



# Stanford eCorner

## An Entrepreneur's Checklist

Steve Blank, *Stanford Engineering*

November 11, 2009

Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/2322/An-Entrepreneurs-Checklist>

No matter what business vertical you're entering, serial entrepreneur Steve Blank outlines a few points of necessary focus for the emerging business start-up, including market opportunity, market regulations and distribution, competitors and complimentors, and technology breakthroughs. He notes that the customer is not always the same thing as the payer, and that this bifurcation is creating interesting new business models.



### Transcript

And here is the first big idea. When you're doing a startup, there's almost a checklist of things that entrepreneurs mentally worry about for every company. Some of these things, VCs will tell you to stick in your business plan. Some of these things never get spoken but you'll end up doing anyway. And some of these things you just forget to do. So, I tend to list them as almost a checklist. They kind of work across startups, whether they are Web startups or biotech startups but they are different as you cross industries. Let me just go through Steve's list of what a checklist is. The first one is, what's the opportunity? Where did the idea come from? We can expand on this and we will a bit later in this talk, but basically is the idea a technology idea? Is it the fact that the industry has just changed? Is it that there's some government rules and regulations that just enabled this new business? Or is it an existing market and you've decided that you could build something either faster, better or cheaper? Next thing on my checklist is, where's the innovation? Is it coming out of a technology innovation or is it a market innovation? The customer, who is the customer? When I used to think about customers, I used to think, "The customer is the person who wrote you the check." But as we will see when we will take a look at the different companies that spoke at this ETL, customers and payers may not be the same. Baidu, who are the customers? Who are Baidu's customers, anybody knew? Who are the people who use the site? Who are they? They are the users.

Who pays? Advertisers. Who? All of a sudden, interesting business model. The users have nothing to do with paying for the site. When we look at different businesses, we'll find out that that's actually more true more often than not. Competition. Who are the competitors and who are the complementors? A complementor could be an adjacent market company that actually can add value to your company.