



## Stanford eCorner

### Experience Is Overrated

Guy Kawasaki, *Garage Technology Ventures*

October 20, 2004

Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/1186/Experience-Is-Overrated>

Kawasaki's viewpoint is not one shared by the majority of venture capitalists. Kawasaki sees the best candidates for a successful start-up are young engineers with no business experience.



#### Transcript

Well, let me be crystal clear. I think experience is vastly overrated when it comes to a tech startup. I think that there are zero VC's that are going to agree with most of what I'm going to say now but I think that the sweet spot for a tech entrepreneur is -- shall I say ages and races or just ages or just races? I think the sweet spot is someone in their 20s in an engineering curriculum at Stanford, MIT, Carnegie Mellon, you pick a school, that's the sweet spot. And if you look at the great companies that truly changed the world, if you look at the founding team or the first two or three employees, they were unproven, absolutely unproven. Not only were they unproven. They were clueless. They had no idea how hard it would be to do what they were going to do. And so that's why at 50, I have no desire to be a CEO anymore. I do not want to be a CEO. I will never start another company.

I actually have three startups, Nick, Noel and Noemi. They are three, nine and eleven, and when they graduate college, I'm going to have three IPO's. See, when you get to be like 50, you know how hard it is to do everything. And you know how there are other important things in the world. So I think you need to start a company now when you're like at this age because you have nothing to lose and you don't know how hard it is. And once you have a lot to lose and you know how hard it is, you're not going to do it. You're going to hedge your bets. You're going to wish you went to work for Morgan Stanley. So you need to do it now. When I was evangelizing Macintosh, it was 1984 so I was 30.

So I didn't really know anything yet. And ignorance is not only bliss, it was also empowering. So if today, someone said, "You know, Guy, we're going to start a company. It's going to have a new personal computer operating system. And based on your track record at Macintosh, we think you really know how to evangelize a new operating system. So we want you to become either CEO or whatever, CMO, or Chief Evangelist Officer, because we want you to repeat the Macintosh moment of getting all this great software." There is not enough money printed to make me do that, because I know having done it with Macintosh, how hard it would be. So you need to find someone like me who doesn't know that to do that. But I have too much knowledge. I am too smart to do something that hard. So that's why I think that great companies are with young people who don't know how hard it is because if you knew, you wouldn't do it.