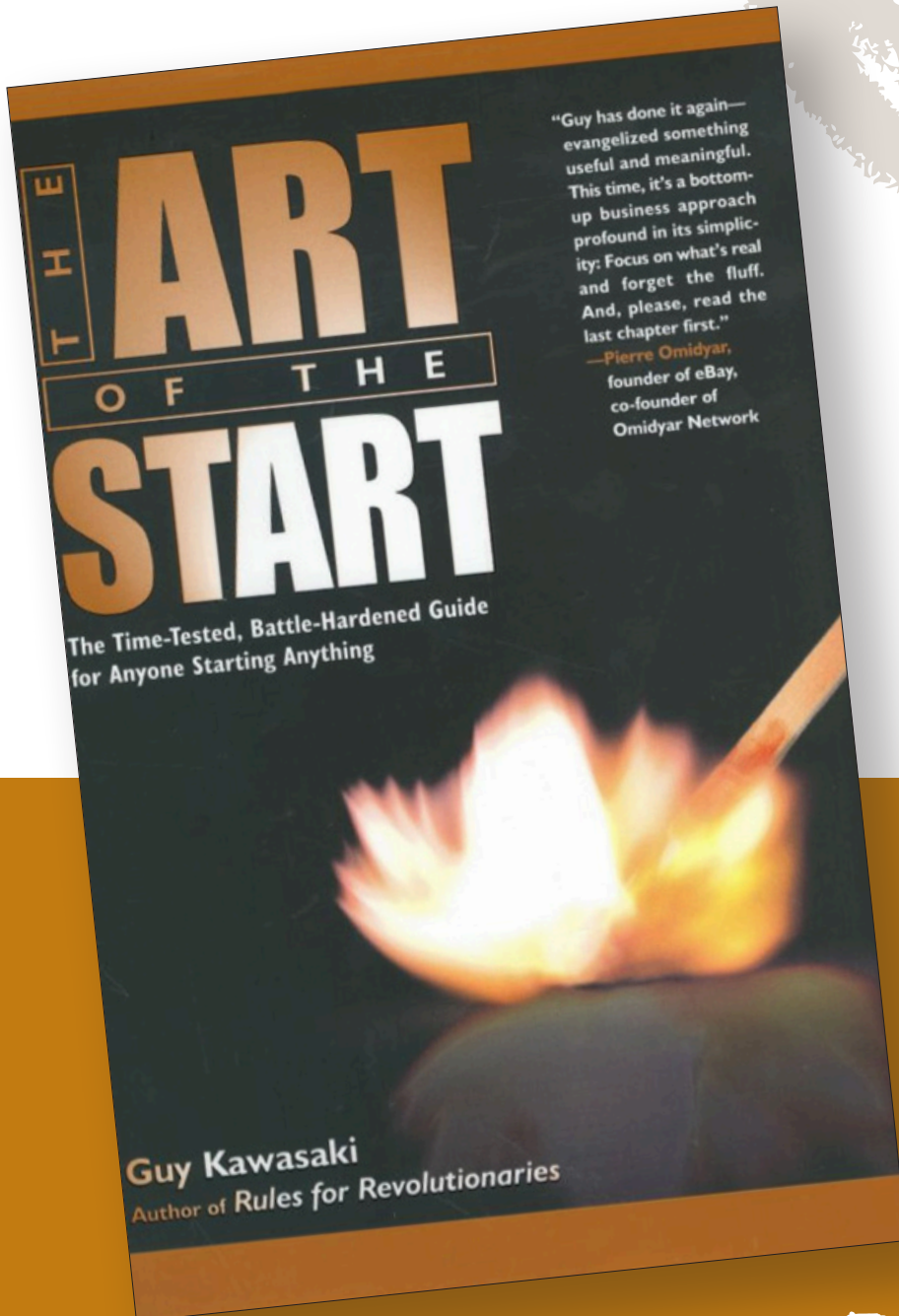


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## The Art of the Start | *Guy Kawasaki*

The Art of the Start: The Time-Tested, Battle-Hardened Guide for Anyone Starting Anything  
Penguin Group USA, New York, NY, 2004. 226 pages.

It begins with a dream that just won't quit, the once-in-a-lifetime thunderbolt of pure inspiration, the obsession, the world-beater, the killer app, the next big thing. Everyone who wants to make the world a better place becomes possessed by a grand idea.

