This Is What Happens When You Set Unrealistic Expectations

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Commentary by Chad Carden – February 1, 2016, 10:19 AM EDT

It's not always about speeding up the process.

The Entrepreneur Insider network is an online community where the most thoughtful and influential people in America's startup scene contribute answers to timely questions about entrepreneurship and careers. Today's answer to the question "What's something you wish you knew before starting your business?" is written by Chad Carden, author of Winning The Money Game.

Being an entrepreneur is an amazing journey. To be able to live your passion while impacting people, markets, and industries continues to be the drive for most of us. But I wish I would've known how much time it can take to implement an idea after developing it.

While there are ways to speed up the process of launching an idea, entrepreneurs (myself included) so often set unrealistic expectations around how much time it takes to do so. Being blinded by excitement can cause entrepreneurs to set wrong expectations around timelines, which can later kill their motivation.

When things don't happen as fast as expected, it's easy to lose steam and question your ideas, plans, and future possibilities.

Setting a crystal-clear direction and strategy for implementation is vital, but tying a timeline that factors in enough time for a real return increases the success rate.

Set realistic expectations

Expectations impact attitudes and mindset. If we meet or exceed someone's expectations (ours included), we tend to have positive attitudes and mindset. The reverse is also true: If we don't meet expectations, we tend to have a less-than-stellar attitude or mindset. I once launched a business with a goal of creating an app with at least 100 customers within the first three to four months of launching. But 15 months after starting the business, we have a prototype and five beta test customers, and I've had some major explaining to do to my four employees. We've worked through everything and have since found seed money to continue, but had I set up more realistic timeframes, it would've reduced stress, workload, and time wasted on trying to "fast-track" the process.

Save time

When you set timeframes that are realistic to your process, it actually saves you time, because now you can strategize and execute within that timeframe, which will actually get results. You limit reworking strategies, constantly resetting the clock, and switching directions. You have an idea that can change the scope of a marketplace and will have a huge impact on your customers. Don't let setting the wrong timeframes steal your dream, ideas, or passions behind the venture.

Chad is the author of two books, Winning The Money Game and P.E.P.P. He has also consulted and sold products and services in over 40 countries and his work has been translated in over 10 languages. Chad has also had the privilege of being invited to the White House to participate in a small business roundtable.