Expand and Contract
The Natural Order of Life

Hello and welcome to the July Edition of the Ideal Almanac.

I see things differently than most people, just ask my wonderful wife, and combined with my continuous search for adrenal highs from taking on new projects, just ask our teams, life is rarely boring at "work". At any given time we often end up with multiple projects in various levels of completion.

When a new idea comes to me either through Divine Intervention or just a reaction to a life event, a trigger is pulled inside my brain and a consistent thought process begins. The idea, which usually was created from a problem, is immediately mapped out in my mind as to how to move that idea to an actual process to create a solution. I figure out the basics of creating the new "thing" including how to design, test and manufacture it. Of course, it is often no further in my brain than that and I am already off trying to market and sell the idea. This of course, truly frustrates those around me who actually have to turn what is inside my head into an actual product. While this might be hard enough on our global teams, I sometimes have multiple ideas at the same time which means we have resources and personnel being pulled in various directions to try and get everything I want done in impossible time restraints because I am also impatient.

With most of my ideas, at least 9 out of 10 either don't work or are not marketable. That moment when I decide an idea will not move forward, regardless of whether we have spent a little or hundreds of thousands of dollars, I pull the plug, take the blame and everyone can rest for a while.

I just did that this morning with a new game we had been working on called "Ladders of Life." We built four samples using our in-house printing and 3D Printing capabilities so in this case it was a cheap process but only one test reviewer returned comments, which were mostly negative, and the other three gave no response which probably meant they did not want to hurt my feelings with bad comments. Translation, the game was not good enough and since we took it far enough to see its potential or lack there off, I was perfectly okay with stopping it. We have two other projects in the works right now, one has already cost $500,000.00 and the other less than $50,000. But even if these don't work, and the odds are they won't, I have learned that we can't get to a successful product or process until the other ideas are tried to whatever extent necessary, and then stopped. You might consider these failures, I simply figure they were part of the process to get us where we need to be going. I don't like spending money on ideas that don't work but I have never been able to look at something and decide whether it would be successful without actually trying it. Maybe other smarter people can but I don't have that ability so we will keep doing it this way.

By the way, the one out of ten ideas that have worked over time has made us a successful, growing, global company, therefore for us, the process works. Don't feel sorry for our teams, we try their ideas too and they love the challenges of creating something from nothing no matter who thought of them. To succeed we have to first fail multiple times but that is okay because besides the success, I am convinced we have a great majority of the fun.

Read more of Andrew's blogs at:
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