter 上发布了关于他在犹他州普罗沃教授科幻和奇幻写作课程的推文时，我看到了一线生机。2017年1月，我抓住机会节约租金和面子前往一个没有人认识我的地方。在那里，即使我保持 Gumroad 的运营，我也可以找到重新整合的方法。

I knew things would be very different in Provo, but the contrast still surprised me. In San Francisco, being successful means you've made a lot of

money (which, in San Francisco, is a *lot* of money). In Utah, it means you're married and active in the church. My new Provo friends told me that I'd been crazy trying to build a billion-dollar company in the first place. Why wasn't Gumroad good enough as it was? After all, I had a sustainable business serving a group of customers I loved. What more could I want?

我知道在普罗沃生活会非常不同，但对比还是让我感到惊讶。在旧金山，成功意味着你赚了很多钱（在旧金山，这是一笔巨款）。在犹他州，则意味着你结了婚并活跃在教堂中。我的新普罗沃朋友告诉我，我一开始就试图建立一个价值十亿美元的公司是疯了。为什么Gumroad不够好呢？毕竟，我已经有了一个可持续的业务模式，为我喜欢的一群客户提供服务。我还想要什么呢？

At first, I couldn't quite grasp what they were talking about, but after living in Provo for a couple of years away from the white-hot epicenter of venture capital, I came to agree. While the unicorn I was chasing turned out to be more of a Shetland pony, my original vision *was* being realized. Thousands of creators were using Gumroad to build their own creative businesses. Real people in the real world were paying their mortgages or topping off their kids' college funds or simply paying for a few extra lattes by selling courses, ebooks, and software online.

起初，我无法完全理解他们在谈论什么，但在普罗沃生活了几年远离风投热点中心后，我开始认同。虽然我追逐的独角兽在最终证明是一匹小矮马，但我的最初愿景正在实现。成千上万的创作者正在使用Gumroad构建自己的创意业务。现实世界中的真实人们通过在线销售课程，电子书和软件来支付他们的抵押贷款，为孩子的大学基金增加一些收入或仅仅购买额外的拿铁咖啡。

Over time, I realized that the problem wasn't Gumroad, the problem was me. I was still so focused on that elusive unicorn, I couldn't see the thriving business humming along right in front of me. Gumroad was profitable, the right size for its market, and enabling more and more writers, coders, crafters, and other makers to achieve their dreams with each passing day. Gumroad may have been a crappy investment for a few venture capitalists, but it was still a great company for its customers.

随着时间的推移，我意识到问题并不在Gumroad，问题出在我身上。

我还是太专注于那个难以捉摸的独角兽，无法看到正在我眼前蓬勃发展的业务。Gumroad是盈利的，适合其市场的规模，并且每天都为越来越多的作家、编码者、手工艺者和其他创作者实现他们的梦想。尽管Gumroad对于一些风险投资家来说可能是个糟糕的投资，但对于它的客户来说，它仍然是一家伟大的公司。

In the year after the layoffs, when I worked by myself, Gumroad *still* sent approximately \$40 million to our creators, without *any* content marketing or paid advertising. Just creators telling other creators. When I recommitted to growing the company again in 2019, I continued to say no to those things I had said yes to previously, and focused solely on what would create more value for our creators. (Namely, shipping a better product.) It worked: In 2020 Gumroad sent more than \$140 million to our creators, up 87 percent over the year before, all while remaining profitable.

在裁员后的那一年中，当我一个人工作时，Gumroad 仍向我们的创作者发送了约 4000 万美元的资金，而没有进行任何内容营销或付费广告宣传。只是创作者告诉其他创作者。当我在2019年重新致力于公司的增长时，我继续拒绝了以前同意的那些事情，专注于能为我们的创作者创造更多价值的事情。(即，出货更好的产品。)它奏效了：2020年，Gumroad 向我们的创作者发送了超过 1.4 亿美元的资金，较去年增长了87%，同时保持盈利状态。

Companies like mine may not grace the covers of glossy magazines or inspire Hollywood biopics, but they drive real, positive change and empower their founders, customers, and employees alike. I know that now, but it took me years to decouple my self-worth from my net worth and to realize that I hadn't failed. I had succeeded.

像我们这样的公司可能不会出现在时尚杂志的封面上，也不会激发好莱坞的传记片，但是它们带来真正的积极变化，让创始人、客户和员工们都得到了赋权。我现在明白了这一点，但我花了多年时间才将自我价值从净值中解脱出来，意识到我没有失败，我已经成功了。

In February 2019, I wrote about my experience in a *Medium* essay, "Reflecting on My Failure to Build a Billion-Dollar Company," that struck a chord with millions. Since then, I've had the chance to connect with entrepreneurs and aspiring entrepreneurs who, deep down, would much rather

build a sustainable business like Gumroad than chase a unicorn. They just think it's weird and uncool to express that desire when the media and our bigger-is-better culture keeps telling them that a unicorn is the only kind of business worth creating.

在2019年2月，我写了一篇中等文章《反思我未能建立一个价值十亿美元的公司的经历》，引起了数百万人的共鸣。自那时以来，我有机会与企业家和有抱负的企业家联系，他们深知比追逐独角兽更愿意建立一个像Gumroad这样可持续的业务。当媒体和我们的大众文化不断告诉他们，独角兽是唯一值得创造的业务类型时，他们只是认为这种愿望很奇怪和不酷。

While that may be the right path for some companies, for many more it's not. Yet plenty of early-stage startups still end up raising venture capital because they *can't* fund their businesses in a sustainable way through profits. As a result, they're locked into the pursuit of huge, winner-take-all markets where growth is the most important asset of their businesses, not revenues, profits, or sustainability.

尽管这可能是一些公司的正确道路，但对于更多公司而言并非如此。然而，许多初创企业仍会筹集风险投资，因为它们无法通过利润实现业务的可持续性融资。因此，他们被锁定在追求巨大的、赢家通吃的市场中，其中成长是他们企业最重要的资产，而不是收入、利润或可持续性。

To help me reconcile those differences, I asked myself certain questions over and over again: What do I actually care to change? If I could fix one thing about my corner of the world, what would that be? What kind of business do I really want to build, own, and run?

为了帮助我协调这些差异，我一遍又一遍地问自己某些问题：我真正关心的是什么改变？如果我能改变我所在世界的一件事，那会是什么？我真正想要建立、拥有和经营的是什么样的企业？

Other founders and future founders have asked themselves similar questions and come to similar realizations. Many of their stories are included in this book. I call these people “minimalist entrepreneurs,” and I call their companies “minimalist businesses.”

其他创始人和未来的创始人也曾问过类似的问题，并得出类似的结

论。他们中许多人的故事都包括在这本书中。我称这些人为“极简主义企业家”，他们的公司被称为“极简主义企业”。

Building a minimalist business does not mean settling for second best. Instead, it's about creating sustainable companies that have the flexibility to take risks to serve the greater good, all while empowering others to do the same. Being profitable, hopefully from the very beginning, means being able to focus and to stay focused on the reason you started a business in the first place: to help others.

打造一家极简主义企业并不意味着妥协于次优选择。相反，它是关于创造可持续性企业的灵活性，能够冒险为更大的利益服务，同时赋予他人做同样的事情。从一开始就盈利，意味着能够专注并始终专注于最初创业的原因：帮助他人。

Historically, entrepreneurs have played a crucial role in driving technological and social progress. This is even more necessary today, when big corporations are required by law to prioritize shareholder value over, among other things, actual value. In researching this book, I've found countless examples of businesses such as Basecamp, Wistia, Missouri Star Quilt Company, and many other honest-to-goodness, highly scalable companies incredibly focused on solving meaningful problems with beautiful products, services, and software that people love—and making a profit doing it. Each company goes about things their own way depending on the specific community they're building for, but they all focus on problem-solving and not taking themselves too seriously. No matter their differences, we can learn from them all.

历史上，企业家在推动技术和社会进步方面发挥了关键作用。如今，这更为必要，因为大型企业法定要求优先考虑股东价值，而非实际价值等其他因素。在研究本书时，我发现了无数像Basecamp、Wistia、Missouri Star Quilt Company等实实在在、高度可扩展的企业，它们极度专注于解决有意义的问题，并以人们热爱的美丽产品、服务和软件获取利润。每个公司都根据特定的社区自己做事情，但他们都专注于解决问题，不会太过严肃。尽管存在差异，我们都可以从中学习。

Unfortunately, the word “entrepreneur” has a weird taint to it. I remember going to a “Career Fair” at school and not identifying with the

“entrepreneurs” at all. They seemed like businessmen (they were always men), and I didn't even like business. I liked making things! Eventually I realized that a business is not an end in and of itself. A business is a tool to make or do stuff, a legal structure; that's it. At first I didn't need a company, but eventually my creations required a legal structure, a team, and an operation to make the stuff I wanted to make, so I started a business.

很遗憾，词语“企业家”有一种奇怪的污点。我记得去学校的“职业博览会”，完全不认同“企业家”。他们看起来像商人（他们总是男性），而我甚至不喜欢商业。我喜欢创造东西！最终我意识到，一个企业不是目的本身。企业是创造或做事情的工具，是一个法律结构；仅此而已。一开始，我不需要公司，但最终我的作品需要一个法律结构，一个团队和一个运营来制造我想要的东西，于是我开始了一家公司。

When I made my transition from unicorn chaser to minimalist entrepreneur, I had to wrap my head around another new normal. This book is about deconstructing the myths we tell ourselves about the best way to build impactful businesses to change the abstract, singular “world,” and about seeking the truth about how to build the businesses that will make us and our communities wealthier, healthier, and happier.

当我从追逐独角兽的抓捕者转变为极简主义企业家时，我不得不适应另一个新的常态。这本书讲述了拆解我们关于创造有影响力的企业以改变抽象、单一的“世界”的神话，以及寻找关于如何建立让我们和我们的社区更富裕、更健康、更幸福的企业的真相。

In the end, my failure to launch Gumroad into the stratosphere was the best thing that ever happened to me, because it taught me the very real consequences behind a “growth at all costs” mindset. Unfortunately, it took me eight years, and a lot of pain, to realize it. I hope this book will help other aspiring entrepreneurs learn the lessons I learned without the painful layoffs and years of soul-searching. The overwhelming response to the viral essay I wrote about my experience is more proof that this promise resonates with many.

最终，我未能将Gumroad推向极高点是我经历的最好的事情，因为它让我意识到“不惜一切代价增长”心态的真实后果。不幸的是，我花了八年时间和很多痛苦才意识到。我希望这本书能够帮助其他有抱负的企业

家学习我所学到的教训，而不必进行令人痛苦的裁员和多年的灵魂探寻。我写的经验文章所收到的强烈反响证明了这一承诺与许多人的共鸣。

This book, part manifesto, part manual, will help you design, build, and successfully grow your own right-size business. Read it again and again, especially when you feel stuck. But keep in mind that you definitely do not need to *finish* this book to *start*. Start as soon as you can. Start before you feel ready. Start today.

这本书有一部分是宣言，一部分是手册，将帮助您设计、建立和成功地发展自己的适当规模的业务。多次阅读它，尤其是当你感到困惑时。但请记住，你绝对不需要读完这本书才开始行动。尽快开始。在你感到准备好之前就开始。今天就开始。

You don't learn, then start. You start, then learn.

不先学习，便难以开展；先开展，便能学到。

Now, let's get to it!

现在，让我们开始吧！

the
minimalist
entrepreneur



1

**the
minimalist
entrepreneur**

The beginnings of all things are small.

万事起始于微。

— CICERO

— 西塞罗

Atlanta-based web developer Peter Askew loves to get things off the top shelf at the supermarket for people who can't reach the same heights he can. A six-foot-eight former high school basketball star, Askew sees being helpful as the pillar of his business strategy, but it wasn't always that way. When the dot-com bubble burst in 2001 and he was laid off from eTour, a websurfing guide he helped build and grow, he had to ask himself, "Is this how I want to live? Is this how I can be of service to the world?"

总部位于亚特兰大的网络开发人员彼得·阿斯克喜欢为那些够不着顶部货架的人取下物品。身高6英尺8英寸的前高中篮球明星，阿斯克认为乐于助人是他商业策略的支柱，但并不总是如此。2001年点 com泡沫破裂时，他被从他帮助建立和发展的网络冲浪指南eTour中解雇，他不得不问自己：“这就是我想过的生活吗？这是我能为世界提供服务的方式吗？”

He knew he could get another job thanks to his background in marketing analytics, but he was also disillusioned. Money and prestige were not nearly as important to him as independence and freedom. Eventually he wound up with another role in advertising where he was exposed to a wide range of business models as thousands of new web businesses came online, but in the evening and on weekends, he threw himself into his side projects, learning about web development, domain names, and how to monetize web traffic.

他知道靠着他在营销分析方面的经验可以找到另一份工作，但他也感到幻灭。钱和声望对他来说远远不如独立和自由重要。最终，他在广告行业找到了另一份工作，在那里他接触到了各种商业模式，因为成千上万的新网站涌现，但在晚上和周末，他全力投入自己的副业中，学习网页开发、域名和网站流量的变现。

That's how he stumbled on an idea that would change his life. What if instead of buying new domain names, which often took months to rank highly in search engine results, he bought expired domain names, which already had some degree of visibility? Other people were parking ads on expired domains or flipping them, but Askew had something else in mind, the seed of an idea that was driven by the questions he had started to ask himself about his work. Rather than trying to make a quick buck, he would build real

businesses around domain names, asking himself with each one, “Do I feel inspired? Is there a real business here?” and, most of all, “Can I be helpful?”

这就是他偶然发现的一个想法，这个想法改变了他的人生。如果他买的不是新的域名，而是已经有一定知名度的过期域名呢？新的域名需要花费数月时间才能在搜索引擎结果中排名，但其他人还在过期域名上放广告或炒作，而Askew想法与众不同，他开始思考自己的工作，并萌生了一个想法的种子。他不再试图赚取快速的利润，而是要在域名周围建立真正的企业，对于每一个域名，他都会问自己，“我感到受到启发了吗？这里是否有一个真正的企业？”，最重要的是，“我能提供帮助吗？”

He experimented with randomly created names and ventures that didn't quite work before he realized that “the domain name always comes first, the business idea comes second.” In 2009, that domain name was duderanch.com. Askew bought it and launched a directory, traveling to more than fifty dude ranches to meet the owners of the destinations he featured on his site. Eventually he partnered with the owner of guestranches.com, and the two built a curated list of destination ranches around the country. The success of that venture, which he worked on for ten years and sold in 2019, gave him the time and financial freedom to buy more domain names and develop other niche businesses. Some succeeded, others didn't.

他在尝试随机创建名称和不太奏效的风险投资后，意识到“域名是第一要素，业务理念其次”。2009年，他购买了duderanch.com并推出了一个目录，在旅游超过50个牧场以了解他网站中展示的目的地的业主。最终，他与guestranches.com的业主合作，并建立了一个策划的目的地牧场清单。这项他经营了十年并于2019年出售的风险投资的成功，使他有了时间和财务自由去购买更多域名并开展其他的特定行业业务。有些成功了，有些则没有。

In 2014, Askew saw that VidaliaOnions.com was up for auction. Until then, he had focused on information-based businesses, but something about the domain name appealed to him. So did the onions, frankly. As a Georgia native, he knew of Vidalias—a sweet, mild variety that some fans eat raw like an apple. The only trouble was that he didn't know anything about the onion business. Or farming in general, for that matter.

2014年，Askew发现VidaliaOnions.com在拍卖中。在那之前，他一直专注于信息业务，但是这个域名某种程度上吸引了他。而且，说实话，洋葱也吸引他。作为乔治亚土生土长的人，他知道Vidalias是一种甜味温和的品种，有些粉丝会像吃苹果一样生吃。唯一的问题是他对洋葱业务一无所知。或者泛指农业，毕竟。

Regardless, he put down a \$2,200 bid, confident that someone in the business would come in higher. (If bidding on interesting domain names like this sounds like a neat hobby, you may be a minimalist entrepreneur.) When he won the auction five minutes later, he was pleasantly surprised, but he filed it away for later and went back to work on other projects.

不管怎样，他出价了2200美元，相信业内的某个人会出更高的价钱。（如果竞标像这样的有趣域名听起来像是一种很酷的业余爱好，那么你可能是一位极简主义企业家。）五分钟后他赢得了拍卖，他感到惊喜，但把它收好以备以后使用，然后又回到了其他项目的工作中。

As the days went by, though, he couldn't stop thinking about Vidalias. "[The domain] kept nudging me," he writes in his essay "I Sell Onions on the Internet," and "after a month, I began to understand what it was telling me. That I buy pears from Harry & David every year, and I should mimic that same service for Vidalia onions. Instead of farm-to-door pears, farm-to-door Vidalia onions." He saw a way he could be helpful to others, and a new minimalist business was born.

随着时间的推移，他仍然无法停止思考 Vidalias。在他的文章“我在互联网上销售洋葱”中，他写道：“[域名]不断地推动我”，“一个月后，我开始理解它告诉我的事情。我每年都从哈利和戴维购买梨子，我应该为 Vidalia 洋葱模仿同样的服务。不是从农场到门口的梨子，而是从农场到门口的 Vidalia 洋葱。”他看到了自己可以帮助他人的方法，并诞生了一家新的极简主义企业。

Askew didn't eat Vidalias himself, but he knew that many people did, both from his own experience and from strong search volume for the phrase on Google Trends. But he still had his doubts. "I'm not a farmer," he worried. "I have no logistics or distribution system setup."

Askew自己不吃维达利亚洋葱，但他知道许多人吃，这是从他自己的经验和在Google趋势上对该短语的强烈搜索量中得出的。但他仍然有疑

虑。“我不是农民，”他担心道。“我没有建立物流或分销系统的经验。”

He got started anyway. His first step was to reach out to a trade group that put him in touch with Aries Haygood, the owner of an award-winning Vidalia farm in operation for over two decades that had, crucially, a packing shed. He used his own money to put up a new site on VidaliaOnions.com, and then, “[while] the farm concentrated on the Vidalia, I concentrated on customer service, marketing, branding, web development, & logistics,” he recalled. “I didn’t have other projects that were this front-facing, customer wise. And I discovered I immensely enjoyed it.”

他无论如何都开始了。他的第一步是联系一个贸易组织，让他接触到 Aries Haygood，这个已经经营了二十多年的获奖 Vidalia 农场的所有者，关键是他们有一个打包棚。他用自己的钱在 VidaliaOnions.com 上建立了一个新网站，然后，“[当时] 农场专注于 Vidalia，而我则专注于客户服务、市场营销、品牌推广、网站开发和物流，”他回忆说。“我没有其他项目是这么面向前端和客户的。我发现我非常喜欢这种感觉。”

Askew and Haygood estimated fifty orders for their first season. They received more than six hundred.

艾斯克和海古德估计第一季的订单量为50个，但他们收到了超过600个订单。

It would be at this point in the life cycle of a VC-funded business that the investors would start getting frisky. “Six hundred orders when we expected fifty?” they’d exclaim. “Time to quintuple your hiring. Come to think of it, what does the international market for Vidalia onions look like? A few million in ad spending, a viral video, and we’ll have Vidalias trending worldwide. We’ll probably need people on the ground in London, Tokyo, and Sydney. Time to raise another round.” And on it goes. Picture a little kid blowing a balloon up for the first time, until . . .

在 VC 资助的企业生命周期中的这一时刻，投资者开始变得冲动。他们会惊叹道：“我们预计会有50个订单，实际上却有了600个？”“这时候该五倍扩大你们的招聘了。”“话说 Vidalia 洋葱在国际市场的前景如何？我们可以通过几百万美元的广告投放，制作一份病毒式传销视频，让Vidalias 成为世界焦点。我们可能需要在伦敦、东京和悉尼设立办事处。该再次筹款了。”这样不停地进行下去。想象一下一个小孩第一次

吹气球的场景，直到...

Askew himself couldn't help but consider trying to accelerate the company's growth, but he stuck to what he had learned over the years and focused instead on profitability. He knew that the previous owners of VidaliaOnions.com had gone belly up trying to sell salad dressings and relishes in addition to the onions themselves. So instead, he slowly built the business in front of him, figuring out how to sell Vidalia onions to the market of potential customers within the range of timely and affordable shipping from that one packing shed.

阿斯克自己也不禁考虑加速公司的增长，但他坚持了多年学到的东西，专注于盈利能力。他知道VidaliaOnions.com以前的所有者曾试图销售沙拉调味料和腌菜，而不仅仅是洋葱本身，最终导致破产。因此，他选择慢慢地在眼前建立业务，找出如何将维达利亚洋葱销售给潜在客户市场，以适当的价格和及时的送货范围。

He made mistakes, of course. At one point, he lost thousands of dollars on faulty shipping boxes, an error that nearly shuttered the operation. But he also made small process improvements year by year, like implementing an automated shipping system rather than manually entering customer orders and printing UPS labels. A few years in, the business was profitable, growing organically at its own pace, and he was having fun.

当然，他犯了错误。一度，他因为不良的运输箱子而损失了成千上万美元，这一错误几乎让整个业务瘫痪。但他也逐年进行了一些小的流程改进，比如实现了自动化的运输系统，而不是手动输入客户订单和打印UPS标签。几年后，这个企业盈利并以自己的节奏有机发展，并且他很喜欢它。

Six years in, Askew's pet project has become a full-fledged business, which makes his many customers happy and has a positive impact in the local community. He no longer sees it as just another experiment along with all of his other cast-off domain names. VidaliaOnions.com is becoming his mission:

六年过去了，阿斯克的宠物项目已经成为一个正式的企业，这使得他的众多客户感到高兴，并对当地社区产生积极的影响。不再把它看作只是他其他被弃置的域名实验之一。VidaliaOnions.com正在成为他的

使命。

Honestly, my customers would be quite upset if we disappeared. Last season, while I called a gentleman back regarding a phone order, his wife answered. While I introduced myself, she interrupted me mid-sentence and hollered in exaltation to her husband: “THE VIDALIA MAN! THE VIDALIA MAN! PICK UP THE PHONE!”

老实说，如果我们消失了，我的客户们会很失望。上个季度，当我回复一个来电订单时，他的妻子接了电话。我自我介绍时，她打断了我的话，对她的丈夫大喊：“维达利亚洋葱先生！维达利亚洋葱先生！快接电话！”

At that moment, I realized we were doing something right. Something helpful. Something that was making a positive impact. . . . It’s immensely gratifying. I feel so fortunate to be associated with this industry.

那一刻，我意识到我们正在做些正确的事情。一些有帮助的事情。一些产生积极影响的事情……这是极其令人满足的。我感到非常幸运能够与这个行业联系在一起。

Maybe it’s the onions, but Askew’s story brings a tear to my eye. There is something profoundly beautiful in a value-oriented mission and a genuine purpose driven by your own lived experience. This is what being a minimalist entrepreneur is all about: making a difference while making a living.

也许是因为洋葱，但是Askew的故事让我感动流泪。价值导向的使命和由自己的亲身经历推动的真正目的有着深刻而美丽的意义。这就是成为一个极简主义企业家的全部意义：在谋生的同时做出改变。

The Minimalist Entrepreneur

Before I started to write this book, I wouldn’t have described myself as a minimalist entrepreneur. I would have said I was a founder committed to a new kind of startup, one that prioritized profitability over growth and positive impact over moving fast and breaking things. Instead of capturing as much value as possible, I was determined to create as much value as possible for

our customers and our community.

在我开始写这本书之前，我不会将自己描述为一个极简主义的企业家。我会说我是一位创始人，致力于一种新的创业方式，这种方式将稳健盈利放在增长之上，将积极影响放在速度和错误之上。与追求最大价值不同，我决心为我们的客户和社区创造尽可能多的价值。

I'm not the only one. In this book, you'll meet dozens of entrepreneurs like Peter Askew and others who are taking the same approach to building their companies. In the past years, I've exchanged ideas on Twitter or at conferences with all of them, and the more people I talked to, the more I felt we should label this new pathway that uses the advent of software to democratize and normalize business creation for everyone.

我不是个例外。在这本书中，你会遇到像彼得·阿斯克和其他企业家一样采取同样方法来建立他们的公司的几十个人。在过去的几年里，我已经在Twitter或会议上与他们交流了想法，而我越和更多的人交谈，我越觉得我们应该为所有人使用软件的出现来民主化和规范企业创立这条新的路径打上标签。

Minimalist entrepreneurs are all unique, as is every path to success, but I've tried my best to coalesce my learnings into a single, repeatable playbook.

极简主义企业家都是独一无二的，成功之路也是千差万别的，但我已经尽力将我的经验总结成一本可重复学习的指南。

The steps to becoming a minimalist entrepreneur map to a function of the minimalist business—and, not coincidentally, to the chapters in this book. Each chapter builds on the previous one—just as addition leads to multiplication leads to algebra leads to calculus—until finally, at the end of the book, you'll be fully equipped to become a minimalist entrepreneur yourself. You can read it all the way through, but you should also feel free to hop around; everyone is at a different stage in their business-building journey.

成为极简主义企业家的步骤与极简主义商业的功能相对应，这也是本书的章节安排。每一章都建立在前一章的基础上——就像加法导致乘法导致代数导致微积分一样——最终，在本书结束时，你将完全具备成为极简主义企业家的能力。你可以一路阅读，但你也可以随意跳跃；每个人在他们的企业建设之旅中处于不同的阶段。

- **PROFITABILITY FIRST**

首要利润

Minimalist entrepreneurs create businesses that are profitable at all costs. Many businesses never intend to stick around long enough to be profitable. Instead, the plan is to sell the business before profits become necessary, raising money from investors along the way. Minimalist entrepreneurs aim to be profitable from day one or soon after, because profit is oxygen for businesses. And they do that by selling a product to customers, not by selling their users to advertisers. 极简主义企业家创造的企业不惜一切代价追求盈利。许多企业从来没有打算存在到盈利成为必要之前。相反，计划是在利润变得必要之前出售企业，并一路上从投资者那里获得资金。极简主义企业家的目标是从第一天或不久之后就实现盈利，因为盈利是企业的氧气。他们通过向客户销售产品而不是向广告商销售用户来实现这一目标。

- **START WITH COMMUNITY**

以社区为开始

Minimalist entrepreneurs build on a foundation of community. They don't ask "How can I help?" but are instead observant and cultivate authentic relationships. They spend time and effort to learn and to build trust, focusing on the market part of "product-market fit" (a term coined by venture capitalist Marc Andreessen for being in a good market with a product that can satisfy that market) before they build anything at all.

极简主义企业家建立在社区基础上。他们不会问“我能帮忙什么？”而是善于观察和培养真实的关系。他们花时间和精力去学习 and 建立信任，重点放在“产品市场契合度”的市场部分（这是风险投资家马克·安德森为了在一个好的市场中满足市场需求而推出的一种术语）上，在构建任何内容之前。

- **BUILD AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE**

建造尽可能少的内容

When they do build, minimalist entrepreneurs build only what they need to, automating or outsourcing the rest.

当他们建造时，极简主义企业家只建造他们需要的东西，自动化或外包其余部分。

Similarly, minimalist businesses do one thing and do it well. They work side by side with their customers to iterate toward a solution, and make sure it's worth paying for, before they take it to customers outside of their communities.

类似地，极简主义的企业专注于一件事，并做到极致。他们与客户并肩合作，不停地迭代，直至找到值得付费的解决方案，然后才将其推向社群以外的客户。

○ **SELL TO YOUR FIRST HUNDRED CUSTOMERS**

卖给你的前100位客户

Minimalist entrepreneurs don't spend time convincing people—they spend time educating people. Selling is a discovery process, and minimalist entrepreneurs use sales as an opportunity to talk to potential customers one by one about their products while simultaneously educating themselves about the problem they are trying to solve for them. Selling this way is a long game built on relationships and vulnerability, not a one-day grand opening extravaganza followed by selling to strangers.

极简主义企业家不花时间说服人们，而是花时间教育人们。销售是一个发现过程，极简主义企业家利用销售机会与潜在客户一对一地谈论他们的产品，同时了解他们试图为他们解决的问题。以这种方式销售是建立在关系和脆弱性基础上的长期游戏，而不是一天的盛大开幕式，然后向陌生人出售。

○ **MARKET BY BEING YOU**

成为你的市场

Speaking of vulnerability, minimalist entrepreneurs share their stories, from struggle to success. The best marketing shows the world who you—and your product— really are. Minimalist entrepreneurs understand that people care about other people, and educate, inspire, and entertain whenever and wherever they can. Instead of making headlines, they make fans—who turn themselves into customers over time.

说到脆弱性，极简主义企业家分享他们的故事，从挣扎到成功。最好的营销展示了你和你的产品真正的面貌。极简主义企业家明白人们关心的是其他人，并尽可能地在任何地方教育、鼓舞和娱乐他人。他们不仅仅是让自己成为头条新闻，更是让拥护者支持他们，并在长期的时间里成为顾客。

○ **GROW YOURSELF AND YOUR BUSINESS MINDFULLY**

谨慎地发展自己和你的事业

Minimalist entrepreneurs own their businesses, they don't let their businesses own them. They don't spend money they don't have, and they don't sacrifice profitability for scale. At this point, it becomes a game to lose . . . and minimalist entrepreneurs don't lose.

极简主义企业家拥有自己的生意，而不是让生意主宰自己。他们不会花费他们没有的钱，也不会为了规模而牺牲利润率。在这个时候，任何失败都成了一场游戏.....而极简主义企业家不会输。

○ **BUILD THE HOUSE YOU WANT TO LIVE IN**

打造你想居住的房子

Minimalist entrepreneurs hire other minimalist entrepreneurs. Instead of following the status quo, they build their companies from first principles, alienating almost everyone. The way you do things won't be for everyone, but it will be really great for a few people, and if you define your values early and often and tell the world who you are, they will find you. Conventional wisdom about how we work, when we work, and where we work is changing fast. Minimalist entrepreneurs understand there are few rules.

极简主义企业家雇佣其他极简主义企业家。他们不遵循现状，而是从第一原理构建他们的公司，使几乎所有人都感到陌生。你做事的方式并不适合每个人，但对于少数人来说，它将非常好，如果你早早地定义和传达你的价值观，并告诉世界你是谁，他们会找到你。关于我们工作、何时工作以及我们在哪里工作的常规智慧正在快速改变。极简主义企业家明白，规则很少。

Even when you've successfully built your minimalist business, the journey isn't over. Spoiler alert: It never is. Minimalist entrepreneurs know

that life is about more than just their companies. The true magic of entrepreneurship is that you and your business can improve the quality of life of many people. And it doesn't have to be millions; "enough" is what you decide it is, not a specific amount.

即使您成功地建立了极简主义的企业，旅程也并未结束。剧透：从来没有结束。极简主义的企业家知道生活不仅仅是他们的公司。创业的真正魔力在于您和您的企业可以提高许多人的生活质量。它并不一定非得是百万富翁，“足够”是您决定的，而不是特定的金额。

If you're nodding along, great. If you're still skeptical, well, that's okay too. I have 50,000 words and a few hours to convince you. Just keep reading!

如果您正在点头表示认同，那太好了。如果您仍然持怀疑态度，那也没关系。我有5万字和几个小时来说服您，只要继续阅读！

Chase Profitability, Not Unicorns

Building a minimalist business is not a get-rich-quick proposition, but it *is* a get-rich-slowly one if you embrace profit-ability, not growth, as the key indicator of your company's success. Profitability means sustainability. Instead of treading water until a lifeboat comes along to save you—which is how many founders think about raising their next round of VC funding—it means building your own boat.

建立一个极简主义的企业并不是一个快速致富的方案，但如果您将盈利能力而不是发展作为公司成功的关键指标，它将是一个缓慢致富的方案。盈利能力意味着可持续性。它不是等待救生艇拯救您（这是许多创始人考虑筹集下一轮风险投资的方式），而是建立自己的船。

And while I do think the minimalist entrepreneur mindset leads to a near-100-percent success rate, I'm willing to concede that it may only happen over the course of many experiments. That's why profitability matters. If you're profitable, you can take *unlimited* shots on goal, virtually guaranteeing your success as long as you keep learning from your customers. Most people don't start. Most people who start don't continue. Most people who continue give up. Many winners are just the last ones standing. Don't give up.

虽然我认为极简主义企业家思维模式可以导致近乎100%的成功率，

但我愿意承认这可能只是在多次实验的过程中才会发生。这就是为什么盈利能力很重要。如果你盈利了，你可以无限制地进行尝试，只要你不断从客户那里学习，就能保证成功。大多数人不会开始。大多数开始的人不会继续。大多数继续的人会放弃。许多赢家只是最后一位站立的人。不要放弃。

We're moving past an era of gatekeeping, where bosses and universities and venture capitalists decide who gets to try and who doesn't. Information about how to start and scale companies is now available to founders around the world, and it's cheaper too, which means there are fewer and fewer reasons to raise money from venture capitalists. There's nothing inherently wrong with raising money, and not all unicorns are evil. I raised money for Gumroad (and, as you'll read later, have again, but in a very different way), and there are companies like Pinterest, Lyft, Slack, and others that raised venture capital, grew quickly, yet stayed focused on their customers. But much of the venture capital model depends on creating unsustainable growth and destroying successful-by-any-other-metric businesses.

我们正在走出一个门槛守护的时代，在这个时代，老板、大学和风险投资家决定谁可以尝试，谁不能。如何启动和扩展公司的信息现在对全球创始人都可获得，而且价格更便宜，这意味着越来越少的理由从风险投资家那里筹集资金。筹集资金本身并没有什么错，不是所有独角兽都是邪恶的。我曾为Gumroad筹集资金（正如您稍后将读到的，我已经以非常不同的方式再次筹集资金），还有像Pinterest、Lyft、Slack等公司筹集风险投资，快速增长，但仍专注于客户。但是，风险投资模型的很大一部分依赖于创造不可持续增长，并摧毁以任何其他标准衡量成功的企业。

Why does this happen? The venture capital business is a high-risk, high-return investment strategy in which venture funds swap capital for early-stage startup equity, essentially buying a piece of the future value of the companies in which they invest. For the model to work, the rare winners like Uber, Airbnb, and Stripe need to pay for all the losers. Aileen Lee of Cowboy Ventures coined the term “unicorn” to refer to privately held startups valued at more than \$1 billion, which are the lifeblood of venture funds. In fairy tales, people can't help chasing unicorns—they are nearly irresistible, but

they're also rare, elusive, and nearly impossible to catch.

为什么会发生这种情况？风险资本业务是一种高风险、高回报的投资策略，风险投资基金通过交换资本获得早期初创企业的股权，从本质上来说购买了它们所投资公司未来价值的一部分。为了使这种模式运作良好，像优步、爱彼迎和Stripe这样的少数赢家需要为所有输家买单。Cowboy Ventures的Aileen Lee创造了“独角兽”一词，指的是估值超过10亿美元的未上市初创企业，这是风险基金的生命线。在童话故事中，人们总是会追逐独角兽——它们几乎是不可抵挡的，但也很罕见、难以捕捉

Her mythological metaphor couldn't have been more apt. Almost everyone fails to build billion-dollar businesses, even the founders who raise gobs of venture capital. According to Matt Murphy, managing director and partner of Menlo Ventures, approximately 70 percent of startups fail, which can mean anything from full liquidation to becoming cash flow positive, which, despite being good for the company, is still bad for the VC. Of the 30 percent still standing, he says, some return three to five times the initial investment, which constitutes only modest success in this setting. The whole system is riding on at least 5 percent of VC-backed companies delivering tenfold to one hundredfold returns to balance out losses and make it all worth it. Without them, the VC model simply doesn't work. That's because the outsized success of the rare billion-dollar startup compensates for all the money thrown against the wall, like so much spaghetti, on thousands of other ventures.

她的神话隐喻再恰当不过了，几乎每个人都无法建立百亿美元的企业，即使是筹集了巨额风险投资的创始人也不例外。据Menlo Ventures的董事总经理和合伙人Matt Murphy称，约70%的初创企业将面临失败，这可能意味着全面清算或实现现金流积极，尽管对公司而言是好事，但对风投公司而言仍然不利。他说，剩下30%的公司中，有些公司的回报率是首次投资的3到5倍，在这个领域中仅仅是适度的成功。整个系统依赖于至少5%的风险投资支持企业实现10倍到100倍的回报，以抵消损失并使其具有价值。“如果没有这些公司，风险投资模式就根本行不通。这是因为罕见的百亿美元初创企业的超常成功弥补了将大量资金如意大利面条一般扔在数千个其他企业上的损失。”

That's not what minimalist entrepreneurs do. We are laser focused on profitability from day one, in order to get to sustainability soon after, so that we can serve our customers and our communities for as long as we wish.

这不是极简主义企业家所做的事情。我们从第一天开始就专注于盈利，以便尽快实现可持续性，从而为我们的客户和社区提供服务，直到我们希望结束为止。

Don't Call It a Comeback

No matter where you work, how you work, or who you work for right now, you can use the principles in this book to rethink the beliefs and practices that may be holding you back. I really do believe that starting a business should be an option for everyone, no matter your background. That's why this book is full of examples of many great businesses that have been built by passionate individuals around the world, many who have flown under the radar until now. For up-and-coming minimalist entrepreneurs, I hope their stories can serve as examples as new online tools make the process of building, marketing, and selling easier and cheaper for everyone— including solopreneurs and independent creators.

不管你在哪里工作，怎样工作，或者现在为谁工作，你都可以使用这本书中的原则，重新思考可能阻碍你的信念和做法。我真的相信，创业应该是每个人的选择，不管你的背景如何。这就是为什么这本书充满了许多伟大的企业的例子，这些企业是由全球热情的个人建立的，其中许多人直到现在才开始获得关注。对于新兴的极简主义创业者，我希望他们的故事可以作为榜样，因为新的在线工具让建立、营销和销售过程变得更加容易和便宜，包括独立创作者和自主创业者。

Where do you start? Take a good hard look at the people, places, and communities you care about. Where are the pain points? What isn't working, but might with a little elbow grease? These are all opportunities to make things better through minimalist entrepreneurship. It's ironic to me how often people go around hoping to find a startup idea while simultaneously complaining about all the everyday stuff around them that doesn't work properly. "Sure, I could solve that for people with a little effort, but the

potential market just isn't big enough to really scale.” That's the kind of thinking that this book seeks to address.

你从哪里开始？认真审视你关心的人、地方和社区。痛点在哪里？哪些事情不顺畅，但是只需要一点点的劳动力就可以得到改善？这些都是通过极简企业可以使事情变得更好的机会。我觉得很讽刺的是，人们经常希望找到创业点子，同时抱怨他们周围的所有日常问题都无法得到适当的解决。“当然，我可以通过一点点努力来解决人们的问题，但潜在市场并不足够大，无法真正扩展。”这就是本书试图解决的思维方式。

You may already be on your business-building journey, but if you're just getting started, some business models lend themselves more easily to the pathway of minimalist entrepreneurship. These include almost any kind of business-to-consumer or business-to-business enterprise that has fast customer feedback loops and ample opportunities for iteration like software as a service (SaaS), digital and physical products and services, or connecting people for a fee. We'll talk about all of these later in the book.

你可能已经在创业之路上了，但如果你刚刚开始，一些商业模式更容易借助极简主义创业的道路。其中包括几乎任何具有快速客户反馈回路和充足机会进行迭代的企业，如软件即服务(SaaS)、数字和实物产品和服务，或为费用连接人们的企业。我们稍后将在本书中谈论所有这些内容。

There are also businesses that aren't necessarily suited for this framework because of the slow pace of customer feedback. For example, any business that requires a heavy investment in research and development or that relies on sales to large, bureaucratized corporations or institutions—like Fortune 100 companies, academia, or hospitals—might not match up as well with the processes and systems I recommend.

还有一些企业可能不适合这种框架，因为客户反馈的速度较慢。例如，任何需要大量研发投入或依赖销售给大型官僚机构或机构（如财富100强企业、学术界或医院）的企业可能无法很好地匹配我所推荐的流程和系统。

The good news is that what constitutes a “business” is changing faster than ever before and opening up possibilities to a wider range of innovators.

Though this shift was in motion before 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated it and drove increased interest in entrepreneurship from people of all backgrounds. Now more than ever before, we don't need to move to a place called Silicon Valley, go to a school called Harvard or Stanford, and raise money from the venture capitalists. The internet lets you learn from anywhere, network with anyone, and raise money directly from customers.

好消息是，“企业”的定义正在比以往任何时候都更快地发生变化，这为更广泛的创新者开辟了可能性。虽然这种转变在2020年之前就已经开始了，但 COVID-19 大流行加速了这种趋势，并引起了来自各个背景的人们对创业的增加兴趣。现在，我们不再需要搬到一个叫硅谷的地方，去一个叫哈佛或斯坦福的学校，从风险投资家那里筹集资金。互联网让你可以从任何地方学习，与任何人建立网络，并直接从客户那里筹集资金。

The world desperately needs the solutions that only entrepreneurs can provide. Everyday problems are all around us, but they are often hidden from the view of the Silicon Valley software engineers and Ivy League overachievers who have been anointed as our entrepreneurial class. We need the help of entrepreneurs from every part of the planet and every stratum of society. It's down to individual creators and entrepreneurs to set better goals for ourselves and our businesses. After all, problems don't solve themselves. People do.

世界迫切需要只有企业家才能提供的解决方案。每天都有困扰着我们的问题，但它们常常被硅谷软件工程师和常青藤高材生的视野所忽略，而这些人被推崇为我们的企业家阶层。我们需要来自全球和社会各阶层的企业家的帮助。达成更好的个人和业务目标，归根结底取决于个体创造者和企业家。毕竟，问题不会自己解决，人才能做到。

Creator First, Entrepreneur Second

On paper, it seems simple enough:

在纸面上，似乎足够简单：

1. Narrow down who your ideal customer is. Narrow until you can narrow

no more.

1. 确定您的理想客户是谁。缩小范围，直到无法再缩小。
2. Define exactly what pain point you are solving for them, and how much they will pay you to solve it.
2. 明确定义您解决的痛点是什么，以及他们愿意支付多少费用来解决它。
3. Set a hard deadline and focus fully on building a solution, then charge for it.
3. 确定一个严格的截止日期，全力以赴构建解决方案，然后收费。
4. Repeat the process until you've found a product that works, then scale a business around it.
4. 重复这个过程，直到找到一个适合的产品，然后在它周围打造一个业务规模。

In practice, it's not so simple. There are many complications that pop up, and most people don't even know where to start. A "business" of any kind is too scary, too amorphous, or too unattainable. Luckily, there's another way to get started today. Before you become an entrepreneur, become a creator.

实际上，这并不是那么简单。会遇到许多复杂的情况，大多数人甚至不知道从哪里开始。任何类型的“业务”都太可怕，太模糊，或者太难以实现了。幸运的是，现在有另一种方法可以开始。在成为企业家之前，首先要成为一个创作者。

That could mean being an artist, but it doesn't have to. Creators make things, charge their audiences for those things, and then use that money to make more things. They use the first dollars they earn as tools to fuel their own creative drive, not the other way around. With time and experience, creators show others how to turn their own creativity into businesses, and the cycle continues. In the end, there isn't much difference between a business like Gumroad and a creator. It's just semantics—one or more people using the tool of a business to make something new. Painters need brushes. Writers need pencils. Creators need businesses. It's key for people to understand that, because it lowers the cognitive barrier to starting a business, and starting is *really* important. You don't learn, then start. You start, then learn.

这可能意味着成为一个艺术家，但不是必须的。创作者制作东西，向他们的观众收取费用，然后用那些钱来制作更多的东西。他们使用首次赚到的钱作为工具来推动自己的创意驱动，而不是相反。随着时间和经验的积累，创作者向他人展示如何将个人的创造力转化为企业，循环不断。最终，Gumroad这样的企业和一个创作者之间没有太大的区别。这只是一个语义问题——一个或者多个人使用企业的工具来创造新事物。画家需要画笔，作家需要铅笔，创作者需要企业。这对于人们来说非常重要，因为它降低了开始创业的认知壁垒，而开始则非常重要。你不是先学习再开始，而是先开始再学习。

My best friend in middle school, obsessed with the computer game *World of Warcraft*, started designing fantasy creatures in Photoshop. I was impressed, but I also remember thinking, “I could do that.” So I went through some Photoshop tutorials and got to work. When I started to get the hang of the software, I began submitting logos to online competitions. I didn’t win any, but the process of creating a lot of stuff and putting it out there made me a pretty decent designer, and then led to freelance web design work.

我在中学时最好的朋友痴迷于电脑游戏《魔兽世界》，开始在 Photoshop 中设计幻想生物。我很受启发，但我也记得当时想：“我也能做到这点。”于是我学习了一些 Photoshop 教程并开始工作。当我掌握了软件的技巧后，我开始参加在线比赛并提交标志设计。我没有赢得任何奖项，但创建大量的作品并发布它们的过程使我成为了一个相当不错的设计师，然后开始了自由职业网页设计工作。

Once you’re working on other people’s projects, you can’t help but get ideas of your own, so I began building simple web applications, hiring developers to help with the coding. For example, before Twitter natively supported threads, I created an app called Tweader to see the conversations that happened between people on Twitter. Another app, Ping Me When It’s Up, would text me when a website that had gone down was back up again. (It should be clear by now that I’ve never been very good at naming things.)

一旦你开始为别人的项目工作，你不可避免地会有属于自己的想法，因此我开始构建简单的网络应用程序，并聘请开发人员帮助编码。例如，在Twitter原生支持线程之前，我创建了一个名为Tweader的应用程序，可以查看Twitter上人们之间的对话。另一个名为Ping Me When

It's Up的应用程序会在网站恢复正常后给我发送短信。(现在应该很清楚，我从来不擅长给事物命名。)

When the iPhone App Store opened, I learned to code for it by taking a free course on iOS development from Stanford through iTunes University, called CS193P (I still recommend it!). The App Store handled all the financial aspects of selling what I made to customers around the world, which meant I could focus on creating apps. Perfect.

iPhone应用商店开放时，我通过iTunes大学免费学习iOS开发的课程（称为CS193P，我仍然推荐它！）学会了为其编写代码。应用商店处理了向全球客户销售我的产品的所有财务方面，这意味着我可以专注于创建应用程序。完美。

The first app I built was called Taxi Lah!, which let users call a cab from their phones—before Uber. I put it on the App Store for fellow Singaporeans and made a few thousand dollars. Then I made an app called Color Stream that let designers create and modify color palettes on their phones. I made about \$10,000 from that. Each time, I was trying to solve a problem I had. I wanted to design and build a little bit of software to make my life—and the lives of others—a little bit better.

我建立的第一个应用程序叫做“Taxi Lah!”，可以让用户从手机叫出出租车，比优步还早。我将它放在应用商店上供新加坡人使用，并赚了几千美元。然后我制作了一个名为“Color Stream”的应用程序，让设计师可以在手机上创建和修改颜色调色板。我从中赚了约10,000美元。每次，我都在尝试解决我遇到的问题。我想设计和构建一些软件，使我的生活和他人的生活变得更好。

This experience—shipping real products to real customers—led to my first job at Pinterest, where I designed and built the Pinterest iPhone app. While I was there, I built Gumroad in my spare time to help me sell an icon I designed in Photoshop. When I found a solution that worked, I sold it to other creators, who sold their products to their own community of creators, many of whom eventually became Gumroad customers themselves. Now I'm an honest-to-goodness entrepreneur without ever having really given it much conscious thought along the way.

这个经历-向真实的客户发运真实产品-导致我在Pinterest找到了第一

份工作，我设计并构建了Pinterest iPhone应用程序。当我在那里时，我利用我的业余时间建立了Gumroad，以帮助我销售我在Photoshop中设计的图标。当我找到一个可行的解决方案时，我把它卖给了其他创作者，他们把他们的产品卖给了他们自己的创作者社区，其中许多人最终成为了Gumroad的客户。现在我是一个真正的企业家，而我从来没有真正地在意过这个过程。

The App Store cleared the marketing and financial obstacles out of my way so that I could fully embrace my creative side and become a creator. That transition led to me becoming a founder. It's an upward, virtuous cycle. Creation begets more creation. Today, Gumroad does the exact same thing for other would-be creators. It's basically a glorified Sahilcloning factory. Isn't that beautiful? (My mom thinks it is.)

应用商店消除了营销和财务方面的障碍，使我完全拥抱了创造性，成为了创作者。这种转变使我成为了一位创始人。这是一个上升的良性循环。创造促成更多的创造。今天，Gumroad 为其他有志之士做着同样的事情。它基本上是一个被美化了的 Sahil 克隆工厂。这不美吗？（我妈妈觉得是。）

Max Ulichney is an art director and illustrator based in Los Angeles. He'd always imagined he'd spend his days working at a large company to pay the bills in return for a few hours in the evening to do his own work. He spent fifteen years as an art director at the same creative agency, eventually using an iPad app called Procreate to draw and paint in between meetings. One day, a couple of years ago, Max decided to sell some of the digital "brushes" he'd designed for his own use to other Procreate users. A few hundred dollars later, he decided it was worth the effort to continue selling the digital tools as a business. Two years in, Max was making a living as an independent creator. Recently, he quit his job at the agency to work on Maxpacks full-time.

马克斯·尤里奇尼是一位艺术指导和插画家，常驻洛杉矶。他一直想象自己会在一家大公司工作来支付生活费用，以换取几个小时的自由时间去从事自己的工作。他在同一家创意机构担任艺术指导长达十五年，期间利用iPad上的Procreate应用程序在会议之间进行绘画和涂鸦。几年前的一天，马克斯决定把自己为自己开发的一些数码“画笔”出售给其他Procreate用户。数百美元的收入后，他决定继续将数码工具作为业务销

售。两年后，马克斯成为了一名独立的创作者并赚得了生计。最近，他辞去了在机构的工作，全职致力于Maxpacks。

There are thousands of “creator first, entrepreneur second” stories like Max’s.

有成千上万与马克斯类似的“创作者为先，企业家为辅”的故事。

Adam Wathan and Steve Schoger teach people how to build and design web applications. They believe, as I do, that nearly anyone can become a competent front-end engineer and designer with a little help. In December 2018, after just a few years building their online audiences, they released Refactoring UI, an online course, earning over \$800,000 in a single month. Now they get to spend their time doing what they really love: building Tailwind, a free and open-source framework for the rapid creation of custom web designs.

Adam Wathan和Steve Schoger教人们如何构建和设计Web应用程序。他们相信，像我一样，几乎任何人都可以在得到一点帮助后成为一名称职的前端工程师和设计师。2018年12月，仅仅几年时间就建立起线上受众的他们发布了名为《重构UI》的在线课程，在一个月内就赚了超过80万美元。现在，他们可以花时间做他们真正喜爱的事情：构建Tailwind，一个用于快速创建自定义Web设计的免费开源框架。

Kristina Garner, mother of two boys, teaches families how to run secular, nature-based homeschooling programs for their kids. What started as a blog in 2015 about her personal passion has become Blossom and Root, a business that employs dozens of people and helps thousands of families every month.

两个儿子的母亲Kristina Garner教导家庭如何为孩子们开展非宗教、以自然为基础的家庭教育计划。2015年开始的个人兴趣博客如今已经成为了Blossom and Root这个企业，每月帮助数千个家庭，并雇用了数十人。

These are just a few of the 28,207 creators who sold something on Gumroad last month. That sounds like a big number today, but I too started somewhere smaller and less lofty, where creation always begins: at the number next to zero. Where there was nothing, now there’s something: digital brushes, online courses, Vidalia onions on your doorstep.

这些只是上个月在Gumroad上销售过东西的28,207位创作者中的一小

部分。今天听起来这个数字很大，但我也曾从零开始，从一些比较普通的东西开始创作：数字画笔、在线课程、送到你家门口的 Vidalia 洋葱。从无到有，创造总是从零开始的。

In the next chapter, I'll show you how to get started.

在下一章中，我将向你展示如何开始。

KEY TAKEAWAYS

关键点

- o You don't learn, then start. You start, then learn.
不先学习，就开始。先开始，然后学习。
- o Minimalist entrepreneurs focus on getting “profitable at costs” instead of growing at all costs.
极简主义企业家专注于“在成本方面盈利”而不是不惜一切代价增长。
- o A business is a way to solve problems for people you care about—and get paid for it.
一家企业是为你所关心的人解决问题的途径，并在此过程中获得报酬。
- o Become a creator first, an entrepreneur second.
先成为创作者，再成为企业家。

Learn More

- o Follow Peter Askew (@searchbound) on Twitter, where he regularly tweets about business ideas, domain name opportunities, and other interesting stuff.
关注Peter Askew (@searchbound) 在Twitter上，他经常发布关于商业创意，域名机会和其他有趣内容的推文。
- o Read his article “I Sell Onions on the Internet” at www.deepsouthventures.com/i-sell-onions-on-the-internet/.
请阅读他的文章“我在互联网上销售洋葱” ，网址为 www.deepsouthventures.com/i-sell-onions-on-the-internet/.
- o Read the article that inspired this book: “Reflecting on My Failure to Build a Billion-Dollar Company” at sahil.lavingia.com/reflecting.
请阅读启发本书的文章：“反思我未能建立一家市值十亿美元公司”（网址为sahil.lavingia.com/reflecting）。

- o Follow @gumroad on Instagram to see our creators' stories.
关注我们的Instagram账号@gumroad，了解我们的创作者故事。
- o Join the Minimalist Entrepreneurs club on Clubhouse to meet and learn from other minimalist entrepreneurs in the community.
加入 Clubhouse 的极简企业家俱乐部，与社区中其他极简企业家见面和学习。

2

start with community

It takes a village to raise a child.

养育一个孩子，需要整个村庄的力量。

— AFRICAN PROVERB

非洲谚语

In 2009, Sol Orwell was overweight and unhappy, so he decided to join the “r/Fitness” subreddit, one of the thousands of smaller online communities within Reddit, to find information and support. At the same time, he started reading about fitness and nutrition, taking notes on what he was learning in books like Tim Ferriss’s *The 4-Hour Body* and posting summaries on the fitness subreddit for other members of the community. Reddit was a natural place for Orwell to seek connection. He was already participating in the NBA and Toronto subreddits, among others, so he knew and understood Reddit’s rules and norms about posting only authentic, useful content.

2009年，Sol Orwell 身材超重，感到不开心，所以他决定加入“r/Fitness” subreddit，这是Reddit中数千个较小在线社区之一，以寻找信息和支持。与此同时，他开始阅读健身和营养方面的内容，并记录学到的知识，像是Tim Ferriss的《4小时工作周》等书籍，并将摘要发布在健身 subreddit上，为社区的其他成员提供帮助。Reddit是Orwell寻找联系的自然选择。他已经参与了NBA和多伦多subreddit等其他社区，因此他了解Reddit的规则和规范，只发布真实、有用的内容。

The more he learned about fitness and nutrition, the more he shared. In addition to his reading notes, he inspired others by answering questions and documenting his personal journey of losing sixty pounds, which occurred over a period of several years. He credits his physical transformation to the relationships he formed with other “redditors,” including Kurtis Frank, one of the moderators of r/Fitness. Eventually, Sol and Kurtis ended up moderating the subreddit together, and as time went by, they noticed two persistent problems.

随着对健身和营养的认识越来越深入，他分享的也越多。除了阅读笔记，他还通过回答问题和记录自己减60磅的个人经历，激励他人。他把自己的身体变化归功于他与其他 Reddit 网友建立的关系，其中包括 r/Fitness 的版主之一 Kurtis Frank。最终，Sol 和 Kurtis 成为了这个 subreddit的版主，并随着时间的推移，他们注意到了两个持久的问题。

First, little reliable information was available about nutritional supplements, either from other redditors or from the companies that made these products; second, almost every day, new members asked the same

questions over and over again, many times about supplements. Sol was frustrated by both situations, but eventually he realized that maybe the resources people needed just weren't out there.

首先，关于营养保健品，无论是从其他红迪网用户还是从生产这些产品的公司中获取可靠信息都非常困难；其次，几乎每天都有新成员反复问同样的问题，其中很多是关于保健品的。Sol 对这两种情况都感到沮丧，但最终他意识到，也许人们需要的资源只是不存在。

Sol and Kurtis saw a job to be done for a community that they cared about and had nurtured from five thousand to about fifty thousand during the two years they had been moderating. In 2011, they launched Examine.com, a website where people could find the kind of free, unbiased, up-to-date research and information on nutrition and supplements that they themselves had been looking for.

索尔和柯蒂斯看到了一个社区需要的工作，他们一直在这个社区里呵护了将近两年时间，把人口从五千人增加到了约五万人。2011年，他们创建了Examine.com，这是一个可以让人们查找免费、公正、最新的营养和补品研究信息的网站，这正是他们自己一直在寻找的。

They told people about their project, but they didn't sell anything, and they only occasionally dropped links in the fitness subreddit when they were answering questions. Instead, other members of the community did it for them. After all, they had been part of Reddit at this point for about five years. Sol remembers they both had something like "100,000 plus karma," a measure of how much a user has contributed to Reddit based on upvotes and comments from other users— so people trusted them, and they were solving a problem for the fitness subreddit without asking for anything in return.

他们向人们介绍了他们的项目，但并没有出售任何东西，也只在健身主题社区偶尔发布链接以回答问题。相反，社区的其他成员替他们发布了链接。毕竟，他们此时已经在Reddit上呆了大约五年。Sol记得他们两个的声望都有“100,000加分”之类的东西，这是基于其他用户的赞和评论衡量用户在Reddit上贡献的度量标准——所以人们信任他们，并且他们不求任何回报的情况下为健身主题社区解决了问题。

In 2013, two years after they started the site, they started to think about monetizing, so they surveyed the community about what problems they

believed the information on Examine.com might be able to solve. “We would ask people, ‘What’s your problem? What do you wish you could do?’” Sol remembers. “The most common thing was ‘We wish you just had a table of all of the information you have. So if I wanted to look at supplements that affect blood pressure, I could look it up quickly.’ ” Because of those answers, they offered their first product, the *Research Digest*, a comprehensive guide to supplements and nutrition.

2013年，他们在创立网站两年后开始考虑盈利，于是就向社群进行了调查，询问他们认为Examine.com上的信息能够解决哪些问题。“我们会问人们，‘你的问题是什么？你希望能做什么？’”Sol回忆道，“最常见的问题是‘我们希望你们能够提供一张包含所有信息的表格。这样，如果我想查看影响血压的补品，我就可以快速查询。’”由于这些答案，他们推出了第一个产品——研究摘要，一份综合指南，介绍了补品和营养方面的信息。

Sol was well known in the health and nutrition space, and to promote the *Research Digest*, he leveraged his relationships with fitness professionals *four years* after initially joining the fitness subreddit. When he and Kurtis launched, 105 people in the fitness industry shared the link. The goal was a thousand sales, and by the end of the first day they had already sold six to eight hundred copies. By the end of the launch, they had sold three thousand copies, all based on reputation, trust, and word of mouth.

