

TURN FAILURE AROUND

Turn Failure Around

Shawn Wilkins · February 21st

Bill Cosby once said that “in order to succeed, your desire for success should be greater than your fear of failure.” When [Culture Milk](#) started, it was aimless. We launched with a team of writers — some were friends who only had a mild interest in writing, and others were actual seasoned writers with a passion. Our problem lied in our lack of identity, purpose, and enthusiasm. We were so desperate to be “new” and “exciting” that we failed to build a face for ourselves. After the scramble of posts and my dee seeded frustration, I grew to realize that the problem wasn’t with the writers, but with me: the management.

Culture Milk was an idea [Nate Boateng](#) had that I brought to life. We managed to get a designer, a few great writers, and more than all, we got a really solid team. The problem was that our aim was unidentified. We had no way of branding ourselves as new or interesting. We wanted to be a blog which didn’t do news and write about things that simply interested us.

That clearly wasn’t working.

Looking at the “popular” everyday sites people go to, we couldn’t compare Culture Milk to any of them, and many of us thought that was great. However, it wasn’t. We couldn’t compare ourselves because we were doing less, not more.

So, I flipped the script. I struggled with my own mind for months on end. I told my writers what I wanted to do, and the next day, I had a completely different idea. It was a painful process, but it was most definitely necessary in order to progress. The idea we had for Culture Milk was leading to its own demise, and I noticed it. I noticed it quickly. I noticed how the writers didn’t want to write for Culture Milk when they could put the same content up on their personal blog. I noticed how our articles were always positive and never gave any critique or mentioned any issues. We were a glorified Pinterest with text.

So, I took an eventual failure and turned it toward success.

I gave birth to new ideas. I started doing things differently right then and there. I scrambled around, brought on new writers, found an excellent copy editor, recruited numerous specialized writers... I made sure that the boat I had worked so tirelessly to construct would not sink. I had complete control of the site’s direction and changed it, because the failure I saw before me was never what I ever intended. I knew what was wrong, and I fixed it.

Your ideas are what breed your creations. You don’t stop doing something because the idea behind it is wrong, you adjust it and make it work and when you create something that people truly want to be a part of, you know you’ve created something amazing.

Culture Milk’s identity has changed entirely. It’s changed from “cool things on the internet” into “interesting ideas, commentary, and thoughts on culture... and cool things on the internet.” Nerd culture is what we talk about and it’s what we manage to excel at as a whole. We have writers who love apps, who create and work on some of the greatest apps. We live and breathe comics, and always seem to take interest in anything with a circuit board. That’s what makes us different and that’s what keeps people coming back.

Don’t let *you* be the reason why *you* fail. If you see something is wrong, flip the script. Change the tides. Hell, change the entire game. You have your hands on the steering wheel and you see where you’re going. Don’t like it? Change lanes. The internet allows you to do anything you please as long as there is passion and heart behind it. When you create something, you have to support it and make it breathe fresh air. Failing is never an option. It’s never forced, either. It’s up to you to succeed and it’s the only thing you can do.

If you enjoyed this post, you may [Tweet it](#) or [Like it](#). 22 people already have.

Shawn Wilkins



As creator of Culture Milk, I bring excellence and creativity to a site that’s bred in thought and intelligence. Being able to have full articles that discuss popular topics here on Stemmings, I plan to show what the tech world is like to your average person and what your average person is missing. It’s a race with multiple finish lines.

Also on Stemmings

Peruse the Archives

Know what’s going on

Marcus Edvalson · June 20th

It seems like an obvious thing to say, but in the business of design, you have to know what’s going on. I don’t say this in an frivolous way. I mean it quite literally; if you don’t know what’s going on, who does? I’ve spent the past decade working with companies of every size and stripe, teams that were bloated and bursting at the seams, and others...

I Hate Vacations

Dan Malarkey · June 18th

For the last twelve years I have slowly ventured into society working jobs at various different companies in various different industries. This experience introduced me to many different types of cultures. Each job I worked had the same solution in the end: I need a fucking vacation. I got my first job at the age of sixteen. It was at a major drug store chain down the street...

Set Yourself on Fire

Krystyn Heide · June 17th

When I was in art school, I had ridiculous dreams of becoming an artsy rockstar photographer. I took an entry-level job at a local magazine, where my assignments were neither artsy or rockstar. I was sent on the most mundane shoots—politicians, crowd shots, book signings—all of the tenured photographers were getting the good gigs. Eventually, after much begging...