



Stanford eCorner

Great Founders Build Support

Mike Rothenberg, *Rothenberg Ventures*

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Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/3528/Great-Founders-Build-Support>

Mike Rothenberg, founder of Rothenberg Ventures, says a common trait among good entrepreneurs is an ability build supportive relationships in an unfamiliar environment. He also describes how being authentic and engaging are key to building a network, as is ensuring alignment with others by explaining how the relationship will benefit them.



Transcript

There is a pattern that great founders do all have in common that is actually - that's actionable and visible. And that is great founders are amazing at getting support. They're amazing at getting support from people who can really help them. That is what entrepreneurship is, is getting support outside of which you can currently control and so because of that you can observe who are good entrepreneurs, by who they are building relationships with, that is called a network. So the network is the only thing that matters in seed. It's the only thing that matters in seed. So how do you build a network? Well, there is - there are lot of ways to do it, but one thing to keep in mind is that it must be authentic and it must be engaging. And so what - and it must have alignment. The people who are in your network must also benefit from it. Everyone must benefit from it.

If they're not benefiting from it, it won't be rational for them to do it and so you have to structure it correctly. And so one of the things that we have done since the beginning, is actually find the people that we really want to build those long-term networks with and people we respect and people who could advise us and advise our companies and all of these things, and actually see if they will invest in us. Because if they won't invest, then they are not really sold obviously. And so that's the real test. And the beautiful thing about trying to find out if somebody will invest is if they won't invest, they will often tell you why if you really mean it, if you ask and mean it.