Lesson 0 – Why? Help?

**QUESTION 1:**
Do you (really) want to start a company?

**QUESTION 2:**
What do you expect your company to look like in 5 years?
($1 million, $10 million, or $100 million in sales? How many employees?)

**QUESTION 3:**
What do you personally want to be doing in 5 years? 3 years? 2 years? Next year?
(CEO, CTO, sales, product development, advisor to the company, etc.)

**QUESTION 4:**
Are you prepared to quit your current job and work at the new company full-time?

**QUESTION 5:**
Do want to be rich, famous, both, or neither?

**QUESTION 6:**
At work, what makes you happy? Excited? Eager to start a new day?

**QUESTION 7:**
Do I start this company alone, or seek a co-founder?

**QUESTION 8:**
Do I seek a mentor, set of advisors, incubator and/or accelerator?

**QUESTION 9:**
Are you passionate about your idea?
Lesson 1 – Lean

QUESTION 10:
What problem are you solving?

QUESTION 11:
Who are the people whose problem you are solving?

QUESTION 12:
Are you solving an important problem?

QUESTION 13:
Will your solution create more problems than it solves?

QUESTION 14:
Can you describe the problem, customer, and solution in 10 minutes or less? Without a single word of jargon?

QUESTION 15:
Who is the person responsible for buying your product?

QUESTION 16:
What is the minimal set of features required to get the first few customers to buy your product?

QUESTION 17:
Are you ready to launch your minimal viable product (MVP)? If not, when?
Lesson 2 – Opportunity Size

QUESTION 18:
How many customers need your product?
(Try to create a top-down model of the market opportunity.)

QUESTION 19:
How many copies of your product will each customer buy?

QUESTION 20:
How many customers can each of your sales people close?
(Build a bottom-up model of the market opportunity, based on sales or other resource limitations.)

QUESTION 21:
How long does each of those sales take?
(If you've yet to start selling, make a best guess, including the expected complexity of the sale and importance of the solution to the customer.)

QUESTION 22:
At scale, how many customers do you expect will buy your product per year?
(Take the answer to above question, then make a best guess on what percentage of potential customers will actually buy the product.)

QUESTION 23:
High-price/high-service, small number of sales, or Low-price/low-service, large number of sales?
QUESTION 24:
What is the selling price of your minimal viable product?

QUESTION 25:
What is your target price of your beyond-minimal product?

QUESTION 26:
How big is this opportunity?
(Multiple the number of projected customers by the average selling price.)

QUESTION 27:
After reviewing the opportunity size, do you need to revisit the market sizing or pricing, or look for additional customers, or go all the way back and to the beginning and change the product?

QUESTION 28:
Is the opportunity worth the effort?
Lesson 3 – Competition

QUESTION 29:
What other companies are solving the same problem?

QUESTION 30:
How does your product compare to the competition? How does it compare feature by feature and benefit by benefit?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Your company</th>
<th>Competitor 1</th>
<th>Competitor 2</th>
<th>Competitor 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most important benefit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefit 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefit 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefit 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefit 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less important benefit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Least important benefit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
QUESTION 31:
How does the price of your product compare to the competition? Which pricing model are they using (high-price/high-service or low-price/low-service)?

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

QUESTION 32:
What is unique about your solution?

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

QUESTION 33:
What is your long term, sustainable, competitive advantage?

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________
Team

QUESTION 34:
How many people do you need in your company?

________________________________________

________________________________________

QUESTION 35:
What is each person responsible for?

________________________________________

________________________________________

QUESTION 36:
Who will develop your product? Who will do the marketing? Who will do the sales? Who will run the company?

________________________________________

________________________________________

QUESTION 37:
Which roles will you fill, and which will you hire?

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________
Lesson 4 – The Business Model Canvas+

LEARNING FROM THE CANVAS:
1. Fill out your Business Model Canvas
2. Narrow down each box to the top three most likely answers
3. Pick a box, assume those answers are incorrect, make changes to fix the business model
4. Repeat across 2-3 other boxes
5. With those learnings, go back and fill out the answers that now seem most likely

THE PYRAMID:
When all the questions and other exercises are complete, fill in the other five boxes of the pyramid
Lesson 5 – The Financial Model

UNIT SALE:
What is your unit sale?

On average, how many units does each customer purchase?

On average, what does each customer pay per unit?

