

**Start Small, Stay Small:  
A Developer's Guide to  
Launching a Startup**

**Rob Walling**

# **Start Small, Stay Small**

## A Developer's Guide to Launching a Startup

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*For my Mom and Dad, who years ago taught  
me the value of hard work.*



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# Preface

## **Who is this Book For?**

This book is aimed at developers who want to launch their startup with no outside funding. It's for companies started by real developers solving real pain points using desktop, web and mobile applications.

This book intentionally avoids topics restricted to venture-backed startups such as: honing your investor pitch, securing funding, and figuring out how to use the piles of cash investors keep placing in your lap.

In this book I assume:

- You don't have \$6M of investor funds sitting in your bank account
- You're unable to relocate to the handful of startup hubs in the world
- You're unwilling to work 70 hour weeks for low pay with the hope of someday making millions from stock options

There's nothing wrong with pursuing venture funding and attempting to grow fast like eBay, Google, Twitter, and Facebook. It just so happens that most people are not in a position to pursue this option.

## **What Does This Book Cover?**

The focus of this book is building and launching a successful software, web or mobile startup with no external funding.

This process includes:

- Developing the proper mindset for a self-funded startup
- Understanding the Market-First Approach
- Finding and testing a niche market
- Choosing the optimal platform, price and revenue model
- Building a killer sales website
- Understanding the primary purpose of your sales website
- Building the right kind of interest, and thus driving the right kind of traffic, to your website
- Learning how to outsource
- Working with virtual assistants
- Determining what to do after launch: do you grow the business or start over?

If you're reading this book I assume you are an experienced software developer, so we won't be covering the development process. If you need assistance building software there are books written with that purpose in mind.

As I began the writing process, I received input from developers who told me they were tired of "filler" material – weak case studies, superficial interviews, chapters describing 10 options for how to accomplish a task but no guidance on which path to take or how to decide between them.

So I've focused on providing a practical, step-by-step approach to getting your startup off the ground and focused on making every word count. No filler allowed.

If you aren't frantically underlining, highlighting or taking notes as you read each chapter, I have not achieved my goal for this book.