

Startup Professionals February Summary



Selected ideas and assistance to entrepreneurs and startup founders in finding business ideas, funding, executive mentoring, and business networking to incorporate a business, file patents, add an advisory board, and address operational issues.

Greetings!

Thank you for your ongoing interest in the activities of Startup Professionals.

To give you some insight into our areas of interest, our background, and our expertise, I am providing below the abstracts for a small selection of popular articles that we and others published during the month just ending. Please feel free to click on the link at the end of each to access the original entire article on the Internet.

Also feel free to contact me directly if you have any questions or comments.

Marty Zwilling

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marty C. Zwilling".

Founder & CEO, Startup Professionals, Inc.
Website: <http://www.startupprofessionals.com>
Blog: <http://blog.startupprofessionals.com>

How to Ask the Right People for the Right Amount of Money to Kick-Start Your Business

It's great to start with a big dream as you contemplate a new business, but finding the money you need takes more than dreaming. As an advisor to young entrepreneurs, I find that many are a bit naïve about how the investment process really works. For example, I just read an otherwise impressive business plan last week from a first-timer who asked for \$10 million ... ([More...](#))

8 Ways to Transform Yourself Into a Freelance Expert

Being a consultant is a role that works with big companies, but I have found that it doesn't get much traction in small businesses and startups. The image of a self-proclaimed expert who can generate a report, make a great presentation, and leave you to do the implementation, is just not attractive when you don't have a staff, and you are already overloaded ... ([More...](#))

7 Strategies For Anticipating Future Customer Trends

The market is changing so fast these days, and if you are not planning a solution today for tomorrow's customers, you may be setting yourself up for failure and don't even realize it. There are always new competitors who are planning their arrival tomorrow. As an angel investor, I routinely toss business plans that focus too much on today, and don't talk about tomorrow. ([More...](#))

Why Female Founder Office Hours is So Important (Mark Suster)

If you haven't yet heard about Female Founder Office Hours it is an initiative you should be aware of whether you're male, female or any other gender identify. The idea is simple enough: several female VC partners at top funds will hold 1-hour meetings with 40 promising female entrepreneurs looking to get advice on their business and pitch in a friendly, non-judgmental, safe ... ([More...](#))

7 Myths That Kill Many Businesses Before They Start

You don't have to be a new venture advisor like me to hear all the excuses for not starting your own business. I'm sure all of you have friends who are not happy in their employee roles, and are not shy about complaining, but never seem to get around to doing anything about it. They can cite all the myths about being too old to change, not having the money, ([More...](#))

7 Steps For Counseling Employees Who Need To Change

As an advisor to entrepreneurs and new business owners, I've long observed that one of the toughest challenges is people change management in the team. It's an area where you typically have little experience and training, and dealing with needed change is fraught with emotions on both sides. I have found that my years in a big company have paid huge dividends in this area. ([More...](#))

5 Ways Today's Market Allows Startups To Scale Faster

As an active angel investor, I'm accustomed to hearing entrepreneurs pitch their expectation to quickly create a new dominant brand, based on their disruptive technology. In the past, such statements have been credibility red flags, since "everyone" knows that a dominant brand takes decades to establish and scale. Only recently, I realized that times are rapidly changing. ([More...](#))

Empathetic Doesn't Mean Doormat (Seth Godin)

It's essential to find empathy for the people you hope to serve, to teach, to work with. Without it, you can't find the place they're stuck, you can't help them move in the direction they seek to go. But it's entirely possible that your empathy will lead to a moment where you need to say 'no'. ([More...](#))

The Biggest Danger In Leadership (Dan Rockwell)

Self-importance is behind most of the stupid things leaders do. Self-importance keeps leaders ignorant and isolated. Self-importance blinds you to your weaknesses and distorts your view of strength in others. Even insecurity is a symptom of self-importance. Self-important leaders: Live with a sense of under-appreciation. Others don't fully appreciate the splendor of self-important leaders. ([More...](#))

6 Unexpected Burdens That Come With Outside Investors

As an angel investor to startups, I'm still surprised to find entrepreneurs who expect investors to give them money, and assume no strings attached. Would you do that if it was your money? If the entrepreneur wants total control of their own venture, with no one looking over their shoulder, they should work within the limits of their own resources, a process called bootstrapping. ([More...](#))

10 Strategies To Isolate Smart Risks In A New Venture

There is an old saying that good lawyers run away from risk, while good businessmen run towards risk.

Entrepreneurs see "no risk" as meaning "no reward." In reality, all risks are not the same. Many risks can be managed or calculated to improve growth or provide a competitive edge, while others, like skipping quality checks to save money, are recipes for failure. ([More...](#))

7 Strategies To Enhance Agility In The Face Of Change

Most small businesses have now forgotten the last recession, and are back to "business as usual." They don't realize that business as usual is gone forever. With social media and smart phone apps, real product information spreads at astounding speeds. Entrepreneurs that are not listening, not engaging, and not changing are destined to be left behind even in the best of times. ([More...](#))

Splitting The Deal (Fred Wilson)

Syndicating an early stage investment is a time honored practice in the venture capital business. It was extremely common in the VC business in the early 80s when I started. I assume syndicating was a common practice in the early days of the institutional VC business because fund sizes were small, risk was high, and splitting the deal among multiple firms was a good way to manage those things. ([More...](#))

How To Win Key Decision Points With Today's Customers

Today's customers are much more in control of their buying decision, as they have more choices and more information than ever before. Almost instantly, via the Internet or on their smartphone in the store, they can find the lowest price alternative or their favorite features, without waiting for push marketing or listening to your best sales person. ([More...](#))

8 Strategies For Regularly Reinventing Your Business

Sometimes entrepreneurs are so focused on making change happen for customers that they forget that continually changing themselves and their company is equally important. Some get stuck in a rut and get run over by competitors with new technology, like Eastman Kodak, and others get pushed into a crisis, like Apple did, before they reinvent themselves into a new market. ([More...](#))

Marty Zwilling is the Founder and CEO of Startup Professionals, an Arizona-based company which offers startups a range of offerings and consulting services. He is a member of the ATIF Angels group, where he serves on the Selection Committee. He is a mentor to aspiring entrepreneurs through Embry-Riddle University and the Forbes School of Business, and has done guest lectures on entrepreneurship in various MBA programs. He is also on the Advisory Board of a several startups, and has an extensive technology background with IBM and other large and small companies.