



Stanford eCorner

Stages of a Startup

Ashwin Navin, *BitTorrent*

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Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/1890/Stages-of-a-Startup>

Ashwin Navin, Co-founder and President of Bit Torrent, alludes to a theory by Bob Cringely about the three stages of a company - Commandos, Infantry and Military Police. Navin suggests that startup success relies on successfully identifying and executing on the demands of each phase, as well as transitioning between phases, by bringing in the right team members for each stage of the company.



Transcript

He talks about new companies in three stages. Basically in the first stage, what you really want are the commandos. Those that don't obey any rules, they take the beach, and they break everything. And they do things that in many ways what most people would consider irrational. And I view that as what Bram did. You know, Bram did some, from a business sky stand point, pretty irrational things. He invested two years of engineering time, he didn't register domains, he didn't set up a company, he gave this stuff away for free, what the hell was he thinking? But it was phenomenal thing to do because he wasn't the only one working on peer-to-peer applications but Bit Torrent is the largest, and it's the most recognizable of all of them. So that sort of commando behavior was critical to getting Bit Torrent sort of off the ground. The next phase is characterized by the military police. Oh no, I'm sorry, the infantry.

Commandos, infantry. Infantry comes into the territory that the commandos have secured, and actually secure it. Start to set up a perimeter, and start to make sense of the rubble. Maybe start to set up the rules a bit. And then the last wave is the military police, that kind of sets up the walls and establishes the territory and defends it. And so recognizing where you are in that process will help you find the right people for that point in development.