QUESTION 42:
Can this be a profitable venture?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Back-of-the-Envelope Financials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>REVENUES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projected Revenues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of Sales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL REVENUES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXPENSES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Salaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Taxes &amp; Benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Other Expenses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL EXPENSES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ESTIMATED PROFITS</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QUESTION 43:
When will this company be profitable?

QUESTION 44:
How much capital is needed to start your company?
Lesson 6 – The Realities of Funding

**FUNDABLE?**
Do you have the personal means to launch this company from savings, credit cards, other personal credit?

________________________

Is your company pursuing a high-growth opportunity?

________________________

Is your company ready for crowdfunding?

________________________

Is your company ready for Angel or VC funding?

________________________

**QUESTION 47:**
Should you bootstrap your company or seek outside investors: friends and family, grants, incubators, Angels, or Venture Capital?

________________________

**FUNDING?**
Create a list of potential funding sources.

1. _____________________________
2. _____________________________
3. _____________________________
4. _____________________________
5. _____________________________
6. _____________________________
7. _____________________________
Lesson 7 – Startup Marketing

CORE ESSENCE:
What three words/concepts best (and completely) describe your company?
1. ____________________
2. ____________________
3. ____________________

QUESTION 38:
How will your customers know your company exists? How will they know the benefits of your product?

_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

QUESTION 39:
What do you call this company?

_____________________________________________________________________________
Lesson 8 – Startup Sales

SALES FUNNEL:
What are the stages of your sales funnel?
1. __________________________
2. __________________________
3. __________________________
4. __________________________
5. __________________________
6. __________________________
7. __________________________

SALES TEAM:
When you have a team of 10 salespeople, how are you going to organize the team?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

SALES INCENTIVES:
When you have a team of 10 salespeople, how are you structure the sales quotas and incentives?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
QUESTION 40:
What is your sales process?
1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6. 
7. 
8. 
9. 
10. 

QUESTION 41:
What are you going to do to keep your customers happy, once you have customers?


Risks & Legalities

QUESTION 45:
What are the risks of failure? What might go wrong? Which of your assumptions might be wrong?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

 QUESTION 46:
Do you own your idea? Can you legally start your company?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Ready for Market? Measure, Learn, and Update!

QUESTION 48:
Is your product sellable today?

________________________

QUESTION 49:
How often will you update the product?

________________________

QUESTION 50:
What did you learn today?

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

QUESTION 51:
What are you measuring?

1. ____________________________
2. ____________________________
3. ____________________________
4. ____________________________
5. ____________________________
Lesson 9 – Corporate Culture

CULTURE:
What are the five core features of your corporate culture?
1. __________________________________________
2. __________________________________________
3. __________________________________________
4. __________________________________________
5. __________________________________________

NETFLIX:
What did you like within the Netflix culture of Freedom and Responsibility?
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

VALVE:
What did you like in Valve’s or Treehouse’s implementation of a flat organization?
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

METHOD:
What did you like within Method Soap’s culture of keeping it weird, fast, and beautiful?
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
Lesson 10 – A Great Pitch

YOUR PITCH:
Below is the outline, how will you make your pitch stand out?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Investor Pitch</th>
<th>Recruiting Pitch</th>
<th>Sales Pitch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Title</td>
<td>1. Title</td>
<td>1. Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Problem</td>
<td>2. Problem</td>
<td>2. Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market</td>
<td>5. Market</td>
<td>5. Solution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Team</td>
<td>9. Team</td>
<td>8. Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>overview</td>
<td>10. Next steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Amount and planned use of funding</td>
<td>11. Q&amp;A</td>
<td>11. Thank you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Q&amp;A</td>
<td>12. Thank you</td>
<td>12. [Appendix]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Next steps</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Thank you</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. [Appendix]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IMPACT:
If you are pitching impact investors or any other impact-oriented audience, don’t forget to include your impact. What is that impact? How will it be measured?
(This is commonly found within the problem, adjacent to the business model in the financial overview, or between the financial overview and ask.)
Final Question

**FINAL QUESTION:**
Do you still want to start this company?

________________________

If no, return to question 1 and repeat for the next idea.
If yes, return to question 1 and iterate through the answers given the knowledge gained in answering all the other questions.

Remember, the plan you create from these answer is wrong. No matter how many times you iterate through it, it will always be wrong. The key is to iterate enough times to convince you that this business is worth doing, enough times to convince the team you need to recruit to the team, and the funders you need to fund the startup costs.

In the end, you’ll never have all the answers. You just need enough to believe that success is possible.