



Stanford eCorner

Co-Founders Provide a Sanity Check

Jessica Mah, *inDinero*

November 30, 2011

Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/2859/Co-Founders-Provide-a-Sanity-Check>

Entrepreneur Steve Blank asks inDinero Co-Founder Jessica Mah about the value of having a co-founder. Mah explains co-founder Andy Su provides a contrarian opinion to her own, which serves as an invaluable "real time sanity check" when it comes to making critical decisions.



Transcript

You mentioned a couple of times your co-founder. So first of all... Yeah. ...how important is it do you think to have a co-founder? Could you have done this yourself? No, not at all. I think it's super important to have a co-founder and I'm so thankful I have one. And why? What do you think you get from a co-founder? Is it just another pair of hands or eyes or something else or what is it? It's real-time sanity checks on all the decisions I make. My co-founder would often give a differing opinion like I'd say, oh, this guy is like so cool, he graduated from a top CS school, we should totally hire him and my co-founder would say, no, you don't want to hire him, here's why, or I would just say a bunch of things and he would just refute that and I'd say, wow, thank God I have you. And had you worked together before? We had throughout college together. So you had a working relationship before you did the company and you knew each other? Yeah. And how do you break ties? How do we divide up? No, how do you break ties? So he says one thing, you say another, how do you decide? Well, first, it was who is more charismatic and that was usually me.

I would be like - I would just come up with a bunch of reasons and tell Andy why he is wrong. But over time, I tended to be more wrong than he is. So... Sounds like a marriage to me. Oh. He is - well, now, we default to his decision. And you still like each other? Oh, yeah, we've actually gotten closer because of it. Interesting. And could you imagine having more co-founders or is two the right number for you, what do you feel like? Two or three might be right, four feels like it would be a lot, but it really depends on the people you're working with and with my co-founder, Andy, we're - like we are best friends, we live with each other and it just feels right.