



Stanford eCorner

Convince the Visionaries First

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April 22, 2015

Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/3516/Convince-the-Visionaries-First>

Big Switch Network's Kyle Forster explains how his experience with successfully introducing new products into the market mirrors lessons from the highly acclaimed book "Crossing the Chasm," by Geoffrey Moore, who asserts that the key to launching a disruptive technology is to win over customers known as "visionaries" before approaching the "early adopters."



Transcript

If your choice is an enterprise technology and you're kind of looking at a new product category type of thing, this should be on your desk, please read it, and please read it and give it away to other people because I've found just as a common vocabulary, this has matched my last five years exactly. So I actually personally signed our first \$2 million customers and I was a big part of sourcing our first multi-million-dollar partnership and one of the - we can talk about the chasm but I think one of Moore's really interesting perspectives is that you have this group of people called the visionaries and now the visionaries are a little quirky to work with, they've no budget, they are very demanding, but when you find visionaries the people who love new technology and they're willing to take new technology for new technology's sake. And sitting somewhere near them as an early adopter and you think of the early adopter as a generally an upwardly mobile professional, very, very practical, incredibly busy and they have a budget and they're looking for some kind of change agent in the organization and they're interested in using technology to do it. I think the point that Moore makes is that you can't skip a step here, you kind of have to win the first group to get to the second group and they are the gatekeepers for you for the mass market. You can't really go to the early adopters because they're using a visionary, some friend of theirs, somebody in the organization to serve almost as a pre-filter and so once you win the hearts and minds of the visionaries then you kind of get the right to get on the calendar for the early adopter. This matches so closely to what we've been through and I can say on an individual level, at a company and a team level, it is so close and it really changes the way that you think about who are - do you always go for the person the organization has the budget, well the answer is, when you have a new product category, no, not really. If you're thinking about kind of ever in your life doing a disruptive new product category play, something really -- world has never seen before, there is no budget line item for it, really read this and I highly encourage you to spend some time actually giving this book to the people around you.