

10 REASONS NEW HARDWARE **PRODUCTS FAIL** (AND HOW TO AVOID THEM)

HARDWARE STARTUP CHEAT SHEET



MISTAKE #10

Poor Packaging & Positioning

- [*] Ensure packaging communicates product value within seconds
- [*] Test packaging with real customers before large production runs
- [*] Position product clearly: what it is, where it fits, why it matters
- [*] Plan for multiple packaging iterations before finalizing

MISTAKE #9

Focusing on Patents Instead of Customers

- [*] Prove customer demand before investing heavily in patents
- [*] Prioritize customer outreach and testing over legal filings
- [*] Pursue patents only when business case clearly supports cost
- [*] Remember: a patent protecting nothing wanted is just an expense

MISTAKE #8

Trusting Compliments Instead of Real Validation

- [*] Distinguish between praise and actual buying behavior
- [*] Focus on end customers who pay money, not industry contacts
- [*] Look for repeat buyers and consistent demand as validation
- [*] Don't let positive feedback substitute for real sales data

MISTAKE #7

Building an Audience Too Late

- [*] Start building audience while developing the product
- [*] Build in public and share progress openly
- [*] Use audience for feedback, messaging clarity, and prototype reactions
- [*] Have audience ready before crowdfunding or pre-sales campaigns

MISTAKE #6

No Plan After the Prototype

- [*] Develop marketing, distribution, and sales plans alongside prototype
- [*] Work on business areas simultaneously, not sequentially
- [*] Begin partnership and outreach conversations early
- [*] Never wait until prototype is done to plan go-to-market

MISTAKE #5

No Plan to Fund First Manufacturing Run

- [*] Plan manufacturing funding before the purchase order arrives
- [*] Consider pre-sales, crowdfunding, partnerships, or financing
- [*] Explore PO financing and invoice factoring for large orders
- [*] Don't assume funding will magically work itself out later

MISTAKE #4

Underestimating Manufacturing Complexity

- [*] Recognize prototype is the starting line, not the finish line
- [*] Plan for tolerances, repeatability, test procedures, and quality systems
- [*] Account for enclosures, materials, adhesives, packaging, and labeling
- [*] Expect manufacturing phase to take as long as prototype phase

MISTAKE #3

Moving into Production Too Early

- [*] Don't let volume discounts push you into premature large orders
- [*] Test in multiple environments before committing to production
- [*] Use smaller pilot runs to learn and adjust first
- [*] Remember: large runs lock mistakes into physical inventory

MISTAKE #2

Over-Engineering Instead of Shipping an MVP

- [*] Build the simplest version that solves the real problem
- [*] Avoid adding features that exceed business capacity
- [*] Let real customers show you what matters for version two
- [*] Ship something—progress only becomes real with customers

MISTAKE #1

Building Before Proving Anyone Wants It

- [*] Validate demand before building with deposits or preorders
- [*] Don't confuse compliments with actual commitment
- [*] Use reservation funnels, mockups, and paid preorders to test
- [*] Hardware can be validated before it physically exists

For Entrepreneurs and Startups:

Develop and launch your electronic product **FASTER** without costly mistakes!

Doing it alone is slow and risky. Small missteps now can become big problems later. Skip the mistakes and launch faster.

→ Frustrated things aren't moving as fast as you want?

Feeling unsure what to do next? ←

Meet your guide: John Teel



Hey there, I'm a former microchip design engineer at Texas Instruments and founder of a hardware startup that sold products in hundreds of retail stores. My chip designs are in devices from Apple, Intel, and more.

Now, my full-time focus is helping people like you bring new electronic products to life, without wasting time, money, or risking everything.

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