Introduction

When it comes to discovering a great startup idea, there's often a tension between actively brainstorming and letting ideas emerge organically. While sitting down to deliberately think up ideas can be effective, some of the most impactful concepts often arise from simply living life with an awareness of what's missing—a gap in the market, or an unmet need that becomes evident in your everyday experiences. Instead of forcing the process, it might be more productive to keep a background process running, constantly filtering your experiences through the question, "What could make this better?"

The best startup ideas aren't always those that aim to please everyone. Often, the most successful ventures solve a crucial problem for a specific group of people. A solution that is hugely desirable for a few can be far more successful than something that's only somewhat desirable for many, as the latter risks appealing to no one in the end.

Building a startup is a long game. Some of the most valuable ideas come from deep expertise and experience. Whether you're working in a startup, becoming an expert in a valuable field, or simply building something that interests you, these activities can lay the foundation for identifying those golden opportunities. Don't shy away from tough ideas—those that are challenging to implement or seem less glamorous. Often, these "unsexy" ideas have less competition and can lead to significant rewards if executed well.

Interestingly, sometimes the best ideas come when you're not actively trying to find them. Meditation and mindfulness exercises can help clear your mind, fostering creativity when you least expect it. Similarly, engaging in completely different activities, like going for a walk, hiking in nature, or pursuing a hobby, can give your mind the rest it needs to bring new ideas to the surface. Sleep, walks, and spending time outdoors are surprisingly effective in triggering inspiration.

It's also essential to embrace diverse experiences. Regularly stepping out of your comfort zone, trying new activities, or learning new skills can open your mind to new ideas. Traveling, if possible, can expose you to different cultures and ways of life, offering fresh perspectives and inspiring new concepts.

Sometimes, all it takes to spark creativity is a change in environment. Working from a coffee shop, library, or even a different room in your house can provide new stimuli and prompt innovative thoughts. The key is to keep doing new stuff—exploring new places, meeting new people, diving into new topics, and picking up new hobbies. New inputs often lead to new outputs.

However, be wary of common pitfalls. It's easy to fall into the trap of solving symptoms rather than addressing the root problem. There's also "Schlep Blindness"—the tendency to avoid problems that seem too tough to tackle. Additionally, founders often gravitate towards areas of personal interest, which can create tunnel vision and result in an overestimation of the market size or viability of an idea. Balancing passion with objective evaluation is crucial for identifying ideas that not only excite you but also have strong market potential.

Below I am listing approaches to finding the startup idea.

The best resources I came across on this topic:

:

- [How the most successful B2B startups came up with their original idea](#)
- [Coming up with the B2C startup idea](#)

Problems you faced

Think about problems or inconveniences you face in your daily life. Often, the best business ideas come from solving a problem you personally encounter

What I personally wish existed

Spend 21 days recording every problem you encounter

Your unfair advantages

Analyse your unfair advantages - what unique skills, connection, experiences or insights do you have.

https://www.amazon.com/Unfair-Advantage-Startup-Success-Starts/dp/1788163311

Use your expertise

Do all kinds of analysis in what you are expert in. Think of every job you've had (plus internships and life experiences)

Use your industry expertise as a privilege to execute something innovative

What problems did I come across, what did I learn others don't know about?

Innovate around your interests/passions

What topics are you passionate above?

Causes which matter most to me. What are the issues that I care about deeply?

When did I feel happiest

When did I feel a lot of energy

What do I love reading about, what captures my attention on new, social media

Which people I admire and why, what they do

When you were proud of yourself, which skills did you use

Which events and experiences you want to repeat

Products/companies which inspire me

Brainstorm - how expertise and interests can intersect

How can your skills be applied to a completely different area?

Use ChatGPT to generate of unusual ideas - list information you find important (your strengths, your interests, your expertise) and ask AI to generate innovative business ideas

Stop taking the status quo for granted and start to question things.

Pay particular attention to things that chafe you. The advantage of taking the status quo for granted is not just that it makes life (locally) more efficient, but also that it makes life more tolerable. If you knew about all the things we'll get in the next 50 years but don't have yet, you'd find present day life pretty constraining, just as someone from the present would if they were sent back 50 years in a time machine. When something annoys you, it could be because you're living in the future.

