Stanford eCorner

Founding Teams

Ashwin Navin, *BitTorrent*

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Ashwin Navin, Co-founder and President of Bit Torrent, talks about founding teams--where they come from and how to form them. Navin suggests that founding teams emerge from relationships developed in school or work and that founding teams work best when the team members have complementary skills. In addition, Navin emphasizes the quality of students and colleagues in Silicon Valley and suggests that students take the opportunity to experiment with new business opportunities.

Transcript

Students have a great opportunity being on campus to get to know people really well. And the relationships that you're going to build here are going to be valuable for a long time after you live. So being in this environment, being in Silicon Valley, and a long heritage here at Stanford of Entrepreneurial Behavior. You know, this is a great time to take some risks and make some experiments with the people that you are already spending lots of time with. In the case of me leaving Yahoo, people thought I was crazy. You know, I worked for a studio chief, who spent most of, had hired many lawyers at Warner Brothers to shut companies down that were trying to commercialize peer-to-peer applications. For a good reason, I mean they are file-sharing applications, and I think Bit Torrent has very dramatic differences. But Yahoo Team I think probably didn't think this was a very wise move on my part at that time, for any of reasons. Being open-sourced, being peer-to-peer, being associated with a lot of piracy. But what I saw on Bram was a guy that complement, our skills complemented each other very well.

And in addition to that, Bram is a guy that can get really obsessed with a problem and get very focus on it, and be eager to solve it. And has very strong technical capability and matching well with my background being more aligned with the business realm. I saw the opportunity, because Bit Torrent has this fundamental value that we could actually reposition the technology and actually went approval of big media companies to commercialize successfully and make this thing really successful. That was the initial idea and finding that Bram is interested in doing that with me, we just got together and did it.