

Seven lessons from a late-starting entrepreneur

John Thornhill, april 8 2022

There was an inspiring article in this Saturday's Financial Times, "[Seven lessons from a late-starting entrepreneur](#)" (paywall protected link: [here](#)).

It was written by John Thornhill. John has been a business journalist at the FT for more than 30 years. During the last three years he started a new media business called "Sifted". It was partially financed by his employer, the FT. That makes him an intrapreneur.

I was an intrapreneur, and I didn't start a business until I was 39 years old, so I saw myself in John.

The article enumerates the lessons learned in John's three-year start-up experience. Without doing complete justice to John's article, his lessons that struck me were:

Your business's demands will far outstrip your own skills, determination, and energy. You'll need a team. They need to be enthusiastic, hard-working, critical and challenging. The challengers are the hard ones to find... most of us are taught to avoid confronting the boss with his occasional abject stupidity.

You are going to make lots of mistakes, often in parallel. You'll need to recognise and learn from those experiences in the midst of constant crisis.

Don't give up: if you are getting out there, customers and prospects are going to tell you what they need. Listen to their feedback and keep trying.

I'm hoping that many CSI employees get to follow in my late-starting intrapreneurial footsteps and in those of John. And lest John's start-up lessons sound too daunting, I'll leave you with a quote from his article:

"The past three years... have been the most exhilarating, unnerving, frustrating and rewarding I could imagine."

Mark L.

P.S. If you are a CSI employee and have the urge to use your experience and energy to passionately pursue your ideas, please contact Karl Schabas (karl.schabas@vmsfund.com).