### *But what does it take to turn your idea into action?*

In *The Art of the Start*, Guy Kawasaki brings two decades of experience as one of businesses most original and irreverent strategists to offer the essential guide for anyone starting anything, from a multinational corporation to a church group.

Kawasaki's goal is to help leaders use their knowledge, love, and determination to create something great without getting bogged down in theory and unnecessary details.

## The Art of Starting

### **Make Meaning.**

The best reason to start an organization is to make meaning – to create a product or service that makes the world a better place. So your first task is to decide how you can make meaning.

### **Make Mantra.**

Forget mission statements; they're long, boring, and irrelevant. No one can ever remember them – much less implement them. Instead, take your meaning and make a mantra out of it. This will set your entire team on the right course.

### **Get Going.**

Start creating and delivering your product or service. Think soldering irons, compilers, hammers, saws, and AutoCAD – whatever tools you use to build products and services. Don't focus on pitching, writing, and planning.

### **Define Your Business Model.**

No matter what kind of organization you're starting, you have to figure out a way to make money. The greatest idea, technology, product or service is short-lived without a sustainable business model.

### **Weave a MAT (Milestones, Assumptions, and Tasks).**

The final step is to complete three lists:

- (a) major milestones you need to meet
- (b) assumptions that are built into your business model
- (c) tasks you need to accomplish to create an organization

## The Art of the Start | *Guy Kawasaki (cont'd)*

### The Art of Positioning

Most people consider “positioning” an unnatural act foisted upon them by marketing dweebs who are assisted by highly paid and clueless consultants. In truth, positioning goes far beyond a management offsite or exercise. When done properly, it represents the heart and soul of a new organization, stating clearly:

- Why the founders started the organization
- Why customers should patronize it
- Why good people should work at it

Wile E. Coyote understands positioning better than most entrepreneurs: He’s a coyote, and he’s going to eat the roadrunner for lunch. Organizations should position themselves with comparable clarity by explaining exactly what they do.

*The art of positioning really comes down to nothing more than answering that one simple question: What do you do?*

Developing a good answer to this question involves seizing the high ground for your organization and establishing precisely how it differs from the mass of competition. Then you must communicate this message to the marketplace. You will need to learn how to do both in short, differentiated, and powerful ways.

### The Art of Pitching

Forget “I think, therefore I am.” For entrepreneurs, the salient phrase is “I pitch, therefore I am.” Pitching isn’t only useful for raising money – it’s an essential tool for reaching agreement on any subject. Agreement can yield many outcomes: management buy-in for developing a product or service, closing a sale, securing a partnership, recruiting an employee, or securing an investment.

*The gist of pitching is to get off to a fast start, explain the relevance of what you do, stay at a high level, listen to audience reactions and then pitch over and over again until you get it right.*

You need to learn how to pitch your organization and product or service in a shorter, simpler, and more effective way.

### The Art of Writing a Business Plan

An organization’s business plan is supposed to satisfy everyone (investors, directors, founders, and managers) and induce magical effects on those who partake of it – specifically, the irresistible urge to write a check or approve a go-ahead action.

*Like the Holy Grail, the business plan remains largely unattainable and mythological.*

## The Art of the Start | *Guy Kawasaki (cont'd)*

Most experts wouldn't agree, but a business plan is of limited usefulness for a startup because entrepreneurs base so much of their plans on assumptions, "vision", and unknowns.

For external and internal startups, the MAT (Milestones, Assumptions and Tasks) is the most useful guide for the day-to-day operation of an organization.

However, many investors, recruits, potential board members, and internal decision makers do expect a business plan and won't proceed without one. Plus, writing a business plan does have the benefit of forcing a team to work together to formalize intentions. So write a plan, and write it well, but don't convince yourself that it's the Holy Grail. Organizations are successful because of good implementation, not good business plans.

### The Art of Bootstrapping

If you plan carefully, bootstrapping will only be a stage in your business's development. It doesn't have to be your permanent lifestyle – think big and start small.

The enemy of bootstrapping isn't spending – it's failing to execute. Master the art of executing:

- Set and communicate goals
- Measure progress
- Establish a single point of accountability
- Reward the achievers
- Follow through until an issue is done or irrelevant
- Insist on realism
- Establish a culture of execution

### The Art of Recruiting

There are few tasks that face an entrepreneur that are more enjoyable than recruiting employees to a hot startup. What could be better than finding people to help change the world? And there are few factors that are more critical to the success of a startup than good people.

