



Stanford eCorner

The Decision to Sell

Fern Mandelbaum, *Monitor Venture Partners*

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Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/842/The-Decision-to-Sell>

Mandelbaum sold her first major company, Skyline Toys, when the company was at a critical juncture: they either need to find a strategic partner or raise a lot of money. A perfect partner was found in IDEO, and she sold the company. Mandelbaum decided to take her career in a new direction because she was intrigued by the opportunities of the internet and was interested in joining a venture firm.



Transcript

Now, you obviously started out running your own company. And working with a partner, building it, dissolving the products, selling them, it was really successful, Skyline Toys. I remember I had an opportunity to come over. Fern called me up. We didn't know each other very well and through a mutual friend, she called me up and said, "Tina, I know you've done things for kids and cooking and science. Can you develop some paper that evaporates?" Right, that was with paper that dissolves. Anyway, we had fun trying to do that together. But that was a really fabulous place. Why did you decide to sell it? We had a critical juncture. We either needed to find the key strategic partner or we needed to raise a lot of money.

We had bootstrapped it, at that point had license to little over a hundred products. But we really needed to take it to the next level. And at the time we were working with Ideal as a strategic partner. And the more we've learned about them. The incredible resources, the most phenomenally talented people, we realized they were the perfect partner. And we sold it. You sold it. Now, Brandon, your partner stated the idea. Yeah. But you made the decision to leave? Yeah. Why did you decide to take off and do new things? At the time, the Internet thing was happening and I was completely intrigued by what a change this was creating in the world.

And I was helping a company resonate at that time that was simulating multiple servers. And I was always helping start-ups on the side. And I just thought now wasn't the time to actually join a venture firm. I'd always considered it throughout my life and I just thought I just sold the company. There's a whole I thought paradigm shift going on, not to use a term that's grossly overused. But I just thought now is the time to jump into the venture business. However, my family made me promise I wouldn't take a job right away because I have a habit of jumping into things right away. So I left the idea of Skyline and began to just work with some venture guys. Sort of looking at their companies and considering joining their firms. But then I got more involved with the companies that I was just helping.

And then I got more and more involved then. It took me another five years to join the venture firm.