Work on small projects which seem cool

Work on projects that seem like they'd be cool. If you do that, you'll naturally tend to build things that are missing

Immerse yourself into an industry

Pick an industry of your interest or an industry you want to explore due to other reasons (maybe based on market trends). Immerse yourself into it to "see" problems

- Participate in industry conferences and webinars, these events are often where new ideas and future trends are discussed first. Attending industry-specific conferences, trade shows, and webinars can provide early insights.
- Learn or work in areas which are new to you, do not focus on entrepreneurship classes
- Shadow people
- Network like crazy in the industry and take introductions extremely seriously

If you're fixated on a particular industry or market, consider looking into completely different areas. Exploring industries that are unfamiliar to you can provide new insights and ideas.

Conduct a research

Talk to people from a chosen industry/chosen type of potential users.

- Understand their day to day, their struggles, problems they face. One successful startup talked to 100 truck drivers, by that got deep understanding of gaps.
- Analyse "jobs to be done" - the concept of "Jobs to be Done" (JTBD) is a framework used to understand the underlying reasons why people use products or services. It goes beyond just looking at the features or benefits of a product and instead focuses on the motivations and needs that drive people to "hire" a product or service to get a specific "job" done in their lives
- Focus on the customer's actions and behavior - rather than asking for someone's opinion, try to understand what they actually do and why.
- Ask open-ended, non-leading questions
- Avoid yes/no questions - these types of questions can be limiting and don't provide much useful information. Instead, try to ask questions that encourage the potential customer to explain their thoughts and experiences in more detail.
- Listening actively and taking detailed notes: Pay close attention to what the customer is saying and try to capture as much detail as possible. This will help you better understand their needs and pain points.
- Shadow people doing their job, often what people say is misleading and differs from what they actually do or how they do it.
- Take a different look at the problem - people might be saying they want fast horses, actually, they want faster vehicle

Address problems/gaps of existing products/services

Review public feedback about products of services of your interest or which are in demand and think how the common frustrations with them could be addressed. Remember to check Reddit

Analyse most criticised products/services

- You can also look on the iOS or Android app store for popular and highly downloaded apps that have poor star ratings. For those apps, the idea is strong but the experience is not.
- Trustpilot
  1. Go to Trustpilot
  2. Select the business category that your interested in
  3. Check out the top companies
  4. Filter by 2 & 3 star reviews (1 star reviews aren't the best for this because it's just people hating on the product)

5. See if you could solve any of the frustrations of the customers and you might just stumble upon a new startup idea

How can I do better? - "10x" something – make existing businesses 10x easier, 10x faster, 10x more productive, or 10x better in some other way.

Do SWOT analysis

Trends/ changes

Stay informed about global trends and technological advancements. Keeping an eye on shifts in consumer behavior and technology can reveal untapped markets.

Platforms like **Statista** and **Data.gov** provide access to data and statistics that can reveal market trends and gaps.

Services like **MarketResearch.com**, and **IBISWorld** provide access to extensive market research reports and data, helping you identify gaps and trends.

- Chatgpt - prompt to share trends
- https://www.trendhunter.com/
- https://www.accenture.com/us-en/insights/song/accenture-life-trends
- https://www.entrepreneur.com/starting-a-business/business-ideas
- https://www.trendwatching.com/
    - https://www.trendwatching.com/makeshift
    - https://www.trendwatching.com/2024-trend-check
- https://trends.google.com/trends/
- https://www.springwise.com/
- https://www.cbinsights.com/ - paid
- https://www.pewresearch.org/
- https://www.forbes.com/innovation/?sh=37f39c8d6834
- https://explodingtopics.com/
- https://www.gartner.com/en/research/methodologies/gartner-hype-cycle - paid
- https://www.gartner.com/en/information-technology
- https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/insights-store
- https://www.vml.com/expertise/intelligence/trend-reports
    - https://www.vml.com/insight/the-future-100-2024
- https://www.wgsn.com/en
- https://www.startus-insights.com/resources/
- https://digitalleadership.com/blog/
- https://techcrunch.com/ + newsletter

50 trends - https://darlucey.notion.site/Trends-Database-ec9b6bd7f5e4445a97602829afc380f1

Discover trends

- https://meetglimpse.com/
- https://treendly.com/

2025

- https://www.trendhunter.com/trends/2025-trend-report
- Tech trends - https://www.pluralsight.com/blog/career/tech-in-2025
- Future consume 2025 - https://mlp.wgsn.com/future-consumer-2025-download-en.html
- Travel industry - https://info.skift.com/hubfs/Skift-Megatrends-2025.pdf
- Finance - https://www.deloitte.com/content/dam/assets-shared/legacy/docs/perspectives/2022/gx-crunchtime-finance-2025-revisited.pdf
- Global trends - https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/Newsroom/Reports%20and%20Pubs/2025_Global_Trends_Final_Report.pdf
- https://explodingtopics.com/blog/emerging-trends

Dying industries

For example, journalism is in free fall at the moment. But there may still be money to be made from something like journalism. What sort of company might cause people in the future to say "this replaced journalism" on some axis?