Good recruiting starts at the top: CEOs must recruit the best people they can find. The focus should be on three factors:

1. Can the candidate do what you need?
2. Does the candidate believe in the meaning you're going to make?
3. Does the candidate have the strengths you need (as opposed to lacking the weaknesses you're trying to avoid)?

If candidates pass these tests, then go get them, but in a smart way – by using all your weapons, negotiating at the right moment, and double-checking your intuitions.

## The Art of the Start | *Guy Kawasaki (cont'd)*

After they're on board, you should define a honeymoon period during which both parties can analyze whether things are working out. Finally, as a philosophical framework, make the effort to "recruit" your employees every day – to make sure they want to come back the next day.

### 5 Ways to Avoid Hiring the Wrong People

1. Don't confuse correlation and causation – working at a successful organization doesn't necessarily mean an individual contributed to the success.
2. Don't confuse big-organization skills with new-organization skills – success in a large, established organization doesn't guarantee success in a startup.
3. Dramatize your expectations – make it crystal clear working in a startup is different from what they might be used to previously.
4. Read the tea leaves when checking references – if you don't get a reference that's superlative, you are in effect getting a negative one.
5. Trust the richest vein – current employees are the richest source for finding great people.

### The Art of Partnering

Partnerships are hard to make work. Both parties want 2 + 2 to equal 5, but they end up with 3 instead. The gist of good partnering is that it should accelerate cash flow, increase revenue, and reduce costs. Partnerships built on solid business principles like these have a much greater chance of succeeding.

Once you understand this, a partnership is simply a matter of implementation: making sure the people who do the real work buy into it, finding internal champions, focusing on strengths, cutting win-win deals, waiting for the right moment to bring in lawyers and legal documents, and establishing ways to end the relationship.

### The Art of Branding

There are two major schools of thought regarding branding: the first holds that it's incomprehensible voodoo that marketers practice. The second contends that it's a simple matter of applying the classic Ps of marketing: product, place, price, and promotion.

There needs to be another P: proselytization, which is the process of converting others to your belief, doctrine, or cause.

Proselytization – evangelization – represents the core of branding for startups in today's highly competitive world, in which information is free, ubiquitous, and instantaneous.

***The art of branding require creating something contagious that infects people with enthusiasm, making it easy for them to try it, asking them for help in spreading the word, and building community around it.***

## The Art of the Start | *Guy Kawasaki (cont'd)*

Create products or services that are inherently contagious. Here are the key elements of contagiousness:

- Cool
- Effective
- Distinctive
- Disruptive
- Emotive
- Deep
- Indulgent
- Supported

### Recruit Evangelists

- Ask
- Ignore academic background and work experience
- Focus on what's important: Do they believe, and do they want to help?
- Let a hundred evangelists blossom
- Assign tasks and expect them to get done
- Continue "fellowship"
- Give them the tools to evangelize

### Foster a community

- Identify and recruit the "Thunder Lizards" of your product or service
- Hire someone whose sole purpose is to foster a community
- Create a budget for community support
- Integrate the presence of the community into your sales and marketing efforts and your online presence
- Host the community's efforts
- Hold a conference

## The Art of Rainmaking

A Native American rainmaker is a medicine man who uses rituals and incantations to make it rain. For startups, a rainmaker is a person who generates large quantities of business. Like a medicine man, entrepreneurs have created their own rituals and incantations to make it rain.

Two factors make rainmaking difficult for startups. First, although entrepreneurs design a product or service for a specific purpose, they have no way of knowing who will actually buy it and what it will be used for. Thus, the first step of rainmaking is to get version 1.0 of the product or service into the marketplace to find out where it blossoms.

## The Art of the Start | *Guy Kawasaki (cont'd)*

Second, the products and services of startups are rarely just bought. Instead, they must be sold because few customers want to take a chance on a new product or service from a small, undercapitalized organization. Thus, the second step of rainmaking is to overcome this resistance.

### The Art of Being a Mensch

Mensch is the Yiddish term for a person who is ethical, decent, and admirable. It is the highest form of praise one can receive from the people whose opinions matter. This topic is included for two reasons:

- Every person and organization exists in the larger context of society. Doing things that benefit you and your organization to the detriment of the rest of society doesn't scale.
- If you want to build a truly great, lasting organization, you need to set the highest moral and ethical standards for employees. A mensch, by definition, provides a good role model for this.

