

How does a startup become viable?

This question became more than academic when I became the Chief Operating Officer (COO) of my own tech startup, TOBC. There are plenty of methodologies out there for developing a startup. Unfortunately, we found that no single methodology fit our startup.

In this case, I discuss how we applied four related startup methodologies—by Eric Ries, Steve Blank, Agile Methodology, and Alexander Osterwalder & Yves Pigneur—to our startup. We discovered that these methodologies guided our startup development in different ways.

What is The Old Ball Coach?

The Old Ball Coach (TOBC) is a browser based, football management simulation game that allows a user to play the role of football head coach and general manager. The game is targeted to football video game players that typically enjoy playing the simulation part of current popular football games more than actually playing the individual games. Its primary purpose is to deliver a management experience instead of the management experience being an additional/supporting feature.

Methods

TOBC set out to test our assumptions on whether there are people who would pay for our services. We turned to Steven Blank's The Startup Owner's Manual, Osterwalder and Pigneur's Business Model Generation, Ken Schwaber and Jeff Sutherland's Agile Scrum Alliance Scrum Guide, and Eric Ries' The Lean Startup to launch TOBC from ideation to consumer recreation.

This capstone explores what methods TOBC used and why. Then I examine the results from ascribing to particular heuristics.

"The only help a youth wants is to be directed what books to read and in what order."- Thomas Jefferson

Human Dimensions of Organizations | Innovation Comes Standard

Rosita Tran III, Master of Arts Candidate

Lessons Learned

Methodology	Steps	Feedback Loops	Benefits	Weaknesses	
Steven Blank	There are 2 areas: Customer Development, Customer Validation, with 4 phases nestled within each	Slow, if any	 Road map to follow Shared language to begin explaining what our product is Checklist to follow for each phase 	 Doesn't quite explain how to follow the roadmap or how it fits into the entire method Blank lays out. Doesn't provide the user any structure No feedback loops 	
sterwalder & Pigneur	9 "Building Blocks" that show the logic of how a company intends to make money	Componentized feedback	 Clear business model that gives the company a shared language and a systematic way to challenge assumptions 	 It didn't give us a good way to collaborate to get the job done. 	
gile Methodology Weekly 15 minute Scrum framework where these three questions are ask: 1. What have you been working on? 2. What are your impediments? 3. Do you have anything to demo?		Fast, transparent feedback	 Clearer alignment on strategy and execution Stay informed and focused on what matters most Share knowledge and best practices 	• Time intensive	
Eric Ries	Build, Measure, Learn	Precise, customer-centered feedback	 Accurate data Actual needs of the customer Reveal info we wouldn't have thought to ask because of failure 	 Lacks guidance for how to execute iterations 	

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Image Sources • TOBC Archives • The Lean Startup, Eric Ries, 2011

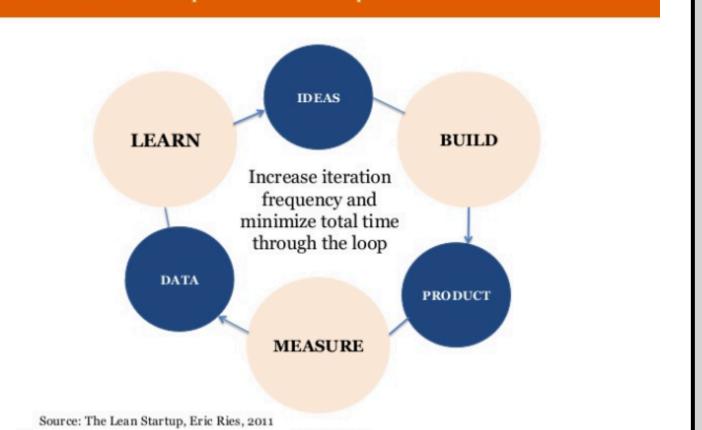
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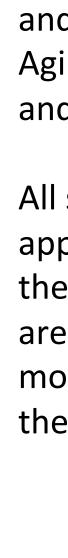
The Old Ball Coach: A Case Applying Four Startup Methodologies

Human Dimensions of Organizations, The University of Texas at Austin



The Lean Startup Feedback Loop





Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my mom, Rose Cox, for being my biggest fan, for holding me accountable to the dreams I mused aloud, and for her unconditional love and support. We did this together! Thank you to my familysisters/ Tio's/Tia's/ cousins- for giving me the encouragement and motivation to pursue said dreams, and for your unwavering confidence in me. Thank you to John Reyes for introducing me to the world of tech startups and for your unbending stance on promoting women in tech. Words can't express what your love and friendship mean to me.

A special thanks to Clay Spinuzzi for being a phenomenal advisor and an outstanding project manager role model. Finally, thank you to my HDO classmates and faculty for such entertaining discussions and for sharing a piece of your complex and colorful lives with me; I'm honored. I thoroughly enjoyed taking this journey with v'all! Hook 'Em!

The University of Texas at Austin



Conclusions

the company worked with the different proaches, TOBC realized that no one approach as a magic bullet. Combining the best from each proach was most effective for startup success. able 1 compares the four approaches.

artups may need unique combinations of ethods. This case study helps us to understand ne different approaches brought to the table for ur unique startup.

nderstanding the composition of the team's ollective strengths as well as the possible gaps in dividual experience is key. Trying to embrace a arning organization concept and building roficiency in areas that the team lacks knowledge also helped. This is where having a growth indset will yield better results, in both the short nd long term. As with the lessons learned from gile and Ries, TOBC took an iterative approach nd learned from those experiences.

All startups face unique circumstances. Multiple approaches can help them to better understand these circumstances, just as they did for TOBC . We are continuing this journey and will doubtless use more approaches. But we systematically examine these approaches so we can draw better lessons.



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