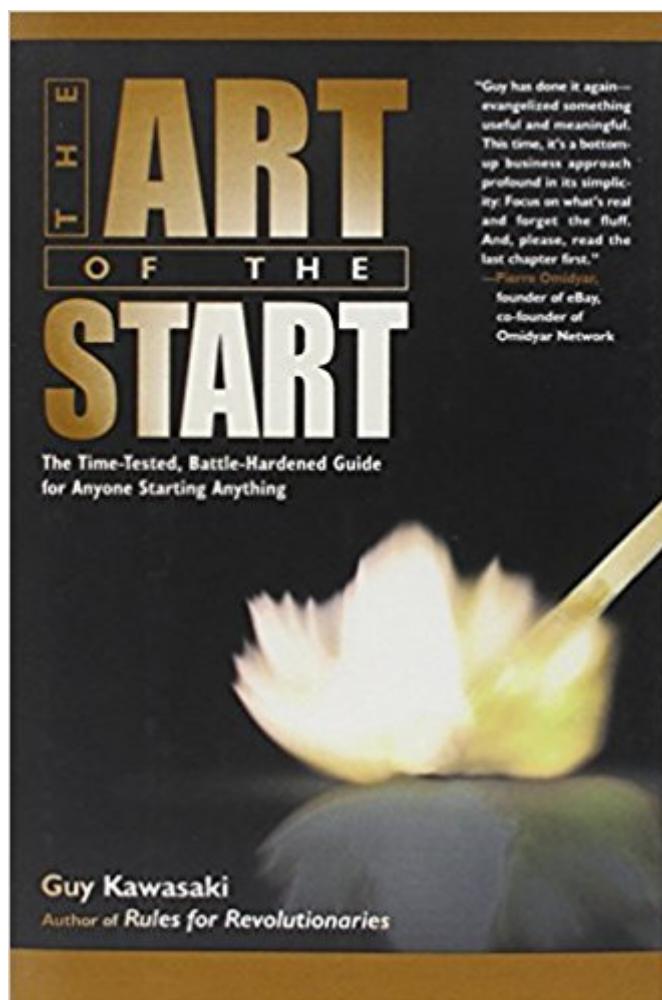


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# The Art Of The Start: The Time-Tested, Battle-Hardened Guide For Anyone Starting Anything



## **Synopsis**

A new product, a new service, a new company, a new division, a new organization, a new anything where there's a will, here's the way.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Kawasaki (Rules for Revolutionaries) draws upon his dual background as an evangelist for Apple's Macintosh computer and as a Silicon Valley venture capitalist in this how-to for launching any type of business project. Each chapter begins with "GIST" ("great ideas for starting things"), covering a variety of facets to consider, from identifying your customer base and writing a business plan to establishing partnerships and building brand identity. Minichapters zero in on particular jobs that will need doing, while FAQ sections address the questions readers are most likely to have: Kawasaki covers the basics in an effectively casual tone. Much of the advice, however, consists of generic banalities—start your company's name with a letter that comes early in the alphabet, use big type in presentation slides for older businessmen with declining eyesight, and avoid writing e-mails in all capital letters—that can be found in any mediocre guide. Fortunately, Kawasaki does rise to the occasion here and there. He goes into great detail when it comes to raising capital and offers effective methods for sorting through the nonsense associated with interviewing prospective employees. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

A successful entrepreneur requires three things: a garage, an idea, and this book Guy's irrepressible guide to the raw essentials of life in a young company. I wish we could post all this information on Sequoia Capital's Web site because it would make our jobs much easier. --Sequoia Capital

You are looking for what to do, to launch/grow your business. So, when you stumble upon suggestions (or "teachings") like: "Anticipate the tectonic shifts then jump on them", you know you are reading the wrong book. Maybe DogBert has better catchy phrases. We do not all have a garage, to be "these two guys in the garage" he loves so much, sorry. I finished reading the book, hoping for something to light up inside and finally get the meaning, and got a lot of empty motivation but zero on actionable stuff for my situation (or explanations on what he means). That proves how good writing can sell books even without content and substance (or how idiot I am for searching for answers in publicly available "hot shot" books)

Below are key excerpts from the book that I found particularly insightful:

1- "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 their success is to survive the microscope tasks while bringing the future closer."

2- "GIST (GREAT IDEAS FOR STARTING THINGS): 1. MAKE MEANING 2. MAKE MANTRA. 3. GET GOING. 4. DEFINE YOUR BUSINESS MODEL. No 5. WEAVE A MAT (MILESTONES, ASSUMPTIONS, AND TASKS)."

3- "THE ART OF INTERNAL ENTREPRENEURING: PUT THE COMPANY FIRST...KILL THE CASH COWS...STAY UNDER THE RADAR...FIND A GODFATHER...GET A SEPARATE BUILDING...GIVE HOPE TO THE HOPEFUL...ANTICIPATE, THEN JUMP ON, TECTONIC SHIFTS...BUILD ON WHAT EXISTS...COLLECT AND SHARE DATA...LET THE VICE PRESIDENTS COME TO YOU...DISMANTLE WHEN DONE...REBOOT YOUR BRAIN."

