

Sameer Dhar's Eldercare / AgeTech Idea Graveyard

If you've found this file, it's likely you came from [an interview with Sameer Dhar in the newsletter, Focused Chaos](#).

[Sameer Dhar](#) is a founder & mentor. He sold his previous company, Sensassure, to Essity. Sensassure built a hardware and software platform for tracking incontinence in the elderly. After exiting his startup, Sameer did a deep dive into other opportunities in the eldercare / agetech space with the ambition of building another startup.

He was kind enough to share all of that research here.

This is an unprecedented amount of research being shared. If you're interested in the eldercare / agetech space you're going to find so much valuable content.

He's invalidated 15+ ideas, but continues to explore the area. And he's hoping others see this research and can pick the ball up, perhaps benefitting from the work he's already done.

A little about Focused Chaos

Focused Chaos is a weekly newsletter by entrepreneur & investor, Benjamin Yoskovitz, where he shares practical guidance and his own personal experience in startups, product management, investing and more.

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Here's a list of the ideas Sameer explored. Many of them include links to other files that you should have access to. Note: Some personal information has been removed or changed to protect people's privacy.

2018-2019

1. Scaling daycares together with retirement homes
 - a. Killed because:
 - i. Too many regulations for both sectors (daycares + retirement) - capital intensive and difficult to scale (requires a retrofit or net new build)
2. Airbnb model to fill vacancy occupancy in retirement homes
 - a. Killed because:
 - i. Most desirable locations (i.e. in cities / downtown cores etc) are usually 100% occupied
 - ii. Base rents are >3K/month which is high for most folks

3. [“Mom in a box”](#) - pairing international students with concierge “moms” to help them get settled in a new location and provide ongoing support
 - a. Killed because:
 - i. Did some initial customer discovery with international students and many of them already have family in the new location, don’t have copious amounts of money to play with etc.
 - ii. Sale will require specific intakes from the universities and universities already have orientation programs etc that they operate and are wary of external vendors coming and trying to take advantage of a “vulnerable population”
4. [Backyard homes](#)
 - a. Killed because:
 - i. Difficult to envision scaling beyond a 30-40MM\$ mom and pop builder
 1. Even if you print homes in factory, still have to deal with site specific variables like sewage, site-specific dimensions etc.
 - ii. Flew to Sydney, Australia (world leader in granny flats) and confirmed largest builder of this type of housing got to the scale of ~300 homes annually => tough to see this scaling to more than a custom home builder

2020

5. [Referral service platform](#)
 - a. Too many competitors, shifted to concierge idea to target seniors more upstream
=> concierge type offering
6. [Concierge service for seniors](#)
 - a. Killed because:
 - i. Thought that a Cariloop-esque entry makes most sense to provide care navigation services for families and then build a service/product offering on top of this.
 1. From speaking with players like Hello Envoy etc, very difficult to scale due to complex family decision-making processes (must sell to adult child and then get the senior on board, which takes time and handholding both to acquire and then maintain the customer)
 - ii. Also explored in China and India => more potential in developing economies:
 1. Labor supply abundant
 2. Cultural acceptance of having strangers in the home, so matching problem is less acute
 3. Potential currency arbitrage if selling to adult children in western economies

7. Home sharing platform (like Silvernest etc) where elders with vacant real estate rent rooms
 - a. Killed after interviews with existing home sharing participants (both on the renter and rentee side) because:
 - i. Relationships are super fickle and one bad experience can sour a homeowners' willingness to continue to share their home
 - ii. Relationship dynamics when living together are tough to navigate / solve at scale => neighbors are better than roommates!
8. Unified hardware / software solution for home market (lots of point solution sensors etc, need a platform to tie it all together)
 - a. Killed because:
 - i. Complicated sale similar to concierge service w/ family dynamics
 - ii. Existing point solution providers are trying to do this themselves, i.e. CarePredict trying to win with initial sale and then integrate other tech solutions into its platform
9. [Job marketplace for seniors](#)
 - a. Killed because:
 - i. Initial validation of demand on seniors side but more difficult to get the other side of the market (employers etc) onboard. Lots of models out there that have been tried including mentorship platforms etc.
 - ii. Saw most traction with a concept [test of retired teachers](#) tutoring languages online - kind of lost steam on this as didn't feel excited / passionate enough
 - iii. Tough to monetize. Platforms like Amava probably best positioned to win with this concept
 1. <https://www.getsetup.io/>

2021

10. Virtual book+ club platform (clubhouse but for meaningful discussions, had over 100+ sessions in 10 months and ~200 users per month), post-mortem [here](#)
 - a. Killed because:
 - i. People appeared to prioritize in-person communities over virtual as soon as stuff opened up during / after pandemic
 - ii. Created a nice to have / not a need-to-have - people could live w/o it. Needed to do a full product reset leveraging the insights generated to-date and didn't have the team to do it.

2022

11. [D2C incontinence product play](#) (manufacture in China, ship direct to the West)
 - a. Killed because:

- i. Costs in China might have a 20-30% advantage however when accounting for shipping and distribution as well as import taxes, becomes more expensive
- 12. [Adaptable footwear for bunions and other foot conditions](#)
 - a. Differentiation really about brand, lost steam on this for founder/market fit reasons
- 13. Uber for landscaping service catered to seniors to “own outside of home” before moving to “inside of home”
 - a. Did customer discovery and is exceptionally operationally intensive business
 - i. Supply side shortage is biggest challenge
 - ii. Ultimately a service business, tough to scale (service is also not a commodity like Uber)

2023

- 14. Referral / retention platform for high turnover, low wage worker industries (<https://www.caribou.care/> for other industries)
 - a. Killed because:
 - i. Hard to get in front of operators and don't know where our unfair advantage as a team in doing so is
 - ii. Back of house in restaurants could be an opportunity and perhaps fast food chains in labor supply constrained environments
 - iii. Given we'd be helping with costs vs revenues (as in the home care space where +1 caregiver = +++ revenue), I'm getting the sense we're not gonna be as top of mind for folks as Caribou is in the home care space
 - iv. just generally, space isn't inspiring enough for me to persist in it without really positive customer demand indication
- 15. [Hims and Hers play for OAB](#)
 - a. Killed because:
 - i. Economics don't make sense: Current generic meds are relatively low cost and our cut of it might work out to at best 50-80\$ per **year** per consumer. With a projected CAC of \$100-150 and then taking into account a potential drop off rate of 40-70% after one year of usage, it looks like most of the money from this potential business would have to be made on a subscription basis.