Sol在健康和营养领域非常有名，为了推广研究摘要，他利用了自己与健身专业人士的关系，四年后加入健身版块时。当他和Kurtis推出时，有105位健身行业的人分享了链接。目标是一千个销售额，到第一天结束时就已经卖出了六到八百份。到推出结束，他们已经卖出了三千份，所有这些都是基于声誉、信任和口碑。

Fast-forward to today, and Sol is happy, healthy, and wealthy. Examine.com continues to be an important resource for health and nutrition professionals; it has seventy thousand visitors per day and does seven figures in annual revenue, though Sol has since stepped back from the day-to-day operations. The team has expanded Examine’s offerings to include additional guides and subscription services on how supplements factor not only into fitness but also into longevity, chronic disease, and psychological health. But

they've never lost their focus on community and continue to depend on the trust and relationships that grew authentically over time.

快进到今天，Sol感到快乐、健康、富裕。Examine.com继续成为健康和营养专业人士的重要资源；它每天有七万名访客，年收入达到七位数，虽然Sol已经放弃了日常运营。团队已将Examine的服务扩展到包括有关保健品如何在健身、长寿、慢性疾病和心理健康等方面发挥作用的额外指南和订阅服务。但他们从未失去对社区的关注，并继续依赖随着时间的推移而真实增长的信任和关系。

In this chapter, we'll talk about how you can find your own communities (if you haven't already) and how to uncover the kinds of problems that might be best suited for a minimalist business. I won't lie. This process takes time, but done right and, most of all, done authentically, it will be the basis of how you move forward now and for years to come. Whether you're just getting started or you're already in the process of building a product, knowing and contributing to your community is key at every stage. Remember that, and you'll find and nurture the right atmosphere for collaboration, growth, and eventually a sustainable business that matters.

在本章中，我们将讨论如何找到自己的社区（如果你还没有的话），以及如何揭示最适合极简主义企业的问题类型。我不会撒谎。这个过程需要时间，但如果做得正确，最重要的是真实，这将是你现在和未来前进的基础。无论你刚刚开始还是已经在建立产品的过程中，了解并为你的社区做出贡献在每个阶段都是关键的。记住这一点，你会找到和培养合适的合作、成长、最终是有意义的可持续经营的氛围。

Community First

Community is a fundamental societal unit. From Sol's r/Fitness subreddit to yoga classes to family to the group of friends we game with in the middle of the night, communities are a place where we can connect, learn, and have fun. For minimalist entrepreneurs, communities are the starting point of any successful enterprise.

社区是一个基本的社会单位。从Sol的r/Fitness subreddit到瑜伽课程，再到家庭和我们在深夜玩游戏的朋友圈子，社区是我们可以连接、学习和

享受乐趣的地方。对于极简主义企业家而言，社区是任何成功企业的起点。

That doesn't mean you should run out and find a community to join just for the purpose of starting a business. It means that most businesses fail because they aren't built with a particular group of people in mind. Often, the ones that succeed do so because they're focused on a community that a founder knows well. That process can't be rushed because it comes from authentic relationships and a willingness to serve, both of which take time to uncover and develop. You may even have to learn a new language—or at least some insider lingo.

这并不意味着你应该去寻找一个社区，只是为了创业的目的。这意味着大多数企业失败，是因为它们并非基于特定的人群建立而成。通常情况下，那些成功的企业之所以成功，是因为它们关注的是创始人熟悉的社区。这个过程无法被急于求成，因为它源于真正的关系和愿意为人服务，这两者都需要时间来发掘和开发。你甚至可能需要学习一门新的语言 - 或者至少学习一些内部行话。

Communities used to be limited by geography, but it's never been easier to connect to people with whom you share something in common, whether it be an interest, a favorite artist, or a belief system. But a community isn't a group of people who all think, act, look, or behave the same. That's a cult.

社区曾经仅限于地理位置，但现在连接与你有共同点的人从未如此简单，无论是兴趣、喜欢的艺术家还是信仰系统。但社区不是一群人思想、行为、外貌或表现都相同的集合。那是一个邪教。

A community is the opposite. That's what I discovered when I moved from San Francisco to Provo and got out of the Silicon Valley bubble. For one of the first times in my life, I saw that the best communities are made up of individuals who might be otherwise dissimilar but who have shared interests, values, and abilities. It's a group of people who would likely never hang out with each other in any other situational context, and it often encompasses virtually every identity, including, yes, politics.

社区则相反。当我从旧金山搬到普罗沃并走出硅谷泡泡时，我发现这一点。在我的人生中第一次，我看到最好的社区是由可能在其他方面不同，但拥有共同兴趣、价值观和能力的个人组成的。这是一个群体，

他们可能在任何其他情境中都不会互相交往，它经常包含几乎所有的身份，包括政治。

A community can override people's dislike of one another. Every Sunday in the Latter-day Saints Church, I saw the progressive next to the conservative, the rich next to the poor, the young next to the old. I'm not sure what they thought of each other outside the church building, but for at least one day a week, they sat together for the sake of the community.

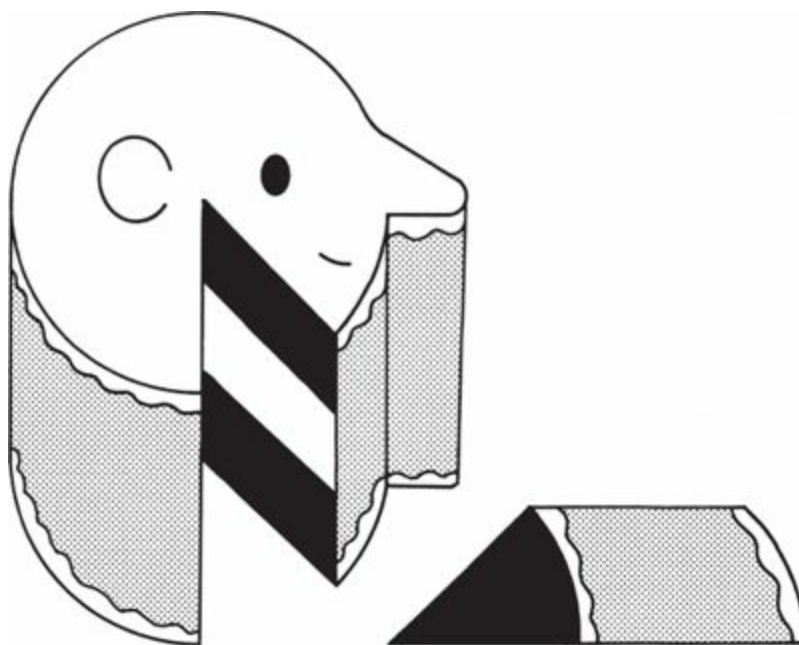
一个社区可以推翻人们对彼此的不喜欢。每个星期天在摩门教会，我看到进步派坐在保守派旁边，富人坐在穷人旁边，年轻人坐在老年人旁边。我不确定他们在教堂外想什么，但是至少在一周的某天，他们为了社区坐在一起。

It wasn't easy. It was real work to be an active participant in that church community, to learn how to speak the language, but for the first time in a long time, I was reminded of something important: you don't have to bring your whole self to every community you join, but you do have to bring a slice of yourself. And that part needs to be authentic to its core. It's the combination of time and vulnerability that leads to relationships and growth.

这并不容易。要成为教堂社区的积极参与者、学会说现场语言真的需要努力。但是，长时间以来这是我第一次想起一件重要的事情：你不必完全展现自己加入每个社区，但你必须展现自己的一部分，而这一部分必须是真实的。通过时间和脆弱性的结合，才能建立关系、实现成长。

Part of my own growth was realizing that as an outsider, I was in a particularly great position to see the community with fresh eyes and to contribute value in a new way. You may never move to a new city, but getting out of your bubble matters when it comes to community. And it's healthy and normal to leave certain communities as you explore new ones.

我个人成长的一部分是意识到作为局外人，我处于一个特殊的优势地位，能够以崭新的眼光看待社区，并以新的方式提供价值。你可能永远不会搬到一个新城市，但是在社区问题上走出自己的舒适圈很重要。随着你探索新的社区，离开某些社区是健康和正常的。



You don't have to bring your whole self to every community you join, but you do have to bring a slice of yourself.

你不必全盘接受任何社群，但你必须要带上自己的一部分。

For me, my move from Silicon Valley to the Silicon Slopes showed me that I didn't care too much about tech, at least not in the way that I thought I did. In Utah, I didn't go to Java-Script meetups or attend design lectures or judge startup pitch competitions. Instead, I found myself at figure drawing classes. Or a few hundred feet away from a barn, learning how to plein-air paint. Or at a coffee shop on Thursday mornings, writing and reviewing science-fiction stories with a few friends I met at a workshop.

对我来说，从硅谷搬到硅坡让我明白了我并不太关心科技，至少不是我之前认为的那样。在犹他州，我没有参加Java-Script聚会，也没有听设计讲座或参加创业比赛评审。相反，我在素描课程中发现了自己，或者在离谷仓几百英尺的地方学习户外绘画。或者在星期四早上在咖啡店里，与我在研讨会上认识的几个朋友一起编写和审阅科幻小说。

Finding these creative communities in real life reminded me of the spark that inspired me in the early days. And rediscovering myself as a creator and spending time with other makers reconnected me to why I had built Gumroad in the first place: I loved to create! I couldn't believe I had forgotten that, for

years.

在现实生活中找到这些创意社区，让我想起了早期启发我的火花。重新发现自己是一个创作者，并与其他创作者一起度过时间，让我重新建立联系，明白了我为什么要创建Gumroad：我喜欢创作！我简直不能相信自己已经忘记了那个，多年来。

I was accidentally at the forefront of a movement that was taking shape—what Li Jin, former partner at Andreessen Horowitz and founder of Atelier Ventures, calls the “passion economy”—“a world in which people are able to do what they love for a living and to have a more fulfilling and purposeful life.” At the time I created Gumroad, online creator platforms were still new, but the rise of no-code solutions has made building and charging for podcasts, video and audio content, online courses, virtual teaching, and virtual coaching almost seamless, so that starting a business around something you love has never been more attainable.

我无意中成为正在形成的运动的先锋人物 - 李进（Andreessen Horowitz的前合伙人和Atelier Ventures的创始人）所称的“激情经济” - “一个人们可以通过自己喜欢的工作获得生计并拥有更充实和有意义生活的世界。” 在创建Gumroad的时候，在线创作者平台仍然很新，但是无代码解决方案的崛起使得构建和收费播客，视频和音频内容，在线课程，虚拟教学和虚拟辅导变得几乎无缝连接，因此围绕您热爱的事物开展业务从未如此容易。

You probably have something you enjoy, something that on its face has nothing to do with your “real” job. Maybe it’s marathon running or ceramics or electronic music or another passion that you pursue in your free time. Whatever it is, building a minimalist business around the people you love to spend time with and the ways you love to spend your time depends on being part of a community. You may already be thinking about how to solve the problems of a current community you participate in, or you may simply be planning to join a community based on something you love. Either way, finding your people is really important at the beginning. Not just for the sake of your business but also for the sake of your own wellbeing.

你可能有自己喜欢的事情，这些事情可能与你“真正”的工作毫不相关，比如马拉松、陶艺、电子音乐或者其他你在闲暇时间追求的热情。

不管是什么，围绕你喜欢的人和方式来建立一个极简主义的企业，取决于成为社区的一部分。你可能已经在思考如何解决你参与的当前社区的问题，或者仅仅计划加入一个基于你喜爱的事物的社区。无论哪种方式，找到你的人在初期非常重要。这不仅是为了你的事业，也是为了你自己的健康。

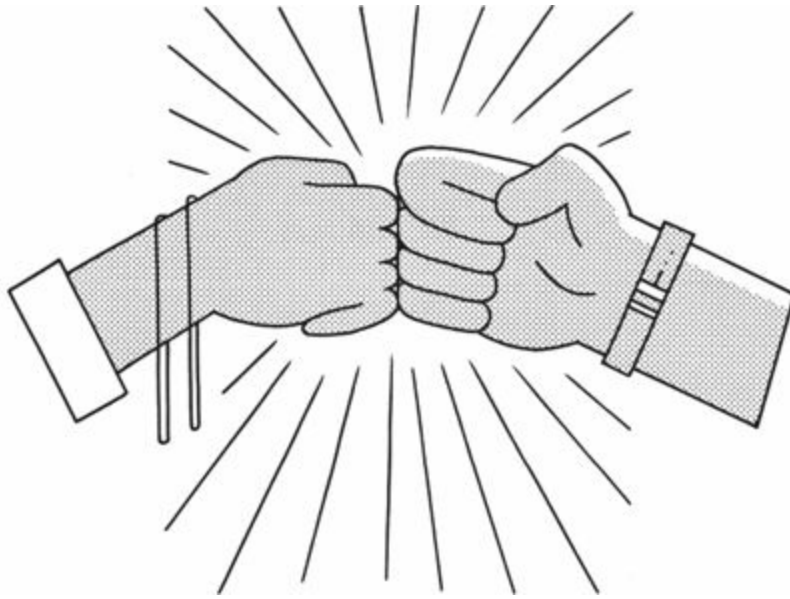
Taking writing and painting classes in Provo reminded me that my community wasn't just the people in front of me; it was also a wider group who wanted, like me, to "turn their passions into livelihoods." The real communities I was a part of didn't care about growth at all costs; that kind of accelerated expansion would have cracked them into a million little pieces. Instead, their priority, like mine, was connecting to each other in ways that allowed for the space, time, and freedom to explore their interests and to eventually transform their passions into businesses in meaningful ways.

在普罗沃参加写作和绘画课程提醒我，我的社区不仅是我眼前的人，还有一群更广泛的人，他们像我一样，想将他们的热情转化为生活。我真正参与的社区并不关心不惜一切代价的增长；那种加速扩张将使它们碎裂成无数小片。它们的优先事项与我的一样，是以允许空间、时间和自由探索他们的兴趣，并最终以有意义的方式将他们的热情转化为生意的方式相互连系。

Find Your People

Many people struggle to consciously place themselves within communities, even though everyone is *already* a part of several. If you're reading this and wondering which communities you're already a part of, ask yourself these questions:

许多人努力有意识地融入社群，尽管每个人都已经是其中几个社群的一部分。如果你正在阅读这篇文章，并想知道自己已经加入了哪些社群，请问自己以下问题：



If I talk, who listens?

如果我说话，谁会听？

Where and with whom do I already spend my time, online and offline?

我已经在哪些地方和与哪些人在线和离线花费了时间？

In what situations am I most authentically myself?

我在什么情况下最真实地表现自己？

Who do I hang out with, even though I don't really like them, but it's worth it since we share something more important in common?

我和谁在一起，即使我不是很喜欢他们，但我们有更重要的共同点，所以这是值得的？

Spend an hour, at least. Let yourself think you've run out of ideas at least a few times. In the list you end up creating, you'll find the people you are meant to serve. You may be tempted to skip this exercise if you've already started a business, but I believe that doing this regularly is a good opportunity to remind yourself why you're doing what you're doing and, most important, who you're doing it for.

至少花一个小时时间。让自己至少几次认为想不出主意。在你最终创建的名单中，你会找到你要服务的人。如果你已经开始了一家企业，你可能会想跳过这个练习，但我相信定期进行这个练习是一个很好的机会，让你想起为什么在做这个事情，最重要的是，你在为谁做。

From here, you can turn your list of communities into a list of locations—geographic and online—in which to spend even more time learning and contributing:

从这里开始，你可以把你的社区列表转化出一份地点列表——其中包括地理位置和在线地点——在这些地方你可以花更多的时间学习和贡献。

- o For every group with a shared interest, there's a Facebook group, a Reddit community, a Twitter or Instagram hashtag, or some other form of gathering and sharing ideas on the web. There are often several. Join them all.

每个共同兴趣的群组都有一个Facebook群组、Reddit社区、Twitter或Instagram标签或其他形式的聚集和分享网上思想的方式。通常会有几个这样的网上聚集地。加入它们吧。

- o There are communities run by the businesses that service that community: forums, groups, and more. Join those too.

那里有由为该社区提供服务的企业经营的社区：论坛、群组和更多。也加入那些社区。

- o There are also notable teachers, with online classes that also function as communities. They may be also worth joining— though be mindful of the cost.

还有一些值得关注的老师，他们的在线课程也充当着社区的功能。加入这些社区也许也是值得的——不过要注意费用。

- o Of course, there are the in-person communities! There are meetups, workshops, classes, speaker series, networking events, and more.

当然，还有面对面的社群！有聚会，工作坊，课程，演讲系列，网络活动等等。

It's important to note that your goal here is to join *communities*, not *networks*.

在这里需要注意的是，你的目标是加入社区，而不是网络。

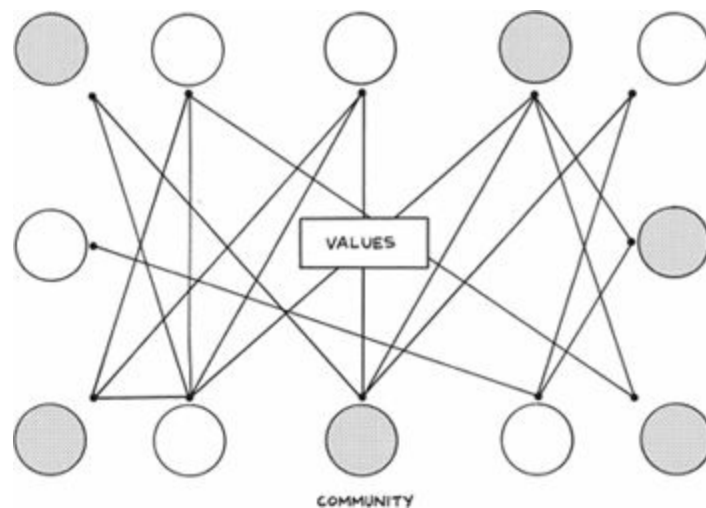
In a network, such as Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram, new-comers start at zero. No one says “hi” when they walk in the door, and if you have

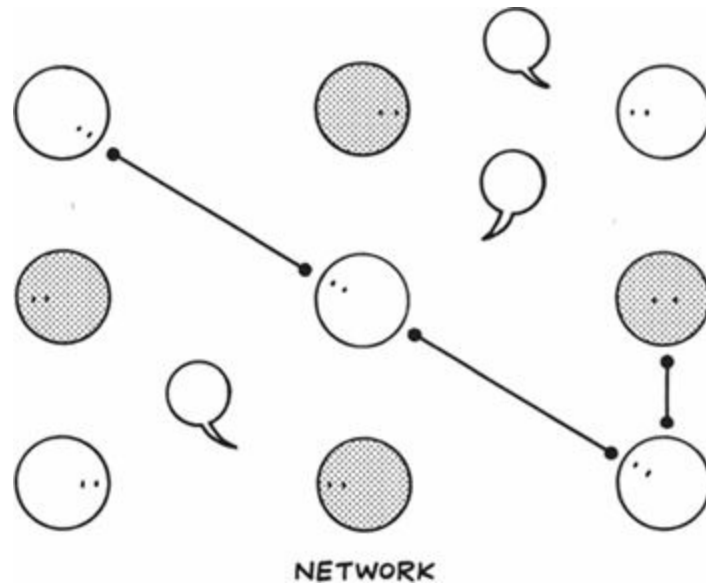
something to say, there's no guarantee that anyone will hear or help.

在像Facebook、Twitter或Instagram这样的网络中，新手从零开始。没有人在他们走进门口时说“你好”，如果你有话要说，没有人能保证会听到或帮忙。

Networks, in person or online, aren't bad. Sometimes they can lead to genuine and meaningful connection, especially over time, as you gain friends and followers and the algorithms start to recommend your work and your content to people who don't already know you. But where did those friends and followers come from in the first place? The communities you're in! (Note: Networks and audience are really important for the minimalist entrepreneur, just not yet. We'll cover them deeply in chapter 5.)

网络，不论是面对面还是在线，都不是坏事。有时候它们可以建立真实和有意义的联系，特别是随着时间的推移，当你获得朋友和追随者，算法开始向没有认识你的人推荐你的工作和内容时。但是这些朋友和追随者最初来自哪里呢？来自你所在的社区！（注意：对于极简主义企业家来说，网络和受众非常重要，但现在还不是时候。我们将在第5章中深入介绍它们。）





Eventually, you will be part of various networks as the face of your business, but at the beginning, beware of believing that communities and networks are interchangeable, no matter how appealing the potential virality may seem. Instead, build deep relationships first.

最终，作为企业的代表，您将成为各种网络的一部分，但在开始时，请注意不要相信社区和网络是可以互换的，无论潜在的病毒传播有多吸引人。相反，首先建立深层次的关系。

Contribute, Create, and Teach

Being a member of a community is a start, but the real magic happens when you start to contribute. Authors and bloggers Ben McConnell and Jackie Huba call this the “1% Rule”: On the internet, they say, 1 percent create, 9 percent contribute, and 90 percent consume. They’ve shown this rule to be true when applied to sites like Wikipedia and Yahoo, and it’s also widely applicable to other collaborative websites. For example, most people do not post, comment, or even upvote on Reddit like Sol Orwell and Kurtis Frank did. Instead they browse anonymously, which is known as “lurking.” To cite one example, even when the r/Askreddit subreddit was getting 1.5 million unique visitors a day, it was only getting 2,674 submissions and 110,408 comments in the same period.

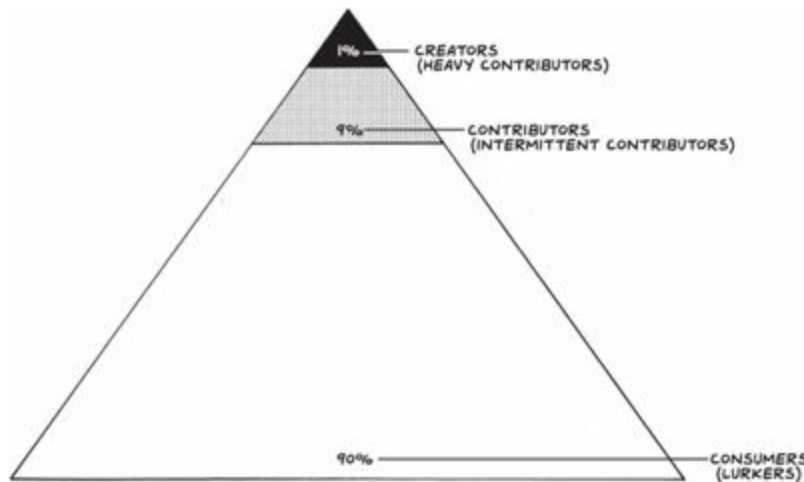
成为社区成员只是一个开始，真正的魔力在于你开始贡献。作者和博主本·麦康奈尔和杰基·胡巴称之为“1%法则”：在互联网上，他们说，1%的人创建，9%的人贡献，90%的人消费。他们已经证明了这个规则适用于维基百科和雅虎等网站，并且也广泛适用于其他协作网站。例如，大多数人不像Sol Orwell和Kurtis Frank那样在Reddit上发布、评论或点赞。相反，他们匿名浏览，这被称为“潜水”。举个例子，即使r/Askreddit子版面每天获得150万独立访问者，在同一时期内也只有2674篇提交和110408条评论。

If you contribute, you will have ten times the presence of someone who doesn't. And it will continue to grow from there.

如果你做贡献，你的存在感将比不做贡献的人多十倍，而且会不断增长。

Contributing means commenting, editing, and generally being part of the broader conversation. What's more, if you go further and create by showing what you're working on, teaching what you're learning, and bringing new material to your community, that influence will grow ninetyfold. Of course I am simplifying, but hopefully the point stands: While it's better to lurk rather than needlessly comment, it's even better to add value into the community *even if you don't feel that you're ready*. If you struggle with this, as many do, remind yourself that if you have something to add, it's selfish to keep it to yourself!

贡献意味着评论、编辑和参与更广泛的对话。更重要的是，如果你进一步通过展示你的工作、教授你的所学和给你的社区带来新的材料来创造，你的影响力将增长九十倍。当然，我正在简化，但希望重点仍然存在：虽然默默观察比毫无意义地评论要好，但即使你认为自己还没有准备好，也最好为社区增加价值。如果你遇到困难，像许多人一样，请提醒自己，如果你有什么要添加的，把它留给自己是自私的！



Once you begin contributing, folks will start recognizing your name. Eventually, some may seek your words of wisdom by “@mention”ing you directly or by following you so they get notified every time you post.

一旦你开始贡献，人们就会开始认识你的名字。最终，一些人可能会通过直接“@提到”你或关注你来寻求你的智慧言论，这样他们就会在每次发布时得到通知。

When I lived in Utah, I met several painters who built communities and eventually businesses in this way. One example is landscape oil painter Bryan Mark Taylor, who was part of a community of painters and art enthusiasts participating in and attending plein-air painting competitions up and down the California coastline. He sold his work through these competitions and established a loyal group of collectors and fellow artists, who followed him to Instagram. There he grew his community by posting more of his work and educational videos. When his easel broke on a backpacking trip in the early 2010s, he created the first prototype of the Strada Easel to solve his own problem. And because his community had grown organically over a period of years and through a shared passion, he had thousands of other painters he could share it with who then wanted one for themselves. Today, the Strada Easel makes him and his employees a happy living, and he gets to paint as much as he wants.

当我住在犹他州时，我遇到了几位画家，他们通过这种方式建立了社区并最终创立了业务。一个例子是风景油画家布莱恩·马克·泰勒（Bryan Mark Taylor），他是一群画家和艺术爱好者的社区的一部分，

参加和参观加利福尼亚海岸线上的野外绘画比赛。他通过这些比赛出售自己的作品，并建立了一批忠实的收藏家和同行艺术家，他们跟随他在Instagram上成长。在那里，他通过发布更多的作品和教育视频来扩大他的社区。在2010年代初，他在背包旅行中的画架坏了，于是他创建了第一个Strada画架原型来解决自己的问题。因为他的社区经过多年的有机生长和共同的热情，他有成千上万的其他画家可以分享给他们，他们接着也想要一个。今天，Strada画架使他和他的员工过上了快乐的生活，他可以随心所欲地画画。

Once you're regularly cultivating relationships by contributing to the conversation, the time will come when you're ready to go further and educate others. But what will you say and how will you engage the people you've come to know and respect in your community? It's all about creating value and can all be summed up by three signs Nathan Barry, the founder of ConvertKit, which provides email marketing for creators, has hanging in his office. They read:

一旦你通过参与对话定期培养关系，就会有一个时机让你准备向别人传授知识。但是你将会说些什么，如何与你认识和尊敬的社区中的人进行互动呢？一切都是关于创造价值，并可以概括为三个标志，ConvertKit创始人Nathan Barry在他的办公室挂着。它们写着：

- o “Work in Public”
“公众工作”
- o “Teach Everything You Know”
“传授你所知一切”
- o “Create Every Day”
“每天创造”

If you're always learning, you'll always have something to teach others about their own next best steps.

如果你一直在学习，你将一直有一些关于别人自己的最佳下一步的东西要教别人。

When Nathan started blogging and publishing ebooks in 2006, he struggled to grow the community for his work, while others in his space

seemed to have no trouble at all. One web designer he followed was Chris Coyier, who was regularly posting articles and tutorials on his website, CSS-Tricks.com.

当Nathan在2006年开始写博客和出版电子书时，他很难扩大他的工作社区，而其他同行似乎毫不费力。他关注的一位网络设计师是Chris Coyier，他经常在他的网站CSS-Tricks.com上发布文章和教程。

Chris had a following based on his articles, and in 2012 when he needed \$3,500 for living expenses to take a month off to redesign his site, he promised recorded tutorials about the redesign process in exchange for a contribution to his Kick-starter campaign. In short order, Chris raised \$87,000. “I couldn’t help but think how Chris and I had equal skill sets when it came to web design,” Nathan writes. “We started at the same time and progressed at the same rate. So how did Chris have the ability to flip the switch and make \$87,000 off a Kickstarter campaign and I didn’t have the ability at all? What was the difference?”

克里斯的文章让他有了一大批追随者。2012年，他需要3500美元的生活费，以便花一个月的时间重设计他的网站。他承诺录制有关重设计过程的教程，以换取Kickstarter活动的捐款。很快，克里斯筹集了87000美元。“我不禁想到，克里斯和我在网站设计方面的技能水平是相等的，”纳森写道。“我们同时开始，进步速度也一样。那么，为什么克里斯能够轻松筹集87000美元，而我却没有这种能力呢？区别在哪里？”

They were both doing the work, but Chris was sharing it, while Nathan was not. “I realized I would take on a project, do the work, deliver the project and move on,” he said. “Chris did the same thing, BUT before he moved on, he would teach about everything he learned doing that project. When he could, he shared samples, he wrote tutorials about the code he wrote and any specific methods he went through. He did this with every project. The difference was that all along the way, Chris was teaching everything he knew and I wasn’t.” Since that epiphany, ConvertKit has grown to over \$20 million in annual recurring revenue.

他们俩都在做工作，但是克里斯在分享工作，而内森没有。他说：“我意识到我会接手一个项目，完成工作，交付项目，然后继续下一个项目。但是克里斯在继续下一个项目之前，会教授他在完成该项目

时学到的所有知识。他会分享样品，撰写有关他编写代码和任何特定方法的教程。他为每个项目做到这一点。不同的是，沿途一直以来，克里斯在教授他所知道的一切，而我则没有。” 自从有了这个领悟，ConvertKit的年复合收入已经增长到了2000万美元以上。

Chances are, if you've learned something, there's probably a good portion of your community that would find value in learning that same thing from you, even if you aren't the world's leading authority on the subject.

如果你学到了东西，很可能你的社区中还有很多人也会发现从你那里学习同样的东西很有价值，即使你不是这个主题领域的权威。

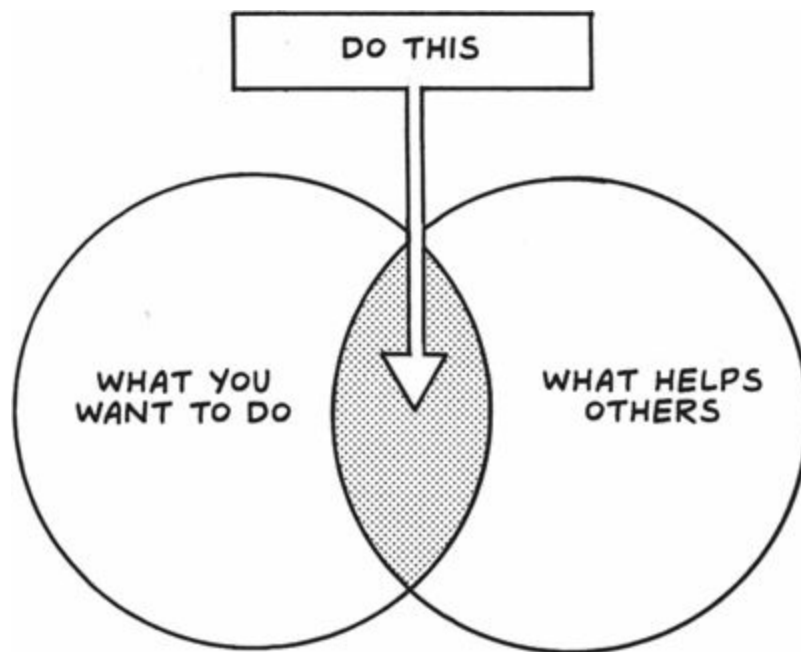
And if you're regularly learning, then you'll always have regular content to contribute to the community. This can become a nice flywheel over time, as teaching often becomes the best way to drive your own curiosity and inspiration to learn more yourself. And when you learn publicly, your students will have questions that force you to learn even more stuff to teach them.

如果你经常学习，就会有持续不断的内容可以为社区做出贡献。随着时间的推移，这可能会成为一个不错的正循环，因为教学通常成为驱动自己好奇心和灵感进一步学习的最佳方法。当你公开学习时，你的学生会有问题，这迫使你学习更多的知识来教导他们。

You don't have to teach *everything* you learn. In fact, a narrower core focus can be better. For example, Patrick Mc-Kenzie, a writer, entrepreneur, and software business expert who is best known for a 2012 post on salary negotiation that has since become a cult classic in the software engineering space, believes that the best personal brands exist at the intersection of two topics. He now works for Stripe, where he continues to write and advise software engineers and software entrepreneurs about how to start and scale their businesses, speaking from real experience as a creator and business owner himself.

你不必教授你所学的一切。事实上，更窄的核心重心可能更好。例如，Patrick Mc-Kenzie是一位作家、企业家和软件业务专家，他因2012年关于薪资谈判的帖子而被认为是软件工程领域的一个文化经典，他认为最好的个人品牌存在于两个主题的交汇处。他现在为Stripe工作，在那里他继续撰写并向软件工程师和软件企业家提供建议，告诉他们如何

开始和扩展他们的业务，他是一个有着真实创作者和企业主身份的人，具有实际经验。



If you're learning every day, which you probably are, you'll have something to share every day. Meanwhile, you'll build your skills and experience, learn to speak the language, and grow your community, all essential ingredients when you eventually have a product you are ready to sell.

如果你每天都在学习，而你很可能是这样的，那么你每天都有东西可以分享。同时，你会提高自己的技能和经验，学会说这种语言，以及扩大社交圈，这些是当你准备出售产品时必备的因素。

Unfortunately, as you probably already know, there are no shortcuts. As you think about what you're creating now and how that might lead to a business in the future, look to the communities you're already a part of. You've invested time and energy there, so perhaps you already have an idea of how to proceed. If you don't, keep going, and continue using your time to get strong, to learn how to paint, to learn how to code, to learn how to write, or to learn whatever else you are into, teaching what you're learning along the way.

不幸的是，正如你已经知道的那样，没有捷径。当你思考你现在所

创造的内容以及它如何引领你未来的事业时，要注重你已经参与的社区。你已经在那里投入了时间和精力，也许你已经有了如何继续前进的想法。如果没有，就继续前进，继续利用你的时间变得更强，学习绘画、编码、写作或者你所喜欢的其他事情，并向你所学的内容发展授课。

When you are proficient enough to monetize what you know, now or in the future, if you've put in the time, you will be part of a sizable community that will eventually be your first group of prospective customers (more on that in chapters 4 and 5). This is an important factor in keeping you honest about the quality of work you are able to produce. Your community should serve as proof that you're improving, producing, and helping others; these people could spend their attention on a gazillion things, and they've chosen you.

当您足够熟练地将所学知识货币化时，现在或将来，如果您花费了足够的时间，您将成为一个庞大的社群的一部分，这个社群最终将成为您第一批潜在客户（更多内容在第4和5章中讨论）。这是保持您诚实制作作品质量的重要因素。您的社群应该作为证明您正在进步、生产和帮助他人的证据；这些人可以将他们的注意力放在无数的事情上，他们选择了您。

Becoming a person who helps people precedes building a business that helps people. It's not a coincidence. When you become a pillar in a community, you gain exposure to the problems that the people within it face. People will come to you, explain their problems, and ask for your help in solving them.

成为一个帮助他人的人先于建立一个帮助他人的企业。这不是巧合。当你成为社区的支柱，你会接触到社区内部的问题。人们会来找你，向你解释他们的问题，并请求你的帮助来解决。

Overnight Success Is a Myth

It took me a long time—until writing this book!—to realize how important communities were to my career. The Gumroad origin story I tell starts with me working as an early engineer at Pinterest. A few months in, on a Friday

night, I was at home learning how to design a photorealistic icon for a side project. I came up with this:

在我写这本书之前，我花了很长时间才意识到社区对我的职业发展是多么重要。我讲述的Gumroad起源故事始于我在Pinterest担任早期工程师。几个月后的一个星期五晚上，我正在家里学习如何为一个副业设计逼真的图标，我想到了这个：



I spent four hours, if I recall correctly. But if I had had a source file to work from, something to see how all the shadows and highlights and shapes came together, it would have taken me half that time. I would have totally paid money for that, at least a buck. And because I was part of a community of like-minded designers, I knew many others would too. Not only that, but a subset of those designers followed me directly on Twitter—all potential customers.

我花了四个小时，如果我没记错的话。但如果有一个源文件供我参考，能够看到所有的阴影、高光 and 形状如何组合在一起，那就只需要一半的时间了。我愿意为此付钱，至少一块钱。因为我是一群志同道合的设计师中的一员，我知道很多人也会这样想。不仅如此，而且这些设计师中的一部分直接在Twitter上关注我，都是潜在的客户。

I looked around online, assuming it was going to be incredibly easy to sell something digital to my audience, but it wasn't. It would have required

setting up a whole storefront and paying a monthly fee. I had stubbed my toe on a problem— a concept we'll explore in more detail later in this chapter.

我在网上四处摸索，本以为向我的观众销售数字产品会非常容易，但实际上并不是这样。这需要建立一个完整的商店并支付每月费用。我遭遇了一个问题，我们稍后在本章中将更详细地探讨这个概念。

I built Gumroad that weekend, launched it Monday morning, and even sold a few copies of that pencil icon.

当周末我建立了Gumroad，在周一早上启动，并售出了一些铅笔图标的副本。

But the classic origin story is incomplete. It turns out I had had a similar problem and thought process before, but I hadn't decided to build Gumroad then. In a blog post from 2012, I wrote about trying unsuccessfully to find a way to sell the source code for a Twitter client app I built for the iPhone. I searched for a solution for a few hours, but I couldn't find anything and gave up.

但是这个经典的起源故事是不完整的。事实证明，在那之前我曾经遇到过类似的问题和思路，但我当时还没有决定建立Gumroad。在一篇2012年的博客文章中，我写过尝试无法成功地寻找一种销售我为iPhone构建的Twitter客户端应用程序源代码的方法。我搜索了几个小时，但是找不到任何解决方法，就放弃了。

A lot had changed in the years between the first time I imagined what would eventually become Gumroad and the second time, but the most important shift was that I had found my communities and had established myself within them by creating, contributing, learning, and teaching. When I had the idea the second time around, I was armed with the confidence, audience, and insights to solve a meaningful problem quickly and effectively.

第一次我想象Gumroad会最终成为什么样子的时候，这几年间发生了很多变化；但最重要的转变是我找到了我的社群，并通过创作、贡献、学习和教授建立了自己的地位。当我第二次想到这个想法时，我怀揣信心、拥有观众和洞见，能够快速有效地解决有意义的问题。

From the outside, it all seems so straightforward, but it took time not only to become part of the community but also to choose the community I wanted to serve and decide on the problem I wanted to solve. There's really no such

thing as overnight success. Most are years in the making, just like my ability to build Gumroad over a weekend was also many years in the works.

从外表看来，一切都非常简单明了，但我花费了不少时间才成为社区的一员，同时选择了我想服务的社区，并决定要解决的问题。成功并非一夜之间就能实现的。大多数人需要花费数年时间才能获得成功，就像我花费多年时间才能周末内开发出Gumroad平台一样。

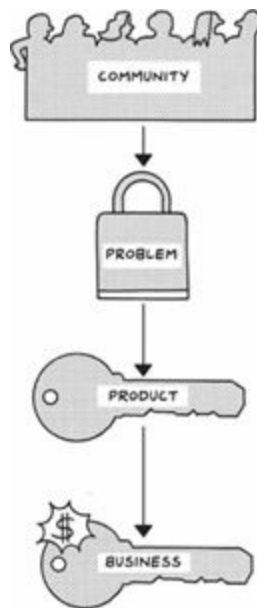
When I was just getting started with web design, parents and teachers were my first clients (a social studies teacher needed a website for her books, while a parent needed help with the online presence of a local charity auction). Over time, I found like-minded web designers on web forums like TalkFreelance, self-described as a “forum for web designers and freelance developers” interested in website design, programming, search engine optimization, and more. Later, I found Hacker News, a site where most of Silicon Valley congregated online. At first, I was a lurker, then a commenter, and then an active contributor. And because my Twitter account was in my profile, as well as in my email signature, I started to collect a small following of people who signaled their interest in following *me*!

当我刚开始做网页设计时，我的第一批客户是家长和老师（一名社会研究老师需要一个关于她的书籍的网站，而一名家长则需要帮助当地慈善拍卖活动的在线宣传）。随着时间的推移，我在像TalkFreelance这样的网络论坛上找到了志同道合的网页设计师，这些网页设计师和自由开发者自我描述为“网页设计师和自由开发者的论坛”，他们对网站设计、编程、搜索引擎优化等方面感兴趣。后来，我发现了Hacker News，这是一个硅谷大部分人在网上聚集的网站。起初，我是一个潜水者，然后成为了评论者，最后成为了积极的贡献者。由于我的Twitter帐户在我的个人资料和电子邮件签名中，我开始收集了一些人的跟随者，他们表达了跟随我的兴趣！

Communities were essential for my personal development and career growth. They were where I made friends and formed business relationships. To this day, I am still meeting people who remember my name or handle from those years. I never had an agenda. I just knew I wanted to be part of Hacker News. And with their help, when I launched Gumroad that first Monday morning, it rocketed to the top of the front page of the site and

stayed there all day. Even though that was just the beginning of my story, it was still confirmation that I had found my people and was where I belonged.

社群对我的个人发展和职业成长至关重要。在这些社群里，我结交了朋友，建立了商业关系。直到今天，我仍然会遇到那些记得我名字或用户名的人。我从来没有一个计划，只是知道我想成为 Hacker News 的一部分。在他们的帮助下，当我在那个星期一早上推出 Gumroad 时，它就迅速升到了该网站首页的首位，并一整天都保持这个位置。尽管那只是我的故事开始，但它仍然证实我找到了我的团队，我属于那里。



Picking the Right Community

Once you are part of a community, you can start to make a list of difficulties its members face, and you can think about how you could build a product or service to solve one or more of them.

一旦你成为社区的一员，你可以开始列出其成员面临的困难清单，然后思考如何构建一个产品或服务来解决其中一个或多个困难。

Every community has a unique set of problems that's calling out for a custom-built solution. You're probably part of a number of communities, but when it comes to making an impact in a community in a way that leads to a minimalist business, you should focus on a community where you can (and

want to): (1) create long-term value; (2) build relationships for decades to come; and (3) carve out a unique, authentic voice for yourself. For the minimalist entrepreneur trying to make an impact, community is a way to stay focused: Instead of changing the world, you can change your community's world.

每个社区都有独特的问题需要定制解决方案。你可能参与了很多个社区，但是当考虑以最小主义的方式影响一个社区，你应该集中精力在一个社区来实现：(1) 创造长期价值；(2) 建立未来数十年的关系；(3) 为自己塑造一个独特、真实的声音。对于试图产生影响的最小企业家来说，社区是保持专注的一种方式：而不是改变世界，你可以改变你的社区世界。

It's not enough to pick any community; you also have to consider your own interests. There are many communities that you may be a part of, but that doesn't mean you want to dedicate a significant portion of your waking hours to solving their problems. Unless some element of the community and its problems overlap with something you're passionate about, it is unlikely you would be happy operating a business within the space—contempt for your customers is not optimal.

不仅仅是选择任何社群，你还必须考虑自己的利益。有许多社群可能会是你的一部分，但这并不意味着你想要花费大部分的时间解决他们的问题。除非社群的某些元素和他们的问题与你的热情重叠，否则你在这个领域经营业务是不可能感到开心的。对您的客户不满意并不是最佳选择。

There are two more important attributes that will decide which is the ideal community to focus on: how large the community is, and how much money they are willing to spend (said differently: the total addressable market, or TAM). The goal here is not to find the largest community with the most dollars to spend in order to capture 1 percent of it. Instead, you should find something right in the middle. Too small, and you won't be able to build a sustainable business. Too large, and it will cost too much money to get to sustainability in the first place—and you will attract or create competitors along the way, leading to a race to the bottom in product pricing that you may not survive.

有另外两个重要的属性决定哪个社区是重点：社区有多大，他们愿意花多少钱（换句话说：总可寻址市场，或TAM）。这里的目标不是找到最大的社区，有最多钱去捕捉其中的1%。相反，应找到居中的目标。太小，无法建立可持续的业务。太大，首先将花费太多的金钱，并且在过程中吸引或创造竞争对手，导致产品定价的价格战，您可能难以生存。

The best way to win is to be the only. And the best way to be the only is to pick a group that is Goldilocks size, has problems they would pay money to solve, and is underserved (likely because it is too small for larger competitors to go after).

赢得胜利的最佳方式是成为唯一的。而成为唯一的最好方法是选择一个正合适的规模的群体，他们有需要愿意花钱去解决的问题，并且是未被满足的（可能是因为规模太小，对于大型竞争对手来说太小了）。

Tope Awotona, founder of Calendly, started three very different companies for three completely different communities before eventually building the scheduling software business in 2013. In 2020, Calendly posted nearly \$70 million in annual recurring revenue, more than double its 2019 figure. But Awotona's first company was a dating app that never really got off the ground. The second was projectorspot.com, which sold (obviously) projectors, but sales were poor and margins small. He tried again with a third startup, selling grills, but as he says, "I didn't know anything about grills and I didn't want to! I lived in an apartment, and never even grilled." Not only was he not part of the grilling community, but he didn't even want to be!

Calendly的创始人托普·阿托瓦纳（Tope Awotona）在2013年建立了这家软件预约公司，但在此之前他曾为完全不同的三个社区创建了三家非常不同的公司，他的第一家公司是一个从未真正起步的约会应用程序，第二家公司是销售投影仪的projectorspot.com，但销售疲软且利润微薄。第三次创业，他转做卖烧烤架，但他说：“我对烧烤架一无所知，也不想知道！我住在公寓里，从来没有烤过。”他不仅不属于烧烤社区，他甚至不想成为它的一份子！2020年，Calendly发布的年度营收接近7000万美元，是2019年的两倍以上。

He took a different approach to building Calendly. He had been a sales rep earlier in his career, and he knew the hassle of sending multiple emails to

schedule meetings. He had even run into the scheduling problem while trying to sell his own products as an entrepreneur. As time went on and his other ideas failed to gain traction, he saw a gap in the marketplace and resolved to address it for the community of sales reps he cared about and understood. He says that “the journey to creating something that’s impactful, something that serves people, something that you know people are willing to open up their wallets and pay for—is not something that you can do just for money.” While lots of people have scheduling fatigue, Awotona focused on problems specific to sales reps, which helped him define a problem he could both solve *and* monetize.

他采取了不同的方法来建立Calendly。他之前曾是一名销售代表，知道发送多个电子邮件来安排会议的麻烦。他甚至在作为企业家销售自己的产品时也遇到了安排日程的问题。随着时间的推移，他的其他想法未能引起轰动，他看到了市场的空缺，并决心为他所关心和理解的销售代表社区解决这个问题。他说“创造有影响力的、为人们服务的、人们愿意打开钱包付费的东西的旅程——这不是为了赚钱而做的。”尽管许多人都对安排日程感到疲劳，但Awotona专注于销售代表具体的问题，这有助于他定义一个既能解决又能赚钱的问题。

What does that mean for you? First, get involved in those communities wherever they are, offline and online. Then, contribute, teach, and, most important, listen. Finally, use the filters above to make sure you are picking the right community to serve.

这对你意味着什么？首先，到线上和线下的社区中去参与。然后，做出贡献、教导和最重要的是倾听。最后，使用上述筛选器确保你选择了正确的社区去为其服务。

Then, your problem becomes: *Which problem should I pick?*

那么，你的问题变成了：我应该选择哪个问题？

Picking the Right Problem to Solve

The late Clayton Christensen described picking the right problem to solve as an opportunity to help customers achieve what they hope to achieve in a particular moment. “What [great companies] really need to home in on,” he

wrote in a 2016 article for *Harvard Business Review*, “is the progress that the customer is trying to make in a given circumstance— what the customer hopes to accomplish: the job to be done.”

克莱顿·克里斯滕森教授曾表示，挑选正确的问题解决方案可以帮助客户在特定时刻实现他们所希望达成的目标。“伟大的公司实际上需要关注的是客户在特定环境下所尝试取得的进展，也就是客户希望实现的任务”，他在2016年发表于哈佛商业评论的文章中写道。

For example, millions of people buy McDonald’s milkshakes. Why? Because McDonald’s found out that the job to be done was to accompany lonely drivers on their trips to work. “Nearly half the milkshakes were sold in the very early morning. It was the only thing [the customers] bought, they were always alone, and they always got in the car and drove off with it.” This is one reason why McDonald’s milkshakes are so viscous: so they last a whole, lonely car ride.

举个例子，数百万人购买麦当劳的奶昔。为什么？因为麦当劳发现完成的工作是陪伴孤独的司机通勤。“几乎一半的奶昔在清晨售出。这是唯一的东西 [顾客购买]，他们总是孤独，他们总是坐在车里开车离开。”这也是为什么麦当劳的奶昔如此浓稠的原因：因为它们可以持续整个孤独的车程。

Now, the McDonald’s marketing team can go into an office and create a problem that could potentially be solved only by their food. Then they can spend hundreds of millions of dollars on advertising to convince people that they have this problem, and that they too could “hire” a milkshake to get the job done.

现在，麦当劳的市场营销团队可以进入办公室，制造一个只有他们的食品才能解决的问题。然后，他们可以花费数亿美元进行广告宣传，说服人们他们也可以“雇用”一杯奶昔来解决这个问题。

Christensen’s idea of “the job to be done” is sound, but Mc-Donald’s is doing it in the wrong order. They didn’t start with the customer; they started with the job to be done, and then sank a ton of money into making customers believe they needed that job to be done.

克里斯滕森关于“要完成的工作”的想法是正确的，但麦当劳的做法是错误的。他们没有从顾客出发，而是从要完成的工作出发，然后投入了

大量资金让顾客相信他们需要完成这个工作。

Minimalist entrepreneurs don't have millions of dollars, nor do they want to manufacture problems for people. Instead, we believe that people already have enough problems, and that our role is to help them get rid of one.

极简主义的企业家没有数百万美元，也不想制造问题给人们。相反，我们认为人们已经有足够的问题，我们的角色是帮助他们摆脱其中的一个。

That is why it is so key to start with community. If you try to make something for everyone, you will likely end up making something that no one really wants or needs. Once you know the group of people you want to help, you will start to see their problems much more readily. There are more problems than businesses. You just have to find them.

因此，从社区开始非常重要。如果你试图为每个人做些事情，你很可能最终做出来的东西没有人真正想要或需要。一旦你知道了你想帮助的人群，你就会更容易地看到他们的问题。问题比企业还多，你只需要找到它们。

Still struggling? Grab a pen and paper. On the left, write down the person/community you would like to help. In the center, write down how they spend their time (buying onions, making icons of pencils on a Friday night, painting). On the right, write down the problems with each activity. It might look like the figure on page 46.

还在苦苦挣扎吗？拿一支笔和一张纸。在左边写下您想帮助的人/社区。在中心，写下他们如何度过时间（购买洋葱，星期五晚上画铅笔图标，绘画）。在右边，写下每个活动的问题。它可能看起来像第46页上的图。

That blankness is like a blank canvas, or a blank page, or a blank business plan. You want to start a business to solve a problem, but you don't have any problems to solve.

这种空白就像一张空白的画布、一张空白的纸或一份空白的商业计划。你想创业解决问题，但却没有问题需要解决。

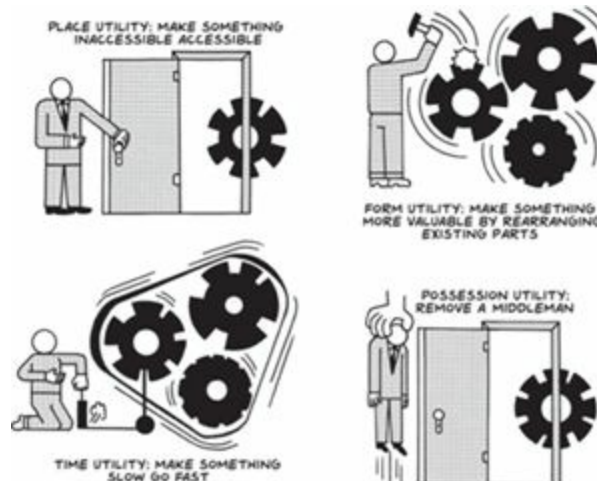
If you're struggling here (many do), some Economics 101 may help. There are only four different types of utility: *place utility*, *form utility*, *time utility*, and *possession utility*. What can you make easier to understand, faster

to get, cheaper to buy, or more accessible to others?

如果您在这方面遇到了困难（许多人都会），一些经济学101可能会有所帮助。只有四种不同类型的效用：地点效用，形态效用，时间效用和占有效用。您能够让理解变得更容易，获取更快，购买更便宜，或者让其他人更容易得到吗？

PERSON	HOBBY/ACTIVITY	PROBLEM
WIFE		
MOM		
PAINTERS	PAINTING	
ME		

- o Place utility: Make something inaccessible accessible
场所效益：使得原本无法接触的事物变得可接触。
- o Form utility: Make something more valuable by rearranging existing parts
形式效用：通过重新排列现有部件使某物更有价值。
- o Time utility: Make something slow go fast
时间工具：让事情变快的工具
- o Possession utility: Remove a middleman
拥有权利：去除中间人



You are not trying to *create* problems for people in order to solve them, à la McDonald's. You are trying to discover inefficiencies in the lives of people you care about so you can help them. These may sound abstract, so let's put the four types of utility in context.

你不是像麦当劳一样试图制造问题以便解决它们，而是试图发现你关心的人生中存在的低效，以便你可以帮助他们。这些可能听起来抽象，所以让我们把四种效用放在上下文中。

A business that farms coffee beans in Ecuador and sells them in San Francisco is changing the “place” property of the beans. Place utility is what you are paying the premium for.

一个在厄瓜多尔种植咖啡豆并在旧金山出售的企业正在改变咖啡豆的“地点”属性。地点效用就是你支付溢价的原因。

If a coffee shop buys beans from a wholesaler and grinds them up, their customers are paying a premium for form utility. (They are also, in theory, paying a premium for place utility if the coffee shop is closer to them than the distributor is. Of course, many businesses are a combination.)

如果一个咖啡店从批发商购买咖啡豆并磨碎它们，他们的顾客就为形式效用支付了溢价。（如果咖啡店比经销商更接近顾客，顾客理论上也为位置效用支付了溢价。当然，许多企业是组合体。）

If they also sell croissants that would take you three days to make, you are also paying a premium for time utility.

如果他们也出售需要你三天时间才能制作的羊角面包，那么你也为时间效用付出了额外费用。

Finally, if you decide it's better for you to invest in a croissant-making machine to make your own croissants than to pay for them over and over again, that's possession utility.

最后，如果你决定购买一个羊角面包制作机来自制羊角面包比多次支付购买更划算，那就是拥有物品效用。

One business that provides time utility is theCut, an app that connects barbers and clients and makes it faster and easier to find, book, and pay for services. Founders Obi Omile and Kush Patel came up with the idea after spending hours struggling to find barbers they liked and trusted. And getting an appointment with the best barbers often meant waiting hours because

many used informal booking systems. TheCut provides utility for both sides. Clients save time, and barbers find new clients (possession utility), spend less time communicating with current ones (time utility), and receive mobile payments (form utility).

一个提供时间效用的企业是TheCut，它是一个连接理发师和客户的应用程序，可以更快、更轻松找到、预订和支付服务。创始人Obi Omile和Kush Patel在花费数小时寻找他们喜欢和信任的理发师后想出了这个想法。而且与最好的理发师预约通常意味着要等上几个小时，因为许多人使用非正式的预订系统。TheCut为双方提供效用。客户节省时间，理发师找到新客户(占有效用)，花费更少时间与当前客户沟通(时间效用)，并获得移动支付(形式效用)。

Omile and Patel built a great business because they understood the problems that plagued the community they planned to serve. Once you've picked your own community, the path to the right solution will become clear for you too.

欧米尔和帕特尔建立了一家伟大的企业，因为他们理解了困扰着他们计划服务的社区的问题。一旦你选择了自己的社区，正确的解决方案的道路也会变得清晰明了。

Solving Your Own Problem

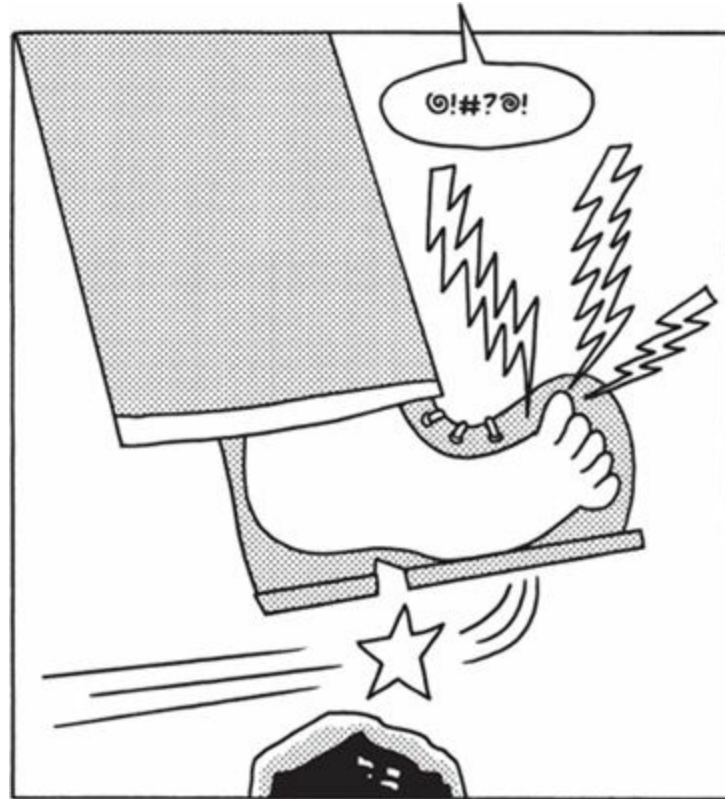
Everyone has problems, “stubbing their toe” throughout their day. You may look around and think your life is pretty good, and maybe the folks around you do too. Or maybe the problems are obvious, and you already know what you want to build.

每个人都会一天中遇到“被脚趾头绊到”的问题。你可能环顾四周，觉得自己的生活还算不错，可能周围的人也是这样想的。或者问题很明显，你已经知道想要建立什么。

But most people, from my experience, miss these moments when they get whiplash from something being much harder or more painful than they initially expected. The brain adapts quickly, assuming the new state of things. It's *meant* to be this hard, it thinks, or there's a really good reason that it is, or it would be too annoying to change. I think that's the wrong way to go about

life. Life is getting better all the time, and you can help accelerate the pace.

