

# How to help founders tap into crowd wisdom

*What's the hardest thing about creating a new product? It's one of the many questions founders have. To gather some views, Adam recently posted a Twitter poll to his 140,000 followers. Twenty-four hours later, we had the results.*

Temps de lecture : minute

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The top pick was 'securing funding', with 42% of 251 votes. Marketing came second with 26%, followed by functionality/reliability with 20%. In last place was design, with 12% of the vote. This might seem unsurprising, especially if you've spent a lot of time pitching. But does this poll actually give us any real insight?

When it comes to discovering what others are going through, and what lessons can be learned from their experiences, it can often be difficult to get at the truth. What are founders really thinking? And what are they really doing? If we scroll on LinkedIn, we mostly see a selective collection of glossy, carefully crafted portrayals. If we post on a forum, Slack channel or WhatsApp group, responses are influenced by what people think we want to hear, and the conversation risks getting anchored to the early replies. And if we run a poll on a platform like Twitter, we soon run into other problems.

First, we have the issue of who is in our sample. We don't know anything about the 251 people who responded to our Twitter poll. Have they ever tried to build a product? And if they have, what stage of the journey are they at? Are they new founders, or do they work for an established company? If you're at the drawing board stage, you might want to learn

from those ahead of you in the creation process, but you might also want to understand how others in your situation are handling their struggles.

Then there's the issue of the question itself. Twitter only allowed four options, but what about factors like building a team? Wouldn't it be better if we could dig deeper into the problem, and harness collective experiences in a more effective way? A few people on Twitter commented on our poll, but these won't necessarily be representative of wider views and could skew what people post subsequently.

The founder journey - like many of life's steep learning curves - brings with it significant fear of judgement and failure. This discourages people from being completely truthful. Instead, it encourages them to stay in line with popular opinions. The concept of the 'Wisdom of the Crowds' can be a powerful tool for getting closer to the truth, but it only works in specific circumstances. In particular, people must contribute independently before seeing what others say, to avoid a dataset ending up with the same parroted viewpoint. However, many of our interactions in life would fail this test. We can't get a genuinely representative and accurate viewpoint from a networking event, online forum, or communal messaging channel.

It was this challenge that led us to create 'Wish I'd Known' - a platform for capturing collective wisdom around life's steepest learning curves and serving it back to the users themselves in an easily digestible way. We started with a community for parents. With a young child ourselves, we knew how cluttered, contradictory, and confusing the information landscape was, and therefore how easy it is to feel overwhelmed. We built a scrappy MVP in a few weeks, and after seeing significant organic growth over the past year, our insights have been used in a parliamentary roundtable, corporate wellbeing training, and by the media. Following this validation, the next journey we're focusing on is the one that founders go through.

Over the past year or so, we've learnt a huge amount of what is required to harness collective wisdom at scale. First, you need people to contribute. And that means building an engaged community (in the case of our parenting app, we've thousands of active contributors). Each week, our members anonymously contribute their experiences then - and this is crucial for an engaging value exchange - they get to see insights based on what others contributed the previous week. Almost all our questions are now user-generated, which we check and refine to ensure they're relatable, clear, and inclusive. As well as multiple choice questions, members also share thousands of words about their experiences and hard-fought lessons, and then we use AI to synthesise these into accessible summaries.

One of the things we've found remarkable is the sense of community that has emerged, despite contributions being publicly anonymous. Many of our members come back week-in-week-out, with much higher engagement than you'd get for something like a Twitter poll. And because they come back every week, we can provide more accurate and detailed insights, tailored to the stage of their journey (e.g. age of child, in the case of parents).

We've come to realise that we've tapped into something powerful. People want to share the things they 'wish they'd known' at the time to pay it forward, while in turn benefiting from the experience of others. But this is just the start. We hope that over the coming months, we can bring this combination of community and crowdsourced wisdom to founders for a more effective, informed journey. And gradually soften that steepest of steep learning curves.

*[Join the waiting list for our free founder community here.](#)*

And if you have a 0-3-year-old, *[join our parent community here.](#)*

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