



## Stanford eCorner

### How Do You Assess Talent?

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Elizabeth Samara-Rubio and Rebeca Hwang, the founders of StorWatts and YouNoodle, respectively, share what they look for when assessing talent or prospective business partners. Having the ability to recover from adversity and possessing actual operating experience are particularly appealing characteristics to Samara-Rubio, while Hwang seeks partners with a value system that aligns with her own, and who possess complementary skill sets and a healthy obsession.



#### Transcript

How do you assess talent before and after you hire or partner with someone? Very good. So for partners when we did our BOC if you will and I think you've heard from Steve Blankinall, there's get out of the building early. I think we went to about 10 ESCOs with operations in over 15 countries and at least five years of operating experience. That's what I was looking for, in other words I wanted to see someone who has tried the best and failed, tried the lowest option and failed and give me some of the real pain, because I really wanted to make the better choice. Once I start down a road I want to make sure that I know what makes other things fail, so that I am designing around that if you will; that's a partner. And talent, I am looking for people who recognize that part of success is failure. So the ability to recover, I really look for someone's ability to recover. In my case it's usually, I start with a value system. If I don't have the same values and morals with the person I am going to spend probably the most amount of time at work with, it's just not going to work. So we have to agree on basic tendencies of the values that drive us.

Second, I think it's very important that we have complementarity. Oftentimes I meet people who have the same skill sets of me and we don't really work well together because we compete and we end up getting on each other's feet. And then the third part, I like to be more obsessed about something, it may not be the topic in question that I am trying to build, the actual project that I am trying to build but people who have a certain level of passion and obsession about something, it could be chess or it could be cheerleading or football. They tend to also have an easier time getting obsessed about the start up for an entrepreneurship project that you may have with them. So I look for obsessiveness.