The three foundations of menschhood are helping lots of people, doing what's right, and paying back society – simple concepts that are hard to implement.

Great companies. Great divisions. Great schools. Great churches. Great not-for-profits. When it comes to the fundamentals of starting up, they are more alike than they are different.

The key to success is to survive the detail tasks while bringing the future closer.

*Let's get started.*

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## The Art of the Start | *Guy Kawasaki (cont'd)*

### Recommended Resources

1. **Read** “36 Questions for 20/20 Church Vision from Start to Finish” by Auxano Founder and Team Leader Will Mancini for a robust framework to help you start your clarity process.
2. **Download** a free PDF of Chapter 1 from Art of the Start by author Guy Kawasaki.
3. **Watch** *Art of the Start* author Guy Kawasaki give a keynote speech on the material from his book.
4. **Download** a *Change This* manifesto from author Guy Kawasaki outlining the five most important things an entrepreneur must accomplish when starting something.

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## Go Ahead Actions for Vision Clarity

by Bryan Rose

### Vision Clarity Connection

***“Start by doing what’s necessary; then do what’s possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible.”—St. Francis of Assisi***

As an entrepreneurial and creative type, I have been a better starter than finisher through the years. In looking back to some of those unrealized dreams, one common thread is a passionate, but plan-less start.

Here are 3 signs you might be a plan-less starter as well:

- You regularly buy web domains, and let them expire after one year.
- You have had a book, song or art piece “in process” for two or more years.
- You have tools in your garage or shed that are rusting.

Many pastors and ministry leaders share in this tension of possessing passion for what should be, but lacking skillful stamina to reach beyond what is. The first sign of struggle or difficulty can derail an entire movement. These leaders’ mountaintop moments, being given a tenuous beginning, most often fall into the moleskin-paged chasm of unfinished thoughts. In most instances, a stronger start could unlock the fruitful finish we all dream of.

In *The Art of the Start*, Guy Kawasaki, offers plans to plan-less starters, as well as some skillful encouragement for natural finishers.

### Go Ahead

#### First, Start for the End

Every leader starts with vision, and those inspirational “love God, love others” statements look great when written on walls and worship guides. However, they offer little practical guidance in the process of making disciples who make disciples. Vision is a developing Polaroid picture, set over a sequence of time horizons, and emerges within a framework of missional identity. Using Kawasaki’s tools, pull aside with your ministry leadership team for a few hours, and ask these horizon-focusing questions:

- “What God IMPACT will we see in the lives of people 12-18 months from now?”
- “What will be the multiplied result of that impact 3-5 years from now?”
- “What 1 action do we need to pursue in the next 3 months to get started?”

#### Then, Start with the Culture

Culture is most expressed in your staff and how they make decisions. Values, or the lack thereof, are often the greatest cultural driver you have. As you start any new ministry, group or program, lead your leaders to reflect the motives behind the church’s missional calling. What are the 4-6 most memorable words or phrases that form a natural undertow, drawing new ideas out into the riptide actions of disciple making? Take at least 3 hours with a core team to form or affirm concise expressions of your values, including specific statements on how each is demonstrated in the life of the organization. Then you are ready to start what’s next.

To learn more about building a framework of missional identity in disciple-making or developing values that shape culture, start a conversation here. At Auxano, we are passionate about creating break-thru clarity with church teams to realize their vision.



## More About Bryan Rose

As Lead Navigator for Auxano, Bryan Rose has a strong bias toward merging strategy and creativity within the vision of the local church and has had a diversity of experience in just about every ministry discipline over the last 12 years.

With his experience as a multi-site strategist and campus pastor at a 3500 member multi-campus church in the Houston Metro area, Bryan has a passion to see “launch clarity” define the unique Great Commission call of developing church plants and campus, while at the same time serving established churches as they seek to clarify their individual ministry calling. Bryan has demonstrated achievement as a strategic thinker with a unique ability to infuse creativity into the visioning process while bringing a group of people to a deep sense of personal ownership and passion.

Bryan has a Master of Arts in Christian Education from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and a B.A. in Architecture from Mississippi State University. He lives outside Houston, TX with his wife, Kelly and children Macy & Matthew.

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