但是，大多数人根据我的经验，会错过这些时刻，当他们由于某些事情比他们最初预期的要难或更痛苦而遭受颈椎扭伤。大脑很快适应了新的状态。它认为这是必须要这么难，或者有很好的原因，否则改变将会太烦人。我认为这是错误的生活方式。生活一直在变得更好，你可以加速这种进程。



Basecamp had their own version of this moment when they were struggling to find the right tool to manage products with their clients. As founder Jason Fried says, “We went looking for a tool to do this. What we found were ancient relics. To us, project management was all about communication. None of the software makers at the time seemed to agree. So we decided to make our own.”

当Basecamp努力寻找适合与客户一起管理产品的正确工具时，他们有自己的这个时刻。正如创始人Jason Fried所说，“我们寻找一种工具来做这件事。我们找到的只是古老的遗物。对我们来说，项目管理与沟通息息相关。当时的软件制造商似乎都不同意。因此，我们决定制作自己

的软件。”

When they launched, they were already an essential part of the online product management and web design community, with a well-read blog and dozens of clients. How did this help them?

当他们推出时，他们已经成为在线产品管理和网页设计社区的重要组成部分，拥有广受欢迎的博客和数十个客户。这对他们有何帮助？

In Jason's words: "We decided early on that if we were able to generate around \$5,000/month after a year (or about \$60,000 in annual revenue), we'd have a good thing going. Turns out, we hit that number in about six weeks. So we absolutely were on to something." When they had something ready to show their community, it turned out that many members had encountered the same roadblock.

根据Jason的话，“我们早早决定，如果我们在一年后能够每月产生约5000美元（即每年约60,000美元的收入），我们的事情会很好。结果，我们在大约六个星期内就达到了这个数字。所以我们绝对有了一些有前途的东西。”当他们准备向社区展示他们的成果时，结果发现许多成员遇到了相同的障碍。

If you have a problem, other people probably do too. Like many chefs, Nick Kokonas regularly faced the issue of lost revenue from no-shows at his Chicago restaurants. In a bid to solve his own problem, he cofounded Tock, which manages demand through traditional reservations but also through ticketing, which allows diners to prepay for reservations and special events and permits restaurants to create "demand pricing" based on the desirability of reservation times. Prior to 2020, Tock was in thirty countries and two hundred cities, and was in use by thousands of restaurants, including some of the world's best. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Tock innovated further by launching Tock to Go, which allows customers to reserve and purchase restaurant meals for pickup from restaurants that may not have offered takeout or delivery ever before.

如果你有问题，其他人可能也有。就像许多大厨一样，尼克·科科纳斯经常面对芝加哥餐厅没有出现的客人而造成的收入损失问题。为了解决自己的问题，他共同创办了Tock，该公司通过传统的预订管理需求，同时还通过门票销售来管理需求，让用餐者可以提前付款预订和特别活

动，并允许餐厅根据预订时间的吸引力创建“需求定价”。在2020年之前，Tock已经进入了30个国家和200个城市，并被成千上万家餐厅使用，其中包括一些世界上最好的餐厅。在COVID-19疫情期间，Tock进一步创新，推出了Tock to Go，让客户可以预订和购买从以前可能从未提供过外卖或送餐的餐厅取餐的餐点。

All of these businesses and many, many more hark back to community as a starting point. After all, if the problem you are solving for other people is also one you are solving for yourself, you will be able to kill a lot of birds with one stone. And if you build a product to solve your own problem, you will have at least one user—more than most startups ever get. Plus, you can talk to that user every single second of the day!

所有这些企业，以及许多其他企业，都始于社区。毕竟，如果你解决的问题也是你自己的问题，你就能一石二鸟。如果你构建一个产品来解决自己的问题，你至少有一个用户——比大多数初创企业都要多。此外，你可以每天每秒都与该用户交流！

Building the Right Solution

Most businesses do not work, even if they are solving a real problem. This is often because while they are building something people want, they are not building it in the right way with the right minimalist mindset. So what kind of business can you build without a dollar of venture capital, appropriate to your skills and resources, in line with your mission, and viable in the marketplace? 大多数企业即使能解决真实问题，也无法运营。这往往是因为他们虽然正在建造人们想要的东西，但却没有用正确的极简主义思维方式去构建。那么，在没有风险投资的情况下，你可以建立什么样的企业呢？它需要适应你的技能和资源，符合你的使命，并在市场上可行。

It is also important to ask: If your business achieves its potential, what kind of positive impact might it make on the world? That, not the lure of an IPO, should be the guiding light for the founders of a company and all of its employees.

问一下非常重要：如果您的企业发挥了全部潜力，对世界会产生怎样的积极影响？这应该成为公司创始人和所有员工的指南之光，而不是

IPO的诱惑。

These are the criteria I use:

以下是我使用的标准:

- o **Will I love it?** Building a business is hard and time-consuming. It will take years. And the more successful it is, the longer you will work on it. So it's important to find something you *want* to work on, for people you *want* to work for. To build a successful business, you need to build something people love. To stick with it, you need to build something *you* love working on.

我会喜欢它吗？创业是困难和耗时间的。这需要很多年时间。而且，成功的程度越高，您需要工作的时间就越长。所以，找到想要从事的事情，并为您想要为其工作的人构建业务非常重要。要建立一个成功的业务，您需要构建一些人们喜欢的东西。为了坚持下去，您需要构建一些您喜欢从事的事情。

- o **Will it be inherently monetizable?** There should be a clear path to charging people money for something of value, in a way that feels obvious. If it makes sense, it'll make cents.

它将天生具有货币化特质吗？应该有一条明确的路径来为有价值的东西收费，而这种方式应该很显然。如果它有意义，它就会创造收益。

- o **Does it have an internal growth mechanism?** In 2020, Gumroad's revenues almost doubled due solely to word of mouth. In our case, it's impossible to use the product without sharing it with other people, and as a result, we've been able to "outsource" our sales and marketing efforts because our customer base does the work for us as their customers use our platform. This is true of a lot of minimalist businesses, especially because you're going to build a great product people want to tell others about, and that they may eventually want to use themselves.

它是否具有内部增长机制？2020年，Gumroad的收入几乎翻了一番，仅因口碑而起。在我们的情况下，如果没有与其他人分享产品，就无法使用产品，因此，我们已经能够“外包”销售和营销工作，因为我们的客户群为我们的平台而努力，当他们的客户使用我

们的平台时，他们会为我们的产品推广。这适用于许多极简主义企业，特别是因为您将要构建一个众人想要告诉其他人的优秀产品，而且他们可能最终希望自己使用这个产品。

- o **Do I have the right natural skill sets to build this business?** For example, if the business requires a lot of business development or sales calls to get off the ground, and you are deathly scared of speaking to anyone, then it's probably not a good fit for you. There are a lot of businesses waiting to be built—pick the right one for you.

我是否具备构建这个企业所需的自然技能？例如，如果需要大量的业务开发或销售电话才能起步，而你害怕与人交谈，那么这可能不适合你。有许多企业等待着建立 - 选择适合你的那一个。

No one book contains everything you'll need to know for starting any kind of business. The important thing is the thought process you bring to figuring things out for yourself. You need the right mindset and to know what questions to ask yourself. It begins and ends by thinking of your business as a tool to solve a customer's problem. Not as a lottery ticket.

没有一本书包含了你在开始任何类型的业务时所需要知道的全部。重要的是你运用思维过程去自己探索问题。你需要正确的心态和知道应该问自己什么问题。它从将你的业务视为解决客户问题的工具开始和结束。而不是将其看作一张彩票。

Squashing Your Doubts

Finally, even though you have an idea you are excited about and are confident you can build, at some point you will have doubts. Surround yourself with colleagues and mentors who will not only tell you the truth but will also encourage you when the going gets tough. After all, people need cheerleaders, not just advice. Inspiring (and inspired) founders and leaders are not born, they are made. Almost anyone can do it, with enough patience, guidance, and sincerity.

最终，即使你有一个你对此感到兴奋并且有信心能够实现的想法，但在某个时刻你会产生怀疑。与那些不仅会告诉你真相而且在艰难时期还会

鼓励你的同事和导师交往。毕竟，人们需要的不仅是建议，还有啦啦队。有鼓舞人心的（和受启发的）创始人和领导者并不是天生的，他们是培养出来的。几乎任何人都能做到，只要有足够的耐心，指导和诚恳。

A minimalist business can meet you where you are. It can grow with you as you grow (more on this in chapter 6). I would be lying if I said talent didn't matter at all, but what truly makes great founders and great businesses in the long term is a great deal of persistence. And one way to maximize your chances of success is to focus on a smaller product, on a community you are a core part of, and to be honest about whether you are solving the problem effectively or not. That's why a mindful approach to selling to a community you already have a relationship with is so important.

一家极简主义企业可以满足你在哪里的需求。随着你的成长，它可以与你共同成长（第6章会更多地阐述此问题）。如果说才华一点不重要，那我是在撒谎。但长期来看，真正使创始人和企业成为伟大之物的是极高的坚持精神。而要最大程度地增加成功的机会，方法之一就是集中精力开发一个小型产品，针对自己所在核心社区，并诚实地思考自己是否有效解决了问题。这就是为什么有意识地向已有关系的社区销售如此重要。

When you have doubts—and you will have doubts—go back to the fact that you've already started the work. By now, you will have (1) zeroed in on a mission-aligned problem to solve and (2) generated feasible ideas for a bootstrapped business that can tackle that problem profitably and sustainably. All you need to do from here, is to keep going.

当你有疑虑时——你一定会有疑虑——回想一下你已经开始了工作这个事实。到现在为止，你已经(1)瞄准了一个与使命相关的问题来解决，以及(2)为一个可以有盈利和可持续性解决这个问题的自助创业企业产生了可行的想法。从现在开始，你只需要继续前进。

KEY TAKEAWAYS

主要收获

- o It's the community that leads you to the problem, which leads you to the product, which

leads you to your business.

"是社区引领你找到问题，找到了问题你才会找到产品，找到了产品你才能创立自己的业务。"

- o Once you've found community-you fit, start contributing with the intention of becoming a pillar in that community.
一旦你找到了属于你的社群，开始做出贡献的时候，有意识地努力成为社群中的重要支柱。
- o Pick the right problem (it's probably one you have), and confirm that others have it. Then confirm you have business-you fit too.
选择合适的问题（可能是你遇到的），并确认他人也遇到了同样的问题。然后确认你有适合的商业解决方案。
- o When in doubt, always go back to the community. They will help you keep going and ultimately succeed.
当你不确定时，总是回到社区。他们会帮助你继续前进并最终成功。

Learn More

- o Check out "1,000 True Fans," a blog post by Kevin Kelly.
请看Kevin Kelly的博客文章“1000个真实粉丝”。
- o Read *Get Together*, a book by Bailey Richardson, Kai Elmer Sotto, and Kevin Huynh.
一起读书，一本由贝利·理查森，凯·艾尔默·索托和凯文·胡恩共同撰写的书。
- o Read "How We Gather," a report by Casper ter Kuile and Angie Thurston.
阅读 Casper ter Kuile 和 Angie Thurston 的报告《我们如何聚集》。
- o Listen to Calendly's Tope Awotona on Guy Raz's *How I Built This* podcast.
请听Calendly的Tope Awotona在Guy Raz的“*How I Built This*”播客中的讲述。
- o Follow Anne-Laure Le Cunff on Twitter (@anthilemoon). She runs a successful online community for makers, community builders, creators, and more.
请在推特上关注Anne-Laure Le Cunff (@anthilemoon)。她运营着一个成功的在线社区，为创客、社区建设者、创作者等提供服务。

3

**build as little
as possible**

Make **SOMETHING** people want.

让人们想要的东西。

— Y COMBINATOR

— Y组合器

Make something **PEOPLE** want.

做有人想要的东西。

— ME

- 我

The previous chapter was all about finding a problem worth solving for people worth solving it for. In this chapter, I explain how to develop your idea and how to figure out what you need to do now versus what can wait until you're in business. Knowledge is important, but so is momentum. You don't want to get so in the weeds on which programming language to learn that you never start making your dream app. Especially at the beginning, minimalist entrepreneurs have to stick to what is truly essential rather than try to learn and do everything all at once.

上一章是关于为值得解决的人发现有意义的问题。在本章中，我将解释如何开发您的想法并确定您现在需要做什么以及可以等到您开展业务。知识很重要，但势头也很重要。您不希望在学学习哪种编程语言时陷入困境，从而永远无法开始制作梦想的应用。特别是在初期，最小化创业者必须坚持真正必要的事情，而不是试图一次性学习和做所有事情。

While writers are often told to “write what you know,” for entrepreneurs the process isn't so simple. When you're starting a business, you're often imagining something—a product, a service, a business model—that's never been done before. That said, most successful minimalist entrepreneurs have a solid background (or interest) in one aspect of the business they're starting even if they don't know everything about it or exactly how to begin.

尽管作家通常被告知“写自己擅长的”，但对于企业家来说，这个过程并不那么简单。当你开始创业时，你往往在想象一些以前从未做过的事情 - 产品、服务或商业模式。也就是说，大多数成功的极简主义企业家都对他们开始的业务方面有坚实的背景（或兴趣），即使他们并不知道所有关于它的信息或者确切如何开始。

For me, it was designing pretty, accessible software. When the iPhone App Store launched in 2008, I was one of its first wave of developers. Not because I was determined to start a business, but because I was following my passions and curiosity.

对我来说，设计漂亮、易用的软件很有趣。2008年iPhone应用商店推出时，我是其中第一批开发者之一。我并非决定要创业，而是因为我跟随自己的兴趣和好奇心前行。

Unfortunately, in my conversations with aspiring founders, this moment is

when most folks decide that building a business is not for them. They have the passion, but they let self-doubt creep in, convincing themselves that they don't possess the hard skills they think they need, such as iOS programming or financial modeling. Let me tell you a secret. Every founder, even the most successful ones, knows nothing at the beginning, and learns from there. This is about interests, not skills. Instead of focusing on the things you do not know, focus on the things you do.

不幸的是，在与有抱负的创始人的交谈中，大多数人都会在这个时候决定建立企业不适合他们。他们有激情，但是他们会让自己怀疑蔓延开来，让自己相信他们没有他们认为自己所需要的硬技能，例如iOS编程或财务建模。让我告诉你一个秘密。每个创始人，即使是最成功的创始人，在开始时都一无所知，并从那里学习。这是关于兴趣，而不是技能。与其专注于自己不知道的事情，不如专注于自己了解的事情。

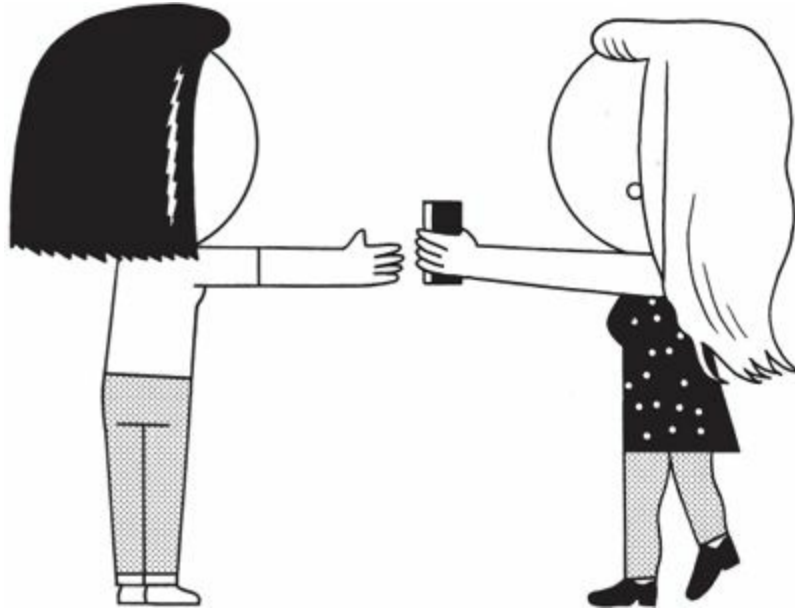
You do not need a team, money, or a degree to start building. You don't need to ship or to code to make your idea come to life— *at first*. You might need them later, but when you are armed with a product that people truly value, these things will be easier and cheaper to acquire than you think. Often, they will find you. If your passion to solve a problem is genuine, you can overcome obstacles on your path one at a time. If you're on a mission to serve customers, you can learn what you need to know and delegate the rest. Just figure out where your skills, knowledge, and background intersect with the business you have in mind and leverage these strengths to the hilt. Don't get permission. Just get started.

你不需要团队、金钱或学位来开始建设。你不需要发货或代码来让你的想法变为现实-至少在一开始不需要。你以后可能会需要它们，但当你拥有一个真正受人们重视的产品时，这些东西将比你想象的更容易和更便宜得到。通常，它们会找到你。如果你解决问题的热情是真诚的，你可以一次克服一次地克服自己道路上的障碍。如果你要为顾客服务，你可以学习你需要知道的内容并委派其他任务。只要找出你的技能、知识和背景与你心中的业务交错的地方，充分利用这些优势。不要请求许可，立即开始。

Anna Gát, founder and CEO of Interintellect, was determined to build platforms where people could peacefully share their beliefs in spite of

growing polarization in public intellectual and political spaces. The first inkling of the idea had come to her between Brexit and the 2016 elections in the United States. Gát felt that a great cultural shift was happening, and she was eager to be part of creating the way the world would look in the years to come. It was a bold idea, but she had accomplished a similarly challenging task several years before as cofounder of Hungary's leading women's rights website and events community, for which she won a *Glamour* Woman of the Year Award. Now she was focused on creating mediated spaces that would allow people with irreconcilable opinions to come together. Her first iteration was a platform for academics where adversarial conversation and research could take place, but within a few months, she found working with that community to be a much slower process than she had anticipated. What she was building wasn't scalable.

创始人兼首席执行官安娜·加特（Anna Gát）创建了Interintellect，旨在建立平台，让人们可以在公共知识和政治领域不断扩大的两极分化中和平地分享自己的信仰。这个想法的最初想法是在英国脱欧和2016年美国选举之间来到她的脑海中。加特认为文化大变革正在发生，她渴望成为创建未来世界看起来的方式的一部分。这是一个大胆的想法，但是几年前作为匈牙利领先的女性权利网站和活动社区的联合创始人，她已经完成了类似的具有挑战性的任务，并因此获得了Glamour年度女性奖。现在，她专注于创建媒介空间，使具有不可调和观点的人可以共同进入。她的第一个迭代版本是面向学者的平台，在那里可以进行对抗性对话和研究，但是几个月后，她发现与该社区合作要比她预期的慢得多。她正在构建的东西不可扩展。



Her second version of the product, a messaging app that would facilitate public discourse through artificial intelligence, was even more ambitious. For two years, she poured all of her energy, money, and time into building a new platform, working nights and spending every dollar she had to fund testing and development. Unfortunately, as the product moved closer to launch, many people who had said they would use the app were not as interested as they had indicated in preliminary research.

她的第二个产品版本是一款通过人工智能促进公共话语的消息应用程序，其雄心更加远大。她花费了两年时间，倾注了所有精力、金钱和时间来构建一个新平台，通宵达旦地工作并用她所有的钱来资助测试和开发。不幸的是，随着产品接近发布，许多曾表示会使用该应用程序的人，在初步调查中显示的兴趣并不像他们所表明的那样高。

“I was hell-bent on building technology,” she says, and the whole endeavor had been so expensive and time-consuming that she was reluctant to abandon it. But in the meantime, she was organizing in-person salons where people could share their opinions and ideas. She didn’t consider these gatherings to be a business, but she knew she had inadvertently created the vibrant intellectual community she had been seeking—it was just happening through the salons rather than through the app.

她说：“我一心要建立技术”，整个尝试都非常昂贵和耗时，以至于她

不愿放弃。但与此同时，她组织了面对面的沙龙，供人们分享他们的观点和想法。她并不认为这些聚会是一个生意，但她知道她已经无意中创建了一个充满活力的智力社区 - 它只是通过沙龙而不是应用程序发生的。

Her entire career had been in tech, so building a company with zero tech felt counterintuitive. She abandoned the app anyway and pursued the “grander” idea based on the energy and fun she felt in the salon community. Now Interintellect is growing sustainably and realizing her initial dreams by way of a low-tech, systematized solution that reflects what her customers want and need.

她一直从事科技行业，因此建立一家零科技公司感觉有些违反直觉。尽管如此，她还是放弃了这个应用，追求那个更“豪华”的想法，这个想法基于她在美容社群中感受到的能量和乐趣。现在，Interintellect正在可持续增长，并通过低技术、系统化的解决方案实现她最初的梦想，反映了客户的需求和想法。

Later in this chapter we’ll talk more about Interintellect, but I get why so many people start with software or technology when building a business. I love it too, but it’s far too constricting at the beginning of the creative process. It makes the stakes too high, and it’s too serious, expensive, and stressful! That doesn’t mean you shouldn’t use engineering strategies to get started. It’s just that you don’t have to jump straight into coding or programming to create the processes that will power your minimalist business.

在本章后面我们会更多地谈论Interintellect，但我理解为什么许多人在创业时从软件或技术入手。我也喜欢它，但在创意过程的开始阶段它太过束缚。这会使得风险过高，太过严肃、昂贵和有压力！这并不意味着你不能使用工程策略来开始创业。只是你不必一开始就着手编写代码或进行编程来创建驱动你的极简主义业务的过程。

The world will tell you to go big or go home, but I say go small at the beginning. And the smallest you could possibly start is to build nothing at all. Instead of skipping straight to software, stick with pen and paper.

世界会告诉你要么大干一场，要么滚回家。但我建议在开始时要小心谨慎。最小的起点是什么也不做。不要直接上手写软件，而是坚持使

用笔和纸。

Start with Process

Every big idea was small first. If you don't start small, if you can't help people one by one, you will struggle to build a business around your idea. Leave your ego at the door, set aside your concerns about funding and software, and focus on your first customers, using your time and your expertise to solve real problems for real people.

每个大的想法最初都是很小的。如果你不从小做起，无法一次次帮助人，你就会为了围绕你的想法建立业务而挣扎。把你的自我放在一边，放下对资金和软件的顾虑，专注于你的第一个客户，利用你的时间和专业知识为真实的人解决真正的问题。

Now that people know you, trust you, and perhaps even turn to you for expertise, it is time to start helping them in a systematic, repeatable way that allows for continuous improvement and iteration. As you fulfill the first customer cycle, document each part of the process so that with every consecutive customer you have a playbook. This document will be the true MVP of your business. I'm not talking about the minimum viable product that we're all trying to build and to launch. I'm talking about the *manual valuable process* that precedes it and will be the foundation for the business you're trying to build.

现在人们知道你，信任你，甚至可能因为你的专业知识而向你求助，因此现在是时候开始系统地、可重复地帮助他们，为持续改进和迭代创造条件。在完成第一个客户周期时，记录每个过程的每个部分，以便为每个连续的客户创建一个操作手册。这个文档将是你的业务的真正 MVP。我所说的不是我们都在努力构建和推出的最小可行产品。我说的是它之前的可持续价值过程，它将是你的企业的基础。

Methodically creating this manual valuable process and recording the steps you take to complete it will help you figure out what's working and what isn't. It will also help you discover if you're making something that people actually need or will buy. In his book *Anything You Want*, CD Baby founder Derek Sivers writes, "If you want to make a movie recommendation

service, start by telling friends to call you for movie recommendations. When you find a movie your friends like, they buy you a drink. Keep track of what you recommended and how your friends liked it, and improve from there.”

有目的地创建这个有价值的流程手册，并记录完成它所需的步骤，有助于您找出哪些方面起作用，哪些方面不起作用。这也有助于您发现您是否在制作人们真正需要或会购买的东西。在他的书《你想要的一切》中，CD Baby创始人Derek Sivers写道：“如果您想创建一个电影推荐服务，请告诉朋友打电话给您进行电影推荐。当您找到朋友喜欢的电影时，他们会请您喝一杯。记录您的推荐内容和朋友的喜好，并从中改进。”

Unfortunately, the English language does not have a word for this activity, so I made one up:

不幸的是，英语中没有一个专用的词汇来形容这种活动，因此我自己发明了一个词：

processize (verb)

处理化

to turn into a process:

转化为流程

After they tested it on their friends, they processized their recommendation system.

在他们对朋友们的测试后，他们对他们的推荐系统进行了加工处理。

It really should be a word in the dictionary because it is so important on the path to building a business the right way. Unfortunately, many people miss this step, falter, and ultimately fail because they go straight from problem to product before learning exactly what and how to build. But processizing is a cheap, quick discovery process that is essential. “Creating a product is a process of discovery, not mere implementation. Technology is applied science,” Naval Ravikant says.

它确实应该成为词典中的一个词，因为在正确建立业务的道路上它

非常重要。不幸的是，许多人会错过这个步骤，犹豫不决，最终会失败，因为他们直接从问题转向产品，而没有学会如何以及如何建立。但是，“过程化”是一个便宜，快速的发现过程，是不可或缺的。“创建产品是一个发现过程，而不仅仅是实施。技术是应用科学，”Naval Ravikant说。

Without processization, you may think you know what the customer actually wants, maybe even because the customer has told you what they want, and maybe even what they would pay for. But as Anna Gát can tell us, talk is cheap. Until you get through the entire process of solving the customer’s problem and (ultimately) receiving payment, you won’t know what the customer wants and is willing to pay for. You need to solve one customer’s problem reasonably well, if imperfectly, before you can scale. If it works, great. If it doesn’t, you may realize *you* want to scale up, but your customers couldn’t care less. If that’s the case, you may want to consider a different idea.

没有过程化，你可能会认为自己知道客户想要什么，甚至可能是因为客户告诉过你他们想要什么，甚至愿意为此付费。但正如Anna Gát所说，说话容易做事难。除非你完成解决客户问题的整个过程并最终收到付款，否则你不会知道客户想要什么并愿意为此付费。你需要合理地解决一个客户问题，即使不是完美的，才能进行扩展。如果成功了，太好了。如果不成功，你可能会意识到想要扩展，但你的客户却并不在意。如果是这种情况，你可能需要考虑不同的想法。

One minimalist business built on process is Endcrawl.com. For eight years, founder John “Pliny” Eremic ran a post-production company for the film industry and watched filmmakers struggle to produce the end credits that listed all of the people, places, and organizations that appeared in or contributed to the making of a film. He and his cofounder, Alan Grow, knew there had to be a better way, and the obvious answer was some kind of software to manage the endless changes and updates that made the process so painful. But they didn’t start there; instead, they set up a Google Sheet and a simple Perl script to build end credits to help them learn about their customers and validate some of their core assumptions. Their initial process looked like this:

建立在流程上的极简主义企业之一是Endcrawl.com。创始人John “Pliny” Eremic运营了一家制片公司长达八年，看到电影制作人为了制作列出所有出现或对电影制作有贡献的人、地点和组织的字幕而苦苦挣扎。他和联合创始人Alan Grow知道必须有更好的方法，显然答案是某种软件来管理无尽的变化和更新，因此他们并没有从那里开始；相反，他们搭建了一个Google表格和一个简单的Perl脚本来建立字幕，以帮助了解客户并验证他们的一些核心假设。他们最初的流程如下：

- o First, they gave customers a Google Sheet with their end credits formatted to their specifications.
首先，他们提供给客户一个谷歌表格，以符合他们要求的终点信用格式。
- o Customers could edit the Google Sheet as often and as much as they like.
顾客可以随意编辑谷歌表格，而且没有次数和数量的限制。
- o Once customers wanted a new “render” or video output of the credits, they emailed the request.
一旦客户想要一个新的“呈现”或信用视频输出，他们会通过电子邮件发送请求。
- o Pliny or Alan manually exported their Google Sheet to CSV.
Pliny或Alan手动将他们的Google表格导出为CSV。
- o Then they manually ran the CSV through the Perl script.
然后他们手动通过Perl脚本运行了CSV文件。
- o Next, they manually uploaded the files to Dropbox.
然后，他们手动将文件上传到Dropbox。
- o Finally, they manually emailed the customer the download link.
最终，他们手动给客户发送了下载链接电子邮件。

For filmmakers used to waiting up to twenty-four hours, it was a revelation that this process, even manually, took only about fifteen minutes. It also allowed the customers to control their data and to do an unlimited number of revisions for a fixed price until the credits were just right. For customers, life was just a little bit better. For Pliny and Alan, it was a chance for discovery.

对于那些习惯于等待长达24小时的电影制片人来说，这个过程只需要大约15分钟的时间，即使是手动操作，这也是一次革新。它还允许客户掌控自己的数据，并且以固定价格进行无限次修订，直到制作到完美为止。对于顾客来说，生活变得更加美好了，而对于普林尼和艾伦来说，则是一次发现的机会。

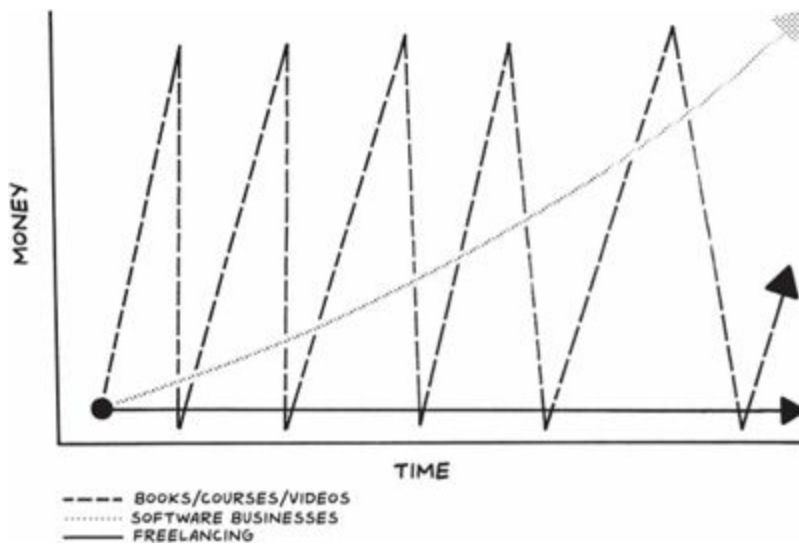
Build Last

Even after you help your first few customers, you might not be totally sure how to solve the problem you have chosen to solve for your community, but one of the easiest ways to get started and to experiment is to freelance. Selling your time does not scale nearly as well as other types of businesses but can generate positive cash flow much sooner, giving you the breathing room to think about what comes next.

即使您帮助了您的前几位客户，您可能仍然不确定如何解决您为社区选择解决的问题，但是开始和进行实验的最简单方法之一是自由职业。销售您的时间并不能像其他类型的企业那样快速扩展，但可以更快地产生积极的现金流，为您留出思考接下来要做什么的余地。

In my experience, many of the best minimalist businesses started out as freelance work or side projects before evolving into viable companies with potential for long-term growth. As you consider what exactly to build, there are a few routes that will get you to a profitable, sustainable business in the quickest, most efficient way. They are:

根据我的经验，许多最好的极简主义企业都是从自由职业工作或副业项目开始，然后发展成为具有长期增长潜力的可行公司。在考虑究竟要建立什么的同时，有几个路线可以使您以最快最高效的方式获得盈利并维持可持续的业务。它们是：



Forms of self-employment income for developers

开发者的自我雇佣收入形式

- o **Selling your knowledge and teaching people via digital content (videos, ebooks, podcasts, and courses).** Lynda.com, which LinkedIn acquired in 2015, grew from a book and a series of in-person workshops led by Lynda Weinman. When the dot-com bubble burst in 2001, Lynda and her husband, Bruce Heavin, offered a subscription service to the online educational videos they made about web design, an idea that was new at the time. At first it seemed that the business would not survive, but as Lynda.com's subscribers grew from just a few hundred to hundreds of thousands, their industry impact also expanded astronomically. 将您的知识通过数字内容（视频、电子书、播客和课程）销售并教授人们。LinkedIn在2015年收购的Lynda.com始于一本书和由Lynda Weinman领导的一系列线下研讨会。当2001年互联网泡沫破灭时，Lynda和她的丈夫Bruce Heavin提供了一个有关网页设计的在线教育视频订阅服务，这个想法当时非常新颖。起初看起来这个业务无法生存，但随着Lynda.com的订阅者从仅有的几百个增加到数十万，他们的行业影响力也极大地扩展了。
- o **Selling a physical product (merchandise or a unique product offering).** Noxgear manufactures light-up visibility vests for runners and cyclists. The idea first came to cofounders Tom Walters and Simon

Curran when they patched together a version of what would eventually become the Tracer360 for their nighttime ultimate Frisbee games. When they looked into what was available in the marketplace for early-morning and late-night athletes, they saw an opportunity, prototyped their product, and sold the first five hundred vests on Kickstarter. They've since added the Lighthouse, a light-up harness for dogs.

销售实体产品（商品或独特的产品）。Noxgear制造适用于跑步者和骑自行车者的发光可见性背心。创始人Tom Walters和Simon Curran最初构思Tracer360的想法是在玩夜间究极飞盘游戏时将其拼凑在一起的。当他们了解早晨和晚间运动员市场上的产品时，他们看到了一个机会，制作了原型产品，并在Kickstarter上销售了前500件背心。此后，他们又推出了Lighthouse，一款适用于狗狗的发光背带。

- o **Connecting people for a flat or percentage fee.** Craig Newmark started Craigslist as an email list among his friends, highlighting local events in the San Francisco Bay Area worth checking out. Today, they are doing over \$1 billion in revenue per year, with fewer than a hundred employees. But while Craigslist is the quintessential example of connecting people, there are many ways to do this. Job boards, like People First Jobs (which we discuss in chapter 7 on culture and hiring), connect companies with candidates, often charging a flat fee for doing so. And there are communities too, like Product Manager HQ, that connect like-minded folks with each other.

连接人们以固定或相应费用。Craig Newmark将Craigslist创建为一个针对他的朋友的电子邮件列表，强调旧金山湾区值得关注的本地活动。今天，他们每年的营收超过10亿美元，只有不到100名员工。但是，尽管Craigslist是连接人们的典型示例，但还有许多其他方法。招聘网站，如我们在有关文化和招聘的第7章中讨论的People First Jobs，将公司与候选人连接起来，通常会收取固定费用。还有类似的社区，如产品经理总部，将志同道合的人连接在一起。

- o **Software as a service (SaaS).** The idea of building a software solution that would optimize remote work and minimize distractions came to Justin Mitchell and his team at Yac in 2018. In four days, they built the first iteration of what would eventually become their asynchronous voice

messaging app for Product Hunt's Makers Festival, because they saw a hole in the market for remote workers who were constantly dealing with the demands of Zoom meetings and the distraction of Slack. Although YAC's platform, integrations, and features have grown since then, it all began with the small idea of eliminating interruptions.

软件即服务（SaaS）。Justin Mitchell及其Yac团队于2018年想到了构建优化远程工作并最大程度减少干扰的软件解决方案的想法。在四天内，他们构建了第一个版本，最终成为他们针对Product Hunt的Makers Festival的异步语音消息应用程序。因为他们看到远程工作者不断应对Zoom会议的要求和Slack的干扰的市场空白。尽管YAC的平台，集成和功能自那以后已有所增长，但它的始于消除中断的小想法。

In the last chapter we covered the four different kinds of economic utility: place, form, time and possession. To come up with your offering, you'll likely overlay that list onto the list above to come up with the type of business that best solves the problem you're trying to solve for your customers. For example, you may save people time (time utility) learning a new skill with an online, cohort-based course (digital content). Or you may build software (form utility) that automates a manual, physical process (SaaS).

在最后一章中，我们涵盖了四种不同的经济效用：地点、形式、时间和占有。为了提供您的服务，您可能会将上述列表与上面的列表相结合，以找到最适合解决客户问题的业务类型。例如，您可以通过在线的同步课程（数字内容）来为人们节省时间（时间效用）学习新技能。或者您可以构建自动化手动物理流程的软件（形式效用）（SaaS）。

Over time, your business will likely offer two or more of these products and services, but at first, you should pick one to focus on and get started. In general, that should be the one that lets you begin today, instead of tomorrow.

随着时间的推移，你的企业可能会提供两个或更多的产品和服务，但首先，你应该选择一个重点开始。一般来说，应该选择让你从今天开始就能开始的那个产品或服务，而不是明天。

Remember that you don't have to know everything about what you're

doing at the beginning (or ever), and many people are wrong the first time about what they are building. The fact is, it's very likely that you discover the kind of business you should be building as you are building another business you thought you should be building. As Adam Wathan of Tailwind UI says, "Want to find a good SaaS idea? Start a business, literally any business. You will soon realize how bad every existing tool is that you have to pay for to run that business, and you will quickly become overwhelmed by the number of things you feel you need to build yourself."

记得你不必从一开始就知道你所做的事情的所有细节（或者是永远不知道），而且许多人第一次构建的东西也是错误的。事实上，当你正在构建你认为应该构建的另一个业务时，很可能你会发现你应该构建的业务种类。正如Tailwind UI的Adam Wathan所说，“想找到一个好的SaaS想法？开始一个企业，任何一个企业都可以。你很快就会意识到你不得不花钱去使用的每一个现有工具都有多么糟糕，你很快就会被你觉得需要自己构建的事情的数量压倒。”

If you make a false start, just go back, reset, and begin again. Nothing you've done or learned is ever wasted. A sustainable, growing business will take years to fully develop, and because you are growing as the business wishes you to, you have the time to make adjustments and learn the skills you need to know to succeed at each step. That's because you are not doing this the unicorn way, which the venture capitalist Marc Andreessen refers to as "baking a cake in three minutes." You are using your slow cooker to make a soup, on low heat and in full view.

如果你开始出错了，就回头，重新开始。你所做的和学到的任何东西都不会浪费。一个可持续增长的企业需要数年时间才能完全发展壮大，因为你正随着企业的发展而成长，你有时间进行调整，学习每个阶段所需的技能。这是因为你不是按照风险投资家马克·安德森所说的“三分钟做蛋糕”的独角兽方式去做的。你正在使用慢炖锅慢慢地做汤，在低温下并且处于完全可见的状态下。

And if you're not rushing, you have time to talk to customers, time to iterate, and time to test your hypothesis.

如果你不赶时间，你就有时间和客户交谈，有时间循环迭代，以及时间测试你的假设。

Test Your Hypothesis

A business hypothesis is just like the one you learned in fifth-grade science class. It is a suggested solution for a problem that does not currently have a solution. It must be testable (able to be tested repeatedly and independently) and falsifiable (able to be proved wrong).

一个商业假设就像你在五年级科学课上学习的那个。它是对目前没有解决方案的问题提出的建议性解决方案。它必须是可测试的（可以反复和独立地进行测试）和可证伪的（可以被证明是错误的）。

For example: *My customers will pay a fixed fee with a small premium to get their end credits quickly and efficiently produced with as many renders as they need.*

例如：我的客户将支付固定费用和少量的保费，以便快速高效地实现他们需要的制作数量和量产终点信用。

Every business starts by testing a hypothesis with real customers. And if you only have one customer, you can treat your startup like a white-glove service. This may mean a phone call or sitting across the table from your customer at a local coffee shop, helping them with their problem.

每个业务都是通过与真实客户进行假设测试而开始的。如果你只有一个客户，你可以像提供白手套服务的初创公司一样对待你的创业公司。这可能意味着给客户打电话或坐在当地咖啡店的桌子对面，帮助他们解决问题。

The goal of these meetings is to validate this hypothesis. It takes time to test and honest reflection to recognize when you are wrong. But it is better to be wrong now, when the stakes are low, than to be wrong after you have spent five years and some of your own personal capital trying to build your idea into a business that was never meant to exist.

这些会议的目标是验证这个假说。测试需要时间，诚实的反思才能认识到自己的错误。但是现在看出错误，当赌注不高时，总比在你已经花费了五年时间和一些个人资本试图将自己的创意变成一个从未有过的业务时才发现错误要好。

When you are validating a hypothesis, do not ask leading questions—questions that point people to the answer you want to hear. Instead, think

about creating the kind of feedback loop that author and tech entrepreneur Rob Fitzpatrick writes about in *The Mom Test*. When you ask the kind of questions he recommends, the kind even your mom can't lie to you about, you will get the honest truth, because no one will know that you have a new idea for a business and that you're testing to see if it's viable. For example, you shouldn't ask:

当你在验证一个假设时，不要问一些引导性问题——这些问题会指引人们回答你想要听到的答案。相反，考虑创建一种反馈循环，就像作者和技术企业家Rob Fitzpatrick在《The Mom Test》一书中所描述的那样。当你询问他推荐的那种问题时，即使是你的妈妈都不能对你撒谎，你会得到诚实的答案，因为没有人会知道你有一个新的商业创意并正在测试它是否可行。例如，你不应该问：

Would you pay for my product?

你会为我的产品付款吗？

Instead, ask:

请帮我翻译成简体中文：`Instead, ask:`。请只返回翻译后的内容，不要包含原文。取而代之，询问：

Why haven't you been able to fix this already?

为什么你还没能修好这个？

There are many businesses that cannot be proved in this way, but these are not the types of businesses we are interested in building. We're aiming to build businesses that are testable at a small scale, and can then be scaled up gradually, over time.

有许多企业无法通过这种方式得到证明，但这些不是我们感兴趣建立的企业类型。我们的目标是建立那些可以在小规模上进行测试，然后随着时间的推移逐渐扩大规模的企业。

Another benefit of this approach: You can charge for it. If you are genuinely helping someone, you do not need to wait until you have a product to sell in order to make money. You can be paid for your time like Pliny and Alan were even before they technically had a "product."

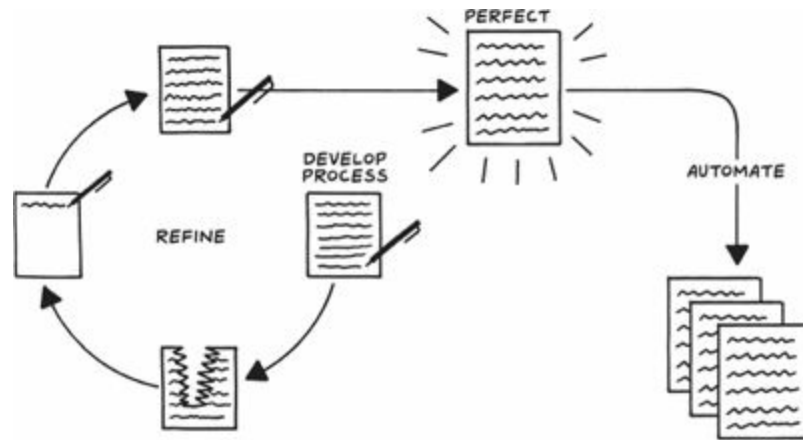
这种方法的另一个好处是：你可以收费。如果你真正帮助了别人，你不需要等到有产品可卖才能赚钱。你可以像普林尼和艾伦一样在技术上还没有“产品”之前就因为你的时间而得到报酬。

In their case, the process they created proved their hypothesis that filmmakers would pay for a solution to the problem of trying to finish the credits. Your first idea may not go as smoothly, and that is totally okay—most experiments are wrong. You are at the frontier, literally trying to make something that does not exist yet, and you will be wrong a lot on the way to figuring out what your customers want. As long as you are working toward being right through processization, you only have to be right once.

就他们的情况而言，他们创建的过程证明了他们的假设：电影制片人愿意为解决制作片尾字幕的问题而付费。你的第一个想法可能不会那么顺利，这完全没关系——大多数实验都是错误的。你正在前沿，试图创造尚不存在的东西，在找到客户想要什么的过程中会犯很多错误。只要你正在通过过程化工作寻求正确的方向，你只需要一次成功。

And when you do arrive there, you will have a document that dictates your perfect process, because as you've walked someone through solving their problem, you've refined the steps it takes to get there. This process will take future customers from nothing to something. It's something you can share (perhaps publish). You haven't made any money. You don't necessarily have a business *yet*. But you've provided what Paul Graham, the founder of Y Combinator among many other endeavors, calls a “quantum of utility: when there is at least some set of users who would be excited to hear about it, because they can now do something they couldn't do before.”

当你走到那里时，你会有一份规定你完美过程的文件，因为在帮助别人解决问题的过程中，你不断地改进了所需的步骤。这个过程将带领未来的客户从无到有。它是可以分享的（也许可以公开）。你还没有赚到任何钱。你并不一定已经拥有一个业务。但是你提供了保罗·格雷厄姆（Y Combinator的创始人和许多其他事业的发起人）所说的“实用量子：当至少有一些用户会因为他们现在能够做一些以前无法做到的事情而感到兴奋。”



Do One Thing Well

Before I launched into research or coding or brand building, I picked a single problem to solve for myself and for my community of creators: selling digital files to their audiences. The basic assumption was simple, that people were starting their careers on the internet, some of them finding enormous success through social media rather than with websites and blogs. But at the end of the day, when they needed a platform to sell what they were making, they still wanted somewhere to send people and a streamlined way to deliver digital files and get paid for them.

在进行研究、编码或品牌建设之前，我选择了一个单一的问题，为我和创作者社区解决问题：将数字文件销售给他们的受众。基本假设很简单，即人们在互联网上开始自己的职业生涯，其中一些人通过社交媒体而不是网站和博客获得了巨大的成功。但归根结底，在他们需要一个销售平台的时候，他们仍然希望有一个地方可以发送信息并简化地交付数字文件并获得收入。

At its start, like any good product, Gumroad really only did one thing. The original Gumroad website reads:

在其开始时，像任何好产品一样，Gumroad只能做一件事。最初的Gumroad网站上写着：

1. **Take a file or a link of value.** This can be anything. From a link to an exclusive build of an app, to a secret blog post, to an icon you spent hours

designing.

1. 获取一个有价值的文件或链接。这可以是任何东西，从一个独家应用程序的链接、一个秘密的博客文章，到你花费几个小时设计的图标。
2. **Share it.** Just like any old link. Choose your own price. You don't have to create a store. And you don't have to do *any* management.
2. 分享它。就像分享任何链接一样。自定价格。您无需创建商店，也无需进行任何管理。
3. **Make money.** And that's it. At the end of each month we'll deposit the money you've earned to your PayPal account.
3. 赚钱。就是这样。每个月末，我们会把你赚到的钱存入你的PayPal账户。

If you think building an app like that is insanely complicated, it may be useful to know that most apps on the internet consist of two things: forms and lists. Twitter, for example, has a form you use to tweet (with a single input) and a list of tweets you see from people you follow.

如果您认为构建这样的应用程序非常复杂，那么知道大多数互联网应用程序由两个部分组成可能会有所帮助：表单和列表。例如，Twitter具有用于发推文的表单（带有单个输入）和您从关注的人那里看到的推文列表。

These apps are referred to as CRUD apps, as they have four actions you can take: Create, Read, Update, and Delete. And Twitter doesn't even let you edit tweets!

这些应用程序被称为CRUD应用程序，因为它们有四个操作：创建、读取、更新和删除。而Twitter甚至不允许您编辑推文！

Gumroad fit this model. At first, I let a creator create, edit, and delete products, and allowed consumers to view them ("read" them). Stripe made payments easy to take, and Pay-Pal made it easy for payouts to be sent out (albeit manually at first).

Gumroad 适合这个模型。一开始，我让创作者创建、编辑和删除产品，并允许消费者查看它们（“阅读”它们）。Stripe 使付款变得简单，而 Pay-Pal 则使支付款项易于发送（刚开始需要手动操作）。

Gumroad didn't have file uploading at the time (you had to specify a destination URL post-purchase, like a YouTube URL), and I didn't even have automated payouts or fee calculations. That was all manual.

当时Gumroad没有文件上传功能（您必须在购买后指定目标URL，如YouTube URL），我甚至没有自动支付或费用计算。所有这些都是手动的。

The whole app was twenty-seven hundred lines of mostly copy-pasted code in a single Python file, hosted on Google's cloud. (I've since open-sourced the code; find the link at the end of the chapter.) But it worked! It solved the problem. So I launched. Of course, it wasn't "ready" for the masses, but ten years later, Gumroad still doesn't feel ready. I don't think it ever will be.

整个应用程序大部分是复制粘贴的代码，共计2700行，全部放在Google的云服务器上。我已经将代码开源（请查看本章末尾的链接）。虽然这个应用程序已经可以解决问题，但当然并不适合面向大众。十年过去了，Gumroad还是感觉不太完善。我不认为它将永远完善。

Wait a second, no payouts? Nope! Instead, I collected everyone's PayPal information. At the end of every month, I made a list of everyone's email addresses and their account balances, and paid everyone out one by one. Eventually, I started to automate bits of it. Instead of copy-pasting lines from the database, I wrote some code to download a list. Later, I wrote a script that would issue the payouts using Pay-Pal's API.

等一下，没有支付？不行！相反，我收集了每个人的PayPal信息。每个月底，我会列出每个人的电子邮件地址和他们的账户余额，并一个一个地支付每个人。最后，我开始自动化一些部分。我编写了一些代码来下载列表，而不是从数据库复制和粘贴行。后来，我编写了一个脚本，使用Pay-Pal的API发放支付。

There were still issues. For example, whether you made a sale on August 1 or August 30, you would still be paid out on August 31, meaning fraudsters could make a bunch of sales a few minutes right before they're meant to be paid out, circumventing our ability to review and block the transactions. Since then we've added a seven-day buffer, though we got away with not having any buffer for at least a year or two.

仍有问题存在。例如，无论您在8月1日还是8月30日进行销售，您仍将在8月31日结算，这意味着欺诈者可以在即将支付的几分钟内进行大量销售，从而规避我们审查和阻止交易的能力。从那以后，我们添加了一个为期七天的缓冲区，尽管我们在至少一两年内没有缓冲区。

Over time, we automated absolutely everything, which made all the difference when I needed to run the ship single-handedly. But we didn't start there! First, I “hired” myself to do it. Then I built a process around it. Then we turned parts of it into a product, now wholly automated.

随着时间的推移，我们自动化了所有的事情，这让我在需要独自管理时有了很大的帮助。但我们并没有从这里开始！首先，我“雇佣”了自己来做这件事。然后我建立了一个流程。然后我们将其部分转化为产品，现在完全自动化。

What Should I Build?

To this day, processizing is a concept we employ over and over again at Gumroad. Everything I do is listed on a piece of paper that everyone in the company can access. When I go on vacation, someone else can take over my job. And if I get hit by a bus, the company doesn't go under. Once you have this magic piece of paper, you can turn your process into a product. We don't have to make up a new word for this because it already exists: “productizing.”

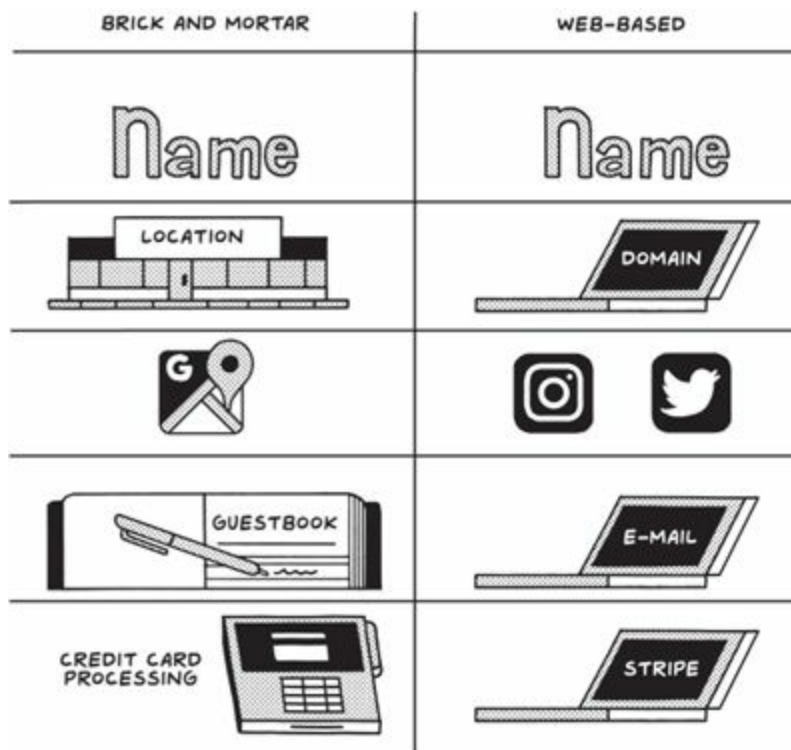
直到今天，在Gumroad中我们一遍又一遍地利用流程化的概念。我所做的所有事情都列在一张每个公司员工都可以访问的纸上。当我度假时，其他人可以接替我的工作。如果我被巴士撞了，公司也不会倒闭。有了这张魔法纸，你可以把你的流程转化为产品。我们不必为此创造一个新词，因为它已经存在：“产品化”。

Productizing simply means developing a process into something you can sell. In the processizing stage, you created a manual valuable process for yourself and built a system for working efficiently and effectively as you helped each individual customer. Now you are ready to productize, which means that you automate each individual task so that people can sign up, use, and pay for your product without you being involved.

产品化简单来说就是将一个过程开发成可以出售的产品。在过程化的阶段中，您为自己创造了一个有价值的手动流程，并构建了一个高效而有效的工作系统，为每个客户提供帮助。现在，您准备产品化，这意味着您将自动化每个个体任务，使人们可以注册、使用和支付您的产品，而无需您参与其中。

If processizing is how you scale a manual process, then productizing is how you go fully automatic. Just like a brick-and-mortar business in your local community needs some essentials to get up and running, you will need to do the same for your minimalist business. And if you have to go back a few steps, don't worry, because that's part of the process too.

如果说流程化是如何扩展手动流程的方法，那么产品化就是如何全自动化的方式。就像你当地社区的实体店铺需要一些必要的东西才能开始运营一样，你也需要为你的极简主义企业做同样的事情。如果你需要回到过去的几步，不要担心，因为这也是过程的一部分。



- o **Name your business.** Before you can tell anyone about your product, you need a name. I like names that take two words and combine them, because I find them easier to remember than a new, made-up word. I also

think they help with word of mouth because everyone will know how to spell them. This is also called a “radio test”: If someone hears your business’s name on the radio, can they find it using Google? Gumroad, Dropbox, and Facebook follow this model. But honestly, your name doesn’t matter much. Take it from the founder of Gumroad. If you’re successful, your name will feel right.

命名你的企业。在你向任何人展示你的产品之前，你需要一个名字。我喜欢将两个词结合在一起的名字，因为我发现它们比新编的词更容易记忆。我还认为这些名字对于口碑营销有帮助，因为每个人都知道如何拼写它们。这也被称为“电台测试”：如果有人收音机上听到你的企业名称，他们能用谷歌找到它吗？ Gumroad、Dropbox和Facebook就是按照这种模式命名的。但是，说实话，你的名字并不重要。来自Gumroad创始人的话，如果你成功了，你的名字就会感觉正确。

- o **Build a website and create an email address.** The equivalent of your brick-and-mortar store is a website. To do that, you need to buy a domain; it will cost you about \$10 (renewing yearly). Connect it to a website-building platform like Carrd, Gumroad, Wix, or something else. These will cost about \$10 a month. Create an email address for yourself with that domain (sahil@gumroad.com, for example), as well as a password manager.

建立网站并创建电子邮件地址。您的实体商店的等同物是一个网站。为此，您需要购买一个域名；它将花费您约10美元（每年续订）。将其连接到像Carrd、Gumroad、Wix或其他平台。这些成本约为每月10美元。使用该域名为自己创建电子邮件地址（例如sahil@gumroad.com），以及密码管理器。

- o **Create social media accounts.** You’ll need two sets of accounts, one for you personally and one for your business (you’ll see why in the chapter on marketing).

创建社交媒体账号。你需要两套账号，一套是个人账号，一套是你的业务账号（在营销章节中会讲到为什么需要两套账号）。

- o **Make it easy for customers to pay.** Get a Square or Stripe account. These are payment processors that will help you collect credit card

payments online and in person. They are free to sign up for and cost about 2.9 percent plus 30 cents per transaction. (You may want to spin up an LLC too, but I tend to wait until I have a few customers before committing.)

使客户支付变得简单。获得Square或Stripe账户。它们是付款处理器，可帮助您在线和线下收集信用卡付款。注册免费，每笔交易约需支付2.9%加30美分费用。（您可能还需要创建LLC公司，但我倾向于在拥有一些客户之前等待。）

Now your business is ready to accept your first customer. If someone asks you what you are working on, you can give them a URL they can check out (if not checkout!). At the beginning, you should use it to explain what your product does and provide an email for folks who may be interested in such a thing, even if you do not have a product yet. You can and should always be learning and interacting with prospective customers.

现在，您的业务已准备好接收第一个客户。如果有人问您正在做什么，您可以给他们一个网址让他们查看（如果不能结账）。在开始阶段，您应该使用它来解释您的产品功能，并提供一个电子邮件，以供可能对此感兴趣的人使用，即使您还没有产品。您始终可以并且应该学习与潜在客户互动。

Once you have these in place, you can start building. But what exactly to build? As little as you can. We'll get into launching in the next chapter, but this chapter is about building. That means you need to start shipping, and shipping means you should start with almost nothing, because the job is to start delivering value for your community/customers as quickly as possible. And they don't want to wait!

一旦你把这些都准备好了，你就可以开始构建。但具体要构建什么呢？尽量少的东西。我们会在下一章讲到发布，但本章是关于构建的。这意味着你需要开始交付价值，尽快地为你的社区/客户提供价值。他们不想等待！

Constraints Lead to Creativity

If you're a minimalist entrepreneur, the early stages are all about constraints. Now that you're productizing, you have to add in more limits. In addition to your product doing just one thing (at first), there are other ways to control the temptation to try to do everything at once . . . or to try to do it perfectly.

如果你是一个极简主义的企业家，那么早期阶段都是关于限制的。现在你的产品正在形象化，你必须增加更多的限制。除了你的产品一开始只做一件事之外，还有其他方式来控制试图一次做所有事情的诱惑.....或试图完美地做到。

I ask myself four questions every time I want to build something new:
每次我想要建造某个新物品时，我会问自己四个问题：

1. *Can I ship it in a weekend?* The first iteration of most solutions can and should be prototyped in two to three days.
1. 我可以在周末发货吗？大多数解决方案的第一版可且应该在两到三天内进行原型制作。
2. *Is it making my customers lives a little better?*
它是否能让我的顾客生活更好一点？
3. *Is a customer willing to pay me for it?* It's important for the business to be profitable from day one, so creating something valuable enough for people to pay for is key.
3. 客户愿意为此付费吗？让企业从第一天开始就获利非常重要，因此创造一些有价值的东西让人们愿意付费是关键。
4. *Can I get feedback quickly?* Make sure that you're building a product for people who can let you know if you're doing a good job or not. The faster you get feedback, the faster you'll build something truly valuable and worth paying for.
4. 我能快速得到反馈吗？确保你正在为能告诉你你是否做得好的人群构建产品。你获得反馈的速度越快，你就能更快地构建出真正有价值且值得付费的东西。

Note that there are no constraints around how pretty the product is or how well written the code is. That's another reason to do as little as you possibly can: to be honest with yourself about how useful your product actually is. A

product that is beautiful or has great marketing behind it may *feel* more useful than it actually *is*. But if your product is incredibly minimal *and* useful, and people look past the lack of polish and use it, you will know you are on to something.

