



## Stanford eCorner

### Setting Up Infrastructure

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Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/1508/Setting-Up-Infrastructure>

Kim Polese, CEO of SpikeSource, relates the challenges she learned while starting a company. She realized that though entrepreneurs might see potential in their technology and have the right people in their company, that alone will not ensure success in the marketplace. It requires making sure that all the pieces are in place for that company, she says.



#### Transcript

So I went up to the University of Washington and take a few classes basically took the equivalent of a Bachelor's Degree in Computer Science over the course of a year, the basic coursework. And then came down to the Valley in 1985 and got my first job at a company called Intellicorp and Intellicorp was one of the first AI companies. This is when AI was really hot. In fact, it was founded by Stanford professor Edward Feigenbaum. And Intellicorp's products were expert systems. Expert system building tools actually helping companies create expert systems that would help automate processes internally within their organization or help them deliver new kinds of applications to their customers. It was very experimental at that time but there was enough meat to it that companies were actually experimenting beginning to buy these systems and built some prototype expert systems with the software. But I learned a lot during that experience too. I learned how easy it is to be early in a market and when you see the potential when it's clear that there's a need in the market place, when you've got the technology, you got a lot of smart people, but the hard part is making sure all the infrastructure is ready for that company or that idea. And the problem with AI back in the mid 80's was the infrastructure basically expensive machines, expensive computers, of worth is \$30,000 and more, some ballots machine, Xerox machines just weren't cheap enough to really propel this market forward.

And the software is also very expensive and pretty complicated to use. So while they were a lot of prototype systems that were developed using AI, it didn't really become mainstream until really just the last decade, or so. Now AI is everywhere. Nobody really calls it AI. We see it in logistic systems. We see it in fuzzy logic, in washing machines determining temperature and so forth. It's everywhere but we just don't think of it as much as we did before as sort of a unique sort of industry sector. So first lesson learned was often times, you can be certain about the potential of the technology but it takes a long time for the market to ultimately catch up because there are other pieces that need to be in place. One of the hardest things about building a company in the technology world is realizing that it's not just about the technology. It's the infrastructure.

Is the market ready for this? And do you have the right partners lined up who can take this product to market? So there are a lot of other pieces that need to be in place and the technology is only one of them.