



Stanford eCorner

Entrepreneurial Advice

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February 17, 2010

Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/2402/Entrepreneurial-Advice>

Getting into entrepreneurship isn't a jump, asserts SlideShare CTO Jonathan Boutelle, it's a pivot, and more often than not, a series of pivots. He adds that if the first thing you do isn't your dream product or service but it gets money from customers, you're already headed in the right direction as an entrepreneur. And what motivates an entrepreneur? His cofounder Rashmi Sinha says that for herself, it's the ability to be independent and to always be facing a new challenge.



Transcript

A lot of times getting into entrepreneurship isn't just a jump, it's a pivot. And a lot of times there's multiple pivots before you can get to your destination. It's very hard. Some people can work as full-time employee of somebody and do a startup on their side until they prove that it has traction. I mean, the Bloglines guy, Mark Fletcher, did that. He worked for Sun. He built Bloglines on the side. And then, once it was working, he quit Sun. It takes a very special kind of energy to be able to do that. When you are working in a professional context in a competitive place like Silicon Valley, it tends to suck up all of your cycles.

And you need to get clear of that. And if the first thing that you do isn't necessarily your dream product or isn't even a product, if you can just get in a place where you have money coming in the front door that is not from an employer-employee relationship, you are well on your way to being able to do that. So, we did multiple jumps before we got to SlideShare. There was employee to consulting, consulting to small B2B product, and then small B2B product to SlideShare. And I think that the ability to do that is important and it's not always recognized. Great observation. Anything else you want to add? I think it's interesting for an audience of people who maybe are thinking about entrepreneurship as to what motivates one. And I think partly for me it is independence. I do things I enjoy and it's always the case. There's always a new challenge.

I think one of the interesting things about the CEO job is it changes every six months as the company is going through different phases and you never quite know what's going to come your way. Enjoying that part, being comfortable with uncertainty. There is a lot of uncertainty and you definitely have to be comfortable with that.