请注意，产品的美观程度和代码的编写水平没有任何限制。这是尽可能少做的另一个原因：诚实地反映产品的实际用处。一个美丽或背后有强大市场营销的产品可能看起来比它实际值得的更实用。但是，如果您的产品非常简洁实用，人们会忽略它的不精细并使用它，那么您将知道找到了重要的东西。

The perfect example of this is Craigslist. It's never been pretty, but it's always worked so well that it didn't matter. And it's so useful that it's spawned a whole world of businesses created from that model. The goal here is to build something "good enough." Good enough to show others, and good enough for them to pay for. Which is almost always much less than you think.

这方面的完美例子就是Craigslist，它从来没有很漂亮，但它一直工作得非常好，以至于外表并不重要。它非常有用，从而衍生出了一系列以这种模式创建的业务。这里的目标是构建一些“足够好”的东西，足够好以向别人展示，足够好以让他们付费购买。这通常比你想的要少得多。

Ryan Hoover launched Product Hunt, a site for product-loving enthusiasts to share and geek out over the latest mobile apps, websites, hardware projects, and tech creations, with an email list and Linkydink, a tool for creating collaborative daily email digests. It happened quickly. Hoover says, "Over Thanksgiving break, we designed and built Product Hunt. . . . [Five] days later, we had a very minimal but fully functional product. We emailed our supporters a link to Product Hunt, informing them not to share it publicly. The supporters were thrilled to join and play with a working version of something they had thought about and, indirectly, helped build. That day we acquired our first 30 users. By the end of the week, we had 100 users and felt ready to share Product Hunt with the world."

Ryan Hoover创立了Product Hunt，这是一个网站，供喜爱产品的爱好者分享和热衷于最新的移动应用程序、网站、硬件项目和技术创作，该网站提供了电子邮件列表和Linkydink，一种创建协作每日电子邮件摘要

的工具。这一切发生得很快。Hoover表示，“在感恩节假期期间，我们设计并建立了Product Hunt.....[五]天后，我们拥有了一个极简但完全功能的产品。我们通过电子邮件向支持者发送了Product Hunt的链接，告诉他们不要公开分享。支持者们非常高兴加入并玩耍一个他们曾经考虑过并间接帮助建立的东西的工作版本，那天，我们获得了我们的前30名用户。到本周末，我们已经有了100个用户，感觉可以与世界分享Product Hunt。”

From the very beginning, Product Hunt had enough momentum that Hoover realized it was a project worth pursuing. His day job building tools for game developers had given him time and space to experiment (see freelancing), and he had a clear idea of what he wanted Product Hunt to be. He knew he didn't need to reinvent the wheel; he could use something similar to the format of Reddit. But since he wasn't an engineer, he still found himself asking, "How am I going to build it? Who will develop it?" In the end, rather than get bogged down by those questions, he decided that the newsletter was a superquick, no-code way to get the project off the ground and build some confidence around his idea.

从一开始，Product Hunt 就有足够的动力，让胡佛意识到这是一个值得追求的项目。他在制作游戏开发工具的工作中有时时间和空间进行实验（见自由职业），并且对他想要的 Product Hunt 有明确的想法。他知道自己不需要重新发明轮子；他可以使用类似 Reddit 的格式。但由于他不是工程师，他仍然在问自己：“我该怎么构建它？谁会开发它？”最后，他决定通过电子邮件快速地、不需要编码的方式把这个项目推出去，并围绕自己的想法建立一些信心，而不是陷入那些问题中。

Like me, Ryan doesn't believe that founders should start with code. "Do shitty work people love at first," he says. As more and more infrastructure gets built by new businesses (including, perhaps, the one you're working on now), it is getting cheaper, faster, and more accessible to build an MVP without code. What that means is that you shouldn't wait until tomorrow to get started. The lower the barriers to entry, the more competition you will have.

像我一样，莱恩也不相信创始人应该从编写代码开始。“他说，要先做一些人们喜欢的简陋的工作。”随着越来越多的新兴企业建立基础设

施（包括您现在正在开展的企业），建立MVP而不需要编写代码变得更加便宜、快捷和易于使用。这意味着您不应该等到明天才开始行动。进入门槛越低，你将面临的竞争就越激烈。

The trendline is simple: democratization. Everything that a software engineer can do today, everyone can do tomorrow. It means you need to know less to do more. Even if your service is manual, or your product is physical, you will be able to take advantage of software to provide your service as efficiently as possible. Every single business is in some way tech-enabled, even though the end product may not be.

趋势是简单的：民主化。今天软件工程师所能做的任何事情，明天每个人都可以做。这意味着你需要知道的东西越来越少，却能做得更多。即使你的服务是手动的，或者你的产品是实物的，你也能利用软件尽可能高效地提供服务。每个企业都以某种方式受到技术的影响，即使最终产品可能并非如此。

For example, if you are building a software business, you can visit [Makerpad.co](https://makerpad.co) and learn how to connect Gumroad and Carrd to accept orders on your website without writing a single line of code. And when you are ready to automate your manual fulfillment process, it will teach you how to add Airtable and Google Forms and Mailchimp. There are products like Notion, which we use to run our entire company. And there are services like Zapier, which allow you to automate the connections between all the software you use. Seriously, check out Makerpad. You'll be surprised how much you can build without writing a single line of code.

例如，如果您正在建立一个软件业务，您可以访问[Makerpad.co](https://makerpad.co)并学习如何连接Gumroad和Carrd以在您的网站上接受订单，而无需编写任何代码。当您准备自动化手动履行流程时，它将教您如何添加Airtable和Google表格和Mailchimp。像Notion这样的产品，我们用它来运行整个公司。而像Zapier这样的服务则允许您自动化使用的所有软件之间的连接。真的，检查Makerpad。您会惊讶于在不编写任何代码的情况下可以构建多少内容。

Similar to processizing your workflow as you were helping people, these tools will let you processize and later productize the internal functions of your business itself.

类似于将您处理工作流程的方式视为帮助他人，这些工具将让您对业务内部功能进行系统化处理和产品化。

Perhaps most important, they will save you money. The further you can get without hiring your first engineer if you are building a software product, the higher your chances of achieving profitability. And the further you get, the better the employee you can hire. (And more often than you think, these people will find you!)

也许最重要的是，这样做可以省钱。如果你正在开发软件产品，没有雇佣第一位工程师的情况下走得更远，你实现盈利的机会就越大。你走得越远，你就可以雇佣到更好的员工。（而且往往这些人会找到你！）

Ship Early and Often

Building a business is a lesson in fast feedback loops and iteration. Imagine if you were on a boat searching for treasure, but you could only ping your radar once a year. Then once a month. Then every day. The boat is your business, and the treasure is product-market fit.

建立一个业务是快速反馈循环和迭代的教训。想象一下，如果你在一艘寻宝船上，但你只能每年一次地使用雷达搜索。然后是每个月一次。然后是每天。这艘船就是你的业务，而宝藏就是产品市场适应性。

You will be wrong a lot; the goal is to get less wrong as quickly as you can. This is why shipping early and often is so important. Gumroad, for example, has never shipped a “v2” in ten years. Instead, we have shipped tens of thousands (literally) of incremental and major improvements over time. Each time, we cross the threshold for some customer from “I may want this later” to “I need this now.”

你会犯很多错误；目标是要尽快减少错误。这就是为什么尽早和经常发布非常重要。例如，Gumroad在十年中从未发布过“v2”。相反，我们随着时间不断发布了成千上万（确实如此）的增量和重大改进。每次，我们都会为某些客户跨越门槛从“我以后可能想要这个”到“我现在需要这个”。

Your goal is to move away from being paid directly for your time. This is

important because your time is far more valuable than your money, and so you should almost always welcome the trade. Over time, you can improve on the exchange rate, but you should always know what it is.

你的目标是远离直接按时间计费。这很重要，因为你的时间比你的金钱更有价值，所以你几乎总是应该欢迎这种交易。随着时间的推移，你可以改善兑换比率，但总是要知道它是多少。

For example, if you are helping people for \$10 an hour, you can set a goal to get to \$20 an hour. You can do this by building software tools to help you do your job twice as fast, or you can increase demand for your service such that you are able to charge more. Ultimately, you will be able to make the equivalent of thousands of dollars per hour, but at the beginning you're still learning and iterating as fast as you can. After all, what matters is not just the processes you build for your business; it's also the processes you build for yourself.

例如，如果你每小时帮助他人赚取10美元，你可以设定一个目标，提高至每小时20美元。你可以利用软件工具快速双倍完成工作，或者增加对你服务的需求从而提高收费水平。最终，你每小时能够赚取数千美元等价值，但在开始阶段，你需要快速学习和不断改进。毕竟，重要的不仅是你为自己的业务建立的流程，也包括你为自己建立的流程。

While it may seem obvious how to productize a SaaS business, productizing isn't just about coding and software. It applies to any minimalist business, including Interintellect. Because Anna Gát processized early, Interintellect has a predictable, repeatable format based on four pillars: creating a moderated space, allowing equal speaking time for participants, promoting fun and entertainment, and establishing a patient, transparent, multidisciplinary atmosphere. The salons are organized and tracked by topic, time zone, and host, and a tight feedback loop allows the company to surface the most discussed topics in the community forum and to program events based on customer preferences.

尽管产品化SaaS业务的方法可能很明显，但产品化并不仅仅涉及编码和软件。它适用于任何极简主义业务，包括Interintellect。由于Anna Gát早期进行了过程化处理，因此Interintellect拥有基于四个支柱的可预测、可重复的格式：创建一个经过调节的空间，为参与者提供平等的发

言时间，促进乐趣和娱乐，建立一个耐心、透明、多学科的氛围。沙龙会议按主题、时区和主持人进行组织和跟踪，紧密的反馈循环使公司能够将社区论坛中最热门的话题公开，并根据客户偏好制定活动方案。

“One interesting thing you only learn in practice after doing it a thousand times,” she says, “is what you’re really making. I was convinced I was making events at the start, but I’m really making hosts.” As a result, Gát has launched a new platform that will enable hosts to build and schedule their own events and to approve, onboard, and train new hosts based on the incredibly strong set of norms by which the community abides.

她说：“只有在实践中做了一千次之后，你才会发现一个有趣的事情，那就是你真正制作的是什么。一开始我认为我在制作活动，但实际上我是在制作主持人。”因此，Gát推出了一个新平台，让主持人可以构建和安排自己的活动，根据社区遵守的一系列强有力的规范来批准、招募和培训新的主持人。

As Interintellect expands, Anna expects to further automate the company’s processes so that they can host sixty events per day around the world. For her, the goal of Interintellect salons is ultimately entertainment even as she systematizes a ritual around how people congregate so that they can learn, share, and interact in an intellectually relaxed space. Even if your business doesn’t at first seem to lend itself to processizing and productizing, Interintellect is a good example of how this methodology can be applied in almost any setting.

随着Interintellect的不断扩张，安娜希望进一步自动化公司的流程，以便他们能够在世界各地举办每天六十场活动。对她来说，Interintellect沙龙的目标最终是娱乐，即使她在如何使人们聚集以便他们可以在一个智力放松的空间学习、交流和互动方面系统化了一种仪式。即使你的业务开始看起来不适合流程化和产品化，Interintellect是一个很好的例子，说明这种方法论几乎可以应用于任何环境。

Create Conditions for Liftoff

At the end of the last chapter, I talked about squashing doubts, but if you’re like 99 percent of the founders out there, doubts will be with you every step

of the way, especially when you bring your product out to a community that you know and respect. Even though selling to strangers is inefficient, people are still desperate to avoid the awkwardness of telling their community what they're working on. Sorry, but it's still absolutely critical to start there.

在上一章的结尾，我谈到了消除怀疑的重要性，但如果你和99%的创始人一样，怀疑将一直伴随着你，特别是当你将产品带到一个你熟悉和尊重的社区时。即使向陌生人出售是低效的，人们仍然渴望避免告诉他们的社区自己正在做什么的尴尬。抱歉，但从这里开始仍然是绝对关键的。

This self-doubt never goes away. Even when you conquer community, you'll still have self-doubt about product. When you build and ship a product, you'll have self-doubt about sales. When you've done everything mentioned in this book, you'll have self-doubt about whether you're qualified enough to write it all down. (Hi!)

这种自我怀疑永远不会消失。即使你征服了社交圈，你仍然会对产品感到自我怀疑。当你构建和推出一个产品时，你会对销售感到自我怀疑。当你做到了本书中提到的一切时，你会对自己是否有足够的资格写下所有这些内容感到自我怀疑。（嗨！）

Just get going, and keep going. Your failures will fade, while your successes will stick around and compound. You didn't believe you'd get this far, yet the data shows that you did. Remind yourself of that as often as you need to, I certainly do.

只要开始了，就要一直坚持下去。你的失败将会逐渐淡化，而你的成功则会积累越来越多。你并没有想到自己会走到今天这一步，但数据证明你做到了。需要时，请时刻提醒自己这点，我也会这样做。

We began this chapter talking about momentum. Let's finish talking about confidence: As you build the solution you'll sell to your first customer, you will also gain the confidence to know you're on the right track and take the next leap forward.

我们开始谈论动力学。让我们结束对自信的讨论：当您建立解决方案并向您的第一个客户销售时，您也将获得信心，知道您正在正确的方向上迈进。

If you're lucky, you may be able to get away with building almost

nothing. If you've solved a true pain point for real people, they won't fault the simplicity of your offering but appreciate you for it. Some will even ask to pay. This is the exciting part: You made your first dollar on the internet. You crossed the great divide from zero to one. You started.

如果你幸运的话，你可能仅需建设很少的东西就能得逞。如果你解决了真实人们的真实痛点，他们不会因你的产品简单而挑剔，反而会为此感激你。有些人甚至会主动要求付费。这就是令人兴奋的部分：你在互联网上赚到了第一块钱。你跨越了从零到一的巨大鸿沟。你起步了。

KEY TAKEAWAYS

关键收获

- o Refine a manual valuable process before building a minimum viable product.
在构建最小可行产品之前，优化手动宝贵的过程。
- o The faster the feedback loop you have with your customers, the faster you'll get to a solution they will pay for. The fastest feedback loop will be one you have with yourself.
与客户反馈的循环越快，您就越快能找到他们愿意支付的解决方案。最快的反馈循环将是您与自己的循环。
- o Before you build anything at all, see how little you can get away with charging for it. Even later, build only the things you need to build. Outsource the rest.
在您构建任何东西之前，请看看您可以收取多少最少的费用。即使是之后，只构建您需要构建的 things。其余的外包。
- o I define "product-market fit" as having repeat customers who sign up and use your product on their own so that you can start to focus on outbound sales.
我的定义是，“产品市场契合”指的是拥有反复使用你的产品并自主注册的客户，这样你就可以开始专注于对外销售。

Learn More

- o Read *Getting Real*, a free "book" about building a web app, by Basecamp, available online at <https://basecamp.com/books/getting-real>.
阅读《实战 Getting Real》，一本关于建立 Web 应用的免费“书籍”，由 Basecamp 制作，可以在 <https://basecamp.com/books/getting-real> 在线获取。
- o Read *The Mom Test*, a book on how to talk—and listen—to customers, by

Rob Fitzpatrick.

阅读《妈妈测试》，这本关于如何与顾客沟通和倾听顾客的书，作者为罗布·菲茨帕特里克。

- o Browse Gumroad's original source code, which I recently published online at <https://github.com/gumroad/gumroad-v1>.
请浏览Gumroad的原始源代码，我最近在<https://github.com/gumroad/gumroad-v1>上在线发布了该代码。
- o Explore Rosieland, @rosie.land, a resource for community builders created by Rosie Sherry.
探索Rosieland, @rosie.land, 一个由Rosie Sherry创建的社区建设资源。
- o Follow Daniel Vassallo (@dvassallo) on Twitter. He made a living on Gumroad before joining as our quarter-time head of product.
在Twitter上关注Daniel Vassallo (@dvassallo)。他在加入我们担任季度产品负责人之前通过Gumroad赚钱。

4

sell to your first hundred customers

It just took off. A true viral success.

它只是一下子爆红了。是一个真正的病毒式成功。

— NO ONE, EVER

永远没有人

After building a product, many people think the next step is launching it to the world. Hollywood has premiere parties, while Silicon Valley has Demo Days, Product Hunt launches, and “Show HN” posts.

建造一个产品后，许多人都认为下一步是将其推向世界。好莱坞有首映派对，而硅谷有演示日、产品猎人推出和“Show HN”帖子。

This obsession with launching is not exclusive to Hollywood and Silicon Valley. It pervades the thinking of cities and towns throughout the world. There’s probably a restaurant near you with a giant red sign pinned over its entrance reading grand opening.

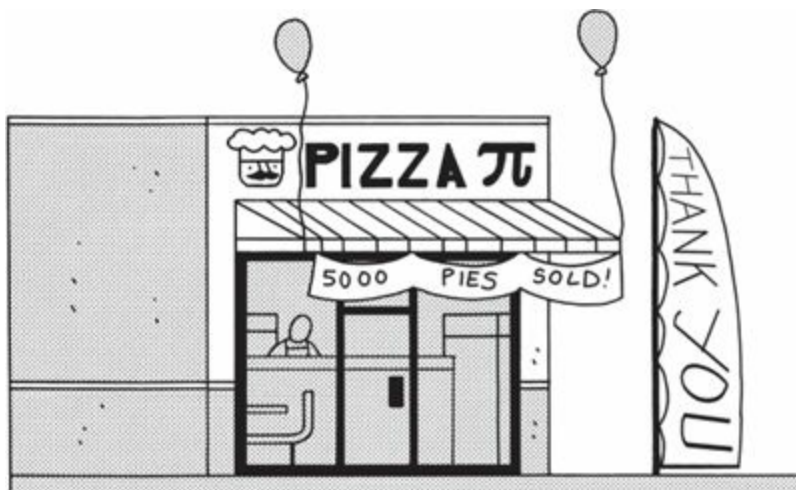
这种对推出的痴迷并不限于好莱坞和硅谷。它渗透到了全世界各个城镇的思维中。你可能在你附近的餐厅看到一个巨大的红色标志，上面写着盛大开业。

It invites you in, with a promise that you’ll be one of the first. Maybe you’ll get a deal. But tomorrow, and even a month from now, the sign is still there. They’re always opening, and grandly too!

它邀请你进来，承诺你会是第一个。也许你会得到一个优惠。不过，明天，甚至一个月后，标志还在那里。他们总是开业，而且非常盛大！

Lots of businesses go this route. Jeffrey Katzenberg, cofounder and former CEO of Dreamworks, and Meg Whitman, former CEO of eBay, founded streaming video service Quibi, a cautionary tale of launching before actually going to market. The company raised \$1.8 billion and bought Super Bowl ads, expecting the whole world to flock to their service. It planned a launch party, meant to draw 150 celebrities among its 1,500 guests, that was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

许多企业走这条路线。梦工厂联合创始人及前CEO Jeffrey Katzenberg 和eBay前CEO Meg Whitman共同创立了流媒体视频服务Quibi，这是一个关于在实际推向市场之前进行推出的警示故事。该公司筹集了18亿美元，并购买了超级碗广告，期望全世界都涌向他们的服务。它计划了一场推出派对，原本打算吸引150位名人和1500名嘉宾参加，但由于COVID-19大流行而取消了。



Ultimately, the app bombed. Only 300,000 people downloaded Quibi on day one, compared with Disney+'s 4 million. One month post-launch, Quibi had fallen off the Top 100 chart, and within six months it shut down and returned its investors' money.

最终，这个应用失败了。第一天只有30万人下载了Quibi，而迪士尼+则有400万人。上线一个月后，Quibi已经从TOP 100榜单中消失，六个月后关闭并退还投资者的资金。

This experience isn't so different for software businesses. Two excitable cofounders work on an app, submit it to Product Hunt, and see thousands of sign-ups on the first day. A few months later, no one is using it, and they're on to a new project. Rinse and repeat. But businesses are not something you engage with once, talk to your friends about, and then forget as you move on to the next thing. Your business should have customers for life, not just for a Friday night.

这种经历对于软件企业来说并没有什么不同。两个充满激情的创始人研发一个应用，提交到Product Hunt，第一天就看到成千上万的注册用户。几个月后，没有人再使用它，然后他们转向一个新项目。但企业不是你只是接触一次、向你的朋友谈论一下，然后在你转向下一个事情时就忘记了。你的业务应该拥有终生客户，而不仅仅是周五晚上的客户。

That's because the real story of starting and then growing a business isn't really that thrilling most days. Between start and success, it can be a slog. It can take years. And it often isn't nearly as glamorous as you expect. But you

will have many small victories, and over time they will build into a sense of satisfaction and pride that comes from not giving up.

那是因为真正开创并发展一家企业的故事在大多数日子里并不那么令人激动。在创业和成功之间，这可能是一场苦战。可能需要多年时间。而且通常并不像你期望的那样光彩照人。但你会有许多小的胜利，随着时间的推移，它们会构建成一种满足感和自豪感，这种感觉源自于不放弃。

In the last chapter we focused on process and product, but once you have your MVP, it's time to turn your attention to your first customers. If you wait too long, if you endlessly iterate without showing your work to the world, you may feel productive even though you are slowly (or quickly) running out of runway.

在上一章中，我们关注了过程和产品，但是一旦你拥有了你的 MVP，就该转向你的第一批客户。如果你等太久了，如果你不断地迭代而不向世界展示你的工作，你可能会感到很有成果，但你正在慢慢（或快速地）失去资金。

That's why it's so important to start. Once you have enough repeat customers, you have product-market fit, which is a milestone worth celebrating and a sign you can think about launching. Until then, skip the one-time grand opening, and instead focus on the slow and steady journey of selling to your first hundred customers.

这就是为什么开始非常重要的原因。一旦你有足够的忠实客户，就达到了产品市场的匹配度，这是值得庆祝的里程碑，并且表明你可以考虑推出产品了。在那之前，跳过一次性的盛大开幕，而是专注于缓慢而稳健地销售给你的前100名客户。

Sales Is Not a Four-Letter Word

I interviewed a lot of people for this book, and you wouldn't believe how hard it was to get anyone to talk about sales. No one likes the stereotype idea of selling—it's sleazy, and it depends on information asymmetry—but that is not what we are doing here. You already have a relationship with the community, and you're selling a product that adds value to the life of a

customer who is happy to pay for it.

我为这本书采访了很多人，你无法想象有多难让人们谈论销售。没有人喜欢销售的刻板印象——它让人感到不诚实，并且依赖于信息不对称——但这不是我们在这里所做的。你已经与社区建立了关系，而你正在销售一种为客户增添价值的产品，他们愿意为此付费。

Eventually strangers will buy your product, but mostly because your customers are spreading the gospel of your business and product, not because they saw an ad. But it will take time to get there. It's not something you hit on day one.

最终陌生人会购买你的产品，但主要是因为你的顾客传播了你的业务和产品的好消息，而不是因为他们看到了广告。但这需要时间。这不是你在第一天就能达成的。

Look at your own life: When was the last time you went on Twitter or Facebook and shouted from your digital balcony about a product you loved? It just doesn't happen that often.

看看你自己的生活：你上次在Twitter或Facebook上站在数字阳台上大声喊出自己喜欢的产品是什么时候？这种情况并不经常发生。

“Viral success” is a myth, pure and simple. There is no such thing. It's just something journalists say about a person, company, product, or service whose seemingly rapid rise is inexplicable from the outside. Most of us—and that includes journalists—only notice new things when they've reached escape velocity. We're often unaware of the previous months or years of hard work and stumbles.

“病毒式成功”纯属虚构，没有这样的事情。这只是新闻工作者对个人、公司、产品或服务似乎快速崛起的人或事物而言的说法，从外部来看很难解释。我们大多数人——包括新闻工作者——只有在它们达到逃逸速度时才会注意到新事物。我们常常不知道之前几个月或几年的艰辛努力和跌跌撞撞。

At the end of this chapter, you will launch, but it's because you'll be celebrating milestones that will actually mean something about the longevity and sustainability of your business. You will be profitable, you will have customers paying for your product, and they will be telling other customers about it. Then you can launch—or rather, you can celebrate by saying thank

you to the community and the customers who have helped you build from nothing to something.

在本章的结尾，你将会推出你的产品，但这是因为你将庆祝一些里程碑，这些里程碑实际上意味着你的业务的持久性和可持续性。你将会盈利，你将有顾客为你的产品付费，他们会告诉其他顾客。然后你就可以推出产品了，或者更准确地说，你可以庆祝并向帮助你从零到一建立起来的社区和顾客表示感谢。

Until then, treat the sales process as an opportunity for discovery. You think your product is market-ready. It's probably not. You think you've figured out the correct pricing tiers. You probably haven't.

直到那时，将销售过程视为发现机会。你认为你的产品已准备好上市。但实际上可能并不是这样。你认为已经找到了正确的定价层次。但实际上可能还没有。

Turn every failed conversion into an insight. Either you're talking to the wrong person and you need to shift your focus, or they're the right person but your product still has work to do to solve their problem. Both are good learnings, learnings you want to have before you start marketing to a broader audience.

把每个失败的转换变成洞见。要么你正在与错误的人说话，需要转移你的关注点，要么他们是正确的人，但是你的产品还需要解决他们的问题。这两种情况都是很好的学习经验，你需要在向更广泛的受众进行营销之前掌握这些知识。

For now, sales is an education process. Your customers will get to know you, and you'll get to know what's working, what's not, and how to fix it. Selling might not always go smoothly at the beginning, but I guarantee waiting won't make it any easier. Once you've figured out how to get started, the next challenge is pricing.

目前来看，销售是一个教育过程。你的客户会逐渐了解你，你也会慢慢发现什么有效，什么无效，以及如何加以修正。销售可能一开始不太顺利，但是我保证等待并不会使它变得更容易。一旦你找到了入手之法，接下来的挑战就是定价。

Charge Something, Anything

Pricing is hard. In the early days, you may be tempted to give your product away for free or to charge less than the value of your time or the raw materials you used. Don't. In order to stay alive, you need to make money. The only way to do that is not only to charge something, but to charge something that allows you to stay afloat. If you've productized, then you've already figured out an initial pricing structure for your first customers, and pricing, just like every other part of a business, is subject to iteration. Eventually, the type of customer you have will influence how and how much you charge, but at the beginning, as you build your solution, keep in mind that you're able to charge in two ways:

定价很难。在早期阶段，你可能会被诱惑免费提供你的产品或按照你时间或原材料价值以下收费。千万别这样做。为了存活下去，你需要赚钱。唯一的方法不仅是收费，而且是收费足以让你维持生计。如果你已经将产品进行了产品化，那么你已经为首批客户确定了一个初始定价结构，而定价就像业务的每个部分一样需要不断调整。最终，你的客户类型将影响你的定价方式和金额，但在开始解决方案时，请记住你可以通过两种方式收费。

- o **Cost-based** (things that have inherent costs—for example, web servers or an employee's time). If you need to pay a certain amount, you can add a “margin,” say 20 percent, and charge that. For example, retail stores often buy wholesale and double the price when they sell it to consumers (giving them a margin of 50 percent). Marketplaces such as iTunes or iStockPhoto often go with this method.

成本定价（具有内在成本的物品，例如网络服务器或雇员的时间）。如果您需要支付一定金额，您可以增加一个“利润率”，比如百分之二十，并收取那个费用。例如，零售店通常会批发购买并在出售给消费者时加价一倍（从而给他们带来50%的利润率）。市场如iTunes或iStockPhoto通常采用此方法。

- o **Value-based** (a feature with clear value). This is charging for something not because it costs you money to deliver, but because it has inherent

value for the customer. For example, Netflix may have a multiscreen feature that doesn't cost them any money to provide (beyond the engineering costs to ship the feature in the first place), but they are able to charge a monthly fee for it.

基于价值的（具有明确价值的功能）。这是针对某些东西进行收费，而不是因为将其提供给客户会成本大，而是因为它对客户具有内在价值。例如，Netflix可能拥有一种多屏功能，这不会花费他们任何成本（除了一开始开发该功能的工程成本），但他们能够对此收取月费。

The goal is to eventually charge people for tiered levels of service, which you can do when your product, service, or software has an established value and brand. Think of the tiers as you would think of the different types of plane tickets—you'll get to your destination whether you sit in economy, business class, or first class, but with substantially different levels of service. Tiered pricing is a common practice for most software businesses, and it changes all the time depending on the features offered. For example, Circle.so, a community platform for creators, has three levels of service, basic, professional, and enterprise, based both on the number of members in the community and on available features and integrations.

目标是最终根据服务的不同等级向用户收费，当你的产品、服务或软件有了确定的价值和品牌时，你就能做到这一点。把这些等级看作你所想到的不同类型的机票，无论你坐经济舱、商务舱还是头等舱，你都能到达目的地，但服务水平有很大差异。分层定价是大多数软件企业的常见做法，根据提供的功能不断变化。例如，专为创作者而设计的社区平台 Circle.so 具有三个服务等级：基础版、专业版和企业版，根据社区成员数量和可用的功能与整合进行划分。

Even if you start low and go up over time, it is important to charge something. There is a very large difference between free and one dollar—that's the *zero price effect*. As behavioral economist Dan Ariely writes in *Predictably Irrational*, "people will jump for something free even when it's something they don't want." He uses the example of a long line of college students waiting for free, terribly unhealthy brownies. Asked to pay even just

one cent, the line of kids disappears.

即使你从低价开始逐步提高，收费一些也很重要。免费和一美元之间存在很大的差别，这就是零价效应。正如行为经济学家丹·阿里利在《预测性行为经济学》中所写的，“即使是他们不想要的东西，人们也会为免费的东西而感到高兴。”他举了一个例子，一个长长的大学生队伍在等待着供应非常不健康的免费布朗尼。但是，只要被要求支付一分钱，这队学生便即刻消失了。

(Later, you can consider introducing a free tier. This model, popularized by venture capitalist Fred Wilson, is often referred to as “freemium.”)

之后，你可以考虑引入免费层。这种模式由风险投资家弗雷德·威尔逊推广，通常称为“免费增值”模式。

Advertising-driven media models are another example. When the reader doesn't pay anything, it's often hard to convince them that it's valuable when the time comes to start charging for it.

广告驱动的媒体模式就是一个例子。当读者不需要支付任何费用时，当开始收费时，很难让他们相信这是有价值的。

Pricing decisions are not permanent. A price is just a part of a product, like everything else, and it can and will change over time. Similar to product development, your goal is to start the discovery process, not get to the perfect result right away.

定价决策并非永久性的。价格只是产品的一部分，就像其他所有东西一样，随着时间的推移它会发生变化。与产品开发类似，你的目标是开始发现过程，而不是立刻达到完美的结果。



It's worth noting that when prices for products do change, they generally go up. This should be true for you as well: As your product improves and you are able to provide a better service, your offering will become more valuable to your customer as well—and you may even introduce higher tiers for your superusers.

值得注意的是，当产品的价格变动时，通常会上涨。您也应该如此：随着您的产品改进并提供更好的服务，您的产品将变得更有价值，并且您甚至可以为您的超级用户引入更高级别的服务。

Once you've picked a price, you need to shop it around. I recommend starting with those closest to you: your friends and family.

一旦你选择了价格，就需要四处比较。我建议从最亲近的人开始：你的朋友和家人。

(Unfortunately, not everyone has a supportive family. Feel free to substitute a chosen family in its place.)

很遗憾，不是每个人都有一个支持性的家庭。可以自由选择一个亲密的人群来代替家人。

Friends and Family First

In Silicon Valley, there's a term for the first round of funding: the “friends and family” round. This may be even more common *outside* the Bay Area,

where venture capitalists and angel investors do not patrol the streets looking for things to fund. But friends and family aren't just important when it comes to funding. Whether or not they've given you a dime up until now, it's worth pitching them to be your first customers.

在硅谷，第一轮筹资有一个专用术语：朋友和家人轮。在海湾地区之外，风险投资家和天使投资者并不会四处寻找投资项目，因此这种术语可能更为常见。但朋友和家人不仅仅在筹资方面很重要。即使他们迄今为止没有为您提供任何资金支持，也值得向他们推销，让他们成为你的第一批客户。

This may make you uncomfortable even if you know that friends and family are in the dead center of your community. It certainly made me uncomfortable, shoving my business in my friends' faces and asking them to try Gumroad when I knew I didn't have all the kinks worked out yet. But when you're just getting started, with few credentials to your name, who trusts you more than your friends and family? And if they don't, who will?

即使您知道朋友和家人是社区的中心，这可能会让您感到不舒服。这当然让我感到不舒服，我把我的业务推到了我的朋友面前，并要求他们尝试Gumroad，当时我知道自己还没有解决所有问题。但是，当您刚开始时，基本上没有什么证书，有谁比您的朋友和家人更信任您呢？如果他们不信任您，还有谁会信任您呢？

Yet people believe they can skip their friends and family in favor of launching and going viral. For example, on Kickstarter. But even Kickstarter knows this isn't the case. "Millions of people visit Kickstarter every week, but support always begins with people you know," it reads on their website. "Friends, fans, and the communities you're a part of will likely be some of your earliest supporters, not to mention your biggest resources for spreading the word about your project."

然而，人们相信他们可以跳过他们的朋友和家人，而选择去推广和走红。例如在Kickstarter上。但即使Kickstarter也知道这不是事实。他们网站上写着：“每周都有数百万人访问Kickstarter，但支持始终始于您认识的人。朋友、粉丝和您所在的社区可能是您最早的支持者，更不用说向外传播您的项目的最大资源。”

Projects do go viral occasionally, I'm sure, but virtually none without a

big initial push from the friends, family, and fans of the project's creators. All of that is to say it's normal and maybe even expected to rely on friends and family to provide initial support, and to be the first to buy your product. If you're having trouble with that, remind yourself you've built something you think provides real value. It's worth paying for even if it's not perfect!

项目有时会偶尔病毒式传播，我敢肯定，但几乎没有一个项目能在没有项目创作者的亲友和粉丝的强烈支持下取得成功。这也就是说，依靠亲友提供初步支持，并成为购买你的产品的第一批人是正常的，甚至可以预料到的。如果你在这方面遇到困难，请告诉自己你已经建立了一些你认为具有真实价值的东西。即使不完美，也值得购买！

PleaseNotes founder and CEO Cheryl Sutherland was using journaling and affirmations to uncover her next professional step when she came up with the idea for her company, which offers coaching programs and makes journals and other products geared toward personal development. A close friend who was a graphic designer helped design her website and her first product, the PleaseNotes, a set of three sticky notepads printed with affirmations. Two other friends who had a crowdfunding consulting business advised her on how to launch an effective Kickstarter campaign to generate preorders for her second product, a PleaseNotes journal. Her goal was to raise \$10,000. She eventually raised \$15,054 from 253 people, many of whom were friends and family. That money allowed her to test the market and gave her the momentum she needed to keep going.

PleaseNotes创始人兼CEO Cheryl Sutherland在使用日记和肯定语句来揭示她的下一个职业步骤时，想到了她的公司的理念，该公司提供辅导计划，并制作针对个人发展的日记和其他产品。一位亲近的朋友是一位平面设计师，帮助设计了她的网站和她的第一个产品PleaseNotes，这是一组印有肯定语句的三个便利贴。另外两位拥有众筹咨询业务的朋友建议她如何发起有效的Kickstarter活动，以产生她的第二个产品PleaseNotes日记的预定订单。她的目标是筹集10,000美元。最终，她从253人那里筹集了15,054美元，许多人都是亲朋好友。这些资金让她能够测试市场，并给了她继续前进的动力。

That early proof of concept is invaluable. It takes time for a restaurant to figure out their menu, hence soft openings with friends and family. It takes

time for a movie to figure out its pacing, hence test screenings. The same goes for your business and your product.

那个早期概念的证明是无价的。餐厅需要时间来确定他们的菜单，因此需要与家人和朋友进行试运营。电影需要时间来确定它的节奏，因此需要进行试映。对于您的业务和产品亦是如此。

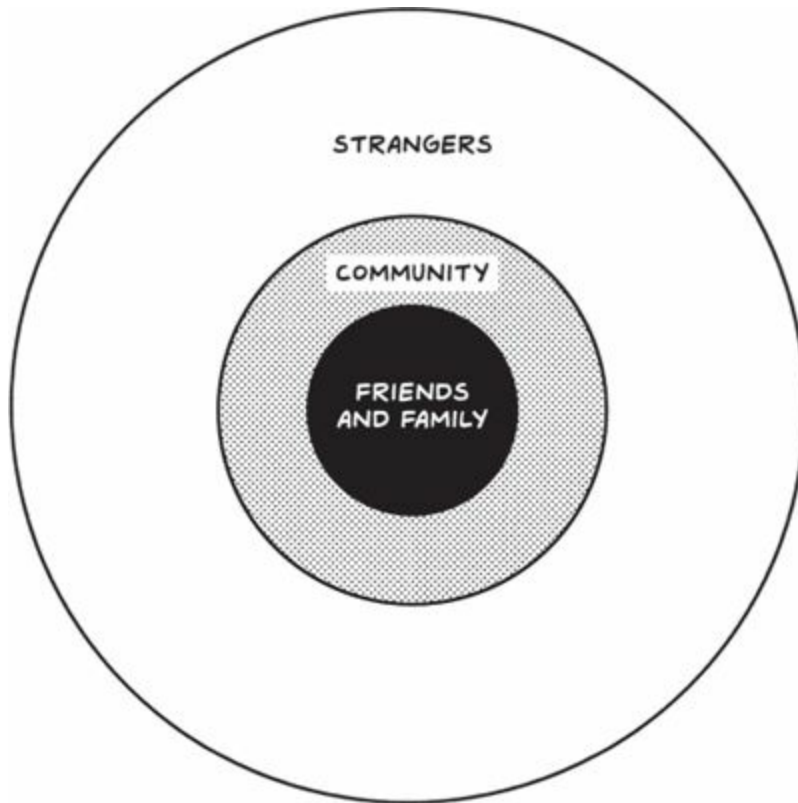
Once you've addressed feedback and turned your friends and family into customers because your product is genuinely good, you can move on from your friends and family, and into your communities.

一旦你解决了反馈并且通过产品的真正好处将朋友和家人变成了顾客，你就可以离开你的亲友，进入你的社群了。

Community, Community, Community

Over time, this becomes less about *you* and more about your *product*. Your friends and family, whom you started with, cared most about you. Your community cares less about you and more about your product.

随着时间的推移，这种关系变得不再只是关乎你本人，而是更多地关乎你的产品。你最开始的朋友和家人最关心你本人，而你的社群则更关注你的产品。



This is the same way your business grows: starting with the people who care about you the most, and “ending” with the people who care about you the least.

这就是你的企业成长的方式：从那些最关心你的人开始，最终框定在那些最不关心你的人身上。

Even if you’ve successfully solved a problem for your community, it may take some time and patience to get their attention. Humans, like objects, have inertia. Everyone is on a path, and it usually takes a bump to knock them in a different direction, even if it is a better one in the form of the solution you’re offering with your business.

即使您已经成功地社区解决了一个问题，也需要一些时间和耐心来引起他们的注意。人类和物体一样都有惯性。每个人都在走自己的路，通常需要一点碰撞才能让他们改变方向，即使您的业务提供了更好的解决方案。

Beyond the other human beings you personally know or are connected to, you can seek out similar customers in the physical environment around you. Every neighborhood, street, and downtown is a community where people live

together and hang out. In thriving communities, there are local businesses, event venues, and block parties. This is where life happens outside of the office and the home. Put a poster on the wall of your favorite coffee shop and on telephone poles.

除了你个人认识或连接到的其他人之外，你可以在身边的物理环境中寻找类似的客户。每个社区、街道和市中心都是一个居民聚集和交流的社区。在繁华的社区中，有本地企业、活动场所和街区派对。这是办公室和家外生活发生的地方。在你最喜欢的咖啡店的墙上和电话杆上张贴海报。

In the next chapter we'll talk about formal marketing, but long before you ever implement a more structured plan, you can still take advantage of opportunities for strategic outreach. Every community has reporters and micro-influencers, who cover the goings-on within the community. In Portland, where I live now, there are dozens of Instagram and Twitter accounts about every facet of the city. These are student, amateur, and professional journalists. They live to write about what you are up to.

在下一章中，我们将讨论正式的营销，但在您实施更为结构化的计划之前很久，您仍然可以利用战略外展的机会。每个社区都有记者和微影响者，他们报道社区内发生的事情。在我现在生活的波特兰，有数十个关于城市各个方面的Instagram和Twitter账号。这些账号既有学生、业余爱好者，也有专业记者。他们喜欢写关于你正在从事的工作。

This is how you make that happen:

这是如何实现的：

1. **Make a list of everyone—yes, everyone—who has written or shared anything about a similar business.** A business launch. A business closure. A new product launch. A date night at that business. We can call these people *subject matter experts*.
 1. 列出所有人的名单-是的，所有人，他们写过或分享过任何与类似业务有关的信息。业务的启动。业务的结束。新产品的推出。在那家企业度过的约会之夜。我们可以称这些人为主题专家。
2. **Contact them all personally.** Offer to walk them through your product, or meet them at your store, or give them a free meal. With Gumroad, I did

this *literally* hundreds of times. And thousands of creators later, if I see a creator I really like whom I think Gumroad could help, I still reach out.

2. 个人联系所有人。提供向他们展示你的产品，或者在你的店铺见面，或者给他们免费的餐点。使用Gumroad,我这样做了数百次。而数以千计的创作者之后，如果我看到一个我真的很喜欢的创作者而我认为Gumroad可以帮助他们，我仍然会联系他们。

3. **Ask for their personal, candid feedback.** Do not ask for reviews, or a social media post, or for them to tell their friends. Your goal is to improve your product experience, and you should make it clear that you massively appreciate their support.

3. 寻求他们的个人坦诚反馈。不要要求评论、社交媒体帖子或者让他们告诉朋友。您的目标是提高产品体验，应明确表示您非常感谢他们的支持。

When you first bring your product to market, you may be part of one community, but that community will grow and change as your business grows and changes. It's simply discovering additional points of overlap and need and letting a broader group know that you have come up with a new solution to their problem. And hopefully, your customers will develop into their own community over time.

当你第一次将你的产品推向市场时，你可能是一个社群的一部分，但随着你的业务的成长 and 变化，这个社群也会成长 and 变化。这意味着要寻找其他重叠和需求点，并让更广泛的群体知道你已经提出了解决他们问题的新方案。希望你的客户随着时间的推移能够发展成自己的社群。

This is about building relationships. You will be doing business for a long time, and it is much easier to keep a customer than to find a new one. Never oversell. Be honest, open, and always kind. Show them how you most recently improved your product. Tell them a recent failing. Don't sell them on your product, educate them on your journey and learnings.

这是关于建立关系。你将长期经营业务，保持客户比寻找新客户要容易得多。永远不要过度销售。保持诚实、开放和友好。展示给他们你最近如何改进你的产品。告诉他们最近的失败。不要向他们销售你的产品，而是教育他们你的历程和学习经验。

Cold Emails, Calls, and Messages

Long before you get to the bottom of the list of people you already know or could know, you're going to be sending a lot of emails, you're going to be making a lot of calls, and you're going to be knocking on a lot of doors. It's your job to reach out to friends, family, and members of your community whom you may not have seen for a while. Your calls are a chance to tell them what you're up to and ask them if they're interested in becoming customers. Some will say yes, but many will say no. Once you're okay with the nos, you're ready to sell to strangers.

长长的清单上有很多你已经认识的人或者你可以认识的人，但在你找遍名单名字之前，你需要发送很多电子邮件，打很多电话，敲很多门。你的工作是联系那些你可能很久没有见过的朋友、家人和社区成员。电话是一个机会，让他们知道你在做什么，并询问他们是否有兴趣成为客户。有些人会说“是”，但很多人会说“不”。当你能够接受拒绝时，你就可以开始向陌生人销售了。

In the early days (read: years) of Gumroad, we scoured the web for people who could benefit from a product like Gumroad and then told them about it. Literally thousands of times. That's the only way, really, when you're young and no one cares or knows who you are, to get folks to use your product.

在Gumroad早期，我们四处搜寻潜在受益者，并向他们介绍我们的产品。这实际上就是我们做了数以千计的次数。当你还年轻，没人知道你是谁时，这确实是唯一的方法，来让人们使用你的产品。

Over time, you can get away with doing it less and less. But until you have a lot of customers or some other force that can supply ongoing momentum, there's nothing better than knocking on doors. This is a tried-and-true technique used by political canvassers, the LDS Church, and others . . . because it works! Trust me, if there was a better way, people would have found it.

随着时间的推移，你可以越来越少地做这件事。但在你有了许多客户或其他能够提供持续动力的力量之前，没有比敲门更好的办法了。这是政治助选人员、耶稣基督后期圣徒教会和其他人使用的经过考验的技巧.....因为它有效！相信我，如果有更好的办法，人们早就找到它了。

Even Katrina Lake, CEO of Stitchfix and one of *Forbes*'s Richest Self-Made Women in 2020, started out with cold calls and cold messages on LinkedIn to potential investors. "The more shameless you can be, the thicker skin you have, the better," she says. "People are going to not write back and people are going to say no, but every now and then someone's gonna be interested and say yes. And you wouldn't have had that chance if you hadn't gotten all the no's first." While you may not be hitting up investors, you will be talking to people over and over again who will say no. The sooner you get used to it, the sooner you stop taking it personally and use those nos as a learning opportunity, the better.

甚至卡特琳娜·莱克 (Katrina Lake) 也是这样开始的，她是Stitchfix的CEO，也是福布斯2020年最富有的自助女性之一，曾通过在LinkedIn上给潜在投资者冷电话和冷留言来开展业务。她说：“你越是不知羞耻，拥有更厚实的皮肤，那就越好。人们可能不会回信，也会说不，但是偶尔会有人感兴趣并说‘是’。如果你没有先得到所有的不，就不会有这个会。”虽然你可能不会拜访投资者，但你会一次又一次地与会说“不”的人交谈。越早适应，越不把它当成个人问题，把这些“不”当成一个学习机会，就越好。

I get it. It's awkward and uncomfortable to reach out to people you don't necessarily know personally, many of whom will ignore or reject you. My sense is that people who wish to reach customers some other way, like search engine optimization (SEO) or content marketing, are looking for an out. If that's you: Stop! It doesn't exist! Just hunker down and dedicate some time to finding people, reaching out to them personally via email, phone, whatever, and being okay with it sucking for a while. You may find that talking about your process and your product and the path you've taken to get there is far less difficult than you think. After all, this is your work, and if you're bringing it out to the world, you should be excited and proud, so don't skip this chance at discovery.

我明白。与陌生人联系是让人感到尴尬和不舒服的事情，其中很多人会忽略或拒绝你。我的感觉是，那些希望通过搜索引擎优化 (SEO) 或内容营销等其他方式来联系客户的人正在寻找一种借口。如果你是这样的人：停下来！这不可能存在！坚定地投入时间去寻找人，通过电子

邮件、电话或其他方式与他们联系，并且要为有段时间的不尽如人意做好心理准备。你会发现，谈论你的过程、你的产品和你所走的道路远比你想象中的困难要少。毕竟，这是你的工作，如果你将它带到世界上，你应该感到兴奋和自豪，所以不要错过这次发现的机会。

A stellar launch doesn't change this. Fanfare doesn't bring real customers, as Quibi learned. Consistent growth comes after a long period of time, mostly driven, especially at the beginning, by a hardworking sales team—starting with you.

卓越的启动并不能改变这一点。繁华喧嚣并不能带来真正的客户，就像 Quibi 所学到的那样。持续的增长需要经过长时间的积累，特别是在开始阶段，需要由一个辛勤努力的销售团队——从您开始带动。

If you need help getting started, here's an example:

如果您需要帮助开始，请看下面的示例：

Hi John,
你好，约翰。

I saw you're selling a PDF on your website using PayPal, and manually emailing everyone who buys the PDF. I built a service called Gumroad, which basically automates all of this. I'd love to show it to you, or you can check it out yourself: gumroad.com.

我看到您正在使用PayPal在您的网站上销售PDF，并手动向每个购买PDF的人发送电子邮件。我建立了一个名为Gumroad的服务，它可以自动化所有这些过程。我很想向您展示它，或者您可以自行查看：gumroad.com。

Also happy to just share any learnings we see from creators in a little PDF we have. Let me know!

我们也很乐意在我们的册子里分享我们从创作者身上得到的任何经验。让我知道吧！

Best,

最好的
Sahil, founder and CEO of Gumroad
Gumroad的创始人兼首席执行官Sahil。

Don't copy-paste. Each email will refine your ability to write better emails. Done right, you're not only educating customers, but educating yourself about what you can do better. It's a learn-learn situation.

不要抄袭。每封电子邮件都可以提高你写邮件的能力。如果做得好，你不仅可以教育客户，而且可以教育自己如何做得更好。这是一个相互学习的过程。

Manual “sales” will be 99 percent of your growth in the early days, and word of mouth will be 99 percent of your growth in the latter days. It’s not a glamorous answer, but it’s true. Things like paid marketing, SEO, and content marketing can come later, once you have a hundred customers, once you’re profitable, and once your customers are referring more customers to you. Only then!

“销售手动”在早期阶段将占到您99%的增长，而口碑营销在后期将占到您99%的增长。这不是一个光辉的答案，但这是真实的。付费营销，SEO和内容营销等活动可以在您拥有一百个客户，盈利并且您的客户正在向您推荐更多客户时进行。只有在那时候！

The best news of all is that once you have a hundred customers, you can use the same playbook to get to a thousand. Once you have a thousand, you can use a similar playbook to get to ten thousand.

最棒的消息是，一旦你有了一百个客户，你可以使用同样的策略来获得一千个客户。一旦你有了一千个客户，你可以使用类似的策略来获得一万个客户。

When Slack IPO’d in 2020 at a valuation of \$16 billion, its offering documents showed that 575 of their customers accounted for approximately 40 percent of their revenue. This just goes to show that you need far fewer customers than you may think.

当Slack在2020年进行首次公开发行，市值为160亿美元时，其招股文件显示，575名客户约占其收入的40%。这表明，你所需要的客户数量要比你想象的少得多。

Big network-focused tech companies boast dazzling metrics, but their actual profits (when they have profits, anyway) come from a very tiny portion of their total audience. The rest of us might do better to ignore the lurkers and freeloaders altogether and focus on core customers. Depending on the nature of the product or service, anywhere from a few dozen to a few thousand regular customers will be more than enough to keep a business viable long-term.

大型网络科技公司夸耀着令人眼花缭乱的指标，但它们的实际利润（如果它们有利润的话）只来自其总受众中一小部分的人。我们其余的人最好完全忽略潜水者和免费用户，而是专注于核心客户。根据产品或服务的性质，只有几十到几千名常客就足以使企业长期生存。

Mailchimp is a good example of how focusing on smaller, reliable customers might make more sense than swinging for the fences. Ben Chestnut and Dan Kurzius first started a web design agency called the Rocket Science Group with a focus on big corporate clients, but at the same time they also built Mailchimp, an email marketing service for small businesses. For about seven years they ran both businesses, until they closed the web design agency in 2007 because they found that working for small businesses gave them the freedom to be more creative and adapt quickly to their customers' needs.

Mailchimp是一个很好的例子，它展示了关注更小、可靠的客户可能比追求更大成功更有意义。本·切斯特尼和丹·库尔齐厄斯最初成立了一家名为Rocket Science Group的网络设计公司，专注于为大型企业客户提供服务，但与此同时，他们也建立了Mailchimp，这是一个为小型企业提供电子邮件营销服务的平台。大约7年时间里，他们同时运营着这两个业务，直到2007年关闭了网络设计公司，因为他们发现为小型企业工作可以让他们更自由地创意，并且快速适应客户的需求。

Chestnut and Kurzius have a universe of offerings, but Mailchimp's service is free up to the first two thousand emails. Once customers want to send to a larger list or need extra services, their plans begin at \$10 per month and go up from there (see the earlier conversation on tiered pricing!). Even though Mailchimp could broaden its reach to corporations or institutions, the company's customer base is still small businesses, and they've not strayed from their mission to build out features for their core community.

栗子和库尔齐厄斯提供了广泛的服务，但Mailchimp的服务在前两千封电子邮件中是免费的。一旦客户想要发送到更大的列表或需要额外的服务，他们的计划从每月10美元开始，从那里上涨（请参见先前关于分层定价的对话！）。即使Mailchimp可以将其覆盖范围扩大到公司或机构，但该公司的客户群仍然是小型企业，并且他们没有偏离为其核心社区构建功能的使命。

It may be surprising, but it is not a coincidence. Whether you're just starting or you've been in business for years, your most important clients are your community. They trust you because you've helped them grow their own businesses. It's not happenstance that they're ready to support you when you have your own.

这可能令人惊讶，但并非巧合。无论你是刚开始做生意还是做了多年，你最重要的客户就是你的社区。他们信任你，因为你曾帮助他们发展自己的企业。当你有自己的企业时，他们愿意支持你，这不是偶然的。

This isn't just about huge SaaS businesses either. It applies to smaller businesses too. Across the spectrum of minimalist entrepreneurs, I see a common pattern: manual sales, finding your community, talking about your journey, highlighting your customers, and getting authentic coverage. If you started with community, and you continue to pay attention and solve the persistent problems your community has, then those first customers can take you very far.

这不仅仅适用于大型SaaS企业，也适用于较小的企业。在极简主义企业家的范围内，我看到了一个共同的模式：手动销售、寻找社区、谈论你的旅程、突出你的客户，并获得真实的报道。如果您始于社区，并继续关注和解决社区持续存在的问题，那么这些第一批客户可以带您走得非常远。

Growth-at-all-costs is all about selling to strangers so that you can scale, but profitability-at-all-costs means you don't need to depend on strangers to keep your business afloat. Instead, you can rely on your existing customers from your communities and eventually from your audience. They'll spread the word as they feel comfortable doing so, and that's how you'll grow. The math looks different for everybody, but the goal is the same: financial independence. When I did it for myself, I needed about \$2,000 a month to maintain my lifestyle.

不惜一切代价追求增长就是为了向陌生人销售，以便扩大规模，但不惜一切代价追求盈利意味着您无需依赖陌生人来维持业务。相反，您可以依靠来自社区乃至观众的现有客户。他们会在感到舒适的情况下传播消息，这就是您增长的方式。数学对每个人都不同，但目标是一样

的：财务独立。当我为自己做到这一点时，我需要每月约2000美元来维持我的生活方式。

If your product costs \$10 a month, like Gumroad's, you need two hundred customers. That doesn't seem so bad. There are about 260 business days a year, so you'd get there in less than a year if you acquired one customer every business day.

如果你的产品每月售价为10美元（就像Gumroad一样），那么你需要200个客户。这似乎并不那么糟糕。一年大约有260个工作日，所以如果你每个工作日获得一个客户，不到一年的时间就能实现。

Daniel Vassallo tweeted recently:

丹尼尔·瓦萨洛最近发推特：



Daniel Vassallo @dvassallo · Dec 30, 2019

2000 customers @ \$39/month is almost \$1M/year.

- You don't need to dominate the market.
- You don't need to disrupt anything.
- You don't need to conquer the competition.

You can add 1 new customer/day & before you know it, you'll have a \$1M/yr machine. Wouldn't that be enough?

144

1.2K

7.6K



That doesn't sound so hard, does it? You may already be selling a product for someone else for your day job. Sell your own!

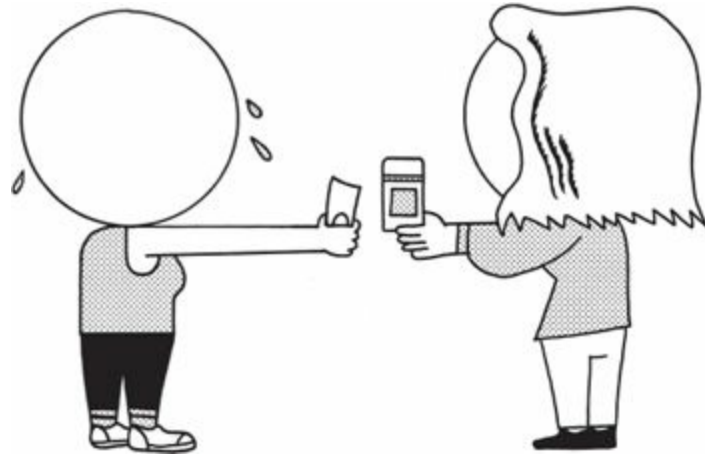
这听起来并不难，是吗？也许你已经在日常工作中代售别人的产品了。现在卖你自己的产品吧！

Sell Like Jaime Schmidt

Jaime Schmidt never launched Schmidt's Naturals, a natural deodorant brand she founded in 2010. Instead, she celebrated small milestones along the way before eventually selling her company for more than \$100 million in 2017 to Unilever.

Jaime Schmidt从未推出Schmidt's Naturals，这是她在2010年创立的一种

天然除臭剂品牌。相反，她在这个过程中庆祝小的里程碑，最终在2017年将自己的公司以超过1亿美元的价格卖给了联合利华公司。



When Jaime was pregnant with her son, she started a deep dive into the world of natural personal care products after taking a class in DIY shampoo. While there were hundreds of recipes available for soaps and lotions, there were few, if any, recipes for deodorants even though many people were concerned about ingredients in traditional formulations. Jaime had tried all of the natural deodorants but had found that none of them worked for her, so she decided to make one herself. She experimented for months until she found an effective formulation and landed on a scent, cedarwood, that she loved. Six months after the shampoo class, she had a product line of lotions and deodorant, and she was ready to sell to her first customers.

