

URL: <https://ecorner.stanford.edu/in-brief/talent-management-for-startups/>

Few VC-funded founding teams include a talent professional, observes Luminary Media co-founder and head of talent Lauren Perkins. She explains how placing an emphasis on talent acquisition and articulating a values statement early on has helped Luminary not only retain staff, but attract desirable content partners.



Transcript

- And when you read blogs or posts or interviews with Founders and CEOs, so many of them say that they spend 90% of their time or more on recruiting and hiring.. That is still puzzling to us because it's very uncommon to have a talent professional, as a Co-founder today in the VC backed world.. We think that will change, our investors think it's a good value add, but internally it's been extremely successful.. We, in about a year, built a company that has about 70 people.. Almost every single one of our employees is outperforming our expectations for their role and we have an incredibly high retention rate.. So we think it was a good move.. For this class and personally for me though I think what could be a challenge for you one day is figuring out if you want to quite your job or if you want to take this risk and start a company with someone.. And to me this was one of a couple of things that stood out as a true differentiator between the group we were co-founding with and other companies I had seen in the past.. I knew that by hiring this person they were very forward thinking about people and truly investing in that asset.. I knew that as an employee of this company that I would have the support that I need but also as the person leading this function, I would have the investment from the executive team that the function deserves..

So something to think about when you're potentially evaluating potential Co-founders or bosses.. A second part of that, another thing that was really influential in making the decision to come on board and leave like I said a lovely job in executive search, was the fact that everyone of our Co-founders wanted to work through a values doc from the beginning.. We wanted to make sure that the values were important to every single person and that we were actually aligned in what we are building.. These are our five values.. We value diversity, accountability, excellence, doing what is right and progress.. We decided early on that these values would govern every decision that we would make that potentially could affect our consumers, our co-workers or creators and that has been a huge asset to attracting and retaining talent.. But it's not just on the employee side, it's really been a differentiator when going out to the content market and asking partners to trust us, and what we're building and why it's going to be different.. And to come on our platform you know this content that is your livelihood a lot of times, it's your baby, to work with us exclusively you know six months before the product's even launched.. So that was a big part of that.. If you are considering co-founding a company I urge you to go through this exercise..

Very early on before you have problems, it might not be that important, but when you start to scale and you're starting to make quick judgment calls.. Having these to fall back on is really has been huge for us..