

Killed by Google

Varun Choraria · 2026-06-16 · <https://www.varunchoraria.com/killed-by-google/>

I first came across [killed by google](#) and was honestly quite blown. I suppose the startup myth is real: your instinct is right 95% of the time, but your ideas are wrong probably 80% of the time.

You only need one shot to make a real difference.

As I started to think deeply about it - both at a personal and company level - a few questions came to mind:

- Is it even feasible if you don't know where your next meal is coming from?
- Is it feasible to tokenmaxx your way to vibe coding a million little ideas in a company struggling to meet ARR goals?
- Is it even worth the time and effort to experiment?

[Stripe also apparently had # crazyideas](#) back in the day where anyone in the company regardless of seniority could build an idea the company should be prioritizing and talk about it publicly. I've seen versions of these morphed as hackathons in the handful of companies I've worked at.

It's a good move, but in an age where everything comes at a cost, is there light at the end of the tunnel?

Utter Chaos

[Ramp is fundraising](#) to cover token costs. Freshworks, where I worked at previously, [let go 11% of their workforce](#) in 2026 because most of their code is now written by AI.

So how does one have fun and build something meaningful in an age where everything is as chaotic as it gets? Let's face it - motivation has a ridiculously low mileage, and frontier models are costly especially if you're outside of the US and [can be gatekept easily like Fable 5](#).

More importantly, you might not even have access to a decent computer to work on.

What's the way out?

Well, in my experience, the fundamentals don't change and in an increasingly chaotic world (it was always akin to [brownian motion](#), in my opinion) - the fundamentals become even more important.

The fundamentals: Relationships + Side Projects > Resumes

I have zero idea why resumes were created in the first place, but for the sake of this conversation let's assume an old IT uncle wanted to add extra hoops to employment.

Which, ironically, was then pre-screened by biased ATS software and was never read by unc.

The world always disproportionally rewarded curiosity - it's just bubbling up to the surface now. Regardless of the software segment - the top players are consolidating ([Fin being acquired by SFDC in 2026](#)) to protect margins while anyone in the low or middle part of the spectrum are chasing capital efficient growth.

Not because their CFO said it was the smart thing to do - but burning money [post ZIRP](#) became that much costlier to do so. 'Growth at all costs' mindset soon morphed into a fight-for-survival, powered by AI at the cost of human labor.

At the end of the day, career fulfillment comes from working on the work you love, and with the people you admire. After a point compensation can only motivate you so much.

[In an earlier post](#), I gave my version of how ~~unfairly~~ high the bar is now. Earlier you had 5,000 other people applying for the same position. Now you're competing against AI too. To be fair, the world always worked and recognized the same things: good judgment + good craftsmanship = rubber hits the road. Ideas are a dime-a-dozen anyway (quite literally since many indie hackers are monetizing it)

So, you can do a couple of things:

1. If you have access to AI at work - regardless of what type (ADE like cursor, LLMs like Claude or codex) - do the work once, automate it the next time, and then document it on your blog or newsletter or linkedIn. That's how you build a rubber-meets-the-road portfolio without throwing in a personal dime. You're also simultaneously building a brag doc for workplace recognition.
2. If you don't have access, [opencode](#) is freely available, along with models you can download off [open router](#) along with skills on github you can build on top of for side projects.
3. Once you build and explore a few things, reach out and comment on people you admire on X or LinkedIn. Exchange notes, build relationships. You'll waste less time in the process and actually get direct access to someone's eyes and ears. You're engineering serendipity this way and opening up collaboration.

It's not hard to do meaningful work, but it's not easy either.