

## Pizza and the Complications of Running a Business

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*The fewer the complications, the more likely you'll see a better outcome.*

We like to complicate things. Product launches, service offerings, websites, pizza....  
Why do we do this?

Sometimes I think it stems from an idea that something needs to be complicated to hold more value. As in, an online course with 34 lessons and 197 bonuses must be more valuable than a course with just seven lessons. Or a book must be more useful if it's 655 pages long instead of just a paltry 243.

Complications can lead to difficulties, though. It's harder to make a complex course with loads of custom features, and it takes longer to write a book that's 655 pages (especially when it may only need 243).

When we make or build things for a living, our minds are great wheelhouses of ideas, constantly churning. Our creativity is what makes us us. It's brainstorming. But too often, we don't then scale it back to its essence, to its minimum viable product (in startup terms) or its "Here's the idea with everything removed except what's necessary to make it work."

My favorite pizza is (vegan) cheese, sauce, and dough. I've tried pizza with loads of toppings, and it's tasty but much harder to eat. Toppings fall off and the crust gets soggy (because lots of toppings tend to leak juices or water). So I always end up back at cheese, sauce, and dough. I think I want 14 more toppings in theory, but in practice, I know that cheese, sauce, and dough is the perfect pizza for me. Cheese, sauce, and dough is the MVP of pizza.

For my business, I've gone for the cheese, sauce, and dough approach. It's currently limited to one product and one service. Right now, I'm focusing on my freelancer course and Web design. I have many, many products that are built and even more services I could sell and offer, but they require too much time, energy, and brainpower. Sure, I often want to (and sometimes do) add new things to the mix, but not before a lot of internal debate on if the end goals outweigh the complications.

It's tempting to make it more complicated and add more products (or toppings!) to the mix, but I always come back to the idea that it's easier to focus and get work done more quickly (and with greater quality) when there are fewer moving parts.

It seems like I may be able to make more money selling three books, five courses, and two online teaching events as I would selling a single course (and no books and no events). But the time and mental space required to sell all those things versus one of them would be so much greater.

Also, from a customer's perspective, it's much easier to make a choice when offered a single product or service versus a multitude of products and services. Want to work with me? Hire me to create your website (and that's it). Want to learn the business of freelancing? Take my freelancing course. I've got one choice for you. It's a yes/no, instead of "Which one of these is right for me? Which one of these should I choose?"

The fewer the complications, the more likely you'll see a better outcome.

I'm not advocating that you pare down to a single thing. Maybe (say, if you're Amazon) selling one thing would totally ruin your business. What I'm asking you to do is to consider what in your life, work or otherwise, have you made needlessly complex?

Complexity isn't inherently bad, but like most things, it needs to be questioned.

Maybe all you need is cheese, sauce, and dough.

**ASSIGNMENT: Write a "current event" style summary that relate this article to your own life and your own business plan project.**