Analyse proven ideas in overseas markets, and bring those to the local region

Think of new variants of recent successful startups

Look at companies which have been successful recently and look for new variants of them

Monitor what are the new products emerging, which problems they address, what are they innovating on, look for hook/your own ideas

https://www.producthunt.com/

https://www.kickstarter.com/

https://www.indiegogo.com/explore/all?project_timing=all&product_stage=all&sort=trending

Monitoring startups and venture capital (VC) movements is a strategic way to gauge emerging trends and understand which sectors or technologies are attracting interest and investment. Here's how you can effectively track these movements:

1. Follow VC Firms and Investors

Identify Key VC Firms: Focus on VC firms known for their successful investments and trendspotting abilities. Firms like Sequoia Capital, Andreessen Horowitz, and Accel Partners are prominent players.

Social Media and Blogs: Many VC firms and investors maintain active blogs or social media profiles where they discuss their investment focus and market views.

2. Use Startup Databases

Crunchbase: A platform offering information on startups, including funding rounds, investors, and recent news.

PitchBook: Provides detailed data on private capital markets, including VC, private equity, and M&A deals.

AngelList: Particularly useful for tracking early-stage startups and angel investor activities.

CB Insights: Offers analytics, data, and research on private companies and emerging industries.

3. Websites of startup incubators and accelerators often showcase the companies they support. Reviewing these portfolios can provide insights into emerging trends and ideas.

3. Industry News and Reports

TechCrunch and VentureBeat: Websites that frequently report on startup funding rounds and emerging tech companies.

Startup and Tech Newsletters: Subscribing to newsletters like The Information, Axios Pro Rata, or Fortune Term Sheet can provide daily updates on startup and VC activities.

4. Networking and Events

Attend Startup Events: Events like TechCrunch Disrupt, Web Summit, or local startup meetups can be valuable for direct interactions with startup founders and investors.

Online Webinars and Forums: Participate in webinars and forums focused on startups and venture capital to gather insights and trends.

5. Analyze Sector-Specific Trends

Specialized Publications: Read publications specific to sectors you're interested in, as they often feature startups and investments in their domain.

Reports by Consulting Firms: Firms like McKinsey & Company, Deloitte, and Accenture regularly release reports on market trends, including insights into innovative startups and sectors attracting VC funding.

6. Listen to Relevant Podcasts

Podcasts like "The Pitch", "Masters of Scale", or "How I Built This": These offer insights into what VCs look for in startups and share stories of successful startups.

7. Utilize LinkedIn

Follow Startups and VCs: LinkedIn is a great platform to follow startups and VCs. You can get updates on their activities, new investments, and posts about market trends.

8. Hackathons and Coding Competitions

Platforms like HackerRank and TopCoder host coding competitions and hackathons. Reviewing past challenges can spark software or app ideas

Look at acquired startups and replicate

www.Acquire.com

1. Go to (you'll need to sign up)
2. Filter companies that are doing over 100K a year (you can change this number but filtering over this number can get you some really good ideas)
3. Look for product ideas that resonates with you
4. Are there any features that are missing from the product? If so you could be onto something.

Look at startups building in public or open source projects

Get inspired from those ideas and come up with your variations using brainstorming techniques

https://openstartuplist.com/

https://www.indiehackers.com/ideas

https://www.reddit.com/r/opensource/

Look at failed startups

Another opportunity for entrepreneurs might be to look for businesses that have failed, and see whether they were simply "ahead of their time."

https://www.failory.com/

https://www.failory.com/cemetery

https://killedbygoogle.com

1. Autopsy (getautopsy.com) - doing a similar thing, but they just don't seem to have pursued this aggressively enough to make noteworthy progress. Only ~2000 entries in 8 years.
2. Numerous smaller lists (https://compile.blog/failed-startups/, https://www.crunchbase.com/hub/startups-that-failed-in-2023, https://www.petecodes.io/founders-share-their-startup-graveyards/

Utilize online idea generation/discovery tools

there are several platforms and communities where people share business ideas

Those probably wont give you the next big idea right away, but they can kickstart your thinking. Use brainstorming techniques described below

Links mentioned below is not a promotion or a recommendation. It is purely a collection of links I found which could potentially help, I have not validated all of them based on their usefullness

