

The Placement Diaries: Week 10 - A Quiet Week and More Market Research

19th November 2021

It's been 10 weeks so far, and it still feels like I'm at square one, so I need to get a bit of a move on, and actually focus in one idea 100% instead of flip flopping between two different ideas at any one time because it's starting to do my head in, as well as causing confusion between myself and everyone else. This week has mainly been quiet because I've been **thinking** about stuff for way too long, and I didn't end up going to the challenge that I was planning on going to (as much as I wanted to) mainly because I didn't really want to get up way too early just to go to it, so I'm a bit stumped at that, but maybe next time.

The illustration business idea seems too easy for me to do since I'm good at it and I do enjoy it to an extent, but that market is really saturated, and it doesn't really hold my interest for that long since it's stuff I could potentially do with my eyes closed; it's basically my comfort zone, and nothing exciting really happens there, so with that idea, it feels like I've pressed the panic button and ran to what I already know (I did the same thing this time last year as well, so I don't want it to become a trend where I have really ambitious ideas, but then chicken out at the last minute and resort to the easy things instead), so there isn't really a market to explore and potentially exploit, let alone have anything that's actually unique (well, apart from the style of work, but everyone does that, so it isn't really unique if everyone's doing it), since this isn't what I actually signed up for.

The experimental web design business idea, on the other hand, is a bit out my current skill set and reach, but it's got potential and it does seem interesting since there really isn't that much of a market for that yet (meaning that I could potentially be the first one there, but I have found other similar hard-to-find businesses working in that area, which I'm using more as sources of inspiration rather than as competitors). Okay, I probably need to do more work with this idea, but I personally find it exciting as well as being able to see what I can do with it, plus it ties in with both my research and personal interests, so that's a win (no good being a creative technologist and frontend web developer if you've got a business in selling prints of your illustrations). It's a bit out of my comfort zone, but I guess if I do it all the time, it will eventually become my comfort zone, yet the thing with technology is that it's constantly evolving, so your comfort zone will have to grow as well if you want to keep up with it.

I'm going to compare these two business ideas to buying a house. The first house (the very-easy-to-do illustration business idea) is a new build, surrounded by other similar looking new builds (in this case, other illustrators doing the same thing as you), and it's well within your budget. It's been done up for you, so all you have to do is move in, along with getting to know your new neighbours. However, you can't really make your mark with it since there's barely any space to swing a cat around (speaking of cats, I also got a cat this week, so there's that), and not a lot of potential to actually do anything with the house, so all you can do is just live in the house. Whilst it is comfortable to live in, that's it, you can't go beyond that at all, unless you decide to buy a bigger house, but the house you're currently in is so comfortable that it's actually boring, but you get used to it, and before you know it, you're a disillusioned and depressed middle aged person.

Now, on the other hand, the second house (the slightly harder, but more interesting experimental web design business idea) isn't a new build at all, but rather, a slightly run down house in a decent area where you can tell that the houses have been done up to a very good standard. It's a bit out of your budget (in buying the house itself), but you really like the area that the house is in, and you'd want to be able to make that house uniquely yours, not to mention that the house has a lot of potential, so you can make it bigger if you want. Living in this house would be slightly uncomfortable at first (especially with all the work that you'd have to do, not to mention that it will take a long time to do, before your dreams and visions can be realised), but it will become worth it in the long run since the house will be uniquely yours, rather than just simply moving into a new build because it's easier to do than to buy a house and do it up.

So in short, do you (or do I, in this case) choose to go for the ridiculously easy option where there isn't really that much room to grow, or do you choose to go for the slightly harder option where there's actually room for you to grow and expand your idea? Make that decision very quickly (this is a note to self), and actually stick to it (dear mind, can you please stop changing your mind all the damn time since it's not helping at all, you're just holding me back, which is very annoying, since I just want to actually realise my original business idea instead of getting sidetracked into something else).

So, in terms of the business ideas, I can either go for the ridiculously easy idea (so easy, it's mind numbing, a bit like the part time job I'm doing), but not have that much room to grow (a bit like buying a new build which you can't really do much with since it's already been done for you), or I can go for the slightly harder idea (it will be a bit uncomfortable at first, but I'll get used to it over time), where it's got room to grow, so that I'm not stuck doing one thing over and over again (a bit like buying that house which is a bit out of your budget, but the house is in a good area and it's got potential, so you can make it bigger), which means that it will be more interesting in the long run,

not to mention that this is what I had planned to do before I panicked and ran straight into my comfort zone.

Anyway, enough about business ideas and houses, I've been trying to do some more market research again, along with how much I hate doing it, but I guess it's important to understand what's actually going on in the world, and if people actually want what you offer or not. However, the only way to well and truly find out about it is to actually get out there and sell the damn things to see if it's successful or not. Less overthinking, more doing (proceeds to overthink everything ever anyway).

Also, the term "market research" tends to throw me off a bit, because I think of research as a formal thing where you sit down at a desk and write essays where you have to cite articles as well as having tonnes of abstract theories that vaguely link to each other, and before you know it, you're a madman with a notice board where there's red string everywhere (all connecting wildly different things), convincing everyone that there's *some* connection in all the things that you're trying to link, as well as being able to communicate it in a way that people actually understand what you're on about. I guess if "market research" was called something less formal and jargony, I'd be more willing to do it instead of feeling thrown off and put off by the idea of doing research, especially if it's research outside of my immediate research interests, along with having to become more commercially minded, whether I like it or not.

So, that's it from this fairly quiet week, and hopefully next week, I'll focus on just one business idea (in this case, my original business idea), so hopefully, I can at least try to make a prototype out of something, as well as actually having something to show for it instead of just mulling over everything ever all the time.