



Stanford eCorner

Recruiting the Best

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Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/867/Recruiting-the-Best>

Worthington relates an anecdote about how renowned intellectual property lawyer Bill Smith joined Fluidigm as general counsel. Worthington gave Smith the pitch before Fluidigm was even funded. Nonetheless, Worthington notes, Smith decided to join the team with the idea that it was going to be a total train wreck, and it was going to be really fun to watch.



Transcript

Then Bill Smith who I'll tell you a funny story about Bill. Bill is a phenomenal lawyer and when I first was introduced to him, I was told you guys may be really on to something and you need just a really good intellectual property lawyer to make sure you're protected. Bill probably won't take your work because he's so busy and he works with all the great companies, and Intel and da, da, da. So I did my best to pitch to Bill and put on my best charm and we were just tiny. We weren't funded back then. We were just trying to get funding. Over the course of several months, I first convinced Bill to take our work or so I thought and then later convinced him to lead Townsend and Townsend and Crew and join as a general counsel. The latter actually did turn out to be true. The former though I found out years later was Bill actually took our work against the advice of his partners and he actually had to get permission from his partners to do it, and his justification for doing it ultimately was look guys, this is going to be a total train wreck and it's going to be really fun to watch. I'm going to come back to this partner meeting with really funny stories about how these guys are screwing this whole thing up and it's going to be really fun to watch how this whole thing blows up.

That was really it. It was entertainment value that Bill originally got involved with us because he thought, well, no, one other thing, he thought we were nice guys but he thought it was going to be interesting and funny to watch us as we collided into the brick wall.