Link	Description
https://www.reddit.com ● https://www.reddit.com/r/ProblemsNeedSolution/ ● https://www.reddit.com/r/SomebodyMakeThis/ ● https://www.reddit.com/r/AppIdeas/ ● https://www.reddit.com/r/Business_Ideas/	
https://thegigabrain.com/feed	Aggregates and analyzes useful discussions from Reddit and other communities.
https://indieideas.io/	A platform for sharing and discovering indie business ideas.
https://go.gummysearch.com/	A tool for market research, helping find customer feedback and insights from online communities like Reddit.
https://authidea.vercel.app/	Similar tool for market research and finding customer insights.
https://www.gethalfbaked.com/ 100 startup ideas - https://darlucey.notion.site/Ideas-Database-a76b01b2b5ff41d5be86b5fe6e1d9401	Startup ideas newsletter.

URL	Description
https://www.rightidea.co/	Platform for sharing and exploring startup ideas.
https://www.ideawip.com/	A platform where users can post and vote on startup ideas.
https://ideaspies.com/	Online platform for sharing innovative ideas across various categories.
https://doesitexist.io/	Tool to search if a product or service already exists.
https://www.bizideas.ai/	Platform that uses AI to generate business ideas.
https://www.notshipped.com/	Platform where you can share or explore ideas that haven't been developed yet.
https://nugget.one/nuggets?opensesame=true	Platform offering a collection of startup ideas.
https://wip.co/projects/ideasai	AI-generated business ideas platform.
https://ideaspark.crxapplications.com/	Idea generation tool.
https://terriblehorriblenogoodverybadideas.com/	Website for sharing terrible startup ideas.
https://microsaasidea.com/	Platform for micro-SaaS business ideas.
https://shushantlakhyani.gumroad.com/	Gumroad page for Smart AI Ideas collection.
https://www.ideasgrab.com/	A list of +3400 ideas that you can use for your own projects
https://www.explodingideas.co/	Platform for discovering trending startup ideas.
https://buildthekeyword.com/	Platform to find keywords and business ideas based on SEO research.
https://oasis-of-ideas.com/repository	Platform for storing and sharing ideas.
https://www.owchie.com/pain-points	
https://app.collabfinder.net/projects	Platform for creatives and technologists to share projects and find collaborators.
https://brainstorming.com/	A website dedicated to brainstorming and idea generation.
https://www.indiehackers.com/ideas	Platform where indie hackers share and discuss business ideas.
https://www.ideaconnection.com/services.html	Platform for crowdsourcing ideas and solutions for business challenges.

https://www.mindsumo.com/challenges/all?flags=none	Connects businesses with problem solvers to share ideas and solutions for various challenges.
https://www.openideo.com/	Open innovation platform for solving big challenges through community collaboration.
https://cofounderslab.com/discuss	Platform for finding co-founders, advisors, and team members for startups.
https://getmakerlog.com/	Community of makers sharing daily progress and ideas.
https://www.sideprojectors.com/#/	Platform where users can share side projects and get feedback.
https://app.bigideaplatform.com/idea_pipeline	Platform for managing and sharing startup ideas.
https://ahrefs.com/keyword-generator	Keyword generator tool for finding low competition, high-volume search terms.
https://problem-base-webapp.vercel.app/problems	Web app for finding problems that need solution 1. Go to https://ahrefs.com/keyword-generator 2. Search for random stuff to find keywords with a high volume (number of people searching) with a low KD (Keyword difficulty - how difficult it would be to rank in the top 10 on google. 20 and below would be what we're looking for here) 3. Based on what you find do a search on Google and see if there is any tool on top of Google. 4. If not then you've found an idea that might be worth going with. If there already is a tool maybe you could build a better one?

Brainstorm - apply process/products/practice/business model to a different cause/industry

Look at existing successful products or services and think of ways to enhance them.

Consider combining features of multiple products into a new offering.

Brainstorm - big to small / small to big

Pick a successful company and do one thing they do OK as part of a big offering, and you do it great, but you offer only that small part of a product/service

Or small to big - combine multiple things and offer an end to end solution

Brainstorm - cross-industry inspiration

Generate ideas by looking at solutions in one industry that could be applied to another.

Research how different industries solve similar problems. Think about how these solutions could be adapted to the industries or trends you've noted.

Brainstorm - reverse thinking

Instead of thinking of what to add to the market, think about what you could remove or reduce. This can lead to innovative minimalist or sustainable business ideas.

Brainstorm - analogical thinking

Draw parallels from one domain to another. For example, how would a successful concept in the hospitality industry work in retail?

