# Homework 2 Michaels Personal Essay

Is being an entrepreneur hard? Hell yea it’s hard but I wouldn’t want it any other way. The higher the risk the higher the reward, right? I know the odds are slim, 90% of startups fail, but I had to take a chance on it. I’m not on my own though. My co-founders, my engineers, my investors they’re all relying on my leadership to get us through to the finish line; a nice fat acquisition.

I tried the 9 to 5 and it wasn’t my schtick. Why spend eight hours a day getting bossed around making someone else’s dream business come true when you can spend 16 hours a day making your own business dream come true? Our product is in the cloud infrastructure market, something I happen to know a lot about since I sold enterprise subscriptions to cloud monitoring tools before I gained my freedom from big business. Early on I identified some inefficiencies (I’m good at that) in our customer acquisition process and after 5 long years I decided to branch off and create an app to help address these problems. We call it Stratos Cloud. We have cool tagline too, “Stratos, we make cloud easy.” I could go on forever about the business, there’s just so much to talk about, so much to do, so much to build. Sometimes it’s hard to stay focused with so much going on and so much work to be completed but I digress, let me tell you a little about myself.

I’ve loved computers and technology since I was a little child and my father helped me build my very first desktop computer, an ultra-powerful Pentium II with a whipping 4gb hard drive. It was epic. Fast forward roughly ten years and I’m a freshman at Stanford vehemently against becoming a computer scientist. I already went half a decade being an outcast there was no way I’m going to spend my entire career being a geek. So I chose to earn a BS and Management Science and Engineering which is still a bit geeky but it involves more business since the program “leads at the interface of engineering, business, and public policy.”

I always wanted to build a tech business of my own but after a few sales internships I found myself graduated and working selling cloud technology that others use to build *their* businesses. It was a drag but I had student loans to pay off. Eventually I paid those off and was in a financial position (no kids no wife) to leave and execute on an idea I came up with while doing sales. I spent the next year validating my business plan, speaking with investors, and bringing on a co-founder. We just raised 500K from a series of angel investors and hired our first two engineers. It’s a pretty exciting time but their a lot of unknowns.

I value technology and beautiful design which is why I always need the latest and greatest iPhone and MacBook Pro. I also know that our product needs an incredible and intuitive UX/UI but the more and more I read up on UX/UI the less and less I feel like I understand it. Unfortunately, were too bootstrapped to hire a real UX designer so we have to do with what we’ve got, which is nothing. No one on the team has time to learn UX either but we can’t simply pop out random designs, failure costs too much, it’s in efficient. At the very least, we need a tool that can hold our hands to get us started then send us off after but send us off prepared for the next step, whatever that may be. Our team is so small that anyone may be making a UI or UX decision on the fly so we ALL need to understand who our user is. Like I said before, were building the plane as were flying it here.

Everything about starting up is about being efficient and being lean. I know we need to know the user, but we don’t have time to take UX classes and I didn’t hire engineers to learn photoshop or interviewing. We need a tool we can use to discover our user, one that used relatively quickly with guided direction that way we don’t veer off course wasting precious time. That’s the enemy, inefficiency and wasted time.