

Some ideas are too big

By Fernando Del Vecchio

We all have ideas. Some have great ideas. What is the difference between an idea and a big idea?



Every time I have an idea, I can think clearly enough about the next step or steps that I should take if I had the intention to implement it. If I happened to travel to Europe, I would define what destination I would like to visit, start reviewing flight offers according to the

dates I would like to travel; review the accommodations; identify what I can do there; consider the tours alternatives, prices, etc. I would also think if I know someone in the places I plan to visit, I would ask about experiences that others have had, etc. Finally, I would begin to close that idea, buying tickets, hiring accommodation, processing visas, etc.

But when I have a huge idea – and I do not mean a spectacular idea but one too big – what happens is that I find it difficult to think about what the next steps would be. How do I continue from here? Or, rather, how do I start from here?

For some people, any idea is too big. For others, there are no too big ideas. One person for whom there seems not to be large ideas is Elon Musk, another, Richard Branson. In his book “Choose yourself”, James Altucher says that – by the time Virgin Atlantic was making a profit of \$ 15 million a year – Richard thought that there should be a transatlantic airline with more comfortable service. What did he do next? He closed a deal with Boeing, signing a leasing contract for an aircraft. He made an excellent deal because if the business did not turn out as he expected, he could return the plane, and if business turned out as expected or better, he would become an excellent Boeing customer. Surely also contacted Airbus to reach a better agreement, but ultimately, what matters is that he knew what should do and started immediately.

I am sure he contacted the authorities to obtain the necessary permits to operate the route, as well as airports authorities for approval. Probably later he hired pilots, cabin crew, closed advertising commercial agreements, and finally, after many small steps, the airline was operational and flying. In short, Virgin Atlantic began to work. It recently expanded its activity towards what – potentially – will become a space tourism service, launching the Virgin Galactic project.

In summary, the day he came up with the idea, he called Boeing to close a leasing deal. To me, that idea would have seemed too big. I could not even identify what to do next after thinking about it. An idea is too big when you do not know how to take the next step.

For many people, any idea is too big. They can have many ideas, and many of them are very good, but they do not know what to do next. In some cases, they identify a problem (as an idea), but they cannot identify an opportunity behind that idea. Therefore, they do not know how to continue, how to take the next step.

Perhaps it is essential, as a training process, to identify what to do next – which is the next step – in front of each idea that we have. Then, it will be a matter of initiative or attitude to do or not do something with that.

Remember Henry Ford: “Whether you think you can or you cannot, in both cases, you’ll be right.”

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