

Define your digital product “need to haves” vs “want to haves”

A lot of times we think we need to have everything in place to be ready to launch a digital product. All the systems, all the automations, all the processes—all polished and perfect. All ready before we hit “publish”.

But most of the time, this isn’t the case. In fact, most of the time, this can only hurt or delay your launch.

You can always automate **later**. You can always build more systems and processes into what you’ve created **later**.

Take Chimp Essentials (his online class). When I first launched it, there wasn’t much of an automated sales process in place. Instead of building automations for funnels (even though the course covers this!) or building out a massive marketing plan or even a super customized WordPress theme for the course, I spent 99% of my time on making the actual video lessons informative, short and actionable. Those things were “**nice to haves**”. Whereas the actual

video content, the stuff people were going to be paying me for, were **“need to haves”**.

If I had waited until all the “nice to haves” were finished, I wouldn’t have launched the course until just now. I wouldn’t have 900+ students who’d been through the lessons, given me feedback and helped me make the course even stronger. And of course they weren’t as concerned as me that the “nice to haves” weren’t finished yet. That’s because those things would have been cool but were obviously not necessary. They got what they paid for: the lessons.

And now, since I tested my idea, gathered a ton of feedback and listened to what paying customers had to say about the course, I’ve been able to turn “nice to haves” into “need to haves”. There’s now a totally custom theme for the course, I’ve added an extra 10 lessons, there’s a shiny automation sequence to onboard new students and there are a whole bunch of deliciously fun automated funnels in place. “Nice to haves” can move to the “need to have” list once you complete all the necessary tasks.

My friends at Crew (formerly Ooomph) started their idea for freelancer-client matchmaking with a MailChimp list and a Wufoo form. That's it. No custom software, no fancy website, just 2 pieces of existing software that were cheap to use and an idea. Only later did they build out a massive business with their own software, and then release a blog, a podcast, a book and a crazy-popular licence free photo site.

Their “need to have” was matching clients with the right freelancers, which happened manually at first. Only once they tested the idea, gathered data from actual usage and got some funding did their “nice to haves” become “need to haves”.

You can't start with everything being in the “need to have” column. You'll never get anywhere. Plus, a lot of assumptions you make about what you think you need might change once people start buying and using what you've made. The internet isn't the same as print because you can keep iterating on it easily (whereas once you print, say a magazine, you can't go back and add pages to it later).

We know the internet and the digital products on it are iterative, and yet we forget when we're putting our own work out there. Assuming it has to be everything, have everything, do everything - right out the gates.

But “need to haves” are items where your idea falls apart without them. For example, if your idea is a course on mailing lists, your course has to have at least a few very useful lessons in it, otherwise, it's not a course. But that course is still a course if it's got some lessons, no matter the stock WordPress theme, lack of automated email funnels or podcast. Those are all examples of “nice to haves”. Sure, they'd make it better, but it's still a course without them.

Start small. Start with just the smallest version of your idea and a way to manually make it happen. You can automate later. You can add more to it later. You can test the waters without a massive investment of your time or your money, and see what happens when people start buying it from you. That's actually a much smarter way to launch.