

Crazy Ideas & Napkin Math Crew

Goal

Start a company! Maybe! Who knows!

What this is

We get together once a week and throw half baked ideas at the wall.

Who

5-6 people interested in impactful work

Guiding Principles

Everything is on the Table

Wacky ideas, absurd thoughts, questioning the nature of our reality - everything is par for the course. If we're curious about something, it's at least worth a cursory evaluation.

Quantity Over Quality

More ideas == better ideas. We should initially optimize for iteration speed and breadth, not depth.

Think Big

Starting a company is quite difficult and painful. If we're going to potentially go through that, the payoff (whether financial or impact) should be significant. Therefore, we're not here to make a small lifestyle business; we're here to think on the Billion and Trillion dollar scale.

Ground Rules

Attendance Commitment

While the content of discussions should be loose and fast, attendance is firm. In order to maximize the value of the meeting and each others' time, we should aim for 100% attendance or rescheduling.

No Commitment to Founding

There is explicitly no commitment to taking on a founder role. If you're part of this, you're committing to ideating and making an impact on a new startup. What your relationship with that startup is can be whatever you want.

Idea-Person Pairing Structure

We're explicitly not committing to one specific idea or company. If people have different ideas to dig into, we can and should group up + reshape flexibly. We may have many in-flight brainstorms at once being led by different people. Also, it's not expected for everyone to lead an idea.

Research Commitment

The time between meetings is the primary time to actually make progress on knowledge gathering or building. Idea owners should collaborate async outside of the meetings. We should aim to come prepared to sessions in order to foster deeper discussion/analysis of our ideas.

Feedback Expectations

We should strive for positive but honest criticism of ideas. Be nice, but don't hold back. Ego kills the quality of iteration; remember, it's never personal.

Confidentiality Expectations

Communicating publicly about ideas is net positive value. We do not expect confidentiality unless a specific idea would disproportionately benefit from secrecy until IP is established.

Format

Trial Period

We'll start with a fixed length trial period - two sessions exactly. The purpose is to figure out our group dynamic and individually evaluate if we want to continue.

Timing

2 hours, one time a week

First Session Prep Expectations

- Come with 1-2 problems / curiosities to give super short pitches (1-2min) on and discuss
- Try to steer clear of prescriptive solutions
- Open ended areas are valid
- Interesting readings are valid

Idea Buckets

We should expect to have many ideas in flight in parallel in various stages of investigation:

1. Background Research Stage - questions and curiosity about an area
2. Pitching Stage - a brand new idea, mostly half baked
3. Hypothesis Stage - continued exploration of an idea, forming a reasonable business strategy
4. Validation Stage - refinement of an idea / getting serious

Idea Discussion Structure

1. Each person can come up at the relevant stage with a pitch or updates for the group
2. Open discussion and feedback
3. People can volunteer to collaborate on the idea
4. Define actionable next steps for the idea

Inter-meeting Research

Don't want to be prescriptive about the amount of time, but we do probably want to make reasonable progress between weeks. 2-4 hours maybe?