



## **EARLY ADOPTER ADVANCED SAMPLE**

**YOU'RE ABOUT TO READ THE FIRST 2,000 WORDS FROM THE  
SUCCESSFUL MISTAKE - AN EARLY DRAFT FOR YOUR EYES ONLY**

**THE FOLLOWING MAY CHANGE OVER TIME, BUT THE FACT YOU'RE  
AWESOME WON'T. TAKE HEART IN THE KNOWLEDGE YOU'RE PART OF  
THIS BEFORE THE REST OF THE RIFFRAFF. THIS IS THE LAND OF MERRY  
MISFITS, AND I'M DELIGHTED TO HAVE YOU HERE.**

**TURND<sub>o</sub>G.**

# STAGE 1: SHOCK

## THAT AWKWARD MOMENT WHEN THE SHIT HITS THE FAN

After blogging for six months and seeing little in return, Jaime Tardy came close to giving up. As she prepared her farewell email to her subscribers, something stopped her. A nagging something. Such procrastinating somethings often end badly, but on this occasion it turned out for the best.

CNN called wanting to interview her about how she cleared \$70,000 of debt and began a life of blogging. I love such serendipitous phone calls, although this marked the beginning of Jaime's unfortunate journey of exciting opportunity.

"I prepared my site for an up-spike in traffic for my CNN feature, but not for my face to appear on Yahoo's homepage," she said, recalling a time before she interviewed hundreds of millionaires for her podcast, *The Eventual Millionaire*. "My site crashed, and remained down for days. When it came back online, I realised how much potential traffic I'd lost, and the missed opportunities."

Everyone hopes to go viral, but how many of us prepare for it? Amid her ecstasy and excitement, shock and realisation hit, but this isn't the part of Jamie's story I love, because a few months later the unthinkable happened.

"I assumed it was a fluke, and I wouldn't get that sort of exposure again." Shaking her head, she laughed. "Not long after, I appeared on Yahoo's homepage again, and again, my site crashed."

The shock of the unexpected is one thing, but the shock of reliving the same pain twice, a different kind of agony.

"Oh, it hurt," she said. "Stupid too, because I could have changed my hosting rather easily. I managed to gather some metrics this time, and in the two hours my site stayed up, I received over 8,000 visitors." She shook her head again. "I remained on Yahoo's homepage for a further forty-eight hours, and all the while my site stayed down. I kept thinking about those lost visitors, but couldn't handle it. Like I say, it hurt."

It's amazing how a great opportunity can turn sour rather quickly, but that's the thing about shock. It shocks you.

In Stage one of your Great Mistake, we focus on these dreaded moments that slow to a standstill. Beginning in your stomach and rumbling up your chest, it continues to your brain and out of your mouth as an "Oh. No."

Jaime experienced this shocking moment at a time she should celebrate and jump for joy, as exposure on Yahoo's homepage is what all bloggers aspire to.

I've watched successful entrepreneurs relive these awful moments many times throughout this journey. Fraser Doherty, the teenage founder of Superjam did, as he realised his big meeting offered bad news, spending an entire year building a brand the UK's biggest supermarket's didn't want.

When Chris Cerrone, of the ever-popular Cerrone Show Podcast, drove down the highway one evening, he became overcome by a weird sensation as black dots covered his line of

sight. After a few days of pushing through, he visited the doctor who told him how dehydrated and stressed he was, which shook Chris into action and to change his spiralling lifestyle.

And then there's Laura Benson, the owner of Jeanne Beatrice, and the moment she realised a new supplier scammed her out of \$2,000. Whatever the mistake, and however big or small, those initial moments of stress, pain, and shock are enough to unnerve the most experienced and hard-nosed entrepreneur.

This is what we'll focus on over the coming pages, unearthing the attributes of a mistake, and the various forms it can take. You'll delve into the warning signs, and how although this period of shock often comes as a surprise, the telltale signs are there all along. You'll also focus on the common responses an entrepreneur makes, and the inevitable ignorance everyone has in the beginning.