当杰米怀孕期间，她在学习自制洗发水的课程后开始深入了解天然个人护理产品世界。虽然有成百上千的洗涤剂 and 乳液食谱可用，但很少有草本制剂的配方，即使许多人都担心传统配方中的成分。杰米尝试了所有的天然香体剂，但发现没有一个适合她，所以她决定自己制作。她进行了数月的实验，直到找到有效的配方并选择了一个她喜欢的味道，雪松木。在洗发水班上6个月后，她拥有了一条乳液和香体剂产品线，并准备向第一个客户销售。

She set up a simple website and a Facebook page for her business where she posted articles and recipes. In the first few months, she sold her products on consignment at two small local goods stores in Portland and on her own at a few street fairs and farmer's markets around the city. People stopped at her

booth to try the deodorant and lotions, and she found a rhythm to her conversations with prospective customers: asking them about the products they used; talking about her products and how she had tested them; and convincing people that her natural deodorant actually worked.

她为自己的企业建立了一个简单的网站和Facebook页面，在这些页面上发布了文章和食谱。最初几个月，她在波特兰的两家小商品店和一些街头集市和农民市场上以委托销售的方式销售自己的产品。人们在她的展台前停下来尝试香皂和润肤霜，她也找到了一种与潜在顾客沟通的节奏：询问他们使用的产品；谈论她的产品以及她如何测试它们；并说服人们她的天然除臭剂确实有效。

The following year, she decided to go all-in on her idea. She took two part-time positions with stores that sold Schmidt's, a decision that served a dual purpose. First, interacting with the clientele gave her a chance to gather customer insights about her own products and learn about the inner workings of retail. But just as important, the income from those gigs served as the seed money to get Schmidt's off the ground. The in-store customers as well as the people she continued to meet at festivals and fairs were most enthusiastic about the deodorant she made; many times, they returned to tell her how well it worked and to buy more. She says, "Early customer feedback allowed me to perfect my formula, determine future scents, and recognize where I was making the most impact." And once she had refined her deodorant, "customers gave me validation that my product worked astonishingly well, and they spread the word."

第二年，她决定全力以赴实现她的想法。她在两家销售Schmidt's的商店找到了兼职工作，这个决定有着双重目的。首先，与顾客互动使她有机会了解自己产品的顾客见解，并了解零售业务的内部运作方式。但同样重要的是，这些兼职工作的收入也为Schmidt's创业提供了种子资金。店内的客户以及她在节日和展览会上继续遇到的人们都对她的除臭剂非常热情；许多人会回来告诉她它的有效性，并购买更多。她说：“早期客户反馈使我完善了配方，确定了未来的香味，并认识到我正在产生最大的影响。”一旦她完善了她的除臭剂，“客户给了我验证，证明我的产品效果惊人，并传开了口碑。”

Schmidt started 2012 with new, modern packaging for the deodorant,

which was designed to set it apart from the competition. She looked beyond the direct-to-consumer sales channels and the natural and wellness retailers that her competitors used almost exclusively; in 2015, she expanded into traditional grocery stores and pharmacies, which allowed her to reach more customers and to enable greater access to healthy natural products.

Schmidt在2012年开始使用全新、现代化的包装设计，旨在使其除竞争对手外独树一帜。她不仅仅关注直销渠道和竞争对手几乎独占的自然健康零售商，而是在2015年扩展到传统的杂货店和药店，这使她能够接触更多的客户，为健康天然产品提供更多的选择。

Her creativity, innovation, and hard work paid off. Schmidt earned appearances on Fox News and *The Today Show*; mentions on social media from celebrities and influencers; articles in national publications; and distribution on the shelves of Target and Walmart. Though it was bittersweet, Jaime realized that a larger company with more resources could bring her vision and mission to an even wider customer base, and she signed the deal with Unilever right before Christmas 2017.

她的创意、创新和辛勤工作得到了回报。施密特在福克斯新闻和《今日秀》节目中露面；在社交媒体上得到了名人和意见领袖的关注；在全国性刊物上发表文章；并在目标和沃尔玛的货架上销售。尽管有些惋惜，但杰米意识到，一家更有资源的大公司可以将她的愿景和使命传播给更广泛的客户群体，于是她在2017年圣诞节前与联合利华公司达成了交易。

Reflecting on her journey, she says, “When I’m asked about what made Schmidt’s so successful, I often say that my customers were my business plan. It started when I listened to those at the farmer’s market, and it continued through each step of growth. Staying hyper-tuned-in to my customers always guided and served me.” Not sales. Not marketing. Customers, educating, and being educated.

回顾她的旅程，她说：“当我被问及什么使Schmidt公司如此成功时，我经常说我的顾客是我的商业计划。它始于我倾听农贸市场的人们，一直延伸至成长的每一个步骤。保持对顾客的高度关注始终指引和服务着我。”不是销售。不是营销。但顾客、教育和被教育却至关重要。

Launch to Celebrate

A launch is a stepping-stone. A thing that happens when your business already has customers, is doing well, and is going to last. Many companies go out of business within the first year. Why make a big deal out of a business before you're sure it'll stick around? Instead, build a successful business and “launch” as a celebration of your success. Spend your business's profits on it, not your own money.

一次发布是一个里程碑。当你的企业已经有客户，经营状况良好，且未来可期，这时才会发生的事。很多企业在第一年就倒闭了。为什么要在你确信它会长久之前就大张旗鼓地推出业务？相反，要构建一个成功的企业，并将“发布”作为你成功的庆祝活动。用你的企业盈利来推广，而不是用你自己的钱。

Better yet, celebrate your customers' success. I think celebrating a milestone is a great excuse to launch. What about having successfully sold to a hundred customers? Once you're running a growing, profitable business with a hundred customers who love you and whom you care about, you can celebrate them—by launching. Throw a party. Invite all of your customers and thank them for their ongoing support.

更好的做法是庆祝您的客户成功。我认为庆祝里程碑是一个很好的借口来启动。成功售给100个客户怎么样？一旦您经营一家拥有100个热爱您并且您关心的客户的日益增长和盈利的业务，您可以通过启动来庆祝他们。举办一个派对。邀请所有客户并感谢他们对您的持续支持。

Do that, and you'll have customers lining up at your door. They'll be people you already know, and who know you. Some of them will bring their own friends and families and maybe even members of their own communities too. They may even help promote your event before it happens because you've told them about it and they're excited about supporting you. Plus, they can actually speak to others about how great your product is and how much better it has made their life. Your customers may be even better salespeople than you are. Good—there's more of them than there are of you!

这样做，你就会有顾客排着队来到你门口。他们将会是你已知的

人，并且他们也认识你。他们中的一部分将会带来他们自己的朋友、家人，甚至是他们的社区成员。他们甚至可能帮助你在活动发生之前推广它，因为你已经告诉了他们，他们对于支持你感到兴奋。此外，他们还可以向其他人介绍你的产品有多么棒以及它是如何改善了他们的生活。你的顾客甚至可能比你更好的销售人员。很好——他们比你更多！



Or perhaps you decide you don't need to launch at all. That's fine too. But entrepreneurship can be lonely, and it can be a good excuse to rally—and reward—your community for helping you get this far.

或许你决定根本不需要推出产品，这也没问题。但是创业往往是孤独的，这可以成为一个很好的借口来鼓动和激励你的社区，感谢他们帮助你走到这一步。

Once you have a hundred customers, some of them now repeat customers, selling your product better than you can, you're ready to move on to the next chapter of your business: marketing.

一旦您有了一百个客户，其中一些现在是重复客户，他们比您更好地销售您的产品，那么您就准备好进入下一个商业章节了：市场营销。

KEY TAKEAWAYS

主要收获

- o Launches are alluring, but they are one-off events I wouldn't bet your business on. Instead, wait until you have a product with repeat,

paying customers. Then launch by thanking them!

推出很吸引人，但它们是一次性的活动，我不会打赌你的业务。相反，等到您拥有具有重复付费客户的产品时再推出。然后通过感谢他们来推出！

- o Selling your product (or process) directly to customers may seem slow, but it is worthwhile. It will lead to a much better product because the sales process will be less about convincing and more about discovery.

直接向客户销售您的产品（或流程）可能看起来很慢，但是它是值得的。这将会导致更好的产品，因为销售过程不再是关于说服，而是关于发现。

- o Start by selling to your family and friends before moving on to your communities and, finally, if at all, to total strangers. (The further away from you, the harder they will be to convince.)

首先向你的家人和朋友销售，然后再向你的社区推销，最后，如果需要向完全陌生的人推销。（离你越远，他们就越难被说服。）

Learn More

- o Read *Predictably Irrational*, a book on human psychology and pricing, by Dan Ariely.
阅读《预测性非理性》一书，这是丹·阿里利探讨人类心理和定价的著作。
- o Read *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, by Dale Carnegie, the best book I've ever read on "sales."
阅读《如何赢得朋友与影响他人》这本书，作者戴尔·卡耐基，这是我曾读过的最好的“销售”书。
- o Read about how important cold email-based sales were in Gumroad's early growth in this interview I did with Indie Hackers: www.indiehackers.com/interview/i-started-gumroad-as-a-weekend-project-and-now-it-s-making-350k-mo-4fc6cbc0e8.

在我与 Indie Hackers 的访谈中了解Gumroad的早期增长有多重要的冷邮件销售：www.indiehackers.com/interview/i-started-gumroad-as-a-weekend-project-and-now-it-s-making-350k-mo-4fc6cbc0e8。

5

market by being you

Marketing is really just about sharing your passion.

营销实际上只是分享你的热情。

— MICHAEL HYATT

— 迈克尔·海雅特

Congratulations! You have community, a product, and a hundred customers. That means you've arrived at product-market fit, which I define more specifically for minimalist businesses this way: repeat customers. Repeat customers mean that your business is able to persist without ongoing sales efforts so you can start to focus on scaling. First comes scaling your customer acquisition and sales strategy, then your company, then your ambition.

恭喜您！您已经拥有了社区、产品和一百个客户。这意味着您已经达到了产品市场适配，对于极简主义企业来说，我更具体地定义为：重复客户。重复客户意味着您的企业能够在没有持续销售努力的情况下继续存在，因此您可以开始专注于扩大规模。首先是扩大您的客户获取和销售策略，然后是您的公司，最后是您的抱负。

So where does *marketing* fit in?

那么营销在哪里适用？

Marketing is sales at scale. Remember that before we built a minimum viable product, we had a manual valuable process. And before you can have marketing, you need to sell to your first hundred customers; that's because sales is the process upon which you build marketing. While sales is outbound and one-by-one, marketing is inbound and about attracting hundreds of potential customers at a time. Sales got you to one hundred customers. Marketing will get you to thousands.

营销是大规模销售。在我们构建最小可行产品之前，要记住我们有一个有价值的手动过程。在您可以进行营销之前，您需要向您的前100名客户销售；这是因为销售是您建立营销的过程。虽然销售是一对一的外发式，但营销是入站式的，每次吸引数百个潜在客户。销售让你达到了一百个客户。营销将让您达到数千个客户。

But do not confuse marketing with advertising. Ads cost money, and minimalist entrepreneurs only spend money when we absolutely have to. We do cover ads later in this chapter, because they are a part of marketing, but in true minimalist fashion, we'll start with the free stuff. Because it's only once you've learned enough from sales—like you did with the manual process for your product—that you're ready to spend money on marketing.

不要把营销和广告混淆起来。广告需要花费金钱，而极简主义企业

家只在绝对必要时花费金钱。本章稍后会涉及广告，因为它们营销的一部分，但真正的极简主义方式是从免费的事情开始。因为只有当你从销售中学到足够的东西——就像你对产品的手动处理所做的那样——你才准备好在营销上花费金钱。

It's much better to start by spending time instead of money. Blog posts are free. Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and Clubhouse are free too. Instead of spending money, let's start there, by building an audience.

不妨先花些时间而非金钱开始。博客文章是免费的。推特、Instagram、YouTube和Clubhouse也是免费的。与其花钱，不妨从这些渠道开始，通过积累受众来建立自己的影响力。

The Power of an Audience

You started your business by tapping into a preexisting community, and now it's time to move on to building an audience. What's the difference?

你开始通过利用现有社区来开展业务，现在是时候转向建立受众了。两者有什么区别？

While your community is a part of your audience, your audience is not a part of your community. Instead, an audience is a network of everyone you can reach when you have something to say.

尽管您的社区是您的观众的一部分，但您的观众并不是您社区的一部分。相反，观众是一个网络，您有话要说时可以接触到的所有人。

That may include your followers on each social media platform, your business's followers, your email newsletter subscribers, the people who walk by your retail store window every day, and more. If you needed to tell as many people as possible that the world was ending in an hour, how many people would you be able to tell? That's your audience.

这可能包括您在每个社交媒体平台上的粉丝，您的企业粉丝，您的电子邮件通讯订户，每天经过您的零售店橱窗的人等。如果您需要尽可能地告诉许多人世界在一个小时内就要结束了，您能告诉多少人呢？这就是您的观众。

Selling allows you to test the waters with these new people because it forces you to leave your bubble and convince them one by one, improving

your product along the way. Marketing is harder, because instead of going to your customers, you have to make them leave *their* bubbles and come to you. People have lives and things to do, and using your product today is unlikely to make an appearance on their priority lists.

销售能让您与这些新人试水，因为它迫使您离开自己的舒适圈，逐个说服他们，同时改进您的产品。营销更加困难，因为您不是去找顾客，而是要让他们离开自己的舒适圈来找您。人们有着自己的生活 and 事情要做，使用您的产品今天不太可能成为他们优先事项列表上的出现。

But if you can figure out how to bring customers to you, you'll have a much easier time scaling your business on all fronts. Hiring becomes easier, sales becomes easier, growth becomes easier. Everything about building a business becomes easier when you have a group of people rooting for your success that grows larger by the day.

但是，如果您能够想出如何吸引客户前来，您将更容易在各个方面扩展您的业务。招聘变得更容易，销售变得更容易，成长变得更容易。当您拥有一批日益壮大的支持您成功的人群时，建立业务的一切都变得更容易。

In the last chapter, I talked about selling to your first customers, a.k.a. your friends, family, and community, and in this chapter, we'll talk about what to do when you've reached out to everyone you already know. I'm not a big fan of selling to strangers, but I am a big fan of bringing strangers into your audience and eventually turning them into customers.

在上一章中，我谈到了向你的第一批客户出售产品，也就是向你的朋友、家人和社区出售产品。在这一章中，我们将讨论当你已经联系了所有你认识的人之后要做什么。我不太喜欢向陌生人出售产品，但我很喜欢吸引陌生人成为你的观众，并最终将他们转化为客户。

People do not go from being strangers to being customers in one step. They go from being strangers to being vaguely aware of your existence to slowly over time becoming fans, and finally to being customers and then repeat customers who help you spread the word.

人们不会一步到位地由陌生人变成顾客。他们会从陌生人到逐渐意识到您的存在，再到慢慢变成粉丝，最终成为顾客，然后成为回头客，帮助您传播信息。

Start with making fans.
从制作风扇开始。

Make Fans, Not Headlines

Think about a company you like. Can you name the founders? Can you imagine what their office looks like? Can you hear their voices in your head? I'd bet that for many companies, the answer is yes.

想一想你喜欢的一家公司。你能说出创始人的名字吗？你能想象他们的办公室是什么样子的吗？你能在脑海中听到他们的声音吗？我打赌对于许多公司来说，答案都是肯定的。

Why are you able to do this? Because you've read articles about them and follow them on social media. You are much more likely to buy their products, if you haven't already.

你为什么能做到这一点？因为你阅读了有关它们的文章并在社交媒体上关注了它们。如果你还没有购买它们的产品，那你会更有可能购买。

Unfortunately, most founders are not comfortable putting themselves at the center of their company's story. But you need to. People don't care about companies, they care about other people. And you've built something from nothing. You love what you do. You don't need to share what you ate for lunch, but you should take your hard-earned learnings and share them with the world.

不幸的是，大多数创始人并不善于把自己置于公司故事的中心。但您需要这样做。人们关心的不是公司，而是其他人。而您从无到有地建立了一些东西。您热爱自己所做的事情。您不必分享自己午餐吃了什么，但您应该将您辛苦获得的经验分享给全世界。

I've seen that no matter how successful they are, many founders still suffer from imposter syndrome. There's so much you don't know, and so many people more knowledgeable than you. There are bigger businesses than yours with more revenue, more employees, and more accolades.

我已经看到，无论创始人有多成功，许多人仍然遭受imposter syndrome的折磨。有很多你不知道的事情，很多人比你更有知识。有比

你更大的企业，更多的收入，更多的员工和更多的赞誉。

That will always be true, and it doesn't matter. You have something to offer. And your existing customers care. They are paying you for your work, they're interested in how you think, and they want to know why you made certain decisions and how your product came to be. As you grow and iterate, your product will improve. You will garner more credibility and trust. And you will have learned so much that could benefit others. When you were engaging with your community and selling to your first one hundred customers, you were already doing this. You were personally connecting, with people, telling them your story, and listening to theirs.

这将始终如此，这并不重要。你有东西可以提供。你现有的客户很在意。他们正在为你的工作付费，他们对你的思考感兴趣，他们想知道你为什么做出了某些决定，以及你的产品是如何诞生的。随着你的成长和迭代，你的产品将会改进。你会赢得更多的信誉和信任。你会学到很多有益于他人的东西。当你与社区互动并向你的前100位客户销售时，你已经在这样做了。你正在与人们进行个人联系，讲述自己的故事，并倾听他们的故事。

Building an audience, the first step toward making fans, is having these conversations at scale.

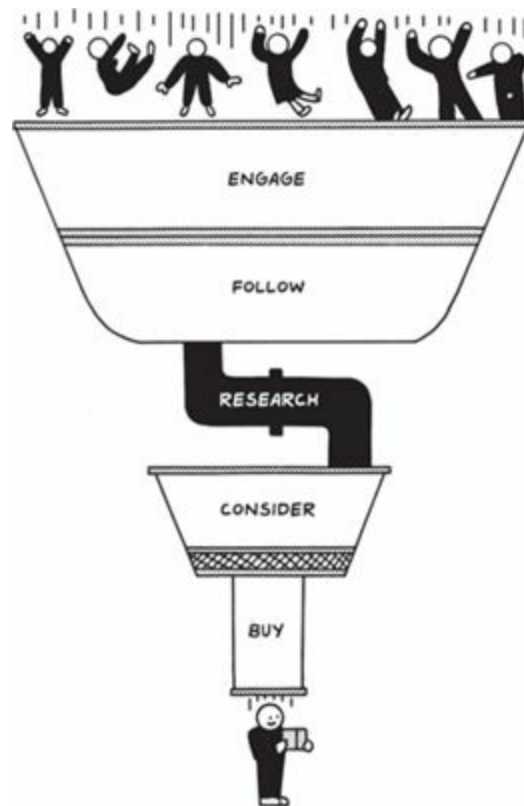
建立观众是成为粉丝的第一步，而在规模上进行这些对话是必要的。

The Minimalist Marketing Funnel

The journey of each customer will be different, but it always starts with someone having no idea who you are or what you're selling. Eventually, they will encounter your product some-where in their Instagram feed or in a forum post or in a tweet a friend shares. They will almost definitely forget about it. One day, even though they'll forget who posted it, they may "like" it. They may engage a few times.

每个客户的旅程都是不同的，但总是始于某人对你是谁或者你在卖什么毫无头绪。最终，他们会在他们的Instagram动态或者论坛帖子或者朋友分享的推文中遇到你的产品。他们几乎肯定会忘记它。有一天，即使他

们忘记了是谁发布的，他们可能会点“赞”。他们可能会尝试与之互动几次。



Eventually, they will get interested—not in your product, but in what you or your business has to say. They’ll hit that big “follow” button. Maybe they’ll click through to your website and check it out. If they like what you think, what you say, and how you say it, they may like what you’ve built too.

最终，他们将会对你或你的企业所要传达的内容产生兴趣，而非仅仅你的产品。他们将会点击“关注”按钮。或许他们会进入你的网站查看。如果他们喜欢你的想法、言语和表达方式，他们可能也会喜欢你所建立的东西。

Most people will not be a fit for your business. That’s okay. Your audience will grow much larger than your customer base—but your customer base is a subset, likely the most passionate, of your audience.

大多数人不适合做您的生意，这没关系。您的受众会比您的客户群大得多，但您的客户群是受众中最热情的一个子集。

If they are a fit, they’ll start to consider your product. Then signal their

intent by signing up for an account, let's say, and then evaluating your functionality, pricing, and more. One day they'll purchase.

如果他们是适合的，他们将开始考虑购买你的产品。然后通过注册账户来表达他们的意图，并评估你的功能，价格等等。总有一天他们会购买你的产品。

While you may be tempted to cut as many steps out of this funnel as possible, you may also want to add steps to it, like a free trial. But you can't shorten this process, no matter how much you'd like to. Every customer will engage, follow, research, consider, and finally buy (and hopefully buy again!).

虽然你可能想尽可能地缩短销售漏斗中的步骤，但你也可能想要添加步骤，比如免费试用。但无论你有什么希望，都不能缩短这个过程。每个客户都会参与、跟进、研究、考虑，最终购买（并希望再次购买！）。

Top of the Funnel: Social Media and SEO

There are eight billion strangers out there to have conversations with. Where do *you* begin? Start with the communities that your existing customers belong to, other than yours, and move outward from there. Marketing is second-degree sales, so your existing customers should *already* be spreading the word about your product. Ideally they're doing it because it makes their experience better. Your customers may go on first dates at your ice cream store, for example.

有八十亿陌生人可与之交谈，你该从哪里开始呢？从你现有客户所属的社区开始，而不是你自己的社区，然后向外扩展。营销是二度销售，所以你现有的客户应该已经在宣传你的产品。最理想的情况是，他们这样做是因为它会让他们的体验更好。比如说，你的顾客可能会在你的冰淇淋店约会。

You can also incentivize this behavior. If you're an ice cream store, you may offer a free waffle cone to anyone who posts a story to their Instagram.

你也可以激励这种行为。如果你是一个冰淇淋店，你可以提供一个免费华夫饼筒给任何发布Instagram故事的顾客。

The analog world has the concept of “foot traffic.” Real estate agents will tell you again and again, “Location, location, location.” Location matters, because people are going about their day in the physical world, and if you happen to be where they are, literally, you may make a new sale you wouldn’t have made otherwise.

模拟世界有着“人流量”的概念。房地产经纪人会一再告诉你，“地点、地点、地点”。地理位置很重要，因为人们生活在物理世界中，如果你碰巧就在他们身边，你就可以成交一笔你本来无法得到的销售机会。

Social media is not so different. Instead of Main Street, there’s the Instagram “Explore” tab. Instead of Martin Luther King Boulevard, it’s the Twitter algorithm throwing new things you may appreciate (or be outraged by) into your feed.

社交媒体并没有很大的不同。Instagram的“探索”标签取代了主街道。Twitter的算法会将一些新的你可能会喜欢（或者愤怒）的东西推送到你的动态中，就像是马丁路德金大道一样。

These algorithms work by judging the theoretical “quality” of your content. The secret sauce is unique to each platform, but it is typically judged by what is going to lead to continued engagement by the end user. In general, this means that your content should lead to likes, shares, comments, and other forms of positive affirmation on the part of the consumer on the other side of the screen.

这些算法是通过评估您的内容的理论“质量”来工作的。秘诀对于每个平台都是独特的，但通常是根据什么将导致最终用户持续参与来评估的。一般来说，这意味着您的内容应该引导消费者在屏幕另一侧产生点赞、分享、评论和其他形式的积极肯定反馈。

Location does still matter for digital products, just not in the same way that it does for the ice cream store. Just like you may choose a different mall for your storefront based on your kind of customer, your audience will live in different places online.

地点对于数字产品仍然很重要，只是不像冰淇淋店那样。就像您可能会根据您的客户类型为您的商铺选择不同的商场一样，您的受众也会生活在不同的在线地点。

Twitter, to use one example, was a great place to start for Gumroad, because of the “retweet” functionality. It allowed our creators to share our tweets with their audiences. I’ve seen folks go from a few hundred followers to thousands because a single popular account retweeted their idea. And because it’s often much easier to tweet than to produce the images, video, or audio necessary to post on other social networks, you can train yourself via a very quick feedback loop.

举例来说，Twitter 对 Gumroad 来说是一个很好的起点，因为它具有“转推”功能。这使我们的创作者可以与他们的观众分享我们的推文。我见过一些人的关注者数量从几百人增加到数千人，因为一家受欢迎的账号转推了他们的想法。而且因为在 Twitter 上发布推文比制作其他社交网络上的图片、视频或音频要容易得多，你可以通过非常快速的反馈循环来训练自己。

But it depends. Instagram may be the perfect platform for your business. Or YouTube, or Reddit, or Pinterest. Try them all. The good news is it’s much cheaper and easier to try a new platform than to move your store to a new zip code. The world is in flux, and new platforms are constantly spinning up. You may find more success on TikTok, Clubhouse, Dispo, or something new that doesn’t yet exist. The important thing is to start. Eventually you’ll find the platform that will let you advertise your business by being you.

但这取决于情况。Instagram可能是您的业务的完美平台。或者 YouTube、Reddit、Pinterest。尝试它们所有的平台。好消息是尝试一个新平台比将您的店迁移到新的邮政编码要便宜得多、更容易。世界处于不断变化中，新平台不断涌现。您可能会在TikTok、Clubhouse、Dispo或尚不存在的新平台上获得更多成功。重要的是要开始。最终，您会找到能让您通过做自己来广告您的业务的平台。

How to Get Started on Social Media

- o **Create an account.** One is your personal account (you, the human) and one is your business account (you, the business).

创建一个账户。一个是你的个人账户（你，作为人类），一个是你

的商业账户（你，作为企业）。

My accounts are my own (@shl) and Gumroad's (@gumroad). My personal account's goal is to encourage more people to start businesses. If you're reading this book, that's probably not surprising to you. Gumroad's goal is to inspire people to become creators, on Gumroad or otherwise. There's a subtle difference—creators and business owners are separate identities, but the fundamental questions are the same: Who is your audience, what do they want out of their life, and how can you help them achieve their goals?

我的账户属于我自己 (@shl) 和 Gumroad (@gumroad)。我的个人账户的目标是鼓励更多的人开始创业。如果你在阅读这本书，这可能对你来说并不奇怪。Gumroad 的目标是激励人们成为创作者，在 Gumroad 或其他平台上。这是一个微妙的区别 - 创作者和企业主是两个分开的身份，但根本问题是相同的：你的受众是谁，他们希望从生活中得到什么，以及你如何帮助他们实现他们的目标？

Too many people think their business account is enough. No, it's not. People don't care about your business and its success, they care about you and your struggles.

很多人认为他们的企业账户就足够了。不，不是的。人们并不关心你的企业及其成功，他们关心的是你和你的挣扎。

- o **Don't share what you ate for lunch.** Status updates about your life and your business are fine, *but they won't grow your audience.* The days of discussing meals on social media are over, even on your personal account. Your goal now is to expand your reach and to provide the most value to strangers who find you on the internet.

不要分享你午餐吃了什么。关于你的生活和业务的状态更新没关系，但它们不会增加你的受众。在社交媒体上讨论餐食的日子已经结束，即使在你的个人账户上也是如此。你现在的目标是扩大你的影响力，并为在互联网上找到你的陌生人提供最大的价值。

- o **Be authentic.** Social media is about ideas, not people. Be yourself, but focus on acting out a set of core values. What did you learn? What conversation did you have? Your job here is to *give*, not *ask*. Remember: This is not about *selling*.

做真实的自己。社交媒体是关于思想，而不是个人。做真实的自己，但专注于表现一套核心价值观。你学到了什么？你进行了什么对话？你在这里的工作是给予，而不是索取。记住：这不是关于销售。

Your business account should be similar to your personal one, because they're both *you*, and both should be about ideas so that you're constantly giving value out for free. It may feel weird that you're not talking about a new customer case study or a new feature you've launched. You can do that too, occasionally. But the truth is, your audience doesn't care. They want to lose weight, laugh, be entertained, get smarter, spend time with loved ones, go home on time, sleep adequately, eat

good food, be happy. Help them do that.

你的商业账户应该与个人账户类似，因为它们都是你，而且都应该关注创意，以便不断地免费提供价值。虽然你不谈论一个新的客户案例或一个你推出的新功能可能会感觉有些奇怪，但偶尔也可以这样做。但事实是，你的听众并不关心这些，他们想减肥，笑一笑，被娱乐，变聪明，与亲人共度时光，按时回家，充分睡眠，吃好的食物，快乐地生活。帮助他们实现这些愿望。

- o **Build in public.** In chapter 2, I talked about community and sharing what you were learning in the process of becoming part of a like-minded group of people who share the same interests. Now it's time to take that a bit further on behalf of your business. Not only should you share what you learn to maintain your ties to your community, but you should also be building your business in public and sharing that process with your customers.

建立公开。在第二章中，我谈到了社区和分享你在成为志同道合的人群中的学习过程中所学到的知识。现在是时候代表你的企业进一步采取行动了。你不仅应该分享你的学习，以保持与社区的联系，而且还应该公开建立你的企业，并与你的客户分享这个过程。

You don't have to be a genius or pretend to be a genius, you just need to be a step ahead of your audience in at least one thing.

你不需要成为天才或假装自己是天才，你只需要在至少一件事情上领先于你的观众一步就行了。

- o **Trust the feedback loop.** Start sharing, and you will soon find out what works and what doesn't. The brilliance of social media is the instant response (or lack of response) you get from your followers. As your audience grows, you will collect more data so that every day you can look back at what worked, what didn't work, and examine why. "Working" means something different for every business, but eventually your efforts should be quantifiable, objective, and should contribute in some way to your bottom line.

相信反馈循环。开始分享，你很快就会发现哪些有效，哪些无效。社交媒体的亮点在于你能得到迅速的回应（或缺乏回应）从你的追随者。随着你的受众增加，你将收集更多的数据，这样你每天就可以回顾一下哪些有效，哪些无效，并检查其原因。‘有效’对于每个企业而言都意味着不同的事情，但最终你的努力应该是可量化的，客观的，并且应该以某种方式对你的底线产生贡献。

Just like your product, the stuff you share on social media is only as good as the experiences it enables people to have. This goes for Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Reddit, Pinterest, and every other platform that connects like-minded people to each other. There are subtle differences, but you'll figure them out quickly as you go.

就像您的产品一样，您在社交媒体上分享的内容的好坏，取决于它能给人们带来的体验。这适用于Facebook、Instagram、YouTube、Reddit、Pinterest和连通志同道合的人们的每个其他平台。虽然平台之间存在细微的差异，但您会很快学会应对它们。

Soon, you'll be able to predict how something will land before you even say it. But since I've already gone through that, I'm here to help you out. I've learned that there are three levels to the type of content people share, each one with more potential reach than the last.

很快你就能在说出话语之前预测它的落地方式。但是既然我已经经历了，我来帮助你了解。我发现人们分享的内容有三个级别，每个级别都比上一个级别更具潜力。

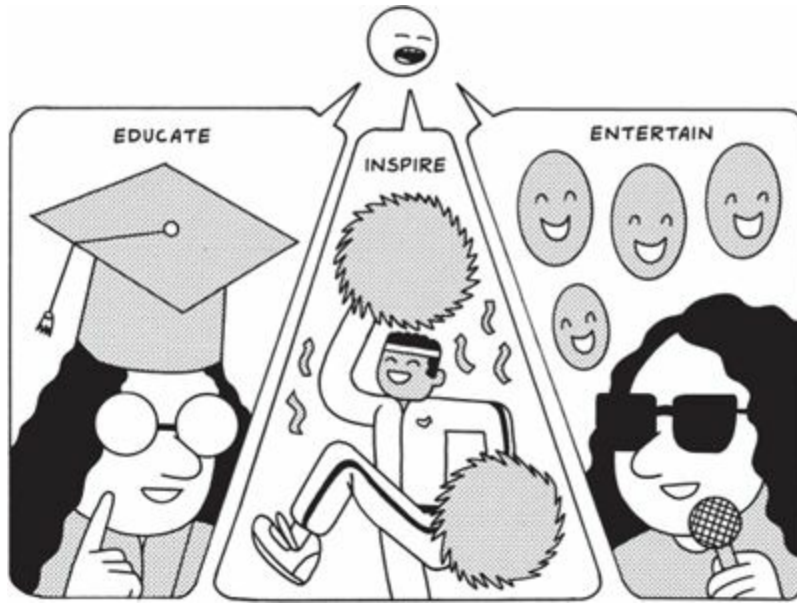
Educate, Inspire, and Entertain

It may be tempting to skip straight to the most “effective” type of content, but just like working out, you should walk before you run a 5K, and run a 5K before you run a marathon. Your body needs time to adapt, as does your mind. And most important, your audience does too.

可能会有诱惑直接跳到最“有效”的内容类型，但就像锻炼身体一样，你应该先步行再慢跑5公里，最后再跑马拉松。你的身体需要时间去适应，你的思考方式也需要。最重要的是，你的受众也需要适应。

Make your mistakes when few people are watching. The corollary of succeeding in public is failing in public, so you want the confidence and security of success at smaller scales before you move up the ladder.

在人们关注较少的时候犯错误。在公众场合成功的必然结果是在公众场合失败，因此你要在更小规模的成功中获得信心和安全感，然后再向更高层次挑战。



LEVEL ONE: EDUCATE

Few make the transition from being themselves to being teachers, but those who do build audiences quickly, because people spend much of their time on social media in search of a better way to live, learn, and make money. This is how you start growing your audience beyond the people who already know you. You do it by providing value for free, asking for nothing in return, repeatedly. It's a natural continuation of what you were doing in your community, only now you're doing it with a wider group of people. If you have a hundred customers, there are at least a hundred things you have learned. Start by sharing those.

少数人能够成功从自我成长为教师，但他们能够快速建立自己的听众群体，因为人们总是在社交媒体上寻找更好的生活、学习和赚钱方式。这就是您将观众扩大到已知人群之外的方法。您需要免费提供有价值的内容，并且无条件重复供给。这是您在社区中所做的自然延伸，只不过现在您的受众更广。如果您有一百个客户，那就至少有一百个学到的经验可以分享。从分享这些经验开始。

Your existing audience will engage with these ideas, broad-casting the very best ones to their own audiences, and yours will grow as a result. You will do this *every day*, because it's part of your job and because you're

already online all day anyway.

你现有的观众将会与这些想法互动，将最好的想法传达给他们自己的观众，从而使你的观众量增长。由于这是你的工作且你已经整天在线了，你每天都会这样做。

Of course, this is not all you're doing. You're still building a company. Building a social media presence is a lagging indicator of the success of your company, and it should always be secondary to it.

当然，这不是你所做的全部。你仍在建立公司。建立社交媒体存在是公司成功的滞后指标，它应始终次于公司。

In 2008, Jenny and Ron Doan lost most of their savings in the financial crisis. Their kids, Al and Sarah, came up with a plan to help get their parents back on their feet. They bought a computerized quilting machine to set up their mom, an avid quilter, in a small space in their hometown of Hamilton, Missouri. Al and Sarah hoped that given the demand and the long lead time for machine quilting, Jenny could take in other people's projects and finish them. If she could earn \$10,000 per month, they figured, she could not only make a living, but could also rebuild the family's savings.

2008年，珍妮和罗恩·多恩在金融危机中失去了大部分积蓄。他们的孩子艾尔和莎拉想出了一个计划，帮助让他们的父母重新站起来。他们买了一台电脑化缝纫机，在他们的家乡密苏里州汉密尔顿的一个小空间里为他们的母亲安装。艾尔和莎拉希望鉴于机器缝纫的需求和长时间的工期，珍妮可以接受他人的项目并完成。如果她能每月赚取10,000美元，他们认为，她不仅可以谋生，还可以重建家庭的储蓄。

Business was so bad that their idea seemed dead on arrival. Al, who had already built several internet businesses, started looking around for a way to let people know about his mom even though he had no idea where quilters hung out on the web. What he discovered was that the internet had not yet touched quilting, and that most quilters closely guarded their techniques and designs in a way that kept people, especially beginners, out rather than inviting them in to learn, sew, and create.

生意非常惨淡，以至于他们的想法似乎还未启动就被否定了。已经创办了几个互联网公司的阿尔开始四处寻找方法，让人们知道他的母亲，尽管他不知道缝制者在网络上聚集的地方在哪里。他所发现的是，

互联网尚未触及到制作被子这一领域，并且大多数缝制者都会严密保护她们的技巧和设计，这使得人们特别是初学者无法得到邀请，去了解、缝制和创造。

Al persuaded Jenny to make ten YouTube tutorials in which she taught quilting techniques, and, well, the rest is history. Jenny's more than five hundred videos have been viewed millions of times, and in 2020, Missouri Star Quilt Company shipped more than one million orders. Hamilton has become “the Disneyland of Quilting,” and the once-decaying small town hosts more than a hundred thousand people every year who come to visit Missouri Star's sixteen quilt shops, their restaurants, and their retreat center. All of that grew from ten YouTube videos.

艾尔说服珍妮拍摄了10个YouTube教程视频，其中她教授了缝制技巧，其余的故事随之展开。珍妮制作了超过500个视频，被观看了数百万次，在2020年，密苏里之星缝制公司发货超过100万份订单。汉密尔顿已成为“缝制迪士尼乐园”，曾经衰败的小镇每年接待超过10万人来到密苏里之星的十六家缝制店、餐厅和疗养中心。所有这一切都起源于10个YouTube视频。

If you're thinking, “I don't know where to start,” or “Five hundred videos!?!,” remind yourself that you've been practicing these skills for a while now. Remember how you participated in your community by commenting, contributing, and creating? You're basically doing that here at scale. It doesn't have to be polished, it doesn't have to be produced, it doesn't have to be perfect. The most important thing is to set aside a dedicated amount of time every day and to begin.

如果你想：“我不知道该从哪里开始，”或“五百个视频！？！”请提醒自己，你已经练习这些技能有一段时间了。记得你是如何通过评论、贡献和创造参与社区的吗？在这里，你基本上是在更大的范围内做同样的事情。它不必完美，不必制作精良，也不必完美无缺。最重要的是每天抽出足够的时间并开始。

LEVEL TWO: INSPIRE

Education is a great way to get started, but to grow outside of your

“students,” you need to go beyond teaching. There are only so many people who are interested in learning physics, but Richard Feynman is much better known than any physics teacher would otherwise be because he talked about something grander than that. He took his insights from physics and turned them into insights about life. Technically his work falls into the category of philosophy.

教育是一个很好的起点，但要在“学生”之外发展，你需要超越教学。只有那么多人对学习物理感兴趣，但理查德·费曼因为探讨比物理更伟大的事物而比任何物理老师更有名。他将自己从物理学得到的洞察力转化为关于生活的洞见。从技术上讲，他的工作属于哲学范畴。

At some point, he started motivating people, inspiring them to lead better lives. As physics became a subset of what he was teaching, his physics students became a subset of his new audience; far more people want to live better lives than want to learn physics.

在某个时候，他开始激励人们，鼓舞他们过上更好的生活。随着物理学成为他所教授内容的一部分，他的物理学生逐渐成为他新观众的一部分；想要过上更好生活的人比想学习物理的人要多得多。

How can you motivate and inspire? You can apply your learnings from painting, writing, designing, software engineering, or physics to life and share them with a wider audience. You can document your projects and your progress: where you started and where you are today. If you're in the supplements business, for example, a weight loss journey will gain far more traction than an information video.

你如何激励和鼓舞他人？你可以将你从绘画、写作、设计、软件工程或物理学中所学到的知识应用到生活中，并与更广泛的受众分享。你可以记录你的项目和进展情况：你从哪里开始，现在又到了哪里。例如，如果你在补充营养品的业务中，一个减肥旅程将比一部信息视频获得更多关注。

Gimlet Media, a narrative podcasting company acquired by Spotify in 2019, launched its first podcast, *StartUp*, about its own humble beginnings. In the first season, founders Alex Blumberg and Matt Lieber tell the story of building their business, including one infamous episode in which Alex awkwardly and disastrously pitches venture investor Chris Sacca, who then

shows him what his pitch *should* have been. Founder fights? Check. Burnout? Check. Family drama? Check. *StartUp* reveals some of the moments every founder faces but few like to discuss. The result? Millions of downloads.

2019年被Spotify收购的叙事播客公司Gimlet Media推出了它的第一款播客节目《StartUp》，讲述了自己的谦卑起源。在第一季中，创始人Alex Blumberg和Matt Lieber讲述了他们建立业务的故事，包括其中一个臭名昭著的事件，即Alex尴尬而灾难性地向风险投资家Chris Sacca发起的洽谈，随后Chris向他展示了一个完美的展示。创始人间的争吵？有。过劳？有。家庭纷争？有。《StartUp》揭示了每个创始人都会面临但很少讨论的时刻。结果是什么？下载量达数百万。

Did the founders set out to inspire? Not necessarily. But by sharing their struggles and their successes, they showed others what was possible and made fans, not just customers. You can do the same. Don't just teach. Speak from experience, tell the truth, and the inspiration will happen.

创始人的目的是激励他人吗？不一定。但是通过分享他们的挣扎和成功，他们向他人展示了可能性，也拥有了粉丝而不仅仅是顾客。你也可以做到同样的事情。不要仅仅教导别人，从你自己的经验出发，说出真相，激励也将会发生。

LEVEL THREE: ENTERTAIN

This third level is the most important, because it makes you relevant to a vastly larger group of potential customers—almost everyone. But it is also the hardest to achieve.

这第三个层次是最重要的，因为它让你对几乎所有的潜在客户群体都具有相关性。但也是最难实现的。

Teaching is hard, inspiring is hard, entertaining is hard. Now try doing them all at the same time. Why? Think about how you spend your time. Do you spend it watching movies and TV shows and stand-up comedy specials, or—let's be honest—reading books like this one?

教学难，激发难，娱乐难。现在试试同时做到这些。为什么？想想你如何花费时间。你是花时间看电影、电视剧、喜剧表演，还是——说实话——读像这本书一样的书？

And even if you do read books like this, how often do you talk to your friends and family about them? It's more likely that you spend time discussing the last basketball game you watched, or the last political scandal, or the upcoming Hollywood blockbuster.

即使你读这样的书，你有多经常和你的朋友和家人谈论它们呢？更有可能的是，你会花时间讨论上一场篮球比赛，上一个政治丑闻或即将上映的好莱坞大片。

When push comes to shove, entertainment wins.

实在不行，娱乐取胜。

Social media is no different. Every platform has a feed that puts all of the content head-to-head. There's one feed, for everything. If content is king, entertainment is the king of content.

社交媒体并没有区别。每个平台都有一个汇总所有内容的动态。所有内容都聚集在一个动态中。如果说内容是王者，那么娱乐就是内容之王。

You don't have to do something completely different. Keep educating people, and inspiring people, but have more fun doing it. You are still trying to teach people, but you want to do so in a way that sticks with them—and that happens when you make it entertaining.

你不必做完全不同的事情。继续教育和启发人们，但要更加快乐地做。你仍在尝试教育人们，但你希望以一种让他们难忘的方式来做到这一点-当你让它有趣时就会发生。

Think about the three parts of a joke: (1) Say something, (2) establish a pattern, and (3) break the pattern with a punch line.

思考笑话的三个组成部分：（1）说一些话，（2）建立一个模式，（3）打破这个模式并说出引人捧腹的结尾。

Here's one example that worked well for me. I often talk about entrepreneurship (big surprise!), but this tweet resonated and went viral . . . because it's funny:

这是一个对我很有效的例子。我经常谈论企业家精神（大惊小怪！），但这个推文引起了共鸣并迅速传播。。。因为它很有趣：



Sahil @shl · Feb 10

...

Entrepreneurship: work 60 hours a week so you don't have to work 40 hours a week.

135

1K

9.7K



You will fail at this, as I certainly have. Telling jokes is hard. And because it's the most subjective of the three, it will be harder to figure out why some things work while others don't. But that's exactly what building a brand is—the murky, “soft” stuff that isn't directly about the value you are creating for your customer.

你会失败，就像我一样。讲笑话很难，而且因为它是最主观的，所以更难弄清楚为什么有些东西有效而其他的则无效。但这正是构建品牌的“软性”事项，与你为客户创造的价值并不直接相关。

Think about your favorite brands and how they communicate. Nike isn't selling shoes, and Apple isn't selling computers. They go straight for the heart, or the funny bone, and you should too.

想想你最喜欢的品牌以及它们的传播方式。Nike 不仅仅是在卖鞋，Apple 也不仅仅是在卖电脑。它们直击人们的心灵或幽默感，而你也同样做到。

But never forget: While social media is sexy and often leads to having millions of followers, it is not the end-all and be-all of your business. I've seen creators with tens of millions of followers fumble, and creators with just a few dozen earn a living multiple times over.

但是永远不要忘记：虽然社交媒体很性感，通常会拥有数百万的追随者，但它并不是你的业务的全部和终极目标。我见过有上千万追随者的创作者犯错，也见过只有几十个追随者的创作者赚取多倍的生活费用。

That's because social media is the top of the funnel. It's mostly strangers. Most of them are not fans yet, and almost none of them are customers.

这是因为社交媒体是漏斗的顶端。大部分人都是陌生人。他们中的大多数尚未成为粉丝，几乎没有人是顾客。

You still need to convert them, and to do that, you need to get them to commit.

你仍然需要将它们转换，为此，你需要让他们承诺。

Middle of the Funnel: Emails and Communities

Don't call it a comeback. Email's been here since the very beginning of the internet. And it'll probably be here until its end.

不要称其为回归。电子邮件从互联网诞生的那一刻起就一直存在。它可能会一直存在，直到互联网的终结。

Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook can take away your business at any time, by tweaking the algorithms, shutting down your account, or making you pay to show up in people's feeds. So even though social media can be incredibly effective for gaining distribution, you are building on rented land.

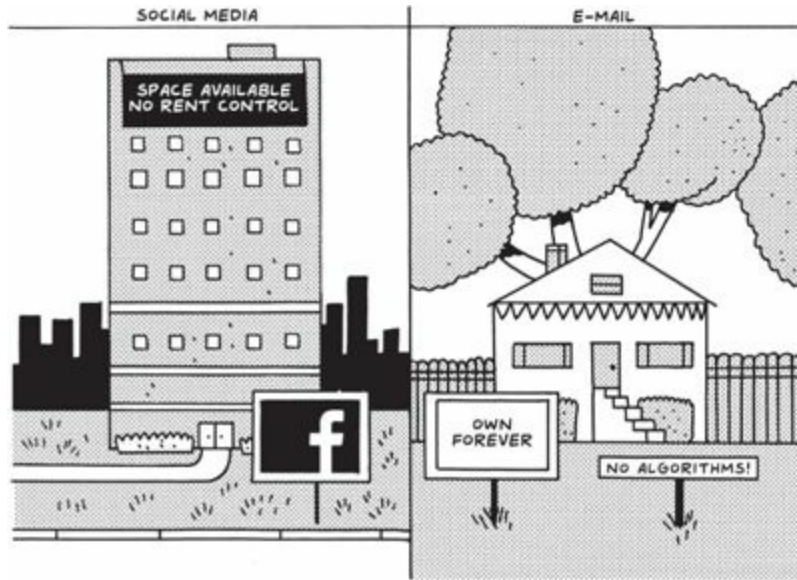
推特、油管、Instagram和Facebook可以随时通过调整算法、关闭您的账户或让您付费出现在人们的信息流中来剥夺您的业务。因此，尽管社交媒体可以帮助您获得广泛的分发，但您却是在租借的土地上建立业务。

That's why, as soon as you have social media followers, you should start building an email list.

这就是为什么在你拥有社交媒体追随者后，你应该开始建立一个电子邮件列表的原因。

Email is "peer-to-peer." It gives you a direct line to your customers that isn't controlled by a private company, an algorithm, or whether you spend money on advertising. And if you have someone's email address, it means they consider you a friend, not a stranger.

电子邮件是“点对点”的。它为你提供了一条直接联系客户的途径，而这不会受到任何私人公司、算法或你是否花费广告费的控制。如果你拥有某人的电子邮件地址，这代表他们认为你是朋友，而不是陌生人。



Of course, you don't spam your friends, so you shouldn't spam these people either. Apply the same three-level framework to emails as you do to any other type of content. First, educate. Second, inspire. Third, entertain. Ideally, you'll do all three.

当然，你不会向朋友发送垃圾邮件，因此你也不应向这些人发送垃圾邮件。对于电子邮件，应用与任何其他类型的内容相同的三级框架。首先，教育。其次，激励。第三，娱乐。理想情况下，你应该三位一体。

Just like you built a process before you built a product, the earliest version of your email list may just be a spreadsheet that you update daily or weekly with the email addresses of your friends and family, your earliest customers, and the people in your community who have shown interest in your product. Eventually, you will want to automate parts of this process as your list grows and you have better uses for your time, like growing the list itself through sales, social media, and content.

就像在创建产品之前建立流程一样，您的电子邮件列表的最早版本可能只是一张表格，您每天或每周会更新其中包含您的朋友和家人、最早的客户以及对您的产品表现出兴趣的社区人士的电子邮件地址。随着列表的增长和您更好地利用时间的方式，例如通过销售、社交媒体和内容来增加列表本身，您最终会想要自动化这个过程的部分。

To do that, you can use an email marketing service like Mailchimp or

ConvertKit to collect emails from your most devout fans. To sweeten the deal, give them something in exchange for their email, like a mini ebook, a short PDF guide, a video, a series of emails that help them solve a problem, or a checklist to complete.

你可以使用类似Mailchimp或ConvertKit的邮件营销服务收集最忠实的粉丝邮件地址，以此来实现这一点。为了让这一行为更具吸引力，你可以给他们一些免费的东西作为回馈，如迷你电子书、短PDF指南、视频、帮助他们解决问题的一系列电子邮件或要完成的清单。

While you probably won't have millions of email subscribers, each subscriber is worth far more than a follower. Besides the product itself, Gumroad's email list is probably our most valuable business asset. More than 200,000 creators subscribe to the Gumroad newsletter. When we have something important to say—such as a new feature that will make our creators more money—we can tell all of them about it, without anyone else's permission.

虽然你可能不会有几百万个电子邮件订阅者，但每个订阅者的价值远高于一个关注者。除了产品本身外，Gumroad的电子邮件列表可能是我们最有价值的业务资产。超过20万个创作者订阅了Gumroad的新闻通讯。当我们有重要的事情要说，比如推出新功能能让我们的创作者获得更多的收益，我们可以不需要任何其他人的授权而将这个消息告诉所有人。

(While we're here, subscribe to it: gumroad.com/gumroad/follow.)

在此期间，请订阅它：gumroad.com/gumroad/follow。

Over the years, they've heard from us dozens of times, and they will continue to, until unsubscribe do us part.

多年来，他们已经听到我们的许多次，直到取消订阅将我们分开。

You can encourage people to subscribe to your list in other ways too. In the previous section, we went in-depth on how to use social media. The next time you have a viral tweet, you can reply to it with a link to sign up to your newsletter. When you have something longer to say, write a blog post and link to that. At the bottom, let people know they can subscribe for further content. Go read your favorite blogger, and I bet you'll notice a form at the very end, with a free goodie on offer, often called a "lead magnet."

您还可以通过其他方式鼓励人们订阅您的名单。在上一节中，我们深入了解了如何使用社交媒体。下次当您的推文爆红时，可以回复一个链接以让其订阅您的通讯。当您有更长的内容需要传达时，可以写一篇博客文章并在其中添加一个订阅链接。在文章底部，让人们知道他们可以订阅以获取更多的内容。去看看您最喜欢的博客作者，我敢打赌您会在文章末尾看到一个表格，上面提供了一个免费的好东西，通常被称为“引领磁石”。

Finally, when you make a sale, virtually every service will allow you to ask for and collect your customer's email addresses, along with any other information you may want to ask for (such as their first name, or the city they live in).

最后，当你成功销售产品时，几乎所有的服务都会允许你要求并收集顾客的电子邮件地址，以及其他你想要询问的信息（例如他们的名字或居住城市）。

Too many creators—trained by Amazon, perhaps, which doesn't give you any data on your customer—think of a sale as the end of a transaction, instead of the beginning of a relationship. The way we're marketing lets you build an audience of people who are hearing from you over and over again, before *and* after they've bought your product.

许多天才创作者，可能是受亚马逊培训的，它不会提供任何关于你的客户的数据，把销售视为交易的结束，而不是关系的开始。我们的推广方式可以让你在顾客购买你的产品之前和之后，与他们建立长期客户关系的听众群体。

To get good at this, and for it to be most effective, you need to reach out to the people on your list frequently. Create a schedule, whether it's every Monday morning or every Saturday night or even just once a month. Pick something right now—you can always change your mind later.




为了做到这一点并取得最佳效果，你需要经常联系你列表中的人。制定一个时间表，无论是每个星期一早上、每个星期六晚上，甚至是每个月一次。现在就选择一个时间——你随时可以改变主意。

The more consistent you are, the faster you'll find out what works for you. Not just the kind of content, but the platforms themselves. Your customers spend their time in different places, and you need to go find them.

你越是保持一致，就能越快找出适合你的方式。不仅是内容的类型，也包括平台选择。你的顾客在不同的地方度过时间，你需要找到他们。

You don't have to blog four times a week if a monthly newsletter with meaningful content is what you can manage and is more suited to your business. As with social media, experiment with how best to use your email list. If you send something out and readers unsubscribe en masse, don't do that again. But if you offer your knowledge, your insights, your experience, and a discount, and you see a response, do that over and over.

如果一份每月发布有意义内容的新闻通讯更适合你的业务，你不必每周发布四篇博客。与社交媒体一样，尝试如何最好地使用电子邮件列表。如果你发送了某些内容然后读者大量退订，就不要再那样做了。但如果你提供自己的知识、见解、经验和折扣，并看到回应，请一遍又一遍地这么做。

YOUR SOCIAL CALENDAR	M	T	W	TH	F	S	S
	X		X		X		
			X				
					X		

Eventually, your business will start to grow organically. You will no longer have to push that boulder up a hill. Social media algorithms will start to boost your content to new followers as you find your own success, your readers will share your blog posts with their friends, and your customers will start to tell others. How can you help them do so? By creating more content they want to share—that will help them educate, motivate, and entertain their own audiences.

最终，你的业务将开始有机地增长。你将不再需要推动那块巨石上山。社交媒体算法将开始推广你的内容到新的追随者，当你找到自己的成功时，你的读者将与他们的朋友分享你的博客文章，你的客户将开始告诉别人。你如何帮助他们这样做呢？通过创建更多他们想要分享的内容，这将帮助他们教育、激励和娱乐他们自己的受众。

How Laura Roeder Used Marketing to Grow

While I prioritize social media, other minimalist entrepreneurs like Laura Roeder, founder of Paperbell and MeetEdgar, have a different take. For Paperbell, a scheduling and client management software for personal coaches she founded in 2020, she decided on SEO-driven content marketing to engage her audience. Early on, she hired an SEO consultant to compile a spreadsheet of keywords that reflected the search intent of her target customers. At first she was worried that using SEO would compromise the quality of Paperbell's resources and advice for coaches, but instead it's helped focus her writing and has resulted in organic growth. "The amazing thing about SEO is that it's a long-term play," she says. "It only gets better over time if you put effort into it."

尽管我优先考虑社交媒体，像 Paperbell 和 MeetEdgar 的创始人 Laura Roeder 这样的其他极简主义创业者有不同的看法。对于她在2020年创立的针对个人教练的日程安排和客户管理软件 Paperbell，她决定采用以SEO为驱动的内容营销来吸引受众。起初，她雇了一个SEO顾问编制了一个关键词电子表格，反映了她的目标客户的搜索意图。起初，她担心使用SEO会损害Paperbell的资源和对教练的建议的质量，但结果是它有助于集中精力撰写，并取得了自然增长。“SEO的惊人之处就在于它是一个长期的游戏，”她说。“只要你付出了努力，它就不断变得更好。”

Note: I have added punctuation marks to make the translation more readable.

Though she does eventually hope to actively build up followers on Facebook and Instagram, right now she puts most of her energy into regular blog posts and product update emails, which she describes as her favorite marketing copy. All of the changes Paperbell makes to its software at this stage are in response to requests, so the update emails are a chance to delight

customers who are invested in Paperbell's progress. "Founders put so much time into researching marketing strategies," she says, "but the only way to discover what will work is to try it, see if you like it, and watch to see if your customers respond." As the founder of multiple companies, she finds it freeing that there's no one right path for everyone and every business.

尽管她最终希望能在Facebook和Instagram上积极建立粉丝群，但现在她把大部分精力放在定期的博客文章和产品更新电子邮件上，她称这是她最喜欢的营销文案。在这个阶段，Paperbell所做的所有更改都是对请求的回应，因此更新电子邮件是一个机会，可以让那些对Paperbell的进展投入了精力的客户感到满意。“创始人花费了很多时间研究营销策略，”她说，“但发现可行性的唯一方法是尝试，看看你是否喜欢它，并观察你的客户是否有反应。”作为多家公司的创始人，她发现这种方式很自由，因为并没有一条适合每个人和每个企业的正确道路。

She knows because she's made changes between Meet-Edgar and Paperbell. With MeetEdgar, a social media scheduling tool she founded in 2014, she and her team didn't offer trial subscriptions because the software required a time commitment to learn and to set up. But since then, there's been a behavioral shift in the way people research tools and consider software.

她知道是因为她在Meet-Edgar和Paperbell之间进行了更改。在2014年创立的社交媒体调度工具MeetEdgar中，她和她的团队没有提供试用订阅，因为该软件需要时间承诺去学习和设置。但自那时以来，人们研究工具和考虑软件的方式发生了行为转变。

"Free trials are table stakes," she says. New customers aren't interested in marketing information; they open six tabs and want to get started comparing their choices right away. With MeetEdgar, she first tried invitations, but now both MeetEdgar and Paperbell offer trial subscriptions.

“免费试用是必要条件，”她说。新客户不感兴趣营销信息；他们会打开六个标签，希望立即开始比较选择。她先尝试了MeetEdgar的邀请，但现在MeetEdgar和Paperbell都提供试用订阅服务。

Laura is a big believer in building an email list from day one. Paperbell's list comes from her first customers as well as from those who've signed up for free trials. She also has a regularly changing lead magnet on the website

to collect email addresses. The list is key because Paperbell is a low-cost software option for individuals rather than for teams, which means the math doesn't work to do demos or to have a dedicated sales team to reach customers.

Laura非常认可从一开始就建立电子邮件列表。 Paperbell的列表来自她的第一批客户以及那些注册了免费试用的客户。她还在网站上定期更换引导工具来收集电子邮件地址。该列表非常重要，因为Paperbell是为个人而非团队提供低成本软件选项，这意味着进行演示或拥有专门的销售团队来吸引客户是不划算的。

“A lot of entrepreneurs think they have to start something totally new,” she says, “but a proven market makes your job so much easier.” With the way people buy on the internet, the quality and consistency of your marketing means that you can get on people's radar and you don't always need to create a unique product category to be successful against bigger companies. Instead, you can build great software and a great community into an impactful, sustainable business through patient, strategic, and consistent marketing.

