

Should you share your unfinished ideas in public?

I mean, someone might steal them... One of the most common questions I get as an idea educator is: “should one share unfinished ideas with the world?”. The scare of someone taking over one’s idea and making it their own can be paralysing and sometimes even stop the creator from mentioning the idea at all. When in fact, feedback and input is what most unfinished ideas need the most.

An idea is born out of previously collected information processed into a new concept. Imagine all the data in your head as threads or networks. A new idea is a unique and never before used combination of those threads or networks. Sometimes we have them all in our brain, ready to put together when needed, while other times there are some threads of information missing for our idea to be finalised on its own. That’s when brainstorming with others come in handy.

Steven Johnson says it best:

Most great ideas come into the world half-baked

Wouldn’t it be fantastic if you are baking one part of a cake and somewhere

else in the world another baker/idea generator is creating the perfect icing for you, without even knowing it? More than anything your job now is to find each other and put those baking skills together before the dough gets over-fermented. (*sorry for the metaphor, you get the point*). But how on earth would you find each other if you don't... talk about your ideas publicly, if you don't share your idea generation process?

Worrying about someone coming in and taking over your idea is a valid concern, but consider this: even if you are sharing an early stage of an idea, you are still way ahead of everyone else. So even if someone would want to take your idea away from you, they wouldn't be capable of creating the exactly same thing. They don't have your unique combination of information and skills to duplicate what's in your mind. Sure, a big shark with a huge budget might just steal your concept and make it theirs, but frankly that can happen regardless of if your idea is not yet finished or if your product has been on the shelves for years. (That is the strategy behind private labelling.) At this point you need to weigh the risk of losing your idea against the risk of not being able to finalising it without outside feedback.

One more thing. Every idea execution creates a lot of WORK. Blood, sweat, tears and hours of work. Work that you have already put in, and that someone else would need to put in, should they steal your idea. In the words of Gary Vaynerchuk:

An idea is like "knowing you should do pushups" it does nothing on it's own. I guarantee that 99% of the people you share you idea with will do NOTHING about it, and even if they did the execution will not be the same as yours and most likely they will not have a clue how to execute it effectively because it was never their idea in the first place.

So, should you share your unfinished ideas in public? Absolutely!

Magdalena Bibik brings ideas to the table. Expert in idea generation and creative business thinking. Based in Sweden, working globally in Swedish, English and Polish. MBE & MLL, Rescue Dog Mother, Coffee Lover.

Interested in learning the basics of idea generation? Check out Magdalena's course "[Idea Lab: Idea generation for beginners](#)".

Idea generation for beginners