4- "SEIZE THE HIGH GROUND

Unless you are a rabbit about to be devoured by a coyote, good positioning is inspiring and energizing. It does not allow itself to be mucked up in money, market share, and management egos. These are the qualities to aspire to:

POSITIVE...CUSTOMER-CENTRIC...EMPOWERING...In addition to seizing the high ground, good positioning is a workhorse. It is practical and serves tactical and strategic purposes that are easily understood and believed by customers, vendors, employees, journalists, and partners. Thus, good positioning also embodies these qualities:

SELF-EXPLANATORY...SPECIFIC...CORE...RELEVANT...LONG-LASTING...DIFFERENTIATED."

5- "Many entrepreneurs try to perfect their business plan and then pull PowerPoint slides out of it. They view the business plan as ; the be-all and end-all, and the pitch as a subset of this magnificent document. This is backward thinking. A good business plan is a a detailed version of a pitchÃ¢Â¢Âs as opposed to a pitch being a distilled version of a business plan. If you get the pitch right, you'll get the plan right."6- "You can argue as much as you like about the precise number of calls bottom-up model yields a much more realistic forecast than even the most pessimistic market share estimates of a consultant's forecast about the total size of a market. The magnitude of your bottom-up forecast will establish the degree of bootstrapping you'll have to do. The only information that will point out the need for bootstrapping more accurately is looking at your bank account balance. "7- "If you do take this path, however, understand that starting as a service business is a good initial path but isn't always the right long-term strategy. Getting customers to pay for your research and development should be only a temporary strategy for a product-based company. In the long run, a service business is fundamentally different from a product business. The former is all about slave labor and billable hours or projects. The latter is all about research and development, shipping, and spreading costs over thousands of boxes going out the door."8- "Good recruiting starts at the top: CEOs must recruit the best people they can find. Next, good recruiting requires looking beyond superficialities such as race, creed, color, education, and work experience. Instead, you should focus 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)?"9- "PREPARE A STRUCTURE FOR THE INTERVIEW BEFOREHAND...ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT SPECIFIC JOB SITUATIONS...STICK TO THE SCRIPT...DON'T OVERDO OPEN-ENDED, TOUCHY-FEELY QUESTIONS...TAKE COPIOUS NOTES...CHECK REFERENCES EARLY."10- "Never assume you're done. Recruiting doesn't stop when a candidate accepts your offer, nor when he resigns from his current employer, nor on his last day at his current employerÃ¢Â¢Âs not even after he starts at your organization. In actuality, recruiting never stops. Every day is a new contract between a startup and an employee."11- "What most organizations learned is that partnerships are hard to make work. Though both parties wanted 2 + 2 to equal 5, they ended up with 3 instead. The problem is that glamour, flattery, and potential press coverage often seduced organizations into entering nonsensical collaborations. 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 likelihood 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."12- "World-class schmoozers adopt Rezac's outward, what-can-I-do-for-you attitude. It is the key to building extensive, long-lasting connections. Upon this foundation, here's how to get more people to know you: GET OUT...ASK GOOD QUESTIONS, THEN SHUT UP...FOLLOW UP."

Excellent book. Guy Kawasaki has a knack for turning a phrase to make explanations colorful and easy to understand. "Suck down to umbrellas" (page 198) is an example. Key influencers and decision makers are shielded from rainmakers by administrative staff (umbrellas). Guy's advice is simple and easy to understand: "suck down to umbrellas." From starting to positioning, pitching to writing a business plan Guy sets out very practical and no-nonsense descriptions of how to get things done. Particularly helpful was his chapter on bootstrapping, with succinct advice "ship, fix, ship, fix, ship, fix...", and to build a bottom-up forecast. One of my favorite movies of all time is The Matrix, so I loved his advice to "take the red pill" (stay in Wonderland and see how deep the rabbit hole goes) and to get a Morpheus. Taking the red pill for a startup leader, as Guy explains, is about staying in touch with reality and learning such things as how long it will be before the product ships, what true, fully-loaded costs of operations will be, and when you will run out of money. A Morpheus for a startup is the CFO, the person who acts as a counterbalance for the CEO, helping to keep the CEO grounded in reality. This sort of analogies made this book particularly enjoyable to read. Loved it.

Anyone starting a venture and needing money, trying to raise funds for an existing venture or just plain trying to make something happen should read this book. The guy has obviously been there and done it a few times (everyday, for years). This is a great book to get you started, but even as the book will state, you also need the experience of getting out there and doing it. If I can add anything to the message in this book, it's to reiterate, don't get discouraged, learn from the rejection (yes, you will be rejected) make adjustments and keep going. If this is it for you, whatever you are trying to do, and not just a hobby, then if you do not quit and keep going, eventually, chances are you will get funded. The only reason I didn't give it 5 stars, is because I've knocked on a few doors myself, and while I appreciate everything Guy is saying, he tends to make it sound like every successful investor, (Venture Capitalist), out there is a smart, on top it, forward thinking, kind of successful business man. These guys crunch numbers for breakfast, they've seen it all ten times, and they know what is going on. Ah, in my experience, no. I'm sure the vast majority of major players

out there are smart not lucky, quick to spot a unique opportunity not just connected, and business savvy not rich kids with ADD. But with that said, I've met senior executives at Fortune 100 companies that couldn't find the bathroom with a flashlight and a map and I've presented to major Venture Capital partners that couldn't read a graph without asking what they were looking at. But in the end, I've gotten funded from traditional sources and non-traditional sources. The book is key in many areas, and this is as good a starting place as any I've seen. Just realize there are no silver bullets in this game so keep going, keep getting better and never underestimate timing and pure dumb luck.

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