“许多企业家认为他们必须开始全新的事业，”她说，“但是一个经过验证的市场可以让你的工作变得轻松得多。”随着人们在互联网上购买的方式，您的营销质量和一致性意味着您可以进入人们的视野，您不必总是创建一个独特的产品类别才能在与更大公司的竞争中取得成功。相反，通过耐心、战略和始终如一的营销，您可以将优秀的软件和优秀的社区建设成具有影响力和可持续性的业务。”

Spend Money Last

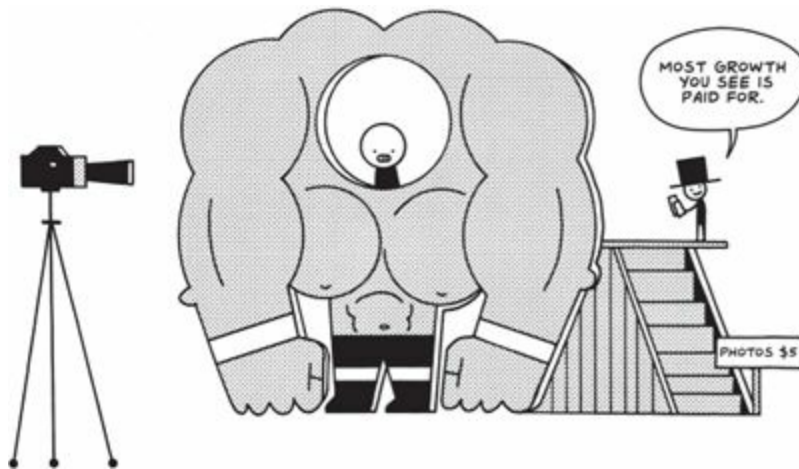
Press cycles about million-dollar fund-raises and billion-dollar valuations are short-lived and targeted at aspiring entrepreneurs, not people like your customers. Building your audience that way doesn't work, because a months-old startup has nothing to say, besides that a few rich people gave them some money. Trust me, I know.

关于筹集数百万美元资金和估价数十亿美元的报道只是短暂的，针对的是有抱负的企业家，而不是像您的客户这样的人。用这种方法建立您的受众并不会起作用，因为几个月前创立的初创企业除了一些富人给他们

一些钱以外没有什么可说的。相信我，我知道。

Most growth you see is paid for. So if you are jealous of someone's constant press and stratospheric growth, keep in mind that they are likely burning cash in order to acquire customers and to promise them an experience or a product that could come to an abrupt end at any moment when the money runs out. It is quite literally growth at all costs.

大多数增长都是有代价的。所以如果你嫉妒某人的持续媒体关注和高速增长，要记住他们很可能会耗费大量资金去获取客户，以及向他们承诺一种体验或产品，但当资金耗尽时，这一切可能会突然终止。这实质上是不惜一切代价的增长。



This is backwards. You started your business to help a group of people you care about, and your product is what you offer them, not your ad creatives. But it is too easy to fall for that trap when these are the examples that get the spotlight. Your product is not for everyone, so you shouldn't try to reach everyone. That's way too expensive. And if you're spending money to get followers, to get customers, or to get eyeballs on your product, you're buying an ad no matter what it's called.

这是相反的。你开始自己的事业是为了帮助你所关心的一群人，你的产品是为了向他们提供，而不是你的广告创意。但是当这些是备受瞩目的案例时，很容易陷入这个陷阱。你的产品不是所有人都适用的，所以你不应该试图去触达每一个人。那样太昂贵了。如果你花钱去吸引粉丝、获得客户或让人们注意到你的产品，无论它叫什么，你都在买广

告。

There are display ads, social media ads, ads in newspapers and magazines, outdoor advertising ads, ads on the radio and on podcasts, direct mail, video ads, product placement, event marketing, influencer marketing, email marketing, and more.

有展示广告、社交媒体广告、报纸和杂志广告、户外广告、广播和播客广告、直邮广告、视频广告、产品植入、活动营销、影响者营销、电子邮件营销等等。

This is an expensive set of rabbit holes to go down, which is why it's important to wait as long as you can before doing so. Ideally, you should have a clear idea of what's already working. Then, and only then, should you spend money to accelerate.

这是一个昂贵的兔子洞，因此在这样做之前尽可能长时间等待是很重要的。理想情况下，您应该清楚地知道已经运作的情况。然后，只有在这种情况下，您才应该花钱来加速。

The stories about your business will be stories about your struggles, your customers, your learnings, and your journey. They will create more fans. Who will in turn become your customers, who in turn will tell others about your business.

关于你的业务的故事将会是关于你的挣扎、你的客户、你的学习和你的旅程的故事。它们将创造更多的粉丝。这些粉丝又将成为你的客户，他们将向其他人宣传你的业务。

There's another reason to figure out how to grow using your time and the customer base you currently have. Relying on advertising, even if it works for you today, may eventually get too expensive. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the move from traditional to digital advertising across all industries, which in the long run will drive the cost of ads up year over year. Just as you don't want to rely on social media companies to mediate your relationships to your customers, you don't want your business model to depend on outside companies providing you with affordable advertising. The sooner your marketing function is as sustainable as the rest of your business, the better. And there's no better time to start than from the very beginning.

找到使用现有的时间和客户基础进行增长的另一个原因是，即使广

告今天对您有效，依赖广告最终可能会变得过于昂贵。 COVID-19大流行加速了传统广告向数字广告的转移，这将从长远来看推动广告成本逐年上涨。就像您不希望依赖社交媒体公司来调节您与客户的关系一样，您也不希望您的业务模式依赖外部公司为您提供负担得起的广告。尽早使您的营销功能与您的业务的其他部分一样具有可持续性，这将更好。没有比从一开始就开始更好的时间了。

Spend Money on Your Customers

Startups like PayPal and Uber spent millions of dollars in their early days paying their users to help them grow. But this may pose an obstacle to real growth. If people are only sharing your product because they are being financially rewarded for it, it is unsustainable.

像PayPal和Uber这样的初创公司在早期花费了数百万美元向他们的用户支付费用来帮助它们成长。但这可能会对真正的增长构成障碍。如果人们只是因为获得经济奖励而分享你的产品，那就是不可持续的。

Instead of thinking about loyalty programs as a marketing function, think of them as genuine rewards to loyal customers. For example, you can offer discounts for leaving a business review online or for sharing it on social media.

不要把忠诚计划看作是营销手段，而是要将它们视为对忠诚顾客的真正奖励。例如，您可以为在线留下商业评论或在社交媒体上分享业务信息提供折扣。

Eventually, you can worry about getting headlines from journalists, but for now you should focus on getting reviews from your actual customers. Once your business is growing and sustainable, you can go beyond outreach to the community reporters and micro-influencers that I mentioned in chapter 4. Now you're ready to offer your product for free to reviewers and more established influencers, or you can offer samples of your products or exclusive information on your company to bloggers and journalists who cover your space. But most of all, you can just tell your story. You can be yourself. You worked hard for this. You struggled. You can show others that their hard work and struggles will be rewarded too.

最终，你可能会担心从记者那里获取头条新闻，但现在你应该专注于从你的实际客户那里获取评论。一旦你的业务正在增长并可持续，你可以超越章节4中提到的对社区记者和微型影响者的外展。现在，你可以为评论员提供免费产品或提供你公司产品 and 独家信息的样品，以吸引博客作者和报道你所在领域的记者。但最重要的是，你可以讲述你的故事。你可以做自己。你为此付出了努力。你挣扎了。你可以向他人展示他们的努力和挣扎也会得到回报。

Helena Hambrecht, cofounder and co-CEO of Haus, an aperitif brand, sees enormous potential in enlisting your best customers as marketers. This is one of the strategies she and her husband, Woody, a third-generation winemaker, are using to market their natural, lower-alcohol-by-volume spirits that they sell direct to consumer.

Haus的联合创始人兼联合CEO Helena Hambrecht认为，将最好的客户作为营销人员具有巨大的潜力。这是她和丈夫Woody采用的营销策略之一，Woody是一位三代酿酒师，他们直接向消费者销售天然、低酒精度的烈酒。

She and Woody didn't have money to put into paid marketing and customer acquisition, so from the first product launch at Haus, she reached out to her communities and pitched stories to the press and to individual influencers whom she knew would be excited by the company story and the content she posts on social media, including some of her own photography.

她和伍迪没有资金投入付费营销和客户获取，因此从最初在Haus推出产品时，她联系了自己的社区，并向媒体和个人影响者推销故事，她知道他们会对公司的故事和她在社交媒体上发布的内容（包括自己的摄影作品）感到兴奋。

Given budgetary constraints, it would have been impossible for Haus to generate *all* the content they need for social media, and that's why Helena believes in "putting the power in customers' hands." Haus relies on user-generated content to generate word of mouth. Lo-fi content shot on an iPhone and genuine customer voices convey the authenticity that is a hallmark of the brand and that speaks to potential new customers.

鉴于预算限制，Haus不可能为其社交媒体生成所需的所有内容，这就是为什么Helena相信“将权力交给顾客”的原因。Haus依靠用户生成的

内容来产生口碑效应。用iPhone拍摄的低保真内容和真实的顾客声音传达了品牌的真实性，这也吸引了潜在的新顾客。

The key, she says, is to build relationships, to make contributors feel valued, and to give them the tools they need to make content that they can not only use for Haus but that they themselves will be proud of. “Marketing doesn’t have to be fancy to be impactful,” she says. “It has to be real.” Though Haus does spend money on ads, she notes that advertising performs best when it’s surrounded by a lot of organic content.

她说，关键是建立关系，让贡献者感到被重视，并给予他们制作内容所需的工具，使他们不仅可以为Haus使用内容，而且本身也会为此感到自豪。“营销不必华而不实，但必须真实有效。”虽然Haus确实会花费资金进行广告投放，但她指出，广告只有在大量有机内容的环绕下才能发挥最佳效果。

She and I and many others believe that this is the only way paid marketing makes sense. Ads are anything openly sponsored and nonpersonal that are used to sell an idea, a political candidate, a business, or a product. The bad news is that we still live in a world in which huge corporations spend thousands or millions of dollars to reach thousands or millions of people, and entrepreneurs are up against the sophisticated marketing departments and advertising agencies of Disney, Coca-Cola, Nike, and the like.

她、我和许多人认为这是付费营销有意义的唯一方式。广告是指任何公开赞助的、非个人且用于销售思想、政治候选人、商业或产品的东西。坏消息是，我们仍然生活在一个巨大的企业花费数千或数百万美元来接触数千或数百万人的世界中，而企业家则必须应对迪斯尼、可口可乐、耐克等公司的复杂营销部门和广告代理公司的挑战。

Though technology hasn’t completely leveled the playing field, it’s made advertising a much fairer fight. There are more places to buy ads, with smaller audiences. And the more targeted you can get, the less you have to spend. This is good news for small businesses that don’t have the large ad budgets of Fortune 500 companies and VC-funded startups but do have committed, well-defined communities.

虽然技术并没有完全平衡竞争环境，但它使得广告竞争更加公平了。现在有更多的广告购买场所，小众受众更多。而且，你越精准地定

位，就越省钱。这对于没有大型广告预算的中小企业而言是好消息，尤其是那些拥有忠实、明确群体的企业。

You can advertise on Yelp, or Instagram, picking a specific geographic location or only people interested in, say, the oil paintings of John Singer Sargent. If you're selling a painting course about how to paint the human figure like an impressionist at the turn of the twentieth century, this can be incredibly effective.

您可以在Yelp或Instagram上广告，选择特定的地理位置或只针对对约翰·辛格·萨金特（John Singer Sargent）的油画感兴趣的人。如果您正在销售有关如何像20世纪初的印象派画家一样绘制人物的绘画课程，这将非常有效。

A lot of people interested in those things will still not be interested in buying your product or service. A lot of people who like ice cream won't buy your ice cream. They may be dairy-free, or only eat ice cream on date nights, or they may like looking at ice cream more than they wish to actually eat it. Or perhaps they used to eat ice cream every day and now they're repenting for it. Who knows? You certainly don't.

很多对那些事情感兴趣的人仍然不会对购买你的产品或服务感兴趣。很多喜欢冰淇淋的人也不会购买你的冰淇淋。他们可能无乳製品，或只在约会之夜吃冰淇淋，或者可能更喜欢看冰淇淋而不是真正地吃它。或者他们过去每天都吃冰淇淋，现在正在忏悔。谁知道呢？你当然不知道。

But somebody (spoiler: Facebook) does. You don't need a whole marketing department, you just need a Facebook account. With their help, you can compete with the world's largest brands in just a few hours a week.

但是有人（剧透：Facebook）做到了。您不需要整个营销部门，只需要一个Facebook帐户。在他们的帮助下，您只需要每周几个小时就可以与世界上最大的品牌竞争。

Take Advantage of Lookalike Audiences

I've already talked about the idea that the scale at which you can be successful with advertising is shrinking every day, thanks to software and the

internet. As you browse, services like Facebook and Google collect data on your habits. They know what you need, want, and like. They may even be able to predict what you'll need, want, and like *tomorrow*. For better or worse, this is no longer surprising.

我已经谈到过一个想法，即由于软件和互联网的存在，广告取得成功的规模每天都在缩小。当你浏览时，像 Facebook 和 Google 这样的服务会收集你的习惯数据。他们知道你需要、想要和喜欢什么。他们甚至可能预测你明天需要、想要和喜欢什么。无论好坏，这已经不再令人惊讶。

Collecting and using customer data is a strategy that's here to stay, but it inevitably leads to questions about internet privacy. From the outset, I've said that minimalist entrepreneurs should be selling *to* their users, not selling their users. In practice, that means building a product that solves a real problem for your customers, only selling to customers who are already convinced by your product, and only using your email list to send important information (not spam) to people who have opted in.

收集和使用客户数据是一种长久存在的策略，但它不可避免地会引发关于互联网隐私的问题。我一开始就说过，极简创业者应该向他们的用户销售产品，而不是向他们的用户出售产品。实际上，这意味着为客户构建解决其真正问题的产品，仅向已经对您的产品感到满意的客户销售产品，并且仅使用您的电子邮件列表向已经选择接收重要信息（不是垃圾邮件）的人发送邮件。

The same logic applies to ads. If you choose to spend money on advertising, you should do it in a way your customers would be happy about. As a bonus, you'll be able to spend less money to reach each new customer.

同样的逻辑也适用于广告。如果你选择在广告上花钱，你应该让你的客户满意的方式去做。作为一个额外的好处，你将能够用更少的钱来吸引每一个新客户。

At Gumroad we don't spend any money on paid customer acquisition, for three reasons: (1) We can reach out to creators directly; (2) their use of Gumroad makes their own communities aware of Gumroad for us; and (3) I'm happy with our current growth rate. But paid ads can be a valuable tool for other entrepreneurs, such as ones selling high-quality consumer goods. That said, you should be mindful of the very real data privacy concerns users

will have when they are on the receiving end of targeted ads. Ultimately, you have to decide if paid customer acquisition is the right fit for you and your business.

在Gumroad，我们不会花任何钱进行付费客户获取，原因有三：

（1）我们可以直接接触创作者；（2）他们使用Gumroad可以让他们的社群意识到我们；（3）我对我们目前的增长速度感到满意。但对于其他企业家来说，付费广告可以成为有价值的工具，比如销售高质量消费品的企业。也就是说，当人们成为有针对性广告接收端时，您应该注意到数据隐私问题是非常真实的。最终，您必须决定付费客户获取是否适合您和您的业务。

If you do decide to spend money, you will be glad that you waited. That's because you'll have a much better idea of who your customer actually is, and therefore who else may fit their profile.

如果你决定花钱，你会很高兴自己等待了。因为你会更清楚地知道你的客户是谁，因此也会知道谁适合与他们合作。

For example, you can ask—and pay—Facebook if they happen to know folks who closely resemble your customers. These are called “lookalike audiences,” which Facebook describes as “a way to reach new people who are likely to be interested in your business because they're similar to your best existing customers.”

例如，您可以向Facebook询问并支付费用，看是否有类似于您现有客户的人群。这些人群被称为“相似受众”，Facebook将其描述为“一种可以接触到可能对您的业务感兴趣的新人群，因为他们与您最好的现有客户相似。”

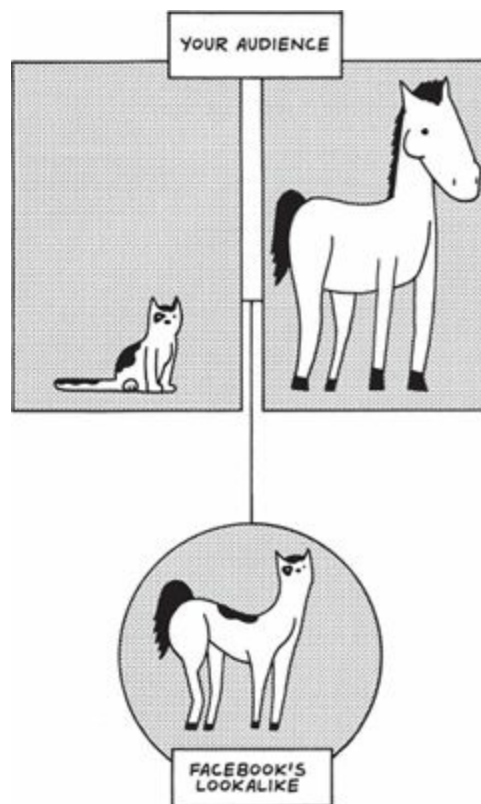
Instead of buying ads to target large swathes of the population, wasting their attention and your money, you can instead tell Facebook, “Please tell people who most resemble my existing customers that I exist.”

不必购买广告来针对大量人群，浪费他们的注意力和你的金钱，你可以告诉Facebook，“请告诉最相似现有客户的人，我存在。”

Each company has its own name for this kind of ad. For example, Pinterest calls them “actalike.” If you decide to spend money on this at all, it's a good way to get started. But remember that this kind of targeted advertising is also becoming more expensive over time, possibly rendering a

previously sustainable business unsustainable.

每家公司都有他们自己的广告命名方式。例如，Pinterest将其称为“如实相似”。如果您决定花钱投放广告，这是一个好的起点。但是要记住，这种定向广告也越来越昂贵，可能使以前可持续的业务变得不可持续。



I could go on and on. There are a million different ways to advertise. But you should rarely, if ever, *need* to. A business built primarily through organic growth will be durable from the start, but even more durable over time as the businesses that heavily rely on paid advertising start to struggle.

我可以不停地说下去。有无数种不同的广告方式。但是你很少甚至从不需要。一个主要通过有机增长建立的企业从一开始就会非常耐用，而随着那些严重依赖付费广告的企业开始遇到困难，它甚至会更加耐用。

Instead of spending money, spend your time. Build relationships, have passionate customers who spread the word, and then think about spending a little bit of your profits to slightly expand your horizon. If you can do that,

you will stay lean and grow at a comfortable rate that never overextends your business.

不要花钱，花时间。建立关系，拥有热情的客户传播口碑，然后考虑花费一点利润来稍微扩展你的视野。如果你能做到这一点，你将保持精益并以舒适的速度增长，而不会过度扩展你的业务。

But paid marketing should never get in the way of what really matters: talking to and selling to customers.

但付费营销永远不应妨碍与顾客交流和销售的最重要事物。

Bottom of the Funnel: Sales

Ultimately, this is what marketing is all about: selling to customers, at scale. Good news: You already have a ton of experience doing that.

最终，这就是市场营销的全部意义：以规模销售给客户。好消息是：你已经在做这件事情上有很多经验了。

That's why this part of the funnel is short and sweet. You've already done the hard work of building a product, finding initial customers, and making sure you've solved their problem. Now you get to revel in the fruits of your labor as your marketing starts to do the much more scalable work of attracting your next customers to you.

因此，漏斗的这一部分很简短而美好。你已经完成了构建产品、找到最初的客户并确保你解决了他们的问题的艰苦工作。现在，你可以在你的市场营销开始更具可扩展性地吸引你的下一个客户的过程中沉醉于你劳动的成果。

KEY TAKEAWAYS

主要收获

- o Marketing is not about making headlines, but making fans. 营销不是为了制造头条新闻，而是为了创造粉丝。
- o Start by educating, then inspiring, then entertaining. Each of these three levels of content is more far-reaching than the last. 首先是教育，然后是启发，最后是娱乐。这三个层次的内容，

一个比一个更具影响力。

- o Paid advertising can work, but it has its cons. If you do decide to spend money, wait as long as you can—you'll know much more about who you're trying to reach that way.

有偿广告可能会奏效，但它有其缺点。如果你决定花钱，尽量等到最后一刻——这样你会更了解自己想要接触的人群。

Learn More

- o Read *Guerilla Marketing*, a book by Jay Conrad Levinson.
阅读《游击营销》，一本由杰康拉德·莱文森所写的书。
- o Read *Made to Stick*, a book by Chip Heath and Dan Heath.
读《让想法更有黏性》一书，该书作者为Chip Heath和Dan Heath。
- o Watch a video course by Daniel Vassallo.
观看Daniel Vassallo的视频教程。
- o Look at room.club/tips, a guide I wrote on how to build an audience on Clubhouse.
请看我写的关于如何在Clubhouse上建立受众的指南，它位于room.club/tips。

6

**grow yourself and
your business
mindfully**

Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your
balance you must keep moving.

人生就像骑自行车一样，要保持平衡就必须不断前行。

— ALBERT EINSTEIN

阿尔伯特·爱因斯坦

In this chapter, we're going to talk about what comes after you're profitable and have an organically growing customer base. For some of you, this will be relevant right this second, but even if you're not there yet, don't skip over this part. It will save you a lot of heartbreak if you can start thinking now about how to grow sustainably while avoiding some of the most common mistakes founders make.

在本章中，我们将讨论在您实现盈利并拥有有机增长的客户群之后要做什么。对于你们中的一些人来说，这将是非常相关的，但即使你还没有到达这个阶段，也不要跳过这部分。如果您现在就可以开始思考如何可持续增长并避免创始人常犯的一些错误，这将为您节省很多心碎。

You may be earning a nice living for yourself and your family, and in theory, your journey and the journey of your company could be coming to a close. But for many, including me, the point is not to create a lifestyle business, retire on a beach somewhere, and be done with it. The reasons to grow are different for every founder. Even though I got comfortable with the non-unicorn outcome for Gumroad in 2019, I've continued to invest in its growth. For one, it's fun and satisfying to work on a continuously improving project. Two, it feels good to find new ways to create value for our creators.

你可能已经为自己和家人创造了美好的生活，理论上来说，你和公司的道路可能即将结束。但对于许多人，包括我在内，重点不是创建一家生活方式企业，在海滩上退休并完成它。每个创始人成长的原因各不相同。尽管我在2019年已经接受了Gumroad非独角兽的结果，但我仍在继续投资它的成长。首先，持续改进项目是有趣且令人满意的。第二，为我们的创作者创造新的价值方式感觉很好。

And frankly, staying put doesn't work. The world is constantly changing, and we and our businesses have to change with it. Staying put is a great way to start going backwards. You don't need to grow like crazy, but you also don't want to grow stagnant.

老实说，原地不动是不行的。世界在不断变化，我们和我们的企业也必须随之变化。原地踏步只会让我们倒退。你不需要疯狂地增长，但也不想变得停滞不前。

I've seen this play out at many companies. They solve the problem, get

complacent, and over the years their customers churn and the people they hire are no longer fired up. But being a minimalist entrepreneur isn't just about owning a business that doesn't own you; it's also about owning a business that you want to work on, even if you don't *have* to work on it anymore.

我曾在许多公司看到这种情况发生。他们解决了问题，变得自满，多年后他们的客户流失了，雇佣的人也不再热情。但成为一个简约企业家不仅仅是拥有一个不掌控你的业务；这也意味着拥有一项你想要继续从事的业务，即使你不必再付出努力。

At this stage, the real question is: How can I grow with intent, without jeopardizing the impact I make for my customers or damaging the life I've built? On the surface, it might seem straightforward to stay the course when you start to see results, but slow, sustained growth is its own kind of challenge that requires deliberate, conscious decision making.

在这个阶段，真正的问题是：我如何有意识地增长，而不会危及我为客户产生的影响或损害我所建立的生活？表面上看起来，一旦开始看到结果，保持原来的路线似乎很直截了当，但是缓慢、持续的增长是另一种挑战，需要经过深思熟虑、有意识的决策。

When businesses fail, it's unlikely that a tornado of unforeseeable misfortunes is the cause. Instead, it's usually one or more of the same handful of mistakes: overspending on inventory and office space, hiring too quickly, cofounder infighting. I'll talk about how to avoid those mistakes, but also about how to deal with them because it's likely that some of them will happen to you, even if you try to avoid them.

当企业失败时，不太可能是由于无法预见的不幸造成的。相反，通常是同样几个错误中的一个或多个：过度采购库存和办公空间，过快招聘，联合创始人内讧。我将谈谈如何避免这些错误，但也将讨论如何处理它们，因为即使你尝试避免它们，也有可能发生其中的一些。

There are two categories of self-inflicted mistakes, or "unforced errors," to watch out for. The first set relates to running out of money, and the second set to running out of energy.

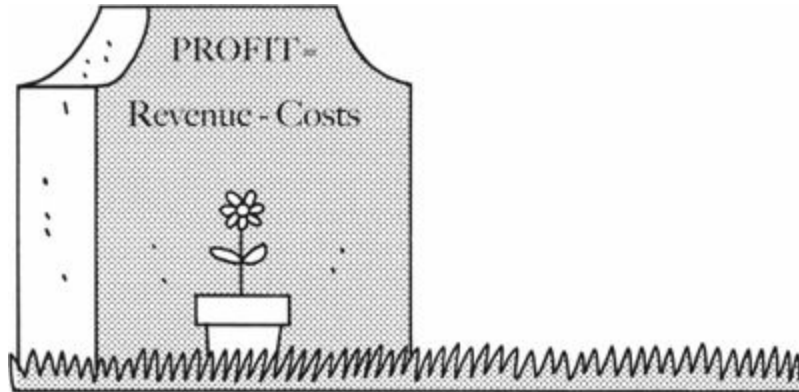
自我造成的错误，或者说“非强制性错误”可以分为两种类别。第一组与耗尽资金有关，第二组与耗尽精力有关。

Let's start with some basic economics and go from there.

让我们从一些基本的经济学知识开始，然后再逐步深入。

Don't Spend Money You Don't Have

The most important equation in business: profit equals revenue minus costs.
商业中最重要的公式是：利润等于收入减去成本。



It sounds so simple: Make more than you spend, and your company can keep on going forever. Make less than you spend, and you will eventually fail.

听起来很简单：多赚少花，贵公司就可以永远继续下去。少于所花费的，你最终会失败。

But you'd be surprised how often founders ignore profitability (read: sustainability) and focus on product development, growing, hiring, and all kinds of other things, right up until the money runs out. Paul Graham, founder of Y Combinator, can size up a company immediately based on whether they're "default alive or default dead." If expenses and revenues stay constant, will the company live or die? Incredibly, half of the founders he talks to have no idea.

但是你会惊讶于创始人经常忽略盈利性（即可持续性），而专注于产品开发、扩张、招聘以及各种其它事情，直到资金耗尽。Y Combinator的创始人Paul Graham可以立即评估一个公司是“默认存活”还是“默认死亡”。如果支出和收入保持不变，公司会活下去还是倒闭？难以置信的是，他跟谈话的创始人中有一半根本不知道。

In Graham's experience, the founders don't know because they don't

think they need to know. They're counting on investors to swoop in and save them if things go south. But if you're bootstrapping your company, *you* have to watch your own balance sheet because there's no one coming to save you from your own mistakes.

根据格雷厄姆的经验，创始人们不知道是因为他们认为自己不需要知道。他们指望投资者在公司陷入困境时前来解救。但如果你是靠自己的力量创业，你必须自己管理好资本结构，因为没有人能够来挽救你犯的错误。

Let me state the obvious. You should already have revenue coming in from the hundred customers you sold to, plus however many you have acquired via the marketing methods I covered in the previous chapter. So if you're profitable now, you should be able to keep it that way by focusing on the only part of the equation left to discuss: costs.

让我说一个显而易见的事实。你应该已经从你销售给的一百个客户以及通过我在前一章中提到的营销方法所获得的客户中获得收入。因此，如果你现在已经盈利，你应该能够通过专注于讨论的唯一剩余部分，即成本，保持这个状态。

There are two kinds of costs. The first is variable cost, also referred to as the "cost of goods sold," or COGS: the cost associated with selling each marginal unit of product. In brick-and-mortar businesses, that includes costs like labor, packaging, raw materials, and more. For software businesses in the 1990s, COGS were non-zero because software was put onto CDs and sold in retail stores.

有两种成本，第一种是可变成本，也叫做“销售成本”或COGS：与销售每个附加单位产品相关的成本。在实体店铺中，这包括劳动力、包装、原材料等成本。对于1990年代的软件企业而言，COGS不为零，因为软件被放在光盘上并在零售店销售。

Things have changed a lot since then. "Shipping" some electrons over the internet is virtually free, and the internet makes it much cheaper to collect payments online. For example, for each dollar we earn at Gumroad, we incur about 40 cents of variable costs. This 40 percent consists of payment processing fees, web hosting costs, other infrastructure costs, and fraud prevention (a necessary evil of helping people transact online).

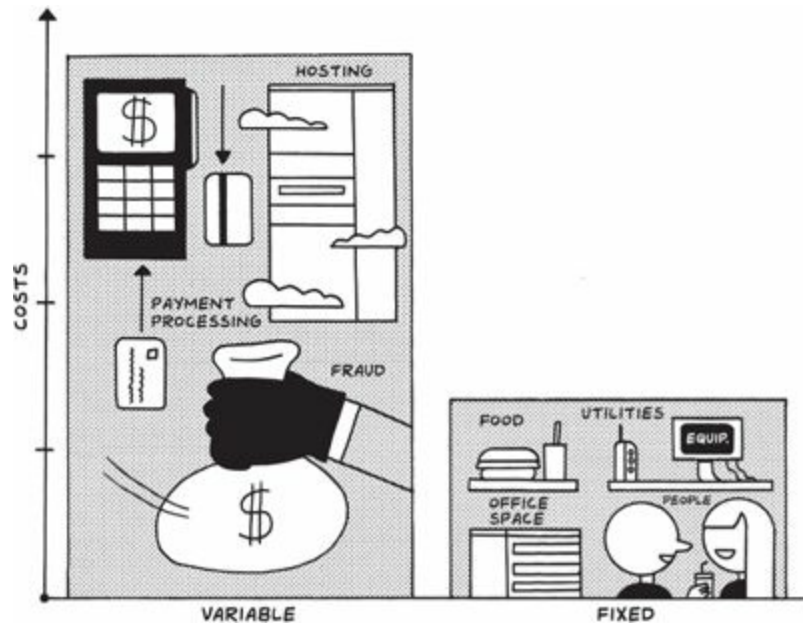
从那时起，情况发生了很大变化。“邮寄”一些电子产品到互联网上的成本几乎为零，而互联网使得在线收款成本大大降低。例如，对于我们在Gumroad赚取的每一美元，我们会产生大约40美分的可变成本。这40%包括支付处理费用，Web托管成本，其他基础设施成本和欺诈预防（是帮助人们在线进行交易的必要之恶）。

That leaves us 60 cents per dollar. But that 60 cents isn't pure profit—we still need to pay the second kind of costs, fixed costs, which don't scale linearly with our revenue and each incremental product sold. This includes everything from our domain name to certain online services, but these aren't the main expenditures for us or for most businesses, minimalist or not. The number one fixed cost is people.

这让我们每个美元剩下60美分。但这60美分不是纯利润 - 我们仍然需要支付第二种成本，即固定成本，它们与我们的收入和每个增量产品销售不成比例。这包括从我们的域名到某些在线服务的所有内容，但这些对我们或大多数企业来说并不是主要支出，无论是极简主义还是不是。第一项固定成本是人力成本。

In the next chapter, we'll talk more about what it means to bring human beings into your company, but for now, let's just say that employees, their equipment, the office space they need, the internet connection, the insurance for the space, the snacks in the fridge, the electricity, and so on, cost a lot of money, and rightfully so. Starting with you, so . . .

在下一章中，我们将更多地讨论将人类引入公司意味着什么，但现在，让我们暂且这样说：员工、他们的设备、他们需要的办公空间、互联网连接、场地保险、冰箱里的零食、电费等等都需要很多钱，理所当然。从你开始，所以...



- o **Pay yourself as little as possible, at least to start.** You are a founder, but you are also the first employee. Treat yourself as such. Don't expect to take dividends. Instead, pay yourself an annual salary even if it is just \$1, and then increase it over time as you can afford to. This will force you to do the work to get your systems set up so you can have an accurate picture of how much or how little is required to run your business, not just sell your product.

尽可能少地支付自己的薪水，至少在开始时是这样。你是创始人，但也是第一位员工。把自己当作员工来对待。不要期望获得分红。相反，即使只是1美元，也要给自己支付年薪，然后随着财力允许逐渐增加。这将迫使你为设置系统付出努力，以便你可以准确了解运营业务所需的成本，而不仅是销售你的产品。

If you're worried about making a living, I get it. That's why I've recommended again and again that you start your business as a side project and use your time, energy, and ideas to grow the business to profitability before you leave your day job. Then, you can pay yourself as profits allow. In my case, when Gumroad started to work, I paid myself \$36K a year, just enough to cover basic living expenses in San Francisco. Over the years, I increased my salary but tied it to the salary of the lowest-paid person at the company: \$60K, then \$85K. When things went sideways in 2015, I paid myself \$0 for a while. Now I pay myself \$120K a year.

如果您担心谋生，我理解。这就是为什么我一再建议您将自己的业务作为副业开始，利用您的时间、精力和想法使业务实现盈利，在您离开日常工作之前。然后，您可以根据利润支付自己的工资。在我的情况下，当Gumroad开始运转时，我每年支付给自己36K美元，刚好足以支付旧金山的基本生活费用。多年来，我增加了我的工资，但将其绑定到公司最低薪

酬的工人的工资上：60K美元，然后是85K美元。当2015年出现问题时，我有一段时间没支付自己的工资。现在我每年支付自己120K美元。

Ultimately, you should be trying to minimize your business's burn, but also remember that the goal here is to provide yourself enough of an income to be able to focus on what matters: helping your customers solve their problems.

最终，你应该尽力减少你的企业成本，但也要记住，这里的目标是为自己提供足够的收入，以便能够专注于重要问题：帮助客户解决问题。

- o **Hire software, not humans.** People are expensive. Software is not, usually because a lot of it is VC-subsidized in the name of growth. Take advantage of this by using Pilot or Bench instead of hiring an accountant or a CFO. Use Gusto to run payroll and benefits in five minutes. Because you are putting off hiring, you will also save money on all of the people-managing roles in your company, like an HR person and an office manager (see below). You may be surprised how far you can get with cheap software tools. For example, you can hire a human being to follow up with new customers every time someone signs up for your service *or* you can use automation tools like Zapier to send a follow-up email and to add those new customers to a queue to call later.

租用软件，不要雇用人员。人力成本高昂，软件通常不然，因为很多软件都是以风险投资为名进行补贴的。利用这个优势，使用Pilot或Bench来代替雇用会计或CFO。使用Gusto可以在五分钟内处理工资和福利。因为您推迟了招聘，您还可以在公司的所有人力管理角色上节省金钱，例如人力资源负责人和办公室经理（请参见下文）。您可能会惊讶于廉价软件工具能为您带来多大的收益。例如，您可以雇用人类遵循每次有人登记您的服务时的新客户，或者您可以使用像Zapier这样的自动化工具发送跟进电子邮件，并将这些新客户添加到稍后回访的队列中。

- o **Don't get an office.** I believed this pre-pandemic, and I, and millions of other people who weren't already convinced, believe it now. An office creates an insane amount of associated costs. Plus, you now have to manage an office. Unless you really need one, avoid it. (You can get one later if you really want it as a reward for building a meaningful, sustainable business.)

不要租办公室。我在疫情前就这样认为，现在我和成千上万的其他人也是如此。办公室会带来惊人的额外成本，而且你现在还需要管

理办公室。除非你真的需要，否则最好不要租。如果你真的想为建立有意义、可持续的企业而努力，以后再考虑租一个办公室作为奖励吧。

Thanks to the pandemic, there's a list of businesses a mile long that have become "digital by default," as Shopify founder and CEO Tobi Lutke put it, but others, like Upwork, have always thrived with distributed teams. Either way, even giants like Google, Microsoft, Morgan Stanley, JPMorgan, Capital One, Zillow, Slack, Amazon, PayPal, Salesforce, and other major companies have extended their work-from-home options post-2020, so if they don't need an office, you probably don't either.

由于疫情的影响，许多企业都已成为“数字化优先”（正如Shopify创始人兼CEO Tobi Lutke所说），而Upwork等其他企业则一直以分布式团队为基础而兴旺发展。无论如何，即使是谷歌、微软、摩根士丹利、JP摩根、Capital One、Zillow、Slack、亚马逊、贝宝、Salesforce等大型公司都在2020年后扩展了在家工作的选项，所以如果他们不需要办公室，那么你也可能不需要。

- o **Don't move to Silicon Valley.** Even before 2020, I would have said, "Don't quit your job, don't move to SF, don't pass go, and don't collect \$200 (from VCs)." After all, San Francisco is expensive, traffic-heavy, and not a great place to raise your children—or even a dog. Now, post-COVID, remote work is the new normal, and that means you can stay where you are. Sam Altman, the former CEO of Y Combinator, said that he was "very excited to see SF have to compete with other cities." Me too. Not only is it cheaper and less competitive to build your company in a smaller town or city, but it's also better for the local community, which as we've learned can pay dividends for your business.

不要搬到硅谷。即使在2020年之前，我也会说，“不要辞职，不要搬到旧金山，不要通过，也不要收集200美元（来自风险投资公司）。”毕竟，旧金山很昂贵、交通繁忙，不是一个养育孩子甚至是狗的好地方。现在，疫情后，远程办公已成为新常态，这意味着你可以留在原地。Y Combinator的前CEO Sam Altman说，他很高兴看到旧金山必须与其他城市竞争。我也是。在一个较小的城镇或城市建立你的公司既更便宜，竞争也较少，而且对当地社区来说更好，正如我们所学到的，这可以为您的业务带来回报。

- o **Outsource everything.** It's all you, every day. For now. Then it's software. Eventually you and your army of robots will be at maximum capacity and you'll need help. But before you hire your first full-time employee, use freelancers. I'm not talking about exploiting good,

hardworking people by paying them less than they deserve. I mean hiring future founders and other potential minimalist entrepreneurs: offering them opportunities to learn within a functional, profitable business; paying them well; and giving them a chance to earn money while spending the rest of their time as they like—maybe even starting their own minimalist businesses themselves.

外包一切。每天都是你。现在是这样。然后是软件。最终，你和你的机器人军队将达到最大容量，你需要帮助。但在聘请第一名全职员工之前，请使用自由职业者。我不是在谈论剥削那些辛勤工作的人们并低于他们应得的薪水。我是指雇用未来的创始人和其他潜在的极简企业家：为他们提供在功能齐备，盈利的企业内学习的机会；支付他们良好的工资，并让他们有机会赚钱的同时用自己的时间做喜欢的事情 - 也许甚至自己开极简企业。

If you can use these tactics to keep your costs lower than your revenues, your business shouldn't die. Even better, you'll have something worth keeping: a profitable, sustainable, growing business serving customers. It's no longer up to the market to decide if what you built was valuable. It's now up to you not to lose it.

如果你能使用这些策略来控制成本低于收入，你的企业就不会倒闭。更好的是，你会拥有值得保留的东西：一个盈利、可持续、不断发展的企业，为顾客提供服务。你所创造的价值不再由市场来决定，而是由你来保护不失去它。

(This may seem overwhelming. To help, in the “Learn More” resources at the end of this chapter, I included Gumroad's *actual* P&L with all of our costs, as well as simpler examples.)

这可能会让人感到不知所措。为了帮助，本章末尾的“了解更多”资源中，我包括了Gumroad的实际损益表，以及更简单的例子。

In the last chapter, I described how the Doans used YouTube to grow the Missouri Star Quilt Company from a struggling mom-and-pop machine quilting shop to a global quilting empire. Looking back, the success of Missouri Star might feel like a foregone conclusion, but it wasn't obvious at the start that the company would succeed, or even survive. “It took four years

before we were profitable and could begin to pay our own salaries,” Al Doan said. “We were doing everything ourselves, including renovating the buildings we bought, as we slowly figured out what worked both for our customers and for the company itself.”

在上一章中，我描述了Doan家族如何利用YouTube把密蘇里星座被struggling mom-and-pop 機器縫紉店轉變成全球連鎖針織王國。回顧過去，密蘇里星座的成功似乎已是注定的事情，但一開始並不明顯該公司是否會成功，甚至能否生存下去。“在我们盈利，并开始支付自己的薪水之前，我们需要四年的时间，” Al Doan说。“在我们缓慢找出既能为客户服务，又能让公司自身运转的方式时，我们正在进行自己的一切工作，包括翻新我们购买的建筑。”

The good news for Missouri Star was that in Hamilton, Missouri, it was much easier to keep costs lower than it would have been in Silicon Valley or another market with expensive labor and real estate. “We started with a five-thousand-square-foot store that we thought would last us forever,” Al said, but they eventually had to separate the company’s inventory into multiple shops where they could house specialized fabrics, notions, and trim. As Missouri Star expanded, the “retail warehousing model”—in which the people who worked in the physical stores also fulfilled online orders—started to break down as employees could no longer simultaneously handle in-person and online sales.

密苏里之星的好消息是，在密苏里州汉密尔顿，比起硅谷或其他昂贵的劳动力和房地产市场，保持低成本要容易得多。“我们最初开了一个五千平方英尺的店，我们认为这可以用很久，”阿尔说。但随着密苏里之星的扩张，他们最终不得不将公司的库存分成多个店铺，以容纳专业面料、配料和饰品。随着时间的推移，“零售仓储模式”开始崩溃，也就是同时在实体店和网上销售的员工不再能够处理网上和线下销售。

The solution was obvious but also scary: To meet customer demand, Missouri Star would have to separate its retail business from its online one, which meant new warehouses, increased inventory, and more employees. As minimalist entrepreneurs, Al and his family were concerned about a radical increase in the company’s variable costs, but because Missouri Star was already profitable and its revenues were growing year-over-year, they had the

confidence (and the money) to support their expansion.

解决方案显而易见，但也令人担忧：为了满足客户需求，密苏里之星必须将其零售业务与在线业务分开，这意味着需要新的仓库、增加库存和更多的员工。作为极简主义企业家，阿尔和他的家人担心公司的可变成本会大幅增加，但由于密苏里之星已经盈利并且收入逐年增长，他们有信心（和资金）支持扩张。

Al also had enough experience to know that avoiding growth and trying to maintain dysfunctional systems wasn't a good idea. "We didn't hire a human resources person until we were at 150 employees," he said, because it felt wasteful to pay someone to perform a function he'd done for years, "even if [he'd] done it badly." It took a few incidents and some intervention from a friend with an HR background for him to realize that investing in HR would be worth the cost. "Otherwise," he says, "you end up with several eight-hour jobs."

阿尔也有足够的经验知道避免增长并试图维持功能失调的系统并不是一个好主意。他说：“我们直到有150名员工才雇用了一名人力资源人员，因为支付某人执行他多年以来所做的功能感觉很浪费，‘即使他做得很差。’几次事件和一些来自HR背景的朋友的干预使他意识到投资HR将是值得成本的。他说：“否则，你就会拥有几个八小时的工作。”

Beyond what the business has meant for the Doan family, Missouri Star Quilt Company has transformed the small town where it's headquartered. When asked about the impact on the community in 2019, Jenny Doan said that at first, "I thought we were just sewing," but now they employ four hundred people. In addition to growing Missouri Star, they've also started a sewing company, a knitting company, and an art company. "We have more ideas than we have buildings at this point," Jenny says.

除了对Doan家族的商业意义之外，缝纫公司Missouri Star Quilt Company还改变了其总部所在的小镇。当被问及2019年对社区的影响时，Jenny Doan表示，起初，“我以为我们只是在做缝纫”，但现在他们雇佣了四百名员工。除了扩大Missouri Star外，他们还开办了一家缝纫公司，一家针织公司和一家艺术公司。“我们的想法比我们目前拥有的建筑物还多，”Jenny说。

The Doans' story offers many different lessons for minimalist

entrepreneurs. Even if it's the goal, growth is its own challenge. Far too often, companies with plenty of talent and market potential run into trouble not because of the product or the customers but because of the unglamorous but essential parts of running the business: Operations. Finances. Human Resources. Legal. In the world of VC, where millions of dollars are thrown around on wild bets, people tend to be over-exuberant, lavishing generous perks like pool tables and free food.

Doans的故事为极简主义企业家提供了许多不同的教训。即使这是目标，增长也是它自己的挑战。往往情况是，拥有充足才能和市场潜力的公司并不因产品或客户而遇到麻烦，而是因为经营企业的不光彩而至关重要的部分：运营、财务、人力资源、法律。在风险投资领域，数百万美元被投放在疯狂的赌注上，人们往往过于狂热，挥霍大量的福利，如台球桌和免费食物。

Don't get swept up in what a "successful" business is supposed to look like. Keep doing what's working, stop or improve the processes that aren't, and always, always, always keep an eye on the numbers and your ears on your customers.

不要被一个“成功”的企业所应该呈现的形象所冲昏了头脑。继续做有效的事情，停止或改进不行的流程，并且始终保持目光放在数字和客户身上。

Stay Focused on What Your Customers Want

The tuning fork you should resort to over and over again is quite simple: your customers.

你应该一再求助的叉形音叉非常简单：你的顾客。

Your customers do not want you to get bigger and grow faster. They do not care how rich you are, if you were on the *Forbes* "30 Under 30" list, which venture capitalists you raised money from, or how many employees you have. They want your product to improve, and your business to stick around. That's about it.

你的顾客并不想让你变得更大更快。他们不在乎你有多富有，是否上榜福布斯“30位30岁以下精英”榜单，你融资的风险投资家是谁，或者

你有多少员工。他们想要你的产品变得更好，你的企业长盛不衰。就是这样。

Amazon has a nice way of thinking about this: “In every board meeting in Amazon HQ stands an empty chair. That seat represents the customer and the customer voice. So everything that is developed and created is scrutinized by the voice of the customer. That voice is what the people in the meeting room ask as if they were in the place and shoes of the customer. Why is this product important for me, what value does it bring, do we really need this service or product?”

亚马逊有一个不错的思维方式：“亚马逊总部的每个董事会会议上都有一个空椅子。那个座位代表客户和客户的声音。因此，每个开发和创建的东西都会被客户的声音严密审查。在会议室里，人们会问自己是否真的需要这个服务或产品，这个产品对我有多重要，它带来了什么价值？”

Even though we're not trying to build Amazons, this attitude is even more important if you are at the helm of a newly profitable and growing minimalist business. As an African American father of six children, Jelani Memory, founder of Circle Media and A Kids Book About, inevitably found himself discussing racism at the table with his blended family of four white and two brown kids. Memory decided to write a book for his own children, one that would describe his experience with racism in terms they could understand.

即使我们不想打造亚马逊，如果你掌舵一家新盈利和成长的极简主义企业，这种态度就更加重要了。作为一个有六个孩子的非裔美国人父亲，Circle Media和A Kids Book About的创始人Jelani Memory无可避免地与他的四个白人和两个棕色孩子的混合家庭在餐桌上讨论种族主义。Memory决定为自己的孩子写一本书，描述他个人在面对种族主义时的经历，并用他们可以理解的方式表达。

The book, *A Kids Book About Racism*, was simple, with no illustrations. He proudly designed and printed one copy; it took four weeks to produce. It gave him a jumping-off point for discussing hard things with his own children, and when he showed it proudly to other friends and parents, many wanted a copy for their families. Even though he was in the midst of raising Series B for Circle Media, the idea of starting a publishing company had

taken hold of him. By January 2019, he negotiated an exit.

《关于种族主义的童书》这本书简单朴素，没有插图。他自豪地设计并印刷了一本，耗时四周。这为他和自己的孩子讨论艰难的问题提供了一个起点，当他自豪地向其他朋友和家长展示时，许多人想要一份这本书给他们的家人。即使他正在筹集Circle Media的B轮资金，但启动一家出版公司的想法已经在他的脑海里生根发芽。到2019年1月，他完成退出谈判。

At that point, he started to tell everyone he knew about his ideas for A Kids Book About—these were his potential early customers, after all—and seeing their reactions and feeling “the power of possibility in the look on people’s faces” not only helped him refine the business but also validated his bigger project of publishing kids’ books on challenging, empowering topics.

从那时起，他开始向他认识的每个人讲述他对于“这是一本关于孩子的书”的想法-毕竟这些人是他潜在的早期客户，并看到他们的反应和感受到“人们脸上的可能性力量”的不仅帮助他完善业务，也验证了他出版关于具有挑战性、赋权主题的儿童书籍的更大项目。

That energy kept him going through early challenges, including learning about publishing in general and figuring out how to manage inventory. He launched A Kids Book About in October 2019 with twelve titles, and it grew steadily but modestly until May 2020. The day after George Floyd was killed by police on May 25, 2020, “A Kids Book About did as much in sales as it had the whole previous month. And it didn’t slow down,” Memory said. “The following day, sales went up 2x, and the day after, went up another 2x and held steady. So, within the span of 10 days, A Kids Book About saw north of \$1 million in revenue.” Their inventory was supposed to last the rest of the year, but they sold out of every single one of their titles but two.

那股能量让他克服了早期的挑战，包括学习出版业的基础知识和如何管理库存。他在2019年10月推出了《关于孩子的一本书》(A Kids Book About)这个品牌，共推出了12本新书。从那时起，在2020年5月25日乔治·弗洛伊德被警察杀害之后，销售额与之前整整一个月的销售额相当。接下来的一天，销售额翻了一倍，第二天又翻了一倍，一直保持稳定。因此，在短短10天的时间里，A Kids Book About的收入超过了100万美元。他们的库存原本应该能维持到年底，但他们的所有图书除

了两本外都卖光了。

Those sales figures validated Memory's belief in the product he was offering and in the possibility for growth within a changing world. He says, "There is a misconception that money or investment confers validation and permission to do things in conventional and expensive ways, but that's not true. It's about product, revenue, and traction. Most of all, customer affection is the permission you need to grow."

那些销售数据验证了Memory对他所提供产品和在不断变化的世界中成长的可能性的信念。他说：“人们有一个误解，认为金钱或投资可以使他们在传统和昂贵的方式进行事务，但事实并非如此。这取决于产品、收入和用户黏性。最重要的是，客户的喜爱是你成长所需要的许可。”

If you stay focused on what drives sales and what excites your customers, then you'll know how to grow; they'll tell you. And if you pay attention as you go, even as you do unwittingly make unforced errors, it will be your customers (or the lack thereof) who will show you how to get back on track, far before you would have otherwise noticed.

如果您专注于推动销售和让顾客兴奋的因素，那么您就会知道如何成长；他们会告诉您。并且如果您在前进过程中保持警觉，即使因无意中犯下错误，也会是您的顾客（或缺乏顾客）向您展示如何迅速恢复正轨，甚至在您自己未注意到之前。

Finally, be diligent about the essentials. It's easy to excuse sloppy practices when you're growing and feel overwhelmed, but that's the moment when you need to be most disciplined about how you spend your time and money. Not just because of the implications for your bottom line but also because nothing brings a business to a screeching halt faster than a legal problem or a break in the supply chain.

最后，要勤勉地关注基本事项。在成长感到不堪重负时，人很容易找借口放松要求，但此时你最需要纪律严明地管理时间和金钱。这不仅是因为对你的收益有所影响，更是因为法律问题或供应链中断会迅速使得企业陷入困境。

Paychecks need to go out on time, and it's on you to avoid any legal, financial, or operational complications that might sink the ship. Vendors need

to be registered in the system and paid promptly. IT security needs to be buttoned up tight, particularly around user privacy. You need to run a good, clean business to establish and uphold your reputation with employees, vendors, and customers. Chances are, however, that one or more of these areas lies outside your area of experience. You probably lack even the basic knowledge to hire the right help. That's okay. We'll talk more on hiring in the next chapter.

发薪水必须准时发放，而你需要避免可能会使公司陷入法律、财务或营运方面的复杂问题。供应商需要在系统中注册，并及时付款。IT安全需要非常严密，特别是在用户隐私方面。你需要经营一个良好、干净的企业，以建立和维护与员工、供应商和客户的声誉。然而，很可能其中一个或多个领域超出了你的经验范围。你可能甚至缺乏雇用正确员工的基本知识。这没关系。我们将在下一章中讨论更多关于雇用问题的内容。

Until then, good news: Your customers can connect you to people who can help, especially if you're open with them about what you need. They're already incentivized to support you, because they use your product and want to make it better. And there's another way to get them even more involved with your success: turning them into owners.

直到那时，好消息是：您的客户可以将您连接到可以提供帮助的人，特别是如果您向他们开放您所需的内容。由于他们使用您的产品并希望将其改善，因此他们已经有动力支持您。并且有另一种方式可以更多地让他们参与您的成功：使其成为股东。

Raise Money from Your Community

Growing businesses, even minimalist businesses, may need capital at some point. Raising money can make sense, once you know how you would spend it to improve the lives of the customers you already have. Shopify, for example, and 1Password raised money several years into their lives. Because they were both profitable when they did it, they were able to keep their visions aligned and their dilution low, and retain control of their companies. 成长中的企业，即使是极简主义的企业，也可能在某个时刻需要资本。

筹集资金是有意义的，一旦你知道如何将其用于改善你已经拥有的客户的生活。例如，Shopify和1Password在它们的生命周期的几年后筹集了资金。因为它们在筹集资金时都盈利，所以它们能够保持它们的愿景保持一致并保持股份稀释率低，保留了对公司的控制权。

If you do choose to go the venture capital route (Hit me up! shl.vc), profitability will give you leverage in those negotiations. But there are also new ways to raise money, ones that preserve your ownership and empower your customers.

如果你决定选择风险投资路线（联系我！shl.vc），盈利能给你在谈判中提供更多筹码。但是，现在也有新的筹款方式，可以保留你的所有权并增强你的客户。

I don't just mean new venture capital funds such as Calm Company Fund (disclosure: I am an investor), and Tinyseed Fund, which are looking to invest in more sustainable, perhaps minimalist, businesses. These firms are building a portfolio with a higher hit rate, allowing them not to overoptimize for finding the single company that returns their whole fund. But they are far from the norm.

我并不只是指像Calm Company Fund（声明：我是一位投资者）和Tinyseed Fund这样的新风险资本基金，它们正在寻找更可持续、也许更简洁的企业进行投资。这些公司正在建立一个更高的命中率投资组合，使它们不会过度优化以寻找唯一能够回报它们整个基金的公司。但它们远非正常情况。

What I am mostly talking about here is a totally new way to raise money from your customers and your communities: Regulation Crowdfunding.

我在这里主要讨论的是一种全新的筹集客户和社区资金的方式：《规定众筹》。

In 2012, President Obama signed the JOBS Act into law. This bill, among many other things, included the ability for private companies like Gumroad to sell shares to the general public, making it possible for almost anyone to invest in the business. On March 15, 2021, the legal limit for regulation crowdfunding went from \$1.07 million to \$5 million. These new rules also allow for “testing the waters,” allowing companies like Gumroad to see how much demand there is to invest in the company before committing to a

crowdfunding campaign.

2012年，奥巴马总统签署了《就业机会法案》。该法案包括许多内容，其中之一是允许像Gumroad这样的私人公司向普通大众出售股份，使几乎任何人都有可能投资于该企业。2021年3月15日，监管众筹的法律限制从107万美元增加到500万美元。这些新规则还允许“试水”，使像Gumroad这样的公司在进行众筹活动之前可以看到有多少需求投资本公司。

I believe that crowdfunding will reorganize the funding landscape. There will always be a place for venture capitalists, but who better to fund a business than its customers, who understand how valuable its offering is? And once founders can vet demand before committing, we should see the numbers skyrocket.

我相信众筹将重新组织资金景观。风险投资家始终有自己的位置，但是谁比顾客更适合资助一个企业，他们了解其价值提供的重要性？一旦创始人能够在承诺之前评估需求，我们应该会看到数字飞涨。

In the old way, the number one downside of raising money was that you created two distinct sets of stakeholders: your investors and your customers. This new practice will allow entrepreneurs to minimize complexity by turning customers into investors. All of a sudden, you have a single group of people you are serving: your community.

在以前，筹集资金的主要缺点是你创建了两个不同的利益相关者群体：你的投资人和你的客户。这种新的做法将允许企业家通过将客户变成投资人来最小化复杂性。突然间，你只需要服务一个人群：你的社区。

I can speak from experience: On March 15, 2021, I used Regulation Crowdfunding to allow some of Gumroad's creators to become part-owners. In 12 hours, we raised \$5 million from more than 7,000 individual investors. Now we have thousands of our creators as our investors too, keeping our interests more cleanly aligned.

我可以说出自己的经验：2021年3月15日，我使用了《规章众筹法》让Gumroad的一些创作者成为公司的部分所有者。在12小时内，我们从超过7,000名个人投资者那里筹集了500万美元。现在，我们拥有数千名创作者作为我们的投资者，使我们的利益更加清晰地对齐。

For the businesses that neither need to bootstrap completely nor want to go the venture-backed path, I'm hopeful that Regulation Crowdfunding will offer a middle ground. But the ultimate long-term goal remains profitability (read: sustainability). Once you're in control of your destiny, you should never let it go.

对于那些既不需要完全自力更生，也不想走风险投资道路的企业，我希望“众筹监管”可以提供一个中间地带。但终极长期目标仍是盈利（即：可持续性）。一旦掌控自己的命运，你就不应该让它失去。

Build Profitable Confidence

I know I've said over and over again that profitability is the metric that matters most to your business. That's because profitability is a superpower. If you rely on VCs for capital, like we did in the early days, you rely on outside forces to be successful. When they pull the plug, you have no more electricity. Your backup generator will last a certain amount of time, then run out too.

