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The Value of Putting on a Suit

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Amit Chatterjee, CEO and founder of Hara, discusses the learning benefits an entrepreneur gains from "putting on a suit" inside a larger company. Compared to launching his own entrepreneurial ventures, Chatterjee found working within an established enterprise to be a way to gain experience in strategy and critical thinking - without having to worry about the bottom line. Ironically, it was also through contacts made while working in a Fortune 5000 that Chatterjee became inspired to launch his next startup.



Transcript

I think it was April 2000, I actually joined and I actually put on a "suit" and joined McKinsey & Co. Perfect timing, because the market was crashing in that era. I spent a lot of time doing that, learning that #1: There is value in putting on a suit and being able to credibly talk about strategy in international experience, managing disparate teams without actually owning payroll. And it became a great lesson for how to think critically and strategically. I was actually recruited out of there to then work at an even older company, SAP, a 38-year-old software company. I didn't even know what they did. I'd always say, "What is SAP?" It was actually three letters for German. And to this day I still don't know what they mean. It's SAP, it's an enterprise software company. And I worked with a guy named Shai Agassi who's one of these great intellectual brains who really gives an entrepreneur's entrepreneur.

And he has sort of revitalized my desire while I was at SAP to go back and do something that I could do back to now saying, taking consulting, taking the business of working at a Fortune 5000 company to working at entrepreneurial startups. Could I create a new startup in a different way? And that's what led me to Hara. I spent a wonderful amount of time really figuring out that what I'd done in the different places, of where I'd made mistakes, where I'd had tremendous successes, could all now be channeled into a new pull story and built it from the ground up.