To finish stage one, we'll look at a few tips, tricks, and tasks you can tackle, because although you cannot escape mistake-hood and failure, you can prepare for it.

Let's delve into some stories sure to make you cringe, grit your teeth, and sigh in disbelief.

## THE ATTRIBUTES OF A MISTAKE

When starting this book, I had two major fears: that no one would share their stories with me, because who wants to place their dirty washing into the public eye; and that everyone would share the same old story, because how different can one mistake differ to the next?

This first fear flew out of the window within days, as people said, "One mistake? Are you sure you don't want more?"

The other didn't hold much traction either, as no two stories were the same. Sure they share similarities, but every entrepreneur shared tales about different issues, at different stages along their journey, and to varying magnitudes. Like stories themselves, each mistake holds rather personal and unique aspects, but most share certain common attributes.

This is where I wish to focus your attention in the very beginning, because before you can overcome mistakes and failure, you must understand what they are, what they're made of, and how they come about. To keep the power of seven alive and well, we'll break things down into: *hiring people, growth/expansion, communication, fear, vision and meaning, decision making, and external issues.*

As an entrepreneur striving to succeed, you're prone to making one or more of these mistakes. You may even sit on the verge of making one right now, and when you do it'll shock you. Just like it did these successful folk.

## THE ART OF HIRING PEOPLE:

As an entrepreneur you have to hire people. Some businesses require more staff than others, and maybe all you need is a team of virtual assistants and freelancers. It doesn't matter, for a hire's a hire my fellow hustler, and odds are you'll make a few bad ones along the way.

It's a mistake many have shared, and they come in an array of shapes and sizes. Whether it involves hiring friends, or settling for the cheapest option, or headhunting that prized executive, hiring mistakes manifest from poor judgement each and every time. Your poor judgement. You place yourself in a state of desperation and focus on the task of hiring anyone, rather than finding the right someone.

As Rameet Chawla suggests, "You should hire those you want, rather than those you need." More in this guy soon...

The art of hiring people isn't about hiring, rather ensuring you don't fire them a week, or a month, or a year down the line. This is where that dreaded moment of shock hides. Hiring someone offers excitement and hope, but firing someone - especially a friend - hurts. I don't just mean your ego or sense of moral standing, but your business. It hurts your business on so many levels, and this is what inspiring folk like Jordan Harbinger, Zeke Camusio, Jon Crawford, and Rameet Chawla teach us.

There are costs to a bad hire, and they go far beyond literal ones like training, recruiting, and salary. But before we get ahead of ourselves, let's focus on the early hiring mistakes so many of us are prone to, and the dreaded combination of friends and money.

I knew Jordan Harbinger as a guy with lots of crazy stories, including kidnappings and other life-threatening tales. His hiring mistake may not have cost lives, but when it comes to a moment of incredulous shock, it doesn't get much better than this.

"I remember having a conversation once," said Jordan, describing his moment of misguided madness. "Where we tried to create a new position for this one guy, because he was no good at any other role we slotted him into."

Considering Jordan's empire, *The Art of Charm*, began life as a humble podcast, it's understandable it grew somewhat organically. After reaching a certain level of success, he and his partners had to hire people, and so he did what most new entrepreneurs do, and approached friends, and friends-of-friends, and those he knew.

Now, hiring friends isn't a problem per se because we all have talented buddies, but if you hire them because it's quick and relatively painless, is it the right hire or the easy one? If it's the latter, you may find yourself in Jordan's shoes, creating new roles and positions in a bid to avoid firing them.

"I remember showering later that day," he continued, his tone a mixture of embarrassment and enjoyment. "And thinking to myself, 'Did I really spend thirty minutes figuring out a new role for someone in order to justify paying him a lot of money?'"

Another young go-getting entrepreneur who turned to friends was Zeke Camusio, founder of Digital Aptitude, an online marketing agency located in the heart of Portland. Rather than focus on the right hire, he took the route with the least amount of resistance, which as we've already shown, breeds rather poor judgement.