我知道我一遍又一遍地说过，盈利能力是最重要的业务指标。那是因为盈利能力是超能力。如果你像我们早期一样依靠风险投资来获得资金，你需要依靠外部力量才能取得成功。当他们断了电源，你就没有了电力。备用发电机能持续一段时间，但最终也会耗尽。

Profitability gets you off the grid, allowing you to grow mindfully with unlimited runway. You can take your time and make thoughtful decisions that move you toward the right targets at your pace, not someone else's. As some Navy SEALs say, "Slow is smooth and smooth is fast."

盈利能让你独立自主，有无限的空间可以谨慎地成长。你可以花时间做出理性的决策，按自己的节奏向正确目标前进，而不是被别人牵着鼻子走。就像某些海豹突击队员说的那样，“缓慢才是顺畅，顺畅就是快速”。

Chris Savage, CEO and cofounder of Wistia, a video and podcast marketing platform, calls the resulting sense of conviction "profitable confidence." In 2017, Savage and his cofounder, Brendan Schwartz, realized that their efforts to scale and grow quickly had not only made their work less

creatively interesting, but had also made them unprofitable. By slowing down, they figured out how to trust their instincts again—and wound up more profitable than ever.

威斯提亞（Wistia）視頻和播客市場平台的CEO和聯合創始人Chris Savage稱之為“有利可圖的信心”。2017年，Savage和他的聯合創始人Brendan Schwartz意識到，他們快速擴張和增長的努力不僅使他們的工作變得不太有創意，還讓他們變得不盈利。通過減慢步伐，他們找到了重新信任自己直覺的方法 - 結果比以往任何時候都更有利可圖。

For Wistia, being profitably confident means that Chris and Brendan know they will live no matter what they do. It allows them to pursue ideas at their own pace, and that frees them up so that every single thing doesn't have to work immediately (or even at all). They don't have to bet the company anymore if they want to try something new, and they can wait years for something to pay off.

对于 Wistia 来说，有盈利的信心意味着 Chris 和 Brendan 知道无论他们做什么都会活下来。这让他们可以以自己的节奏追求想法，使他们有时间等待事情的结果（哪怕结果失败）。他们不再需要为了尝试新东西而押上整个公司的赌注，可以等待多年才能获得回报。

This feels great, because you can truly invest in the stuff that you think will create a lot of value for your customers, not just the stuff that will “move the needle” on your top-line growth metrics as soon as possible, so that you can raise the venture capital you need to keep going.

这种感觉很棒，因为你可以真正地投资于那些你认为能够为客户创造大量价值的事物，而不仅仅是那些能够尽快推动公司上游增长指标、筹得你所需要的风险投资的事物。

When you are profitable, you can take your time. You can talk to customers and really make sure you understand their problems before you attempt to solve them. Then you can iterate on your solution over and over again until you're really happy with it even if you take years to do it. You could even show customers and get their feedback again and again, like we often do.

当你有利润时，你可以慢慢来。在尝试解决客户问题之前，你可以与他们交谈并确保真正理解他们的问题。然后，你可以反复修改你的解

决方案，直到你真正满意，即使这需要多年时间。你甚至可以向客户展示并反复收集他们的反馈，就像我们经常做的那样。

Since you are running on your own steam, your runway will now last you forever. You will not die unless you do something stupid. This means you need to hire slowly, not ambitiously. You should also avoid irreversible decisions like getting a multiyear office lease. Moving slowly will mean you can ship more thoughtfully because you'll have the time and space to learn about yourself, your customers, and your market. It will also give you a clear view of the road ahead. You will be able to detect bugs in your product and systems before they affect your customers. You can test your software in private beta with customers, or behind a waitlist. You can make sure it's good enough before you give it a wide release. This way, your customers continue to appreciate every thoughtful addition—or subtraction—you make and to love your product without worrying about the mistakes that accompany quick changes and rash decisions.

由于你正在自己的动力下前行，你的跑道将会永远存在。除非你做了什么愚蠢的事情，否则你不会死亡。这意味着你需要缓慢招聘，而不是过于雄心勃勃。你还应该避免像签订多年的办公室租约等不可逆转的决定。缓慢前进意味着你可以更加深入地研究自己、你的客户和市场。这也将为你打开清晰的发展之路。你将能够在系统和产品中发现错误，而不会影响到你的客户。你可以在私人beta版中进行软件测试，或者在等待列表之后。在广泛发布之前，你可以确保它足够好。这样，你的客户将继续欣赏你的每一个周到的添加或减少，并且爱上你的产品，而不用担心快速变化和轻率决策带来的错误。

Overcommunicate with Your Co-founder

Once your business is too well run to fail, there's one more failure point to address: you. Your business won't run out of money, but you may still run out of energy.

当你的企业运营得太好以至于无法失败时，仍需解决一个失败点：自己。你的企业不会用尽资金，但你可能会耗尽精力。

One of the fastest ways to drain your enthusiasm and to lose steam is a

cofounder fight. According to Paul Graham, founder disagreements are par for the course, and 20 percent of those situations escalate until one founder departs the company.

其中最快耗尽你的热情和失去动力的方法之一就是与联合创始人争吵。根据保罗·格雷厄姆（Paul Graham）的说法，创始人之间的分歧是家常便饭，其中20%的情况会升级到其中一位创始人离开公司。



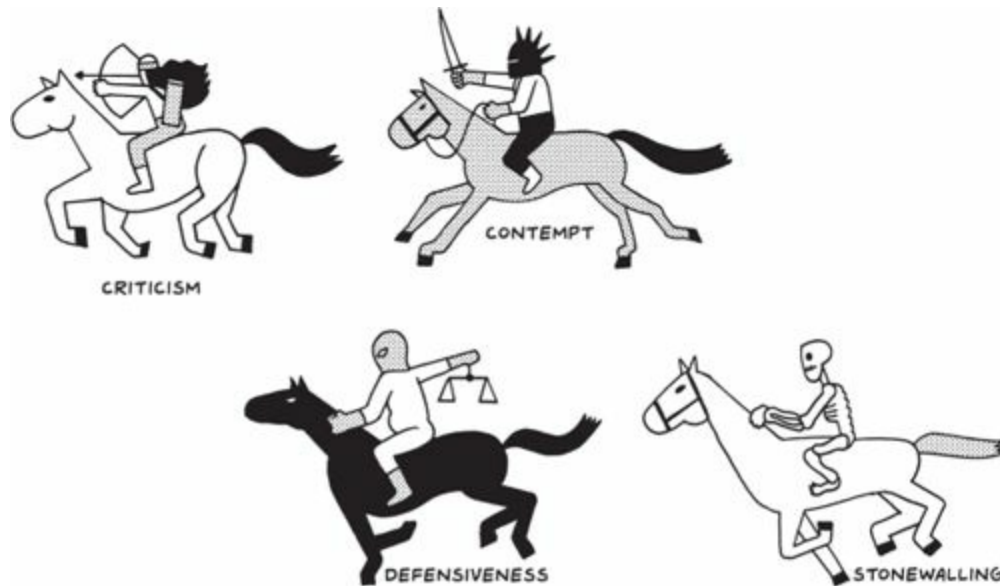
No one gets married expecting to divorce, and most cofounders don't anticipate that things won't work out either. But ultimately, relationships are relationships, and it can be useful to apply frameworks for personal relationships to professional ones if they apply.

没有人结婚的时候预料到会离婚，大多数的联合创始人也不会预计事情不会成功。但最终关系是关系，如果适用的话，将个人关系的框架应用到专业领域可能会很有用。

Drs. John and Julie Gottman, well-known couples therapists, say they can predict the end of relationships using “The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse,” their name for four types of communication styles that start to appear in a relationship: (1) criticism, (2) contempt, (3) defensiveness, and (4) stonewalling. While some founders succeed at tackling their conflicts head-on and eventually rediscover common purpose and mission, others never do, and one founder will move on.

约翰和朱莉·戈特曼博士是著名的夫妻治疗师，他们使用“天启的四骑

士”这个名称来描述出现在关系中的四种沟通方式：（1）批评，（2）蔑视，（3）防御和（4）冷漠。他们认为，这四种方式出现在一段关系中，就能预示它是否会结束。虽然一些创始人成功地应对了冲突并重新找到了共同的目标和使命，但有些人则永远无法这样做，最终一个创始人会离开。



In Startupland, this isn't necessarily a bad thing. Startups are encouraged to “fail fast,” and founders often cycle through several teams at the same time they're cycling through ideas.

在创业界，这并不一定是坏事。创业公司被鼓励“快速失败”，创始人经常在他们的想法循环中同时经历几个团队。

But there's also a lot of truth when people say, “It's harder to divorce your cofounder than your spouse,” so if you want to give your business the best chance at success, approach the relationship with your cofounder(s) like a marriage. Think about the following before you team up for the long haul:

但人们说“解除与联合创始人关系比和配偶离婚更难”的说法也有很多道理，因此，如果您想使您的业务成功的机会最大化，请像处理婚姻一样对待与联合创始人关系。在长期合作之前，请考虑以下问题：

- o Do not start a relationship with someone unless you really, really trust them.

不要和别人开始关系，除非你真的非常信任他们。

- o Do introduce vesting so that each of you earns your stock over several years.

请引入分期归属，以便您每个人在数年内获得您的股份。

- o Do make sure you are aligned on your values, what you want to build, and how you want to build it.

请确保您对自己的价值观、想要建立的东西和建立方式的认同。

- o Do not ignore the possibility that one of you may leave. Plan for what a successful exit from the business may look like.

不要忽略其中一个人可能离开的可能性。计划一下成功退出业务的情况应该是什么样子的。

- o Do have the hard conversations as early as you possibly can. Just like there's no point in dating someone for five years before you figure out if *they* want what *you* want, early in any serious professional relationship, it is important to explore and understand each other's values and ambitions. Because hard conversations get harder the longer you wait to have them.

Here are some questions worth asking your potential partners:

尽早进行艰难的谈话。就像在确定某人是否符合你的要求前交往五年毫无意义一样，任何一段重要的职业关系的早期阶段都很重要，要探索 and 了解彼此的价值观和抱负。因为延迟艰难的谈话只会让其更加艰难。以下是值得问一下你的潜在合作伙伴的问题：

- o *What does a happy relationship look like?*

一个幸福的恋爱关系是怎样的？

- o *What does success for this business look like?*

此业务成功的样子是什么？

- o *What does an exit look like?*

一个出口长什么样？

- o *How fast do we want to grow?*

我们希望以多快的速度增长？

- o *Why are we starting this together?*

为什么我们要一起开始这个？

Have these hard conversations again and again. Think about specific check-ins to reevaluate these goals so that disagreements don't fester silently, and make sure that whatever path you plan on taking, you're on the same page about it.

不断地进行这些艰难的对话。考虑具体的检查来重新评估这些目标，以避免分歧潜在发酵。确保你们计划采取的任何路径上，都达成了相同的共识。

Maintain Your Energy and Sanity

The conventional wisdom is that there are two kinds of startup founders: On one end of the spectrum, you run a lifestyle business and lounge on the beach all day, and at the other, you work 24/7, only stopping to eat or sleep when absolutely necessary and sacrificing exercise, rest, family, the outdoors, and whatever in your life gives you pleasure and sustenance.

传统观念认为，创业公司的创始人有两种类型：一端是经营生活方式的企业，整天在海滩上闲逛；另一端则是全天候工作，除非必要的时候才会停下来吃饭或睡觉，并且牺牲运动、休息、家庭、户外活动以及生活中任何能给你带来快乐和支持的事物。

There's a lot of real estate between those two extremes, and just like your business needs to change and to grow to keep from getting stagnant, so do you as a human being. I'd be lying if I said that being a minimalist entrepreneur doesn't take a lot of hard work, but it doesn't have to be an all-or-nothing proposition.

两个极端之间存在着很多房地产，就像您的企业需要改变和成长以避免停滞不前一样，作为人类的您也需要改变和成长。如果我说作为一位极简主义企业家不需要大量的努力，那就是在说谎了，但这不必是一个非此即彼的选择。

I can speak from experience, as I've changed my mind about what I wanted out of Gumroad quite a few times. For the first several years of Gumroad's life, I was chasing unicorns. Then I right-sized the business to profitability, and today it's one of a few things I am working on, like this book. Generally, I don't let my business make me too happy, so that it can't

make me too sad. But it took years for me to get here, and the kind of people who wanted to work on Gumroad at each phase were very different. I basically had to rebuild the whole team from scratch.

我能够从经验中说话，因为我曾经改变过我在Gumroad想要的东西的想法。在Gumroad的前几年里，我一直在追逐“独角兽”。然后，我把业务调整到盈利水平，今天它成为我正在努力的几件事之一，就像写这本书一样。一般来说，我不会让我的业务让我太幸福，这样它就不会让我太难过。但是我花了好几年时间才走到这里，而每个阶段想要在Gumroad上工作的人都非常不同。我基本上不得不从头开始重建整个团队。

When you're growing at all costs, it's easy to avoid these conversations. It's easy to justify not having them too: You're all focused on growth, and these conversations aren't helping you grow in the short term. But in the long term, as your business morphs like every business does, you need to have them. Or they'll happen to you when you least expect them to, and that's a lot less fun.

当你总是追求增长时，很容易避免这些对话。同样，很容易找到不进行这些对话的理由：你们都专注于增长，这些对话不会在短期内帮助你们增长。但是，长期来看，当你的业务像其他业务一样发展时，你需要进行这些对话。否则，它们会在你最不期望的时候发生，那就不太有趣了。

To be clear, this isn't about scaling back your ambitions in order to make your business work. It's about aligning the ambitions you have for yourself and your company with the ambitions your customers have for themselves. Because I'm not trying to build a billion-dollar business at all costs, my focus now is on creating more creators and business owners.

明确一点，这并不是要为了让你的业务营运而缩小你的抱负。而是要将你为自己和公司拥有的抱负与你的客户为自己拥有的抱负对齐。因为我不是不惜一切代价要打造一个十亿美元的企业，我现在的重点是创造更多的创作者和商业拥有者。

And frankly, you often can't grow faster if you try. I've worked sixty hours a week for years on end, and I've worked four hours a week. For better or worse, Gumroad grew at its own pace, and the number of hours I worked

didn't seem to have much of a correlation. I think you'll find the same is true for you: Your company will grow as quickly as your customers determine it will grow. For us, that was 15 percent in 2017, 25 percent in 2018, 40 percent in 2019, and 87 percent year-over-year in 2020.

坦白说，如果你试图增长速度，通常情况下是无法做到的。我连续几年每周工作六十个小时，也有过每周只工作四个小时的时候。无论好坏，Gumroad 都按照自己的节奏增长，我工作的时间似乎并没有什么相关性。我认为你也会发现同样的道理：你的公司会随着顾客的决定而增长。对我们来说，2017 年增长了 15%，2018 年增长了 25%，2019 年增长了 40%，2020 年同比增长了 87%。

It taught me to be wary of thinking I always needed to do more, earn more, or grow more than I needed to. Once I came to terms with the reality that I couldn't control everything, it got a lot easier to move forward. Instead of pretending to be a product visionary and trying to build a billion-dollar company, as if it were within my control, I could focus on making Gumroad better for our existing creators.

它教会了我要谨慎地思考，不需要总是认为自己需要做更多、赚更多或者成长得比所需还要更多。一旦我认识到我无法控制一切的现实，前进变得更容易了。我不再假装自己是一个产品先驱，试图建立一个十亿美元的公司，就好像这是我可以控制的一样，而是能够将重点放在让 Gumroad 对我们现有的创作者更好。

Some say that you need to grow like crazy, because “if you don't get big, someone else will eat you.” As if companies were fish.

有些人说，你需要像疯狂成长，因为“如果你不变大，别人就会吃掉你。”就像公司是鱼一样。

This is wrong. The vast majority of small businesses are never eaten. Big fish want to eat other big fish. In fact, the longest-lived businesses in the world are also some of the smallest. They are restaurants, hotels, construction companies, and more. Many of them are family firms, or small to midsize enterprises content with steady evolution of their niche and a passionate multigenerational customer base. Something to aspire to!

这是不正确的。大多数小企业从来没有被吃掉。大鱼想吃其他大鱼。事实上，世界上寿命最长的企业也是一些最小的企业，如餐厅、酒

店、建筑公司等。其中许多是家族企业或小到中型企业，他们满足于其领域的稳定发展和多代客户的热情支持。这是我们应该追求的目标！

Maybe you already know this. Maybe that's the business you already aspire to build. If so, I'm glad. But it wasn't obvious to me when I started out, and I see these ideologies pervade and persist in social media, within headlines, and on TV.

也许你已经知道了这一点。也许那就是你已经渴望建立的业务。如果是这样，我很高兴。但当我刚开始的时候，这对我来说并不明显，我看到这些意识形态在社交媒体、标题和电视中广泛存在并持续存在。

One more economics lesson to wrap up: There's no free lunch. Once you have it, you will feel the pressure to spend money more loosely. Keep in mind the lessons we covered in this chapter as you start to spend your customers' money, making sure you're treating it as if it were your own. Instead of hiring like crazy, hire when it hurts. Instead of getting a fancy office, work out of a fancy coffee shop. When you do spend money, see how it affects your burn rate and your runway.

经济学课程的又一课要总结一下：没有免费的午餐。一旦拥有了它，你将感到更自由地花钱的压力。在开始支配客户的资金之前，请谨记本章所介绍的教训，确保你像对待自己的资金一样对待它。不要疯狂地招聘，待真正需要时再招聘。不要租用昂贵的办公场所，可以在高档咖啡店里工作。在花钱时，看看它如何影响你的烧钱速度和储备期。

At this point, you know how to keep things going and growing. You're ready to start hiring and building operational excellence within your company to scale up. That's what we'll cover in the next chapter.

此时，您已经知道如何让事情保持运转和发展。您已经准备好开始招聘并在公司内建立运营卓越以实现规模化。这就是我们将在下一章中讨论的内容。

KEY TAKEAWAYS

主要收获。

- o Seek “profitable confidence”: Infinite runway will maximize your creativity, clarity, and control. This is simple (spend less than you make) but not easy.

寻求“有益的信心”：无限的回旋道将最大程度地增强您的创造力、清晰度和控制力。这很简单（少花于所得），但并不容易。

- o How to spend less: Do less. Don't move too fast, don't move to Silicon Valley, don't get an office, don't get too big. Grow as fast as your customers want you to—and are paying you to.
如何少花钱：做的少一些。不要急于行动，不要去硅谷，不要租办公室，不要变得太大。按照客户和收入的速度增长。
- o If you raise money, think about raising it from your community and turning your customers into owners.
如果你筹集资金，考虑从你的社区中筹集资金，并将你的客户变为业主。
- o Ultimately, most founders run out of energy before they run out of money. Maintain your energy and sanity, and that of your cofounders and coworkers, by realigning early and often on what really matters.
大多数创始人最终是精力耗尽而非资金用尽。尽早且经常重新调整对真正重要的事情的认知，维持自己、联合创始人和同事的精力和心智健康。

Learn More

- o Follow Chris Savage, cofounder and CEO of Wistia, on Twitter (@chrissavage), and read his post on profitable confidence here: <https://wistia.com/learn/culture/profitable-confidence-how-to-build-a-business-for-the-long-term>.
请在Twitter上关注Wistia的联合创始人兼首席执行官Chris Savage (@chrissavage)，并阅读他在此处发布的有关盈利信心的文章：<https://wistia.com/learn/culture/profitable-confidence-how-to-build-a-business-for-the-long-term>。
- o Read about “The Four Horsemen” by the Gottmans, starting here: www.gottman.com/blog/the-four-horsemen-recognizing-criticism-contempt-defensiveness-and-stonewalling/.
请阅读戈特曼夫妇的《四骑士》一文，从这里开始：www.gottman.com/blog/the-four-horsemen-recognizing-criticism-contempt-defensiveness-and-stonewalling/。
- o Check out the Gumroad crowdfunding campaign here: <https://republic.co/gumroad>.
请在此查看Gumroad的众筹活动：<https://republic.co/gumroad>。



7

**build the house you
want to live in**

You can dream, create, design and build the most wonderful place in the world . . . but it requires people to make the dream a reality.

你可以做梦、构想、设计和建造世界上最美妙的地方.....但实现梦想需要有人参与。

— WALT DISNEY

— 华特迪士尼

Whenever I have to decide what to do next, I ask myself the question Gary Keller poses in *The One Thing*: “What’s the one thing you can do such that by doing it everything else will be easier or unnecessary?”

每当我需要决定下一步该做什么时，我都会问自己盖瑞·凯勒在《最重要的事》中提出的问题：“你能做哪一件事，通过做这件事使一切变得更容易或不必要？”

That’s why in this book we’ve focused on community before process, process before product, sales before marketing, and marketing before growth.

因此，在这本书中，我们将重点放在社区之前、过程之前、产品之前、销售之前、市场营销之前、成长之前。

When it comes to the people in your company, the answer to Keller’s question is to focus on culture before hiring. Before you’re ready to hire anyone, you first need to make a company people want to work for. That begins with setting your values, preferably as early as possible, because values are the foundation of the culture you will build together with your employees.

关于公司的员工，回答Keller的问题就是在雇用之前先关注文化。在准备雇佣之前，你首先需要打造一个人们愿意为之工作的公司文化。这始于设定价值，最好尽早设定，因为价值是你将与员工共同打造的文化的基础。

I used to think that communicating company values was kind of dumb, to be honest. Be nice, work hard, show up on time—isn’t it obvious? Then I started Gumroad and realized that if you don’t constantly remind everyone—including yourself—what you do, how you do it, and why you do it that way, you will veer off course. And then you’ll have to make corrections, usually at the most inopportune time.

我曾经认为传达公司价值观有点愚蠢，说实话。友善、努力工作、准时出现——这不是很明显吗？然后我开始使用Gumroad，意识到如果你不不断地提醒每个人，包括自己做事方式、原因和如何做到这一点，你就会偏离航道。然后你将不得不在最不适当的时候进行修正。

For me this happened in the fall of 2014, when I first started having conversations with VCs about the next round of funding for Gumroad. When

I realized that it wasn't going to be easy, if at all possible, to raise our Series B round of funding, I had to realign several team members around a very different kind of culture—one focused on building a profitable, sustainable business rather than a unicorn. We didn't shift our priorities—we were and still are creators first—but our new focus required me to have conversations around the career trajectory some of our employees expected. And let me tell you, it's a lot more difficult, emotional, and expensive to fix your culture than your code.

对我来说，这发生在2014年秋季，当时我第一次开始与风险投资家谈论Gumroad的下一轮融资。当我意识到筹集我们的B轮融资将不会容易，甚至可能不可能时，我不得不重新调整团队成员围绕一种非常不同的文化——专注于建立一个有利可图、可持续的业务，而不是一个独角兽。我们没有改变我们的优先事项——我们始终坚持以创造者为先——但我们的新重点要求我就一些员工期望的职业轨迹进行谈话。让我告诉你，修复你的文化比修复你的代码更加困难、情感上更加复杂，也更加昂贵。

Humans are not computers. We are all unpredictable, emotional creatures. Each person you hire makes the matrix of interactions within your organization more complex. You will make mistakes, but your company values will give you a plan of attack for how to get back on track.

人类不是电脑。我们都是不可预测的、情感化的生物。每个你雇佣的人都会让你组织内的交互矩阵变得更加复杂。你会犯错，但你公司的价值观将为你提供一种重新恢复正轨的攻略。

Today, forty-eight people work on Gumroad, based all over the world, and they seem quite happy! But I had my fair share of ups and downs to get here. In this chapter, I'll share everything I've learned the hard way about hiring the right people at the right pace and keeping them happy and productive in the face of a never-ending barrage of lucrative and glamorous offers for their talent, particularly in the technology space. I also address the challenges and opportunities of remote work and other unconventional approaches to solving problems with people. It's an ongoing process that never really stops.

今天，有四十八个人在全球各地为Gumroad工作，他们似乎很开心！但是在此之前，我也经历了一段起起伏伏的过程。在这一章节中，我将

分享我所有通过实践学到的东西，关于如何以合适的速度招聘合适的人，以及如何在面对众多具有诱惑力的机会时也能让他们保持愉快和高效的工作，特别是在技术领域。我同时也探讨了远程工作和其他非传统的方法来解决人力问题所面临的挑战和机遇。这是一个从未真正停止的持续过程。

Before you invite anyone over, you need to get your house in order. I've never seen a house party end cleaner than when it started, and a company is a house party that never ends. So let's get started figuring out what kind of house you want to live in and then filling it with the awesome people who are going to come along with you on this journey.

在邀请任何人前，你需要整理好你的房子。我从未见过一个家庭聚会比开始时更干净，而公司是一个永远不会结束的家庭聚会。所以让我们开始思考你想要生活在什么样的房子里，然后用一起前行的美好人们填满它。

Define Your Values Early and Often

Values are not generic two-word commandments that companies use to state the obvious. Quite the opposite: They're for stating the non-obvious, in non-obvious ways. They codify what you believe, putting it in a place where everyone can see—and everyone can suggest changes.

价值观不是公司用来陈述显而易见的两个字的命令。相反，他们用于陈述非显而易见的方式。他们将您相信的东西编码，并将其放在所有人都可以看到并且每个人都可以建议更改的地方。

Values are oral tradition. They tell employees a story of how to behave in both everyday *and* extreme situations. And they're more efficient mediums of information than manuals and handbooks. That's because good values stick in the brain; they're efficient and memorable.

价值观是口传的传统。它们告诉员工如何在日常和极端情况下行事的故事。而且，它们比手册和手册更有效的信息媒介。这是因为好的价值观会留在大脑中，它们高效且容易记忆。

Nordstrom, for example, is famed for its customer service. In one iconic story, a customer brings a set of tires to the store to return even though

Nordstrom sells clothes, not tires. The store accepts the tires anyway and fully refunds the customer. In another tale, a clerk who can't find the right pair of shoes at any nearby Nordstrom store recommends a competitor, Macy's, and covers shipping for the customer.

例如，诺德斯特龙以其顶尖客户服务而闻名。在一则标志性故事中，一位顾客带着一套轮胎来到商店退货，尽管诺德斯特龙只卖衣服，而不卖轮胎。但商店仍接受了轮胎并全额退款给了顾客。在另一个故事中，一名店员在附近的诺德斯特龙商店找不到合适的鞋子后，建议顾客去竞争对手梅西百货购买，并为顾客支付了运费。

These stories communicate more about the kind of service Nordstrom—and its customers—expect than a thousand-page manual on “how to be a good sales clerk” ever could. You could start working there tomorrow and already have a good sense of what kind of standards you would need to uphold to be a good “fit.”

这些故事传达的更多是 Nordstrom - 以及其顾客 - 期望的服务类型，而不是任何一个“如何成为一名优秀销售员”的千页手册所能传达的。你明天就可以开始在那里工作，并已经对需要遵守哪种标准才能成为一个好的“适合者”有了很好的感触。

That's because values aren't just for the people within the company. They tell your customers and the people who may consider working for you that you exist, and that they might be a great match. More important, they tell everyone else that your company isn't right for them, saving you, and them, precious time.

这是因为价值观不仅仅适用于公司内部的人员。它们告诉你的客户和可能考虑为你工作的人，你的存在，以及他们可能是一个很好的匹配。更重要的是，它们告诉其他人，你的公司不适合他们，为你和他们节省宝贵的时间。

That absolute clarity is particularly important for minimalist entrepreneurs because we often attract people for whom this may be a first job. Defining and communicating your company's values early sets expectations for how work is done and how disagreements are handled within the organization. They're not just a vehicle for you to push your will on your team. They help hold your team together and provide a way for your team to hold *you*

accountable.

绝对的清晰度对于极简主义企业家来说特别重要，因为我们经常吸引那些可能是第一次工作的人。早期定义和传达公司的价值观设置了工作方式和组织内如何处理分歧的期望。它们不仅是你向团队施加自己意志的工具。它们帮助团队凝聚在一起，并为团队提供了一种让你负责的方式。

Values supersede you, and values allow you to scale. After all, one of the reasons you started a business is to control your environment: when you work, how you work, where you work, who you work with, who you work for, and more. Values make sure that everyone is aligned on what that looks like. This is especially important when it comes to making difficult decisions.

价值观优先于你个人，而且价值观让你的业务能够扩大规模。毕竟你开始创业的原因之一是去掌控你的环境：你的工作时间、方式、地点、同事、客户等等。价值观确保每个人在这方面都保持一致。特别是在面对困难决策时，这点尤其重要。

Natalie Nagale, cofounder and CEO of Wildbit, knows this firsthand. She and her husband, Chris, founded Wildbit in 2000, and in 2012 the growth of Beanstalk, the workflow software that was one of their core products, plateaued.

Wildbit的联合创始人兼CEO Natalie Nagale深有体会。她和她的丈夫Chris于2000年创立了Wildbit，在2012年，他们的核心产品之一—— workflow软件Beanstalk的增长停滞不前。

“That was an important time for us,” she says, “because we were forced to ask why we were building and what we wanted to grow.” One of Wildbit’s principles is that businesses are product agnostic, which helped them make the decision to shift Beanstalk to maintenance and support mode. When they finally stopped trying “to put out Beanstalk fires,” they were able to focus on intentionally growing Postmark, an email delivery service that was their other core product.

“那个时期对我们来说非常重要，”她说，“因为我们被迫问自己为什么要建设，我们想要成长什么。”Wildbit的原则之一是企业产品不可知，这帮助他们决定将Beanstalk转为维护和支持模式。当他们最终停止试图“灭火”Beanstalk时，他们能够集中精力有意识地发展Postmark，这

是他们的另一个核心产品，一个电子邮件送达服务。”

In the years since, not being defined by one project or product has given Wildbit more freedom to “celebrate every opportunity to learn,” which is one of their core values. In practice, this means that if something, even a long-term project, stops being interesting or challenging, they move on. After five years, Wildbit shut down Conveyor, meant to be a successor to Beanstalk, in 2020; this might have been devastating for another company, but for Wildbit it made space for their team to launch two new projects, People First Jobs, a job board, and DMARC Digests, a monitoring service to prevent email scams.

自那时起，不被一个项目或产品所定义为Wildbit带来了更多自由，以“庆祝每一个学习机会”作为他们的核心价值观之一。实际上，这意味着如果某些事情，即使是长期项目，停止变得有趣或具有挑战性，他们就会放手。五年后，Wildbit于2020年关闭了Conveyor，它本来是Beanstalk的继承者；这对于另一家公司来说可能是毁灭性的，但对于Wildbit来说，这为他们的团队留出了为推出两个新项目——People First Jobs（一个职位招聘板）和DMARC Digests（一项监控服务，以防止电子邮件诈骗）而腾出了空间。

Making decisions that affect the lives of your team and your customers is not something to be taken lightly. But if you’ve decided on your values and have developed a culture around them, it will be a lot easier. A lot of founders think they can wait to write down their values, that they’ll appear to them just in time, and that culture will develop naturally. That’s true, but be forewarned that it may not be a culture you want for you, your team, or your customers.

作出影响团队和客户生活的决策并非轻而易举之事。但是，如果你已经确定了自己的价值观并围绕它们建立了文化，那么这将会变得更容易。许多创始人认为他们可以等到适当时候才写下自己的价值观，文化也会自然而然地发展起来。这是对的，但要注意，它可能不是你想要的文化，对于你、你的团队或你的客户都是如此。

You can start small and grow from there. But it is important to start having these conversations—even if it’s just with yourself. You can communicate your values through pithy statements, or you can draw them out

into long stories, but you should start.

你可以从小开始，逐步壮大。但重要的是开始进行这些对话——即使只是与自己对话。你可以通过简短的陈述来传达你的价值观，也可以把它们发挥成长篇故事，但你应该着手开始。

At Gumroad our values exist in a culture doc titled “What Matters.” And to help you get started with your own, I’ve embedded them for your reference below. They may not be exactly the right values for your company, but I hope they’re a good starting point for reflection and action.

在Gumroad，我们的价值观存在于一个名为“重要事项”的文化文档中。为了帮助您开始制定自己的价值观，我在下面嵌入了它们供您参考。它们可能不是您公司的确切价值观，但我希望它们是反思和行动的良好起点。

At this point you are already familiar with Gumroad, the product. Introducing . . . Gumroad, the company!

此时你已经熟悉了Gumroad这个产品。现在，让我们介绍一下…… Gumroad这个公司！

JUDGED BY THE WORK

This value is about being real about what matters: the experience creators—and their customers— have when they use Gumroad.

这个价值在于真实地关注重要的事情：当体验创造者和他们的客户使用Gumroad时的经历。

How I communicate this internally:

如何在内部沟通：

Our creators don't care about us. They care about the product, content, and community we happen to provide.

我们的创造者并不关心我们。他们关心我们所提供的产品、内容和社区。

That means a few things:

这意味着几件事情：

- o While we often work in silos, we do not ship alone. Everything we send to creators is of the highest quality, meaning that *everything* is reviewed by multiple people on the Gumroad team, our creators (they're first!), and other folks in our broader

community. For example, I published my Work article (sahillavingia.com/work) after addressing 600 comments from 150 people. That is extreme, but it meant hundreds of thousands of people read something better.

虽然我们经常独立工作，但我们并不是孤军奋战。我们发送给创作者的所有内容都是最高质量的，这意味着*所有*内容都会由Gumroad团队的多个人员，我们的创作者（他们最先看到！），以及我们更广泛的社区中的其他人员进行审核。例如，我在处理了来自150人的600条评论后，发布了我的Work文章（sahillavingia.com/work）。这很极端，但这意味着数十万人读到了更好的内容。

- o We are okay with employee churn (in fact, I encourage it if it helps us ship a superior product).

我们对员工流失并不感到担心（事实上，如果它有助于我们发布更优秀的产品，我会鼓励它）。

Lastly, it should be **considered a failure to receive feedback on something that could have made a creator's life better *after* you shipped.**

最后，如果你发布之后，没有收到能够让创作者生活更美好的反馈，那么这应该被视为失败。

SEEK SUPERLINEARITIES

This value is a way to define and to encourage growth. Though superlinearity is a mathematical concept referring to a function that eventually grows faster than any linear one, at Gumroad it represents our willingness to learn at a constantly accelerating pace.

这个价值是一种定义和鼓励增长的方式。尽管超线性是指最终增长速度比任何线性增长都要快的数学概念，在Gumroad，它代表着我们愿意以不断加速的速度学习的意愿。

How I communicate this internally:

如何在内部沟通：

We have a fixed number of hours and an unlimited amount of creator income to actualize. Everything we do should contribute to our creators' bottom lines in a measurable and scalable way. **Every day you are producing superlinear returns on your time investment.**

我们有固定的工作时间和无限的创作者收益可以实现。我们所做的一切都应该以可衡量和可扩展的方式贡献于我们的创作者收益。每天你对时间的投资都会产生超线性的回报。

What this means in practice is that job responsibilities at Gumroad change

quickly. Employees might outgrow their roles and leave Gumroad to start their own companies. Great!

在实践中，这意味着Gumroad的工作职责很快就会发生变化。员工可能会超越自己的角色，并离开Gumroad开始自己的公司。太好了！

EVERYONE IS A CEO

This value is about building a company of like-minded people. I'm a CEO, and I think it's a pretty great job, so I want to create a company full of them. 这个价值观是关于建立一个志同道合的团队。我是一名CEO，认为这是一份非常出色的工作，因此我想创建一个由同样优秀的人组成的公司。

How I communicate this internally:

我如何在内部传达这个信息:

Ultimately, you are responsible for spending our creators' money, and it's your job to tell the company how you're doing that.

最终，你有责任花费我们创作者的钱，而你的工作就是告诉公司你是如何处理这些钱的。

You are the CEO of your function, and it is your responsibility to make sure it is executing at a high level and communicating proof to the rest of the company— and our creators.

你是负责部门的首席执行官，你的责任是确保部门高效运行并向整个公司和我们的创作者传达证明。

You need to think strategically (about business and product), proactively get things done, ask for help when needed, and hold yourself accountable before I need to.

你需要对业务和产品进行战略思考，积极主动地完成任务，在必要时寻求帮助，并在我需要提醒之前对自己负责。

Similarly, don't waste resources:

同样，不要浪费资源。

- o Everyone is doing something important when you ask them for help, so do what you can to **save them time and expensive back-and-forth**. This means providing all the context anyone needs, including objective measurements.

当你向他们寻求帮助时，每个人都在做重要的事情，因此尽力节省他们的时间和昂贵的来回。这意味着提供任何人需要的所有上下文，包括客观的度量。

- o Think like a CEO asking for approval from their board, not like an employee asking their manager for direction. **If someone needs to ask you how things are going, they are not going well.**

以CEO的心态向董事会寻求批准，而不是像员工向经理寻求指示。如果有人需要问你事情进展如何，那就说明事情并不顺利。

Most people don't want to be CEOs; most people don't want to work for a company that has these expectations for its workforce. That's fine too; the people who do want to become CEOs find our situation appealing, and they're the ones I believe will create the most value for our creators anyway.

大多数人不想成为CEO；大多数人也不想为一个对员工寄予如此期望的公司工作。这也没关系；想成为CEO的人会觉得我们的情况很有吸引力，而且我相信他们才能为我们的创作者创造最大的价值。

DARE TO BE OPEN

Given you're reading our internal values, this is likely the clearest of the bunch.

鉴于您正在阅读我们的内部价值观，这很可能是其中最清晰的。

How I communicate this internally:

我如何在内部进行沟通：

If there's a Gumroad secret, it's this one: we aim for complete information symmetry.

There's nothing I know that you don't, and eventually there'll be nothing you and I know that our creators don't.

如果说Gumroad有什么秘密的话，那就是我们致力于完全的信息对称。没有我知道而你不知道的事情，最终也没有你和我知道而我们的创作者不知道的事情。

We are building the best product, with the best team, for the best community. Being open about everything is the flywheel that brings more amazing people into our ecosystem.

我们正在建造最好的产品，与最优秀的团队一起为最好的社区服务。对一切保持公开透明是吸引更多优秀人才加入我们生态系统的动力源泉。

This manifests in numerous ways, like making our on-boarding documents publicly available and sharing our financials on Twitter every month. That way, not only does everyone who works at Gumroad know what we're about, but our customers and anyone who might even think about working at Gumroad knows too.

这体现在很多方面，比如将我们的入职文件公开，每个月在 Twitter 上分享我们的财务状况。这样，不仅我们的每个员工都知道我们的公司理念，我们的客户和任何有意向加入 Gumroad 的人也知道了。

I recommend this level of transparency to everyone. The upside is that some of the people who get to know more about your company will love you. The downside is that some won't. They won't agree with the way you do business. They'll disagree with your policies on product quality and remote work or pick apart your numbers. Having a point of view and putting it into practice can be polarizing, but if what you're doing works for you, your customers, and your employees, and the company is profitable, you can sleep at night knowing you're doing the right thing. No one can take it away from you.

我推荐每个人都采取这种透明度的水平。好处是更多的人会了解你的公司并且会喜欢你。坏处是有些人不会。他们不会赞同你的商业方式。他们会反对你的产品质量和远程工作政策，或者挑剔你的数字。拥有观点并付诸实践可能会引发分歧，但如果你的做法适合你、适合你的顾客和员工，并且公司盈利，你就可以安心地睡觉，知道你在做正确的事情。没有人能夺走它。

Another plus is that when things aren't going well, transparency can lead to the kind of reflection that will make things better. The most profound thing I have learned running a company has been the difference between behavior and intention. Behavior is what someone is doing; intention is why they're doing it. Most people judge themselves based on their own intentions but then judge others based on their behavior. Transparency makes that difficult, if not impossible.

另一个优点是，当事情进展不顺利时，透明度可以导致反思，让事情变得更好。我在经营一家公司时学到的最深刻的事情是行为和意图之间的区别。行为是某人正在做的事情；意图是他们为什么这样做。大多数人根据自己的意图评价自己，然后根据别人的行为评价他们。透明度使这很难，甚至不可能。

As the CEO of an impactful company, it's important for me to be open about my intentions. Then others can look at my behavior and suggest improvements so that they match up better. Sunlight may not *always* be the

best disinfectant, but it often helps.

作为一家有影响力公司的首席执行官，我对我的意图保持开放是非常重要的。这样，其他人就可以看着我的行为，提出改进意见，使其更合适。阳光也许并不总是最好的消毒剂，但它经常会有所帮助。

Transparency isn't just about what we show to the world; it's also about how we operate internally. In chapter 3, I talked about the processes we use to run our business, all of which are documented and available for every employee to see. Day-to-day, we use tools such as Slack and Notion to keep everyone in our company aware of what is happening and to give employees clarity about how their work matters. It's easy for people to peer into anything if they're curious (or take over if need be). The cumulative effect of the open environment we've created with public numbers, no meetings, and open communication is that there are no secrets and no FOMO.

透明度不仅仅关乎我们向世界展示什么，也关乎我们内部的运作方式。在第三章中，我谈到了我们用来运营业务的各种流程，这些流程都有文档记录，每个员工都可以看到。日常工作中，我们使用Slack和Notion等工具，让公司内部的每个人都知道发生了什么，同时让员工清楚地了解自己的工作是如何重要的。如果人们好奇的话，他们可以轻易地窥视任何事情（或者在需要的时候接管任何事情）。我们营造的公开环境，包括公开数字、不开会议和开放式沟通，其累积效应是：没有秘密，没有FOMO。

For example, everyone at Gumroad can see via an online dashboard how much our creators are earning. It does run the risk of creating a counterproductive obsession with the numbers (sometimes it is the founder's job to worry about the bottom line, not the employees'), but generally I've found that empowering your team with the data they need to make their own decisions creates a better, more self-sufficient organization. Plus, it means you need to do less, which is a big reason you chose to be a minimalist entrepreneur in the first place.

例如，Gumroad 的每个人都可以在线仪表板看到我们的创作者赚了多少钱。这确实存在创建与数字相反的追求的风险（有时创始人的工作是担心底线，而不是员工），但通常我发现，提供让团队自行决策所需的数据可以创建更好、更自给自足的组织。而且，这意味着你需

要做更少的工作，这也是你选择成为极简主义企业家的重要原因之一。

We also give everyone access to the traffic dashboards, and several of our engineers, when they are looking to take a break from their normal workload, will go in there and see what pages of the site they can speed up. These are things I may never have prioritized, but they save our customers time and improve our product offering.

我们也给所有人访问流量仪表板的权限，当他们想要从日常工作中休息一下的时候，我们的几个工程师会进去看看能加速网站哪些页面。这些是我可能从未优先考虑过的事情，但它们可以节省我们客户的时间并改进我们的产品服务。

Ultimately, if you hire well, your employees will be better managers of themselves than you could ever be. And in the long run, giving everyone autonomy allows you to be a peer to your employees so that you can code alongside your engineers, design alongside your designers, and spend your time creating and building something impactful rather than constantly managing others. As long as you continue to lay out the long-term vision for the company based on clearly articulated values, your employees will be happy to support you.

最终，如果您雇用得当，您的员工将比您更好地管理自己。从长远来看，给每个人自主权使您能够成为员工的同事，以便您可以与工程师一起编码，与设计师一起设计，并花时间创建和构建有影响力的东西，而不是不断地管理其他人。只要您继续基于明确表达的价值观为公司制定长远愿景，您的员工将乐意支持您。

Transparency also matters when it comes to the harder things like money. At Gumroad, we disclose everyone's salary in the company to everyone else, using a simple spreadsheet I keep up to date. This lets people feel good about how much they make and minimizes information asymmetry between me and the rest of the team. Revealing that kind of information may seem scary at first, but that's just because it's unusual. In practice it vastly reduces the number of questions people ask about their compensation, and it also helps combat wage disparity because of bias.

透明度在涉及到金钱等难以处理的事情时也很重要。在Gumroad，我们把所有人的薪资公布给其他人，我会使用一个简单的电子表格来更

新。这样可以让人们对自己的薪资感到满意，并最大限度地减少信息差异。披露这种信息起初可能会让人感到害怕，但那只是因为这种做法不常见。在实践中，这极大地减少了人们对他们薪酬的疑问，也有助于因偏见而导致的工资差距问题。

Laying out the numbers behind the business and the salaries you're paying people tells your employees how their work contributes to the overall profitability of the business. That information makes it easier for everyone when it comes time to have an honest conversation about how much they deserve to get paid. Global studies reveal that 79 percent of people who quit their jobs cite "lack of appreciation" as their reason for leaving, and though it's normal, even expected, for employees to outgrow your company and move on, you don't want unnecessary turnover to be a part of the culture of your business.

将企业收入以及员工薪资清楚地呈现出来，可以向员工展示他们的工作对企业总利润的贡献。这些信息可以使得每个人都更容易地进行关于薪资要求的坦诚对话。全球研究表明，79%的辞职者都认为“缺乏赏识”是他们离职的原因。尽管员工成长并离开公司是正常的，但您不希望不必要的人员流动成为企业文化的一部分。

Beware of the Peter Principle

I don't like to manage. I would much rather have ten amazing people on my team than a hundred good ones. That might mean that we cannot ship as much code as the next startup on an absolute basis, but on a per-person basis we are far more productive and more fulfilled because of it.

我不喜欢管理。我更愿意拥有十个优秀的人才团队，而不是一百个好的。这可能意味着我们在绝对基础上无法发布与下一个创业公司一样多的代码，但就每个人而言，我们因此变得更有生产力和更充实。

Ultimately, a company scales successfully because employees are empowered to help customers without your intervention. Your job, and the job of any management team you build, is to give them the resources to succeed, and, when necessary, the thirty-thousand-foot view so they can clearly see where their work fits into the big picture without having to

undertake the stressful process of investigating on their own.

一家公司最终会成功扩展，是因为有员工有权力为客户提供帮助，不需要你的干预。你的工作以及任何你组建的管理团队的工作，就是为他们提供成功所需的资源，必要时提供 30,000 英尺的视野，使他们清楚地看到他们的工作与大局的关系，而无需自行进行压力巨大的调查。

Don't be a product visionary—or, worse, a product dictator. Your company shouldn't be a cult of personality, building exclusively what you want on the timelines you decide. WeWork is one example of how that path leads to certain doom. Among the numerous excesses, questionable decision making, and lavish capital infusions based on little evidence that the company might ever be profitable, one fascinating detail stands out. Even though WeWork's business has nothing to do with surfing, the board approved a \$13 million investment in a company that made artificial wave pools because former CEO Adam Neumann is an avid surfer.

不要成为一个产品幻想家，更不要成为一个产品独裁者。你的公司不应该成为个人崇拜的邪教，仅建造你想要的产品，按你决定的时间表进行。WeWork是这种做法导致失败的一个例子。在众多的浪费、有问题的决策和奢侈的资本注入中，一个有趣的细节显得突出。尽管WeWork的业务与冲浪无关，但董事会批准了一笔1300万美元的投资，用于一家制造人造波浪池的公司，因为前CEO亚当·纽曼是一名狂热的冲浪者。

That, of course, is an extreme case of the ways in which a CEO's ideas and preferences, however irrational and counter to the interests of the business, can sink the business itself, but the point still stands. Whether you have three employees or three hundred, have clear key performance indicators (KPI) that *everyone* knows about and can measure their work against, which will allow *everyone* to either talk to or build for customers.

当然，这是CEO的想法和偏好，即使与企业利益背道而驰，也会导致企业崩溃的极端案例，但重点仍然存在。无论您有三个员工还是三百个员工，请确保有清晰的关键绩效指标(KPI)，每个人都知道并可以根据其工作进行衡量，这将使每个人都能与客户交流或为客户建立。

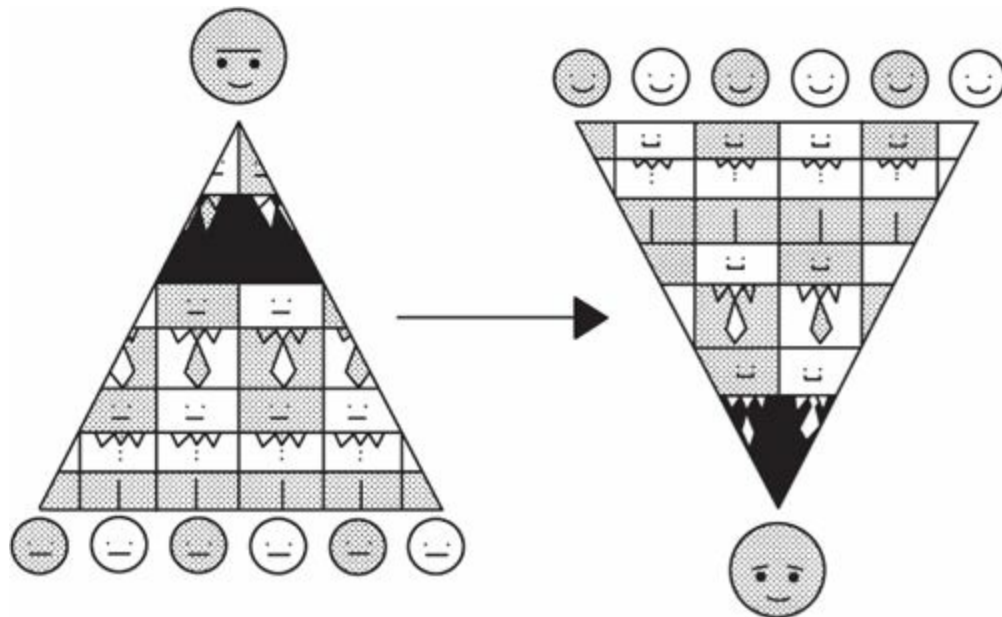
The Peter Principle, coined by educator Laurence J. Peter, states that “the tendency in most organization hierarchies, such as that of a corporation, is for

every employee to rise in the hierarchy through promotion until they reach a level of respective incompetence.”

由教育家劳伦斯·彼得创造的“彼得原则”指出，“在大多数组织等级制度，如公司等，每个员工晋升直到达到他们应有的无能水平”的趋势”。

Though it was originally meant as satire, you may be able to relate to the idea that within a strict hierarchy, everyone gets stuck with the job they're not good at. At Gumroad, I've tried to turn the Peter Principle on its head. Employees work for customers. I work for my employees. The best people continue to do the jobs they're best at as they get promoted— they just get paid more to do it.

虽然它最初是个讽刺，但你可能会认同这个想法，在一个严格的等级体系中，每个人都被扣在自己不擅长的工作上。在Gumroad，我试图把彼得原理颠倒过来。员工为客户工作，我为员工工作。最优秀的人继续做他们擅长的工作，随着晋升而薪酬水平也随之增加。



The problem with managers is that they aren't really invested in the success of the people they manage. But sometimes it's more than just being invested in your employees' success on the job; it's about caring about and investing in your employees' career aspirations and growth—beyond what your company might require. It's about the long-term game for everyone

involved.

管理者的问题在于他们并没有真正为所管理的员工的成功投资。但有时候，不仅仅是在员工在工作上的成功上进行投资；而是关心和投资员工的职业愿望和成长 - 超出公司所要求的范围。这对于所有人的长期游戏来说都是重要的。

This might even mean encouraging your employees to leave to find more growth elsewhere, which we'll cover at the end of this chapter.

这甚至可能意味着鼓励您的员工去其他地方寻找更多的成长机会，这将在本章的最后部分涵盖。

Create Accountability

Gumroad has been remote since 2015.

Gumroad自2015年以来一直是远程的。

I think that remote work is going to be the norm for pretty much every business that doesn't need an office. Which is almost every business that pivoted and figured out a way to keep going with a distributed team during the COVID-19 pandemic.

我认为远程工作将成为几乎不需要办公室的所有企业的惯例。在COVID-19大流行期间，几乎所有转向并找到了一种保持分布式团队运作的方式的企业都可以使用。

When you don't have an office, you don't need to restrict yourself to the folks in your local geography. You can hire people across the world—finding the best people and bringing them into your company without either of you ever leaving home or needing to fly halfway across the world.

当你没有办公室时，你不需要局限于当地的人员。你可以聘请世界各地的人才，将他们带入公司，而你们不需要离开家或飞往世界的另一端。

Once you've taken that step, you might realize that other conventional wisdom about how to run a company doesn't make sense either. Meetings, for example. Most companies use meetings as an essential tool to get their work done, but we don't have meetings at Gumroad. We've even taken it a step further: we're fully asynchronous. This has meant that for us, all

communication is thoughtful. Because nothing is urgent—unless the site is down—discussion takes place only after mindful processing.

一旦你迈出了那一步，你可能会意识到关于如何经营一家公司的其他传统智慧也没有意义。例如，会议。大多数公司使用会议作为重要工具来完成他们的工作，但我们在Gumroad没有会议。我们甚至更进一步：我们完全异步。这意味着对于我们来说，所有的沟通都是深思熟虑的。因为没有什么是紧急的 - 除非网站崩溃 - 讨论只有在经过周到处理后才会发生。

But what happens when something urgent *does* happen? The truth is that our business model doesn't produce the kind of "drop everything and deal with it now" situations that might occur if, for example, your company is reliant on business development and a key customer is pulling out because of a feature degradation or a missed deadline.

但是，如果确有紧急情况会发生怎么办呢？事实是，我们的商业模式不会产生“立即放下一切处理”的情况，例如，如果您的公司依赖于业务拓展，而关键客户因为功能降级或错过截止日期而退出，可能发生这种情况。

If something does require near-immediate engagement, we use Slack as our closest-to-real-time communication channel. GitHub is where we keep our codebase and where engineers submit their code for peer review before it is merged in and deployed live. Notion is for everything else. It is what we use to host our roadmap (which we make public) and our product development processes, as well as where we house our knowledge sharing around how each person does their job.

如果某件事需要立即响应，我们会使用Slack作为最接近实时沟通渠道。GitHub是我们保存代码库和工程师提交代码进行同行评审的地方，在此之后，代码才会被合并并进行现场部署。而Notion则用于其他方面。我们使用它来托管我们的路线图（我们会公开发布），以及我们的产品开发流程，以及每个人如何完成自己的工作的知识分享。

This three-pronged system is a useful heuristic to help employees know where to go to get help when they need it. In a few hours, Slack. In a day or two, GitHub. Longer than that, Notion. Transparency around metrics and team compensation is important—but it's also important to make it easy to

surface the right information at the right time for the right people.

这个三重系统是一个有用的启发式工具，可以帮助员工知道在需要帮助时去哪里寻求帮助。在几个小时内，使用Slack。在一两天内，使用GitHub。超过这个时间，在使用Notion。透明度在度量和团队报酬方面是很重要的，但是让合适的人在合适的时间轻松提取正确的信息也同样重要。

If something does need to be discussed in really-real time, we now use Clubhouse for audio-only conversations. As a bonus, we can pull our customers into meetings much more easily than if it were a Zoom call.

如果确实需要实时讨论某事，我们现在使用 Clubhouse 进行音频对话。作为额外福利，我们可以更轻松地将我们的客户拉入会议，这比使用 Zoom 更容易。

This culture requires everyone to tell everyone else when they plan to do “deep work,” a term coined by writer Cal Newport indicating focused, cognitively demanding tasks. Much of the work we do, including writing, coding, and designing, doesn’t lend itself well to interruptions. Beyond setting expectations, people can decide how they wish to implement this. They can let others know when they plan to surface and respond to questions, or they can turn off their notifications for weeks on end. For me, this is as simple as blocking out times in my calendar.

这种文化要求每个人在计划进行“深度工作”时告知其他人，这个词是由作家卡尔·纽波特创造的，表示专注的、认知要求高的任务。我们所做的大部分工作，包括写作、编码和设计，都不适合中断。除了设定期望，人们可以决定如何实施。他们可以告诉别人他们何时计划回答问题，或者他们可以关闭通知几周。对我来说，这就像在我的日历中设置时段一样简单。

Clear expectations around availability allow people to build their work around their life, not the other way around. This is especially great for new parents, but everyone benefits from being able to structure their days to maximize their happiness and productivity, and most people can learn to manage themselves and be productive and impactful.

明确的可用性期望，使人们能够根据自己的生活安排工作，而不是相反。这对于新父母特别有益，但每个人都受益于能够安排自己的日子

以最大化幸福感和生产力，大多数人可以学会自我管理并快速高效地完成工作。

I recognize that what I do and what we do at Gumroad may not work for every founder or every company, depending on the nature of the business. While flexible work hours are becoming more common, some companies function best when they are totally asynchronous and remote like us, while others use a hybrid of remote work and shared time at coworking spaces. As long as you keep a laser focus on delivering the best product to your customers, creating a system that works will develop organically from the bottom up rather than feeling like something dictated from the top.

我认识到我在Gumroad所做的事情以及我们所做的事情可能并不适用于每一位创始人或者每一家公司，这取决于业务的性质。虽然弹性工作时间越来越普遍，但是一些公司在完全异步和远程工作的情况下运作最佳，就像我们一样，而另一些公司则采用远程工作和在共享工作空间中共享时间的混合模式。只要你专注于为客户提供最好的产品，创建一个可行的系统就会从底层有机地开发出来，而不像被从顶层强制实施一样。

Ultimately, it's up to you to decide what kind of house you want to live in and then find people who agree. Gumroad's values are a little offbeat. You might even say they're a little scary. But they guide everything we do, and they communicate what the world needs to know about our company. Our values may not work for most people. For them, Gumroad isn't a fit. Luckily, there are millions of other companies that are.

归根结底，决定住在什么样的房子里还是得靠你自己，然后寻找与你想法相同的人。Gumroad的价值观有些与众不同，甚至可以说是有些可怕。但它们指引着我们所做的一切，也传达了世界需要了解我们公司的东西。我们的价值观可能并不适合大多数人。对于他们来说，Gumroad并非最佳选择。幸运的是，还有数以百万计的其他适合他们的公司。

How Simply Eloped Defined Its Values and Got Back on Track

Hiring before defining your values and culture is a challenge many founders face, perhaps because it is the default, but luckily it's an issue you can come back from.

在定义公司的价值观和文化之前雇佣员工是许多创始人面临的挑战，也许这是默认的，但幸运的是，这是你可以克服的问题。

Janessa White and Matt Dalley are two founders who ran into trouble when they started hiring at Simply Eloped, a company that helps couples plan intimate or destination weddings. Up until then, Matt and Janessa had been doing everything right. They grew slowly and were strategic about every dollar they spent. Before they started hiring, they had performed every function—customer service, marketing, sales—themselves, and it had allowed them to develop their own systems and to be adaptable and creative, especially when it came to money.

简妮莎·怀特（Janessa White）和马特·达利（Matt Dalley）是Simply Eloped的两位创始人。这家公司帮助新人计划亲密或目的地婚礼。但在他们开始雇用员工后，遇到了一些麻烦。在此之前，马特和简妮莎一直做得很好。他们缓慢增长，并对每一笔支出都非常谨慎。在他们开始雇用员工之前，他们自己执行所有职能，包括客户服务、营销、销售等。这让他们能够开发自己的系统，并且在钱方面非常适应和有创意。

They had also made conscious choices about the vendors they hired to represent Simply Eloped. “The wedding industry can be full of discrimination, so from the very beginning, we built relationships with officiants, florists, bakers, and others who shared our values and felt comfortable with all sorts of couples. I had spent years talking with customers,” Janessa said, “and I knew that we were offering the kind of affordable, inclusive service that people couldn't find anywhere else.”