Brainstorm - random stimulus method

Pick a random object or word and try to relate it to your business interests. This can lead to unexpected connections and ideas.

Brainstorm - iteration as innovation

Taking that idea and adding something to it can result in a very successful challenger startup

Take ideas of others and reuse, but only those which resonate. Add to existing ideas - Yes and ..

Attend webinars/workshops

Participating in entrepreneurship workshops, webinars, or seminars can not only educate but also inspire.

Follow structured ideation programs

- Pre-accelerators
- Explore Startup Competitions and Hackathons

Brainstorm - future backwards

"Live in the future and build what's missing"

Future Backwards Exercise: Imagine a future where your ideal problem is solved. Work backward to identify what needs to happen to reach that point. This exercise can help clarify your vision and inspire innovative ideas.

Look for market gaps

Pay special attention to complaints or unmet needs in these areas. Look for gaps in the market or needs that are not being met.

- Use surveys, interviews, or focus groups to gather direct feedback from potential customers about their needs and pain points.
- Assess weaknesses of the key players in the target market, read customer reviews
- Look for Neglected customer segments
- Leverage Analytics Tools: Tools like SEMrush, Ahrefs, or even social media analytics can provide insights into what people are searching for, discussing, or asking online.
- Monitor Social Media and Forums: Platforms like Reddit, Quora, and LinkedIn can be valuable for understanding what problems or gaps users discuss in various industries.

Industry that is broken / Business models that are outdated

look for stagnant markets, sort of "broken" industries, or inefficient processes

Inspiration via collaboration

- Discuss your struggles with friends, family, or mentors. They might offer a fresh perspective or ideas you haven't considered. Sometimes just the act of verbalizing your thoughts can help clarify them.
- Attend industry events, meetups, and networking sessions to share ideas and gain insights from other entrepreneurs. Collaboration can spark new ideas and provide different viewpoints on existing problems.
- Connect with other entrepreneurs and potential mentors. Networking events, online forums, and social media groups are great for this. Learning from others' experiences can provide invaluable insights and inspiration.
- Hang out with more creative people. Conversations with diverse groups of people can spark unique ideas.
- Mastermind Groups and Brainstorming Sessions: Join or form a mastermind group. Regular meetings with a group for brainstorming can lead to a multitude of ideas.

Podcasts/books/newsletters that can spark a thought

- Read widely, beyond industry-specific material, read books and articles on a variety of topics. This can include biographies, science, technology, and global news. New ideas often come from connecting different concepts.
- Listen to podcasts and watch TED Talks on various subjects. They can be excellent sources of inspiration and innovative thinking.
- Watch documentaries on subjects you're unfamiliar with; they can spark ideas by exposing you to new perspectives.

Blue ocean strategy

Explore creating new market spaces ('Blue Oceans') rather than competing in existing markets. This involves finding ways to create and capture new demand.

Join someone who has an idea

Participate in hackathon

Join discussions online, on platforms like Reddit

Use co-founder matching platforms

- https://www.startupschool.org/cofounder-matching
- https://www.coffeespace.com/
- https://www.cofounderapp.com/
- https://cofounderslab.com/search?country=GB
- https://viphub.in/
- https://www.starthawk.io/find-a-co-founder

An extensive guide of brainstorming techniques

https://gustdebacker.com/brainstorming/

Resources for additional reading

- https://www.entrepreneur.com/starting-a-business/5-steps-to-finding-the-right-startup-idea-for-you/442533
- https://www.startupschool.org/curriculum/how-to-get-and-evaluate-startup-ideas
- YC - How to Get and Test Startup Ideas - Michael Seibel
- https://paulgraham.com/startupideas.html
- https://fi.co/event/how-to-come-up-with-great-startup-ideas-silicon-valley-fall-2024-85dd7293-1c98-4704-816b-d9ac8cfd54f2
- https://review.firstround.com/12-frameworks-for-finding-startup-ideas-advice-for-future-founders
- https://www.entrepreneur.com/starting-a-business/5-steps-to-finding-the-right-startup-idea-for-you/442533
- YC - Where Do Great Startup Ideas Come From? – Dalton Caldwell and Michael Seibel
- https://www.antler.co/academy/how-to-get-startup-ideas
- https://www.antler.co/academy/solving-the-right-problem
- https://www.failory.com/blog/how-to-get-startup-ideas
- https://medium.com/@sarathcp92/10-ways-to-find-the-perfect-business-idea-c865ee6660c2
- https://ehandbook.com/5-tips-for-finding-a-good-idea-for-your-startup-d0cb6da438df
- https://triare.net/insights/startup-idea/