"I ruined two friendships because I hired the wrong person and had to let them go," he said to me over Skype. "I found myself hiring those I came across - friends, friends-of-friends, those in desperate need of jobs - and did so because I wanted to get it over and done with. It was the easy thing to do."

As an entrepreneur you have a million tasks on your agenda, and this number rarely decreases. It's understandable to take the path of least resistance, but to reiterate, the art of hiring doesn't lie in the hire, but ensuring you don't have to fire. I've met lots of entrepreneurs who work with friends and family and loved ones, and it works wonderfully. But it only does if they're the right person for the job. If they're not, and instead hired because it's the easy or cheap option, you face quite the dilemma, which Mr Harbinger himself sums up rather well. "If there's one thing worse than hiring friends, it's firing them."

Of course, hiring friends, and often taking the cheap and easy option, isn't the only issue facing an entrepreneur like yourself. There's another route to take, which Jon Crawford, the founder of StoreEnvy did. As a business pitted against the likes of Etsy, standing out and making an impact is important, so Jon focussed his hiring efforts on the best-of-the-best.

"I tried to design a company culture built on *rockstars*," said Jon, from his contemporary San Francisco office. "I intentionally found designers who had their own following, and were people of 'note'. But what I quickly realised was, we weren't getting anything done. We weren't releasing anything. We weren't shipping anything. The reason was, we weren't on the same page, because when you're a *rockstar*, it's hard to play a role in someone else's band."

Considering he'd just seed-funded his startup and had the money to go after the best, Jon took an understandable approach. But it comes back to your judgement, and striving to make the right hire. Whereas a bootstrapped business may lose focus and go after the easy, cheap, and quick option, a heavily funded one can go wobbly at the knees over the headline-hitting executive.

Either way, it boils down to poor judgement on your behalf, and making decisions for the wrong reasons. You hire and fire and hire again, wasting time, money, and resources during a period of potential growth. And this is where the true shock of a bad hire lies, because although firing someone hurts, the real issue is how it affects your business.

There are actual costs, such as training and salaries and the extra equipment you must buy, but the most dangerous costs are the invisible ones; the potential ones.

A good hire relieves you of work and makes your life easier. A bad hire does the opposite, wasting your precious time and resources as you train them, shadow them, and watch them with eagle-eyes. Every minute you spend on a bad hire is a minute you can't spend on client work, sales, marketing, and the growth of your business.

When it comes to your fundamental task as an entrepreneur, isn't it to grow your business and achieve your potential? Each bad hire not only makes this job harder, but has the potential to prevent it all together. This cannot be painted any clearer than when you sit back and consider the potential money left on the table, which is where our buddy Rameet Chawla comes in.

As founder of Fuelled, one of New York's hippest and fastest growing app agencies, Rameet's hired an array of talent in recent years. Listening to him roll one story off after another, a particular tale stopped me in my tracks.

"This one time, we hired a sales person," he said, shaking his head. "Over a three month period, we lost every lead assigned to them. If you consider the potential income lost, all because we hired a cheaper staff member, it's huge. We usually convert at 20-30%, and with a standard project creating \$50,000 of revenue, the lost opportunity from one poor hire hit us hard."

This one sentence changed everything. From here on in, each hire-related faux pas I listened to made me consider the money left on the table. The wasted time. The wasted resources. The lost opportunities, all because you take the cheap option, the easy option, the ego-driven one.

*“Hire those you want, rather than those you need.”*

This is the nugget of wisdom you should highlight right now, because it’s always easier to take the path of least resistance. But the moment you take this direction, you set potential chaos in motion. Rather than take work off your plate, they add stress to your day. Rather than make you money, they lose it. Instead of finding new clients, they scare existing ones away.

So the next time you hire someone, picture Jordan Harbinger in the shower (*in a professional sense, of course*), and consider the moment of shock when you realise you’re spending your days figuring out how to pay someone large sums of money, just so you don’t have to fire them.

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