他们还有意识地选择了代表Simply Eloped的供应商。“婚礼行业可能会充满歧视，因此从一开始，我们与主持人，花店，烘焙师和其他人建立了合作关系，他们分享我们的价值观，对各种夫妇感到舒适。Janessa说，“我花了多年时间与客户交谈”，“我知道我们提供的是其他地方找不到的价格实惠、包容性强的服务。”

Even though Matt and Janessa had been deliberate about the kinds of external relationships they wanted to cultivate, they hadn't been as intentional

about the culture they wanted to build inside Simply Eloped. In 2019, they raised capital and began a hiring push. “We made every mistake in the book,” they said. “We hired for our wish list, we hired friends and family, and we hired anyone who seemed nice and wanted a job.” The result was what Janessa called a “cultural crisis” during which bullying, gossip, and drama became common-place.

尽管Matt和Janessa在培养他们想要建立的外部关系类型方面是有意识的，但他们在构建Simply Eloped内部所期望的文化方面并没有那么有意识。在2019年，他们筹集了资金并开始招聘人员。他们说：“我们犯了书上所有的错误。我们为心愿清单而招聘人员，雇用了朋友和家人，并雇用任何看起来友好并想要一份工作的人。”结果是Janessa称为“文化危机”，其中欺凌、八卦和戏剧成为常态。

Their first step to correcting course was to hire a leadership coach who began the process of identifying what was happening and how to fix it. Matt and Janessa were forced to ask themselves what kind of leaders they needed to be to manage a growing team. They saw that they had focused too much on making their employees “happy” and not enough time defining what would best serve their customers and provide the best work atmosphere.

他们纠正课程的第一步是聘请了一位领导力教练，他开始了识别正在发生的事情以及如何解决它们的过程。马特和贾内萨被迫问自己需要成为什么样的领导才能管理日益增长的团队。他们意识到自己过于关注让员工“快乐”，而没有足够的时间定义什么最能为客户服务并提供最佳的工作氛围。

They also realized that even though *they* and many of their customers loved the company, it wasn't going to be the right fit for everyone. This revelation sent them back to the drawing board to consider their values, which they now define using the acronym CACAO, for “customer-centric, ambitious, compassionate, adaptable, and ownership.” What's more, they translated those values into a list of attributes that describe the type of person who will thrive at Simply Eloped, and they now draw from that list for their job postings.

他们也意识到，即使他们和很多客户都喜欢公司，它也不会适合所有人。这一发现让他们重新考虑了公司的价值观。现在，他们使用缩写

CACAO（即“以客户为中心、雄心勃勃、富有同情心、适应性强和具有所有权意识”）来定义公司的价值观。此外，他们将这些价值观转化为一份描述哪种人会在Simply Eloped蓬勃发展的属性清单，并在招聘中借鉴这份清单。

In addition, Janessa, Matt, and their team explicitly use Simply Eloped's values to highlight success and to give feedback; during the weekly announcements, Janessa weaves in company values to tell stories about employees' small wins; on the flip side, if someone isn't performing well, she can use the values as context for how and why to improve. Values have ended up being so important at Simply Eloped that Matt and Janessa even wrote a song about them that every employee learns.

此外，詹妮莎、马特和他们的团队明确地使用Simply Eloped的价值观来突出成功并提供反馈；在每周的公告中，詹妮莎会编织公司的价值观，讲述员工的小的胜利故事；相反，如果有人表现不佳，她可以使用这些价值观作为改进的上下文和原因。价值观在Simply Eloped变得如此重要，以至于马特和詹妮莎甚至为它们创作了一首歌曲，每个员工都要学会。

While you may not want or need to write a song about your company values (we definitely are never going to write a song at Gumroad), it's worth noting how clearly Janessa and Matt articulate and define the company's values, for themselves and for everyone who works there. They've found something that works for them, and their clear values enable them to grow knowing where they're going and who they want to bring along with them.

虽然你可能不想或不需要为你公司的价值观写一首歌（我们Gumroad绝对不会这样做），但值得注意的是，Janessa和Matt清晰地表达并定义了公司的价值观，对于自己和所有在那里工作的人来说都是如此。他们已经找到了适合自己的东西，他们清晰的价值观使他们能够在知道自己要去哪里和想和谁一起前进的情况下不断成长。

Tell the World Who You Are

Ultimately, it will be more work to build your company culture than your product. But it will also be more valuable. And at the end of it, you will have

a company that fulfills your goals and the goals of many others as well.

最终，建立公司的文化比建立产品需要更多的工作。但是这也将是更有价值的。最终，您将拥有一个既能实现您的目标，也能实现许多其他人的目标的公司。

People do not change jobs often, and they often don't declare to the world when they're thinking about doing so. In chapter 5, we talked about how marketing is about reminding prospective customers that you exist, over and over again. Similarly, hiring well is about reminding prospective candidates that you exist, and why you exist, over and over again.

人们不经常更换工作，而且通常不会向世界宣布他们正在考虑这么做。在第5章中，我们讨论了营销是关于一遍又一遍地提醒潜在客户你的存在。同样，好的招聘是关于一遍又一遍地提醒潜在候选人你的存在，以及你为什么存在。

And just like we learned in chapter 4, good sales isn't just about sales—it's about education. Hiring is one of the hardest things about startups, because it's about product development, sales, and marketing—all at once!

就像我们在第四章学到的一样，好的销售不仅仅是关于销售本身——它也与教育有关。在初创企业中，招聘是最困难的事情之一，因为它涉及到产品开发、销售和营销——三者必须兼备！

Once you have cultural values that work for you, start to communicate them publicly. Many people fear that communicating these values will alienate people from looking further into their company. This is exactly correct. Clearly defining your cultural values allows most folks to say, "This isn't for me," and a select few to say, "THIS IS EXACTLY THE JOB FOR ME!"

一旦你有适合自己的文化价值观，请开始公开传达它们。许多人担心传达这些价值观会使人们远离他们的公司。这是完全正确的。明确定义文化价值观让大多数人说：“这不适合我，”而让少数人说：“这正是适合我的工作！”

Great people will only apply if they see a job that matches (or exceeds) their expectations for what their ideal work life could be like. If you can, reflect on any painful or stressful job searches you've had, and how often you've gotten to the end of a long interview process with a company only to

realize they weren't a fit for you *at all*.

只有当伟大的人才发现与他们理想工作生活的期望相匹配（或超过）的工作时，他们才会申请。如果可以，反思一下你曾经经历的任何痛苦或压力的求职过程，以及你有多少次在与公司进行了漫长的面试过程之后才意识到它们根本不适合你。

Communicating your values saves everyone time and energy. You only want to interview the candidates who think they're a really good fit for you, not people who are just looking for their next job or a pay raise. Ultimately, the greatest candidates are the ones who plan to replace you.

传达你的价值观可以节约所有人的时间和精力。你只需要面试那些认为他们真正适合你的候选人，而不是那些只是在寻找下一份工作或加薪的人。最终，最好的候选人是那些计划取代你的人。

Hiring Looks a Lot Like Firing Yourself

From the beginning, you should look to hire people who are better than you. They're not there to implement your vision but to improve upon it based on their own interactions with customers.

从一开始就应该雇佣比你更优秀的人。他们并非为了实现你的愿景，而是要根据他们与客户的互动对其进行改进。

Some of them may even be your previous customers. At Gumroad, we make a point to hire from our community first.

他们中的一些人甚至可能是你之前的客户。在Gumroad，我们始终优先从我们的社区中招聘。

Many founders fail to delegate well, but it begins with selfawareness. Ask yourself:

许多创业者在委派任务方面表现不佳，但这始于自我意识。问问自己：

- o What do I most enjoy doing?
我最喜欢做什么？
- o What am I good at, and what am I not so good at?
我擅长什么，我不擅长什么？

- o What function would be a relief to pass to someone else?
哪个功能能够让你放心交给别人？
- o How do I spend most of my time, and is that the right choice?
我大部分时间都怎样度过，这是正确的选择吗？

Once you figure out exactly what job you are hiring for, you can figure out who may be a fit. But often you won't know. Again, this is why it's important to get good at shouting into the ether and letting people come to you.

一旦你确定了你要聘请的工作，就可以确定谁可能适合。但通常你不知道。这也是为什么重要的是要擅长向天空大声呼喊，让人们来找你。

Your job listings should be a filter, not a magnet. Most people won't enjoy working at your company, and your job listings should make it clear that they should look elsewhere. The people who get all the way through are the ones you should have more serious conversations with.

你的工作列表应该是一个过滤器，而不是一个磁铁。大多数人不会喜欢在你的公司工作，你的工作列表应该清楚地表明他们应该另寻出路。那些坚持到最后的人是你应该与之进行更认真的对话的人。

If you do this well, hiring becomes much easier and faster. And because of your minimalist approach to building your business, you already have communities, customers, and a marketing muscle with which to best engage them.

如果你做得好，招聘就会变得更加容易和快捷。由于你对建立业务的极简主义方法，你已经拥有社区、客户和市场营销工具，可以最好地与他们互动。

For example, a single tweet from my personal Twitter account led to hundreds of applicants:

例如，我个人Twitter账户的一条推特就吸引了数百名申请者：



Sahil ✓ @shl · Aug 6, 2020

We're looking for engineers who want to work on @gumroad!

- Web (Ruby + JS) or iOS (Swift)
- 20+ hours a week
- \$125-\$200/hr
- Work from anywhere, no scheduled meetings, no deadlines
- Everything you work on will eventually be OSS!

75

361

1.2K



This isn't just true for me. Adam Wathan's single tweet about a job working on Tailwind UI led to 875 applicants. His tweet, similar to mine, was clear and opinionated:

这不仅仅是适用于我，Adam Wathan在Twitter上发布了一条关于在Tailwind UI工作的工作职位的推文，结果吸引了875名申请者。他的推文与我的类似，表达了明确的观点。



Adam Wathan
@adamwathan

If you're interested in building UI tools with me full-time, we're looking for a developer to join the Tailwind CSS team.

\$115k-\$135k/year, 4 weeks vacation, and 40 hours a week of hacking on fun, interesting problems.

1:32 PM · May 24, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

598 Retweets 56 Quote Tweets 1,833 Likes

Revisit your values, and make sure they are embedded in your job post just like everything else that you write. For Gumroad that means making it clear how much we pay, what we expect of our people, and what we don't offer. But your values will be different from ours, and so your job posts will

be too.

重新审视你的价值观，并确保它们与你写的其他内容一样融入到工作岗位中。对于Gumroad来说，这意味着明确我们的薪资水平、对员工的期望和我们不提供什么。但你的价值观与我们的不同，因此你的工作岗位也会有所不同。

Fit Is Two-Way

Unfortunately, not everyone who joins your company will stick around for the long term, or maybe even the short term. Fit is two-way; when someone isn't working out for you, it also means you aren't working out for them. And someone who isn't a great fit for your company is hurting their own long-term prospects just like they are hurting yours.

很遗憾，并不是每个加入你公司的人都会长期留下，甚至可能短期内也不会。适应是双方的，当有人对你不起作用时，这也意味着你对他们不起作用。而那些不适合你公司的人，正如他们伤害你一样，也会损害自己的长期前景。

When in doubt, reflect on your values. Does this person match? Would this person be *creating more value* outside of your company than within it? Would you hire them today if you knew then what you know now?

疑惑时，反思自己的价值观。这个人是否匹配？这个人在公司外能创造更多价值吗？如果您现在知道他们的情况，您会雇用他们吗？

Truthfully, when you start doubting, you probably know the answer and just aren't comfortable making the hard decision of letting them go.

实话说，当你开始怀疑的时候，你可能已经知道了答案，只是不太舒服做出让他们离开的艰难决定。

Believe me, I know how difficult it is to fire people. But it is an essential skill if you want to build the house you want to live in. To my people, I promise no surprises. Even if it's not a fit, I make it clear—and, due to our asynchronous culture, in writing—exactly why I have concerns that it may not be a fit, corresponding each issue with our values. I do this at least twice over several weeks, making sure they have the clarity and time to make the changes I need them to make.

相信我，我知道解雇员工有多么困难。但是如果您想建造自己想要的房子，这是必不可少的技能。向我的员工们承诺没有任何惊喜。即使不合适，我也会清楚地说明原因，并因为我们的异步文化而以书面形式进行说明，明确每个问题与我们的价值观相对应。我会在数周内至少进行两次，并确保他们有清晰度和时间来进行所需的更改。

But ultimately it's their choice, and often the best thing you can do is to have an honest conversation, tell them it's not working out, and wind things down. Almost every time, they'll be grateful you brought it up instead of them. And if you've been hiring well, they'll find a new job in no time at all. And you should help them with that, providing introductions and a positive reference—you did hire them, after all. They weren't bad employees, they just weren't a fit for you.

但是最终选择在他们手中，而且通常最好的做法就是坦诚地交谈，告诉他们目前的情况不合适，并逐步结束工作关系。几乎每一次，他们都会感激你主动提出，而不是等待他们。如果你之前招聘时做得好，他们很快就能找到新的工作。你应该帮助他们，给他们介绍和提供积极的推荐信，毕竟你曾经雇用过他们。他们并不是不好的员工，只是不适合你的公司。

Your company is a business, not a cult. Embrace change, don't abhor it.

你公司是一个企业，不是一个邪教。拥抱变革，不要厌恶它。

Speaking of change. . . . At this point you'll have a product that customers are happy paying for and a company that people are happy to work for. What comes next?

说到变化.....此时，您将拥有一个让客户愉快支付的产品和一个让人们愿意为之工作的公司。接下来会发生什么？

If you're having fun, you can keep doing what you're doing. Or you can do something completely new. That's what the next chapter is about. We'll talk about broadening and deepening your impact, as well as how to improve your own quality of life. On some level, that's what this whole book has been about: identifying and helping those you love—including yourself—in a way that aligns your own life with the lives of others. Let's go.

如果你很开心，可以继续做你正在做的事情。或者你可以尝试做一些全新的事情。这就是下一章要讨论的内容。我们将谈论如何扩展和深

化你的影响，以及如何提高自己的生活质量。在某种程度上，这本书一直在讨论这个问题：如何在与他人生活相关的情况下，为你所爱的人——包括你自己——提供帮助。让我们开始吧。

KEY TAKEAWAYS

主要收获

- o You've already built one product for customers, now you're building another: The product is your company, and your customers are your employees.
你已经为顾客打造了一个产品，现在你正在打造另一个：这个产品是你的公司，你的顾客是你的员工。
- o Building a company full of humans is more rewarding than building software, but it is also much harder.
建立一个充满人情味的公司比建造软件更有意义，但也更加困难。
- o Articulate your values early and often, because you will need them to avoid veering off course as you grow. (It'll happen anyway.)
在成长过程中，因为你需要它们来避免偏离正确方向，早期和经常表达你的价值观（它们还是会发生的）。
- o Fit is two-way: If it's not working out for you, it's probably not working out for them. Have the hard conversations early, as they'll only get harder the longer you wait.
合适是双向的：如果它对你不起作用，那很可能对他们也不起作用。尽早进行艰难的对话，因为等待的时间越长，对话会变得越困难。

Learn More

- o Read *Reinventing Organizations*, a book by Frédéric Laloux, for a mind-bending look into how the structures of companies and other organizations have changed over time.
阅读弗雷德里克·拉鲁的《重塑组织》一书，可以颠覆您对公司和其他组织结构变革的看法。
- o Follow Janessa White, co-CEO and cofounder of Simply Eloped, on Twitter (@janessanwhite) for insights from building her business.
关注Simply Eloped的联合首席执行官兼联合创始人Janessa White的Twitter账号(@janessanwhite)，了解她在创业过程中的见解。
- o Read *The Peter Principle*, a book by Laurence J. Peter and Raymond

Hull.

阅读劳伦斯·彼得和雷蒙德·赫尔的书《彼得原理》。



8

**where do we go
from here?**

We are born to wander through a chaos field. And yet we do not become hopelessly lost, because each walker who comes before us leaves behind a trace for us to follow.

我们生来漫游于混沌的领域。但我们并不会迷失不归，因为每一个走在我们前面的行者都会留下一些足迹给我们追随。

— ROBERT MOOR

- 罗伯特·摩尔

This chapter comes last, but I rank it first in significance.

这一章是最后一个，但在重要性方面我把它排在第一位。

Even after reading this book, you may be asking yourself if now is the best time to start a company. There is a lot broken with the world, and the future is uncertain. If you think starting a business looks risky, you're right: It is and always will be. But I believe it's one of the best ways to make change.

即使阅读了这本书，你可能会问自己现在是不是创办公司的最佳时机。这个世界存在很多问题，未来也不确定。如果你认为创业看起来很冒险，你是正确的：确实很冒险，而且一直都是这样。但我相信这是实现变革的最佳途径之一。

Never mind if your business isn't "changing the world" from day one, or doesn't employ hundreds of people. As long as you're making the world better in an honest, scalable way by selling a product worth paying for to a community that wants it, starting a company is worth it.

如果你的企业一开始没有“改变世界”，或者雇佣的员工不多，也不要紧。只要你通过销售一种有价值的产品给一个需要它的社区，以诚实、可扩展的方式让世界变得更美好，创办一家公司就是值得的。

I don't think healing the world only happens if we are able to make "a dent in the universe," as Steve Jobs is famously misquoted; it also comes about by repeatedly making small choices that compound and that improve our communities. You can't change everything, but you can and should change a few things, to start.

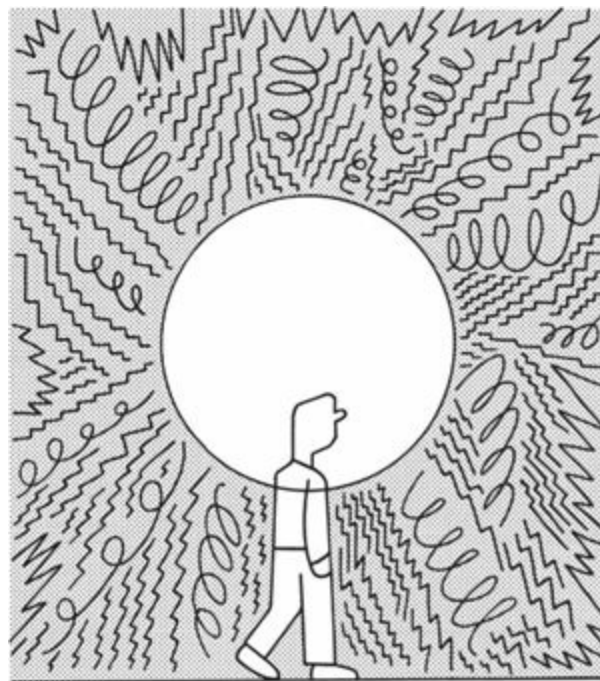
我认为治愈世界并不仅仅在于我们是否能像史蒂夫·乔布斯被广为引用的那样“在宇宙中留下一道印记”，它还通过一遍又一遍做些微小的选择来改善我们的社区。你不能改变一切，但你能够并且应该开始去改变一些事情。

The reward, once you're profitable and growing sustainably because your customers are spreading the word, is that you get to decide what your company's next positive impact will be. I know that once Gumroad got to that point, it was easier for me to focus on a more meaningful life. But it still wasn't easy. I had to wrestle with a new definition of success, one that would be defined by a greater sense of purpose and mission.

一旦您的公司变得盈利且可持续增长，因为您的客户正在口口相传，您将获得奖励，可以决定您的公司下一个积极影响是什么。我知道一旦Gumroad达到那个点，对我来说更容易专注于更有意义的生活。但这仍然不容易。我必须与成功的新定义搏斗，这是由更大的目的感和任务定义的。

“A healthy man wants a thousand things, a sick man only wants one,” Confucius is purported to have said. Rephrased in the context of this book, a minimalist entrepreneur without a successful, sustainable business only wants one thing (that!), while one who has achieved it has the world as their oyster. And Søren Kierkegaard wrote in 1844 that anxiety is the “dizziness of freedom.” It’s what happens when you stare at the infinity of your own choices.

孔子曾说：“健康的人有千般愿望，病人只有一个愿望。”在这本书的语境下，一位没有成功、可持续的业务的极简主义企业家只想要一件事（就是这个！），而拥有成功业务的人则把世界看作自己的蚝。而苏伦·基尔凯郭尔德在1844年写道，焦虑是“自由的晕眩”。当你凝视自己选择的无限可能时，就会发生这种情况。



This is all part of what you get—for taking the risk, doing the hard work,

and putting in the time to start and to scale your business—whether you like it or not. Now that you’ve arrived at your initial destination, *where do you go next?* That’s what we’ll spend this last chapter trying to answer.

这些都是你为冒险、努力工作和投入时间来开创和扩大你的业务而付出的代价，无论你是否喜欢。现在，你已经到达了最初的目的地，接下来你要去哪里？这就是我们将在最后一章试图回答的问题。

You’ve Made Money, Now Make Time

The first thing I did when Gumroad became profitable was to reclaim a significant part of my time.

当Gumroad变得盈利时，我做的第一件事就是收回了我很大一部分时间。



I had lived the founder life for four years, working whenever I wasn’t sleeping, neglecting relationships with friends and family, and generally putting work ahead of all else. With all that behind me, I was free to chart a different course. I found that when I wasn’t trying to placate investors or make the company grow faster than it was meant to grow, finally, I had time. While I was no longer on track to become a dollar billionaire, I realized I was

a “time billionaire,” someone Graham Duncan defines as having at least a billion seconds left in their life— or at least thirty-one years.

我曾经过着创始人的生活四年，除了睡觉时，我一直在工作，忽视了与朋友和家人的关系，通常把工作放在前面。现在这一切都已经过去，我可以自由地选择不同的道路。我发现，当我不再试图取悦投资者或使公司增长得比它应该增长得更快时，终于我有了时间。虽然我已经不再成为亿万富翁的轨道上，但我意识到我是一个“时间亿万富翁”，具有至少十亿秒的寿命——或至少三十一年。

I didn’t have a billion bucks, but I did have the luxury (or agony, depending on how you see it) of obligation-free days for the first time in a long time. I rented a modest apartment in Provo, gave up coffee and beer, and started meeting people who shared my creative interests. After years during which work was the crux of my identity, I wanted the rest of my life to be about anything else.

我没有十亿美元，但我有豪华的（或者痛苦的，取决于您的看法）长时间无责任的日子。我在普罗沃租了一间简朴的公寓，放弃了咖啡和啤酒，并开始结识与我有创意兴趣的人。经过多年工作成为我的身份核心后，我希望我的余生可以与其他任何事情有关。

First off: using my time to create more time. I accomplished that by further automating, outsourcing, or outright ignoring everything related to Gumroad I didn’t enjoy doing (see chapters 3 and 6). That way, I had as much time to do whatever I wanted, whenever I wanted to do it. Is this possible for everyone and every business? I’m not certain. But I do think that you’d be surprised at all the stuff you don’t need to do if you extricate yourself from situations and obligations your former self would have considered essential.

首先：利用我的时间来创造更多时间。我通过进一步自动化、外包或彻底忽略与Gumroad相关的所有我不喜欢做的事情（见第3和第6章），实现了这一目标。这样，我就有了更多的时间来做我想做的事情，无论何时都可以做到。这对每个人和每个企业都可能实现吗？我不确定。但我认为如果你使自己从以前的你认为是必要的情况和义务中解脱出来，你会惊讶地发现所有你不需要做的事情。

Then I went back to the beginning of my journey: I started creating again.

First, I wrote fantasy in Provo as part of a creative writing workshop taught by Brandon Sanderson, one of my favorite authors. Afterward, I stuck around Utah and learned to paint. It probably isn't a surprise, given that I run a company that employs and serves creators, but I like creating stuff.

然后我重新开始了我的旅程：我开始了创作。首先，我在普罗沃写奇幻小说，这是布兰顿·桑德森教授的创意写作工作坊的一部分，他是最喜欢的作者之一。之后，我留在犹他州学习绘画。考虑到我经营着一家雇用和服务于创作者的公司，这可能并不令人惊讶，但我喜欢创造东西。

Creating ex nihilo is satisfying and fun, especially when it doesn't need to pay the bills, and running a minimalist business allowed me to progress at a rapid pace. At some points, I spent upwards of twenty hours a week writing and painting. (And I haven't stopped!)

创造从无到有的东西很满足和有趣，特别是当它不需要支付账单时，经营一个极简主义的企业使我能够以快速的步伐前进。有时候，我每周要花费至少二十个小时来写作和绘画。(而我一直都没有停止！)

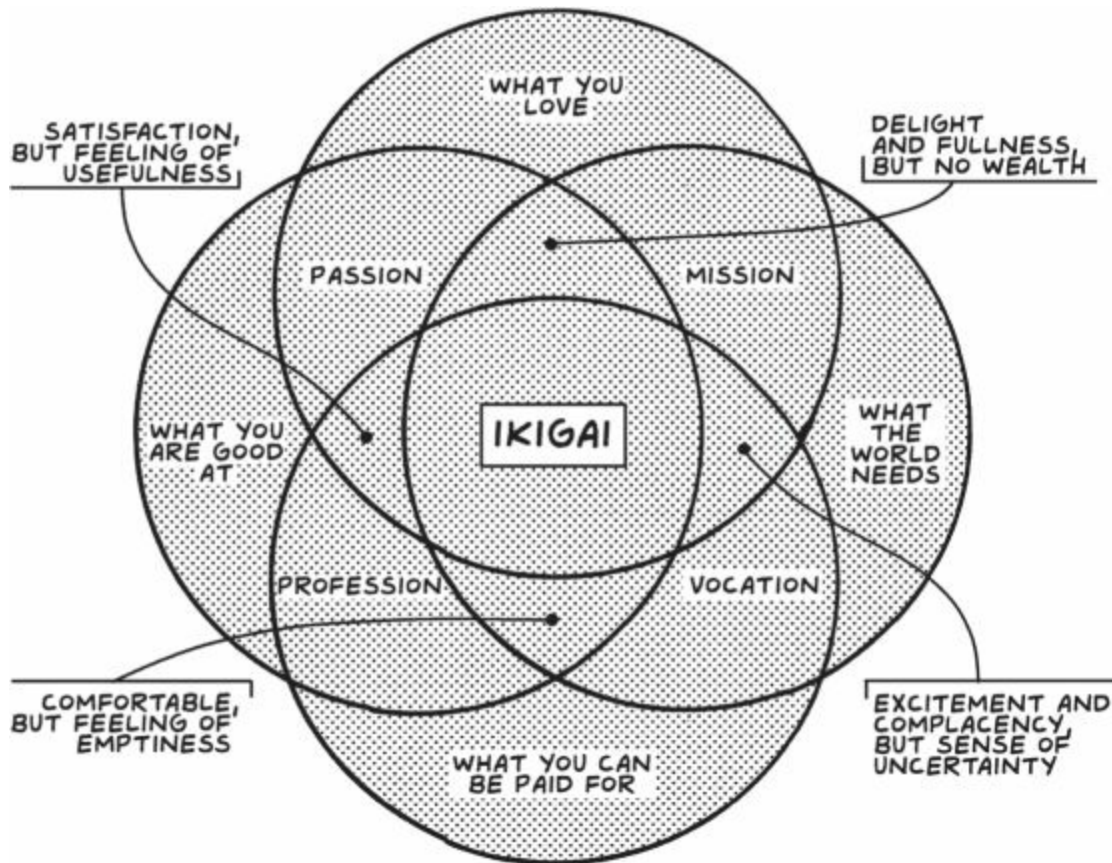
But for me, making stuff doesn't complete me, just like chasing unicorns didn't. I still cared about having a large impact on the world, and I still had a business to help me do it. I didn't need Gumroad to be a billion-dollar company to be free to pursue my goals with maximal optionality and minimal baggage. And I promise that you don't need your business to be that big, either, to accomplish all you hope to accomplish.

但是对于我来说，创造东西并不能让我感觉到满足，就像追逐独角兽一样。我仍然关心对世界产生重大影响，我仍然有一家公司可以帮助我实现这个目标。我并不需要Gumroad成为一个价值数十亿美元的公司，就可以自由地追求我的目标，最大限度地保持选项的多样性和最小限度的负累。我保证，即使你的公司规模没有那么大，也能实现你所希望实现的一切。

I believe our goal should be to bring together our passions, our missions, our professions, and our vocations. This is the Japanese concept of *ikigai*, which aligns what you love, with what the world needs, with what you can be paid for, and with what you are good at:

我相信我们的目标应该是将我们的热情、使命、职业和职业融合在

一起。这就是日本的ikigai概念，它将你热爱的事物、世界需要的事物、可以获得报酬的事物和你擅长的事物联系在一起。



When you are in *ikigai*, you feel at peace, and you can work to improve the world at the same time. You can live in the present while working toward a better future.

当你在生命最喜爱的事情中，你感到平静，同时你也可以为改善世界而努力。你可以活在当下，同时又为更美好的未来而努力。

I believe strongly that the arc of humanity is in its infancy, and one of the major ways we'll continue to make progress is via mindful business creation. One key reason I've used the word "minimalist" to describe entrepreneurship in this book is because I believe your business does not need to be the answer to every question. Becoming a minimalist entrepreneur may result in a great outcome for you while also creating opportunities for your team and your community, but it is unlikely to solve every problem you encounter, either for yourself or for the world.

我坚信人类的历程还处于萌芽期，而继续取得进步的主要途径之一就是**通过谨慎创业**。我在本书中使用“极简主义”来描述企业精神的一个重要原因是，我认为你的企业不需要解答每一个问题。成为一位极简主义的创业者，可能会对你产生极好的成果，同时也为你的团队和社区创造机会，但在解决自己或解决世界上的每一个问题方面，它不太可能是一个通用答案。

The goal here is to *free* yourself, to make the business require as little of you as you wish it to, so that you can engage with the world in the way you think best, whatever that looks like. For most, that means *freeing* others too. You can't free everyone, or build every business, but you can at least teach a few people how.

这里的目标是要让自己解脱，让业务需要尽可能少地依靠你，这样你就可以以你认为最好的方式与世界接触。对大多数人来说，这意味着也要让他人解脱。你不可能解放所有人，或者建立每一个业务，但你至少可以教一些人如何做到。

Create More Creators, CEOs, and Minimalist Entrepreneurs

After two years in Provo, I had a new perspective on Gumroad and my mission. When I reimagined the future, I realized I had the chance not only to make a life for myself but also to expand opportunities for others to make a life for themselves.

在普罗沃待了两年后，我对Gumroad和我的任务有了新的看法。当我重新构想未来时，我意识到我不仅有为自己创造生活，也有机会为他人拓展创造生活的机会。

Building Gumroad exposed me to a whole new range of creators: business owners. Not every act of creation requires a business, but many creators who reach scale start a business to manage their work. One of the things I'm proudest of is that I've made the business side of creation easier for thousands of other people and created business owners around the world.

建立Gumroad让我接触到了一个全新的创作者范畴：企业业主。不是

每个创作行为都需要企业，但是许多已经扩展规模的创作者开始开创企业去管理他们的作品。我最引以为傲的事情之一是我为成千上万的其他人简化了创作的商业方面，并且在全世界范围内培养了企业家。

In 2020, I stumbled upon the next step in my journey to make entrepreneurship accessible to all. Up until then, I had experimented in investing in early-stage tech startups by becoming a limited partner in Arlan Hamilton's Backstage Capital and making several small angel investments in startups such as Lambda School, Figma, and Notion. But in the wake of the George Floyd protests in 2020, I knew I could do more, and I tweeted about wanting to invest in Black founders:

2020年，我在追求让创业变得更加容易的征途中迈出了下一步。在那之前，我曾尝试通过成为Arlan Hamilton的Backstage Capital的有限合伙人并在Lambda School, Figma和Notion等初创企业进行了几笔小天使投资来投资早期科技初创公司。但在2020年乔治·弗洛伊德抗议浪潮的掀起之后，我知道我可以做得更多，于是我发推表示希望投资黑人创业者。



Occasionally I angel invest in tech startups, including @LambdaSchool, @figmadesign, @HelloSign. I'm also an LP in @Backstage_Cap.

My next investment will be in a Black founder. If you are one, please send me an email this week about what you're working on: sahil@hey.com

9:00 AM · Jun 1, 2020 · Twitter Web App

237 Retweets 30 Quote Tweets 1,306 Likes

That tweet led to two hundred emails from Black founders and— most important— four new investments in startups founded by Black

entrepreneurs. Since then, there have been several more through in-network referrals.

那条推文引发了200封来自黑人创业者的电子邮件，并且最重要的是对由黑人企业家创立的新创企业进行了4次新的投资。此后，通过内部推荐网络，还有几次投资。

But many of these startups were looking to raise more capital, and I didn't have very much. So I wrote a "memo" and emailed other investors in my network. One responded, "You should start a fund," and offered to anchor it to help get it off the ground. I doubled down on my goal of creating more CEOs and minimalist entrepreneurs and launched my own fund last year.

但是许多初创企业都想筹集更多的资金，而我手头并不富裕。因此，我写了一份“备忘录”并通过电子邮件联系了我网络中的其他投资者。其中一个回复说：“你应该成立一个基金”，并提议出资帮助启动。我加倍努力，致力于创建更多的首席执行官和极简主义企业家，并在去年创立了自己的基金。

Even though I never expected to be a venture capitalist myself, I am now able to support the kind of founders I meet primarily through my audience and through building Gumroad openly and transparently. Today I get to invest approximately \$10 million a year in about fifty companies.

虽然我从未想过自己会成为一名风险投资家，但现在我能够通过我的受众和公开透明的Gumroad建设来支持那些我遇到的创始人。今天，我每年可以在大约50家公司投资约1000万美元。

I still turn many founders away, but that's not necessarily because I don't believe in what they're doing. It's because most businesses would be better off without venture capital. Ever since I published "Reflecting on My Failure to Build a Billion-Dollar Company" in February 2019, I've met hundreds of minimalist entrepreneurs who have helped me widen my mental model for what a business really is.

我仍然拒绝很多创始人，但这并不一定是因为我不相信他们正在做的事情。这是因为大多数企业没有风险投资会更好。自从2019年2月发表了“反思我未能建立10亿美元公司的失败”以来，我已经遇到了数百位极简主义创业者，他们帮助我拓宽了对于企业真正含义的思维模式。

If you think becoming a minimalist entrepreneur was a good thing for you,

you can help other people see the way. Peter Askew regularly tweets out domain names that he thinks would make great businesses so that others can follow in his footsteps. Chris Cantino and Jaime Schmidt of Schmidt's Naturals started their own investment fund, Color, which supports and invests in underrepresented founders.

如果你认为成为极简主义创业者对你来说是一件好事，那么你可以帮助其他人找到自己的道路。Peter Askew经常在推特上发布他认为能成为很棒的企业的域名，以便其他人可以效仿他的脚步。Schmidt's Naturals的Chris Cantino和Jaime Schmidt创建了自己的投资基金Color，支持和投资代表性不足的创始人。

Being a creator and a minimalist entrepreneur is a path that should be available to a huge array of different kinds of people, and all different kinds of employees and customers should be able to find the exact right fit for themselves. I would argue that it should be available to all eight billion people on this planet. Alas, we're not there yet.

成为一个创作者和极简主义企业家是一条应该对不同背景的人们敞开的道路，所有不同类型的员工和客户都应该能够找到适合自己的最佳选择。我认为这应该让全球80亿人都能够实现，可惜我们还未达到那个阶段。

Though minimalist businesses cannot eliminate discrimination or repair every disparity in access to education, technology, and funding, they do offer a pathway for a wide variety of entrepreneurs to take control of their own destinies. Furthermore, I believe the path to a more equitable future is for more people to create a product or service and sell that, not only because it allows business owners to make a living from creating but also because by expanding the reach of entrepreneurship we can serve people whose problems have not yet been addressed by the free market.

尽管极简主义企业无法消除歧视或弥补每一种教育、技术和资金获取差异，但它们为各种创业者提供了一条道路，让他们掌握自己的命运。此外，我相信通往更加公平的未来之路在于更多人创造产品或服务并销售，不仅因为它允许业主通过创造谋生，还因为通过扩大企业家精神的范围，我们可以为那些尚未被自由市场解决问题的人服务。

Ultimately, it's up to everyone to decide how they want to run their life

and their business. Moving from San Francisco to Provo reminded me that people have their own visions of how they want to serve others. It's not one-size-fits-all, not even close, nor should it be. Different people have different problems and require different solutions.

最终，每个人都要决定他们想要如何经营生活和业务。从旧金山搬到普罗沃让我想起人们有自己的愿景，希望如何为他人服务。这不是一刀切的，甚至远远不是，也不应该是。不同的人有不同的问题，需要不同的解决方案。



Save the Planet

We've talked about the myth of "changing the world" being a distraction from the forest of great business and community-serving opportunities you're already in.

我们已经谈论过“改变世界”的神话，它是对你已经涉足的商业和为社区服务的机会有一个干扰。

But you can still pick battles to fight, especially things that are within your control, like offsetting your carbon footprint and committing to a carbon-neutral future. Large organizations, which fuel the systems and servers that many minimalist entrepreneurs use to power their businesses, are accelerating this process and making it more straightforward to commit to carbon neutrality. In 2019, Shopify committed at least \$5 million annually to the

Shopify Sustainability Fund, which will invest not only in carbon sequestration but also in renewable energy and more sustainable operations for both merchants and buyers. By 2030, Google has committed to running on carbon-free energy everywhere at all times.

但你仍然可以选择战斗，尤其是针对那些在你控制范围内的事情，比如抵消你的碳足迹，致力于实现碳中和的未来。许多极简主义创业者用来支持业务的系统和服务器由大型组织提供，这些组织正在加快这一进程，使碳中和更加简单。2019年，Shopify 至少每年承诺向 Shopify 可持续基金投入500万美元，该基金不仅将投资于碳固定，还将投资于可再生能源和更加可持续的操作，涵盖商家和买家两方面。到2030年，Google 承诺在全球范围内始终使用无碳能源。

But it's not just about relying on big business and its infrastructure to do the work. We can use our companies to make our own contributions to saving the planet no matter what size they are. Emily LaFave Olson, founder of Rainbow Road, a plant-based ice-cream company, is committed to using food as a tool to heal the planet. After she sold her first company, Foodzie, an online gourmet marketplace, and closed her second, Din, a meal kit delivery service, she too found herself asking, "What's next?"

但这并不仅仅是依靠大企业及其基础设施来完成工作。无论公司规模如何，我们都可以利用自己的公司为挽救地球做出贡献。Rainbow Road的创始人Emily LaFave Olson致力于利用食物作为治愈地球的工具。在出售她的第一家公司Foodzie（一家在线美食市场）并关闭了她的第二家公司Din（一家餐食配送服务）后，她也发现自己在思考“下一步是什么？”

Her personal mission was to get closer to the earth, and she and her family moved to Hawaii as she considered her next venture. One idea kept coming to mind: ice cream.

她的个人使命是更接近大地，她和家人搬到夏威夷考虑下一个冒险。一个想法一直在她脑海中浮现：冰淇淋。

She set out to build Rainbow Road into a company that makes delicious ice cream by way of a full-cycle, circular system that is good for the earth. "Pono is a word in Hawaiian that means harmonious," she says, "and I keep the company and myself in balance by always keeping our mission in mind as

I make decisions and tell our story.”

她致力于把Rainbow Road打造成一家通过全循环、循环系统为地球带来好处的美味冰淇淋公司。“Pono是夏威夷语中表示和谐的词语，”她说，“我一直铭记着我们的使命，努力保持公司和自己的平衡，以此作为决策和故事讲述的准则。”

Having raised venture capital for her two previous companies, she’s committed to bootstrapping for now in order to preserve full decision-making control and to focus on profitability and taking her time. “I’m creating longevity by building a foundation more slowly,” she says, “so I ask myself, ‘What is the next smallest step I can take?’” That has allowed Rainbow Road to grow in a way that feels sustainable for the company and for the world. “I can grow something really substantial with baby steps, so I’m not afraid of taking the longer path.”

由于之前两家公司都已经通过风投筹集了资金，因此她现在致力于自力更生，以便保持完全的决策控制并专注于盈利和慢慢发展。“我正在通过更慢的方式建立基础，从而创造长期性，”她说，“所以我问自己，‘我能采取哪些更小的下一步措施？’”这让彩虹路在一种感觉对公司和世界都可可持续的方式下成长。“我可以通过小步伐成长出真正重要的东西，所以我不害怕走更长的路。”

Do your research, figure out what really works, and start putting your mouth where your money is.

做好你的研究，找出真正有效的方法，开始付诸实践。

Let Go

I haven’t taken this path yet, but I’ve thought about it. One day I may want even *more* of my time back, or I may want to serve a totally different group of people in a totally different way. Just like I don’t expect anyone else to work at Gumroad forever, I don’t expect to either. Ultimately, I will let it go, either by choice or by force—and I certainly hope it’s the former.

我还没有走过这条路，但我已经想过了。也许有一天我会想要更多的时间，或者想以完全不同的方式为完全不同的人群服务。就像我不指望任何人永远在Gumroad上工作一样，我也不指望自己这样做。最终，我会

选择放手，无论是自愿还是被迫——我当然希望是前者。

You will ultimately have to make the same kind of decisions. You may walk away from your business completely. You may retire on a beach and feel like your work is done. You may decide to double down, raise money, and take a big swing with your next company. You may find a new CEO but stay involved in the running of the company as chairperson of the board, or start a nonprofit to tackle the next problem you find.

你最终将不得不做出相同类型的决策。你可以完全退出你的企业。你可以在海滩上退休，感觉自己的工作已经完成。你可以决定加倍努力，筹集资金，并与你的下一个公司打一场大的角逐。你可以找到一位新的CEO，但仍参与公司的经营，担任董事会主席，或者成立一个非营利组织来解决你发现的下一个问题。

But where *specifically* do you go from here?

你从这里具体往哪里走呢？

The answer is that I don't know. This question never goes away, and there will never be one right answer for every founder. This is why you should always try to build the right business for yourself *selfishly* while at the same time also serving a community of others *selflessly*. And you should prioritize your happiness while you do it!

答案是我不知道。这个问题永远不会消失，对于每个创始人都没有一个正确答案。这就是为什么你应该自私地尝试建立适合自己的正确业务，同时无私地为他人社区服务。而且你应该在实现这个目标的过程中优先考虑自己的幸福！

I know it's a lot to ask, but it's time to ask yourself *why*.

我知道这很难要求，但现在是时候问问自己为什么了。

You picked a community. *Why* that one? You shipped a manual valuable process and then iterated it into a minimum viable product. *Why* did you choose to solve those problems in the ways that you did?

你选择了一个社区。为什么选择那个社区？你发布了一个有价值的手动流程，并将其迭代成了一个最小可行产品。你为什么选择这样的方式来解决这些问题？

If memory serves, you then sold that product to a hundred customers, who happily paid for it. Who did you reach out to first, and *why* them?

如果我记得没错的话，您随后将该产品销售给了一百名愉快付款的客户。您首先是联系谁，为什么是他们？

You marketed the business and grew yourself and your team alongside it. *Why, why, why?*

你推广了业务，并与团队一起成长。为什么？为什么？为什么？

And finally: *Why* do I want to move on from here? *Why* do I need to go anywhere at all?

最后，为什么我想离开这里？为什么我需要去任何地方？

What helped me, and what will help you as you tackle these questions, is to spend your newfound time reflecting on your past and observing your present to figure out who you are and what you really want. Then you can figure out how to get what you want so you can stop asking these questions at all.

帮助了我，也会帮助你解决这些问题的是花时间反思过去、观察现在，找出自己是谁、想要什么。然后你可以想办法得到想要的东西，这样你就可以不再问这些问题了。

Your “purpose” may be to create more creators, or to help more people start businesses, or to retire on a beach and spend all your time surfing. I won't pretend to know.

你的“目的”可能是创建更多的创作者，帮助更多的人创业，或者退休在海滩上，花全部时间冲浪。我不会假装知道。

My goal in this book was to give you the tools that would enable you to build a business that ultimately gives you the choice and freedom to decide for yourself. It's up to you now. *What's next?*

我在这本书中的目标是提供给您一些工具，让您能够建立一家最终能让您自由选择的企业。现在轮到您了，接下来要做什么呢？

Whatever you do, send me a message and let me know. I'm on the internet:

无论你做什么，请给我发送一条消息，并让我知道。我在网上：

sahil@hey.com

"sahil@hey.com" 的简体中文翻译是 "sahil@hey.com"。

one more thing

Let's start at the beginning. What's the plan? You have a business idea, hopefully. And because you picked the right community to serve, and became a pillar within it, you have a good plan of attack to get started on building your MVP (manual valuable process first, then a minimal viable product). You're going to get to a hundred customers, and only *then* worry about launching!

让我们从头开始。有什么计划？你有一个商业点子，希望如此。因为你选择了正确的社区来服务并成为其中的支柱，你已经有了一个好的攻击计划，开始建立你的MVP（首先是有价值的手动流程，然后是最小可行产品）。你将获得一百个客户，然后才会担心发布！

Soon after—or maybe you're already there—you will be profitable and in control of your destiny. You'll learn how to stay there as you get a good grip on the legal, operational, and financial components of running your business.

很快——或者你已经到达那里——你会盈利并掌控自己的命运。你将学习如何在掌握经营业务的法律、运营和财务组成部分的同时保持盈利状态。

You'll craft a culture that attracts the kind of people you love working with and for. It won't be easy, but your business will grow, and you will start to solve new problems over time.

你将创建一个文化，吸引那些你喜欢与之合作和工作的人。这并不容易，但你的业务将会增长，随着时间的推移你会开始解决新的问题。

Most important, your identity will not be wrapped up in your business. You won't need to do anything you don't want to, at least not for more than a couple of hours a week. Take that, Tim!

最重要的是，你的身份不会被绑定在你的生意上。你不需要做任何你不想做的事情，至少不需要超过一周几个小时。那就对了，Tim！

Of course, even then the journey isn't over. It never is. It won't be easy or quick or straightforward. It will take a lot of time, and perhaps a few attempts, but that's okay, because you have a whole life ahead of you to figure things out. And it's not about avoiding failure but getting to success, eventually. The longer it takes to win, the more prepared you'll be, because you will get better every year that it takes.

当然，即使到那时旅程也并没有结束。它永远不会。它不会轻松、快捷或直接。它需要很长时间，也许需要多次尝试，但没关系，因为你有整个人生时间去搞明白。这不是避免失败，而是最终实现成功。赢得胜利需要的时间越长，你就会变得越有准备，因为你每年都会变得更好。

In this book, we've mostly spoken about successful businesses. But every successful entrepreneur has many failed attempts. In the years before Gumroad's creation, I built and launched several dozen things. Almost all of them failed. Gumroad worked, though. And you only need to be right once.

在这本书中，我们主要讲述了成功的企业。但是每个成功的创业者都经历了许多失败的尝试。在创建Gumroad之前的几年里，我建立和推出了几十个项目。几乎所有的项目都失败了，但Gumroad成功了。你只需要成功一次。

But humanity needs millions if we hope to get out of this mess. (We'll always be in a mess.) Regardless, I believe the future of entrepreneurship *is* the future of humanity, and so the more companies that get started the better. And the best way to get more companies started is to make it easy, accessible, and attainable.

但是如果我们希望摆脱困境，人类需要百万倍的力量。（我们永远都会陷入困境。）无论如何，我相信创业的未来就是人类的未来，因此，越多的公司成立越好。而让更多公司成立的最好方式是使其变得容易、可接受和可达成。

I'm not trying to convince you. Rather, I think you'll understand it deeply when you're running your own business. Your work is necessary. The business you will start is necessary. These kinds of businesses have been necessary for hundreds of years and will be for thousands of years more. There's nothing new about them.

我不是在试图说服你。相反，当你自己经营业务时，我认为你会深刻理解它。你的工作是必要的。你将要创办的企业是必要的。这些类型的企业已经存在了数百年，将来也将存在数千年。这些并不是什么新鲜事物。

If you're struggling to even come up with a problem to solve, be patient. Look around and pay attention. Humanity is just getting started, and it's

unlikely that *anything* we do today will resemble how we do it in the future.

如果你在努力想出要解决的问题，耐心点。好好看看周围，注意观察。人类还处于刚刚起步的阶段，今天我们所做的事情很可能与未来大相径庭。

One day, your life and work will align. You'll have a purpose that unifies everything you do. You'll get paid to do what you love. Your business will grow as long as you keep being *you*.

有一天，你的生活和工作将会统一。你会有一个目的，这个目的将会连接你所做的一切。你会因为你喜欢的东西而得到报酬。只要你坚持做自己，你的业务将会蓬勃发展。

All of these things will happen. But only if you do the most important thing and . . .

所有这些事情都会发生。但仅当你做最重要的事情时才会发生。

Start.

开始。

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Family first: my mom, Shamina Lavingia, and my dad, Ayaz Lavingia, and my brother, Samir Lavingia, for creating and shaping me. And my wife, Kaede Takeshige, for bearing with and encouraging me all the while.

家庭至上：我的妈妈Shamina Lavingia，爸爸Ayaz Lavingia和哥哥Samir Lavingia，塑造了我成为现在的我。还有我的妻子Kaede Takeshige，在整个过程中一直支持鼓励我。

Like all the businesses mentioned in this book, *The Minimalist Entrepreneur* is the product of a community.

像本书中提到的所有企业一样，极简主义企业家也是社区的产物。

The idea originally came from Merry Sun, my editor at Penguin Random House. She read my viral Medium post and suggested that we talk if I was at all interested in “expanding [the] Medium post into a nonfiction book.” That was in February 2019.

这个想法最初来自于企鹅随机之屋的编辑Merry Sun。她读了我的病毒式Medium帖子，并建议我们谈一谈，如果我有兴趣“将[这篇]Medium帖子扩展为一本非小说书籍”。那是在2019年2月。

Merry introduced me to Lisa DiMona, who became my literary agent at Writer’s House. Together, they encouraged me to move beyond my initial favorite title, *Leaving Startupland*, and helped me zero in on the topic of this book—businesses that focus on “creating value” in a sustainable way. They also made me realize I wasn’t going to be able to do it myself.

梅丽介绍了莉莎·迪莫纳给我认识，她成为了我在作家之家的文学代理。他们一起鼓励我超越我的最初最喜欢的标题《离开创业之地》，并帮助我专注于这本书的主题——以可持续的方式专注于“创造价值”的企业。他们还让我意识到我自己无法完成这件事。

David Moldawer helped me take my initial outline and transform it into something that had real structure. He also came up with a much better title:

Stop Chasing Unicorns. I felt really great about the whole thing and signed a book deal with Penguin. That was in December 2019.

David Moldauer帮助我将我最初的大纲转化为具有真正结构的东西。他还想出了一个更好的书名：停止追逐独角兽。我为整件事感到非常棒，并与企鹅签订了一份图书合同。那是在2019年12月。

I started writing in earnest in January 2020. Then COVID happened. Gumroad started to grow like a weed, and I—along with the rest of the world—had an identity crisis. On the one hand, Gumroad was suddenly on its way (again) to becoming a “unicorn,” but on the other, I was not interested in getting back on the VC hamster wheel. I wanted to craft a third way for myself, and in some ways already had; the way I ran Gumroad—fully remote and with no meetings since 2016—meant I was more prepared for the pandemic than many of my peers.

我从2020年1月开始认真地写作。然后COVID发生了。Gumroad像野草一样开始生长，我 - 与世界其他人一样 - 经历了身份危机。一方面，Gumroad突然又要成为“独角兽”，但另一方面，我不想重新加入风投的循环之中。我想为自己打造出第三条路线，在某些方面我已经做到了；我经营Gumroad的方式-全员远程办公并自2016年开始停止开会-意味着我比许多同行更为应对Pandemic做好了准备。

I was also a lot busier. I completed the first draft of the book by summer 2020, but it wasn't good enough. It was too negative (*Stop Chasing Unicorns* doesn't tell you what you *should* do), and it wasn't backed up with enough anecdotes and real data. And frankly, representation was a problem.

我也非常忙。我在2020年夏天完成了第一稿，但它还不够好。它太消极了（《停止追逐独角兽》没有告诉你应该做什么），并且没有足够的轶事和真实数据支持。而且，说实话，代表性也是一个问题。

Lisa suggested I work with Julie Mosow to help me take the book “over the finish line.” Together, Julie and I finished the second draft of the book in December 2020. We changed the name to *The Minimalist Startup*, and then *The Minimalist Entrepreneur*. Almost two years into writing the book, I finally understood what this book was meant to be about all along. It's about a new kind of human and a new kind of lifestyle that software has enabled through “permissionless leverage.” The year 2020 gave the world a peek into

the future, and I happened to already be living in it. Another example why you should start, then learn.

莉莎建议我和朱莉·莫索一起工作，帮助我把书写到“终点”。2020年12月，我们共同完成了第二稿。我们将书名改为《极简创业》，然后是《极简企业家》。在写了将近两年的书之后，我终于明白了一直以来这本书的真正意义。它讲述了一种新型的人类和一种新型的生活方式，这些都得益于“无许可杠杆”的软件。2020年为世界展示了未来的一瞥，而我已经适应了这种未来的生活。这也是为什么你应该先行动再学习的另一个例子。

Together, Merry, Lisa, David, Julie, and I are responsible for most of the words in the book. But the writing process didn't end there! In February 2020, I taught a cohort-based course to test the ideas in the book and make sure they resonated. Each week, the 136 “students” read and gave feedback chapter by chapter. At the end of the month, we had hundreds of comments—about what was boring, confusing, or implausible—to address.

我们一起——Merry、Lisa、David、Julie 和我——对这本书中的大部分文字负责。但写作过程并没有就此结束！2020年2月，我教了一门基于同行的课程，以测试书中的理念，并确保它们产生共鸣。每周，136名“学生”逐章阅读并给出反馈。一个月结束时，我们收集了成百上千条关于什么是无聊、令人困惑或不可信的评论，这些都需要处理。

Those students— and coaches— include: Bhaumik, Timothy, Jonah, Shane, Somvir, Shahena, Jens, Nasir, Robin, Akash, Jamil, Dario, Covington, Adam, Kirill, Ganesh, James, Carlos, Karl, Asim, Surya, Binh, Josh, Rajat, Aneesh, Ditri, Karan, Yousef, Yousef-Husaini, Rahul, Dhruva, Hera, Brian, Addy, Padi, Michael, Matthew, Andrew, Preetham, Matthew, Marty, Vaughan, Shaik, Manuel, Ari, Prab, Isaac, Jon, Nick, Mukesh, Julian, Chandan, Gagan, Rachel, Sergio, Sahil, Shawn, Monte, Aman, Theola, Amin, Pradeep, Prolok, Sam, Greg, Woody, Evan, Sean, Ashray, Eli, Manan, Ozgur, Scott, Shirish, Gerben, Justin, Ciprian, Ahmed, Ashwin, Josh, Obaid, Carl, Nara, Sridhar, Andrew, Alex, Clint, Nick, Mike, Marvin, Bugi, Amar, Wes, Lia, Crystal, Michael, Mert, Tribe, Workast, Yasaman, Manish, David, Raphael, Mateo, Nate, Tobin, Mike, Hunter, Michael, Sergey, Aravind, Akhil, Yazane, Sergio, John, Riddhi, Yuhan, Simon, Daniel, Luca, Carlos,

Razvan, Lorenzo, Eduardo, Murat, Devan, Ben, Marcos, Assim, Francis, Vishal, Thomas, Raul, Vladimir, Prashanth, Ralph, Pramod, Inga, Soumya, Louise, Zach, Nate, Soleil, Clark, Sagar, Charles, Albert, Connor, Gonzalo, Marissa, Clement, Nate, Minjun, Vince, Monish, Amaan, Joshua, Justin, Jenny, and Audrey.

这些学生和教练包括: Bhaumik, Timothy, Jonah, Shane, Somvir, Shahena, Jens, Nasir, Robin, Akash, Jamil, Dario, Covington, Adam, Kirill, Ganesh, James, Carlos, Karl, Asim, Surya, Binh, Josh, Rajat, Aneesh, Ditri, Karan, Yousef, Yousef-Husaini, Rahul, Dhruba, Hera, Brian, Addy, Padi, Michael, Matthew, Andrew, Preetham, Matthew, Marty, Vaughan, Shaik, Manuel, Ari, Prab, Isaac, Jon, Nick, Mukesh, Julian, Chandan, Gagan, Rachel, Sergio, Sahil, Shawn, Monte, Aman, Theola, Amin, Pradeep, Prolok, Sam, Greg, Woody, Evan, Sean, Ashray, Eli, Manan, Ozgur, Scott, Shirish, Gerben, Justin, Ciprian, Ahmed, Ashwin, Josh, Obaid, Carl, Nara, Sridhar, Andrew, Alex, Clint, Nick, Mike, Marvin, Bugi, Amar, Wes, Lia, Crystal, Michael, Mert, Tribe, Workast, Yasaman, Manish, David, Raphael, Mateo, Nate, Tobin, Mike, Hunter, Michael, Sergey, Aravind, Akhil, Yazane, Sergio, John, Riddhi, Yuhan, Simon, Daniel, Luca, Carlos, Razvan, Lorenzo, Eduardo, Murat, Devan, Ben, Marcos, Assim, Francis, Vishal, Thomas, Raul, Vladimir, Prashanth, Ralph, Pramod, Inga, Soumya, Louise, Zach, Nate, Soleil, Clark, Sagar, Charles, Albert, Connor, Gonzalo, Marissa, Clement, Nate, Minjun, Vince, Monish, Amaan, Joshua, Justin, 珍妮, 和奥黛丽。

And address we did. So if you liked the book, it's due to a *community* of just about 150 people. And if you didn't like the book . . . Well, it was all me!

我们已经搬弄好了地址。因此, 如果你喜欢这本书, 那是由近150人的社区共同努力的结果。如果你不喜欢这本书...那么, 那就全是我的错!

Dillon Blue and Amy Stellhorn from Big Monocle designed the cover with help from Brian Lemus and Jen Heuer from Penguin Random House. The illustrations are by Brian Box Brown.

Dillon Blue和Amy Stellhorn来自Big Monocle，与Penguin Random House的Brian Lemus和Jen Heuer一起设计了封面。插图是由Brian Box Brown完成的。

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And thank *you* for reading!

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