



Stanford eCorner

Vision Versus Perspective

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Everyone has a perspective, says Jensen Huang, but to call it a "vision" implies elitism and exclusion. This NVIDIA Co-founder insists that those with a new idea for business approach the world with gravitas, and he cites his own organization as a case study. In 1993, his company's perspective was the first of its kind, and the results have proved a new sense of common sense and disruptive to the status quo. This perspective - not vision - allowed them to create new technology, new markets, new customers, and widespread success.



Transcript

Some people call it vision. Vision's an awfully big word to me. Vision's an awfully big word to me because I believe, first of all, vision matters. Let me tell you that vision matters and I'll help you understand that in a second. But I like to use the word "perspective" because it makes it possible for anyone to have one. When you say vision, it feels like only a few selected visionaries of the world can have one. But everyone has a perspective and that's in fact all visions means. That you see the world in a way that is either, different or otherwise, okay then somebody else. And you see opportunities that I think you believe are particularly important to go on and address. That you can address in a particular way.

And so perspective: Our perspective at the time, this is 1993. You guys won't remember this but the PC was Windows 3.1, CD-ROM was about to be introduced. There were no PC's with networks. Wireless technology: If somebody said radio I think the word that would come to mind is FM radio, and so wireless technology didn't exist. The fastest microprocessor in the world was a 66-megahertz 486DX2. And I don't think any of you would even use it in your tennis shoes today. And we would run our computers with them. And the PC was becoming used for desktop, or for office automation. Our perspective was that this particular device was going to be unique in the sense that it has the ability to run programs. And what if we gave it the benefit of running through 3D graphics programs? So that you could explore new worlds, play games - you know play games.

And so we started a company and the business plan basically read something like this, "We're going to take technology that was available only in the most expensive workstations. We're going to try to make it, reinvent the technology, and make it inexpensive," and the killer app was video games. And so I took this idea to Sandhill Road, and they told me there was no video game market. People don't start companies to play games. And my parents - I remember calling my mom and telling her that I'm going to start this company and she says, "What do you guys do?" I said, "We built these things called 3D graphics chips and people would use them to play games. And she said, "Why don't you go get a job?" And so now of course games was we believe going to be a very large part of the market place and we have that perspective for very obvious reasons. We grew up in the video game generation. I was the video game generation. It was the beginning of the video game generation. And so the entertainment value of video games - computer games - was very obvious to me.

And I could imagine how could be a very large market and a very large industry. For a lot of the people that were older, that sensibility didn't exist. And so notice I just described to you a perspective about the world that we had, that is apparently obviously now true, because video games is the world's largest digital media industry today. It is apparently true. And yet at the time our common sense was unique. Nobody would have created the technology. Nobody would have created the company

with the sole purpose of building technology to make video games possible. And so, that was our perspective.