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Nigel Bowen

Back in 2009, Matt Barrie launched Freelancer.com with the intention of it becoming “the eBay of jobs”. Long story short, it pretty much did and Barrie’s achieved his ambition of creating an Australian internet business that’s up there with the likes of Google and Facebook.

Barrie is an exceptionally intelligent and charismatic individual, but his approach to entrepreneurship can be followed even by those of us who aren’t genius computer programmers or captivating speakers. Here are five ways to be like Barrie.

Work really, really hard

Barrie has been overachieving since an early age, but hard work has had as much to do with his many triumphs as high

intelligence. He outlines his schedule thus: “Get up, go to work, stay at work.”

Start disruptive businesses

Barrie is a big believer that there's still a lot of internet-fuelled disruption left to occur and that established industry players typically won't have the stomach to implement the radical changes required, opening up opportunities for scrappy entrepreneurs to cut the lunch of big companies.

But make sure your business idea is viable and scalable

Just because you can create an interesting good or service doesn't mean there is a market for it. Barrie suggests starting businesses that solve pressing problems – selling painkillers not vitamins, as he puts it. He also recommends pursuing only scalable business opportunities, by which he means ones where there's “unbounded capacity to grow revenue without a corresponding increase in costs or complexity”.

Only hire the best

Barrie subscribes to the theory that people of similar capabilities gravitate towards each other and that if you only employ A-listers from the time you make your first hire you'll eventually find yourself surrounded with a really smart team that is passionate about driving the business forward.

Aim for the stars

Barrie never benchmarked himself against other Australian internet companies or even overseas competitors – he set his sights on building a billion-dollar company and drove himself and his staff to reach that goal by creating the very best online outsourcing marketplace imaginable.

One final piece of advice Barrie offers entrepreneurs is to pursue their dream ASAP. If you're serious, you'll roll up your sleeves and get to work immediately rather than finding reasons to put things off until the conditions are supposedly right.

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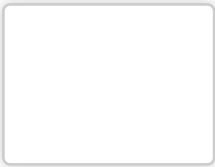
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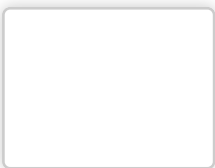
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