



Stanford eCorner

Globalization: Acting Local to be Global

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Mayfield Fund, a venture capital firm based in Silicon Valley, expands its operations in China and India to locally participate in the companies it funds. Roberts notes that this enables Mayfield Fund to understand the unique opportunities offered by different geographic locations.



Transcript

So, let's talk about some of these trends that we see. So, you've all heard about the new move towards this global world. And I've seen that you had a couple of presentations, people like John Doerr who touched on that. So, I won't copy what they've said. But I would just like to iterate to you how this is changing, because we are looking more and more at companies who will have global place. So, a few years ago, we started to think about the world not just in terms of markets for our companies but also in terms of leveraging talents for outsourcing. Now, we're looking at investing in those countries and building companies. So, at Mayfield we now have Mayfield China, which just announced this. We started to invest in China along side another fund two years ago. And after spending some time in Beijing last year, we decided that we would embrace that fund and it will become Mayfield China.

So, we are now investing in companies that are participating in the Chinese local market and also in companies such as Semiconductors and components that are looking to exploit the global opportunity from China. So this is very exciting for us. In order to be global, you have to be local. So, we have a local team in place there. So, we're trying to manage those companies from here, but we are trying to learn what is important there. So, we are spending time trying to understand those new opportunities and how we can also support the companies that we've invested in. So, once again you've got a country that is emerging and growing fast and is looking to leverage what's been done in the U.S. but also adapting those things to its own market. What is interesting, one of the companies we've invested in China is a dating site. So, there are lots of online dating here, but in China, it's all so difficult for Chinese people to have somewhere to meet.

So, online dating has an offline component. So we have lounges and places where people can actually meet the people they've met online offline. So, you have to adapt some of those businesses for the local market and I thought that was particularly interesting and they're very nice rooms by the way. It's all about having tea and coffee and that's about it. But it was fun to see. So, we're also looking into India very carefully. If you look at the Indian market, there is just a huge middle class there and there is an abundance of talent and there may be many of you here who come from India. What is interesting is, we're seeing more entrepreneurs going back to India to build businesses there. There was a very strong communications, infrastructure that is being built and the talent that's building that is taking those products and taking them to other markets. So, I mentioned we've just invested in optical networking company.

Two of our partners who are in India right now and they're looking to assess how we might address the Indian market. So, we think for us it would be very difficult to spend too much time developing early stage companies like we do here that we'd like

to get involve later and take it from there, but very interesting. And the other thing when you look at these countries is, you're not necessarily investing in technology. You might be investing in a shoe manufacturer or the next Starbucks or the next Hirsch. And so, it's very exciting looking at these types of businesses and how we can build great global companies. So, a few years ago, VCs were very focused on this area, maybe Seattle, maybe L.A., maybe Boston and now they really are looking to the world.