

URL: <https://ecorner.stanford.edu/in-brief/demand-is-good-and-tricky/>

"When products start to grow, they start to break," observes Accomable founder and Airbnb product manager Srin Madipalli. As Accomable struggled with massive demand and limited supply, Madipalli searched for outside partners that could help it scale. In the end, he decided that being acquired by Airbnb would be the best way to scale its mission of facilitating accessible accommodations around the world.



Transcript

- And things were growing really fast and really well, but the problem we had was that we had way too much demand and not enough supply.. So to just sort of provide some context, for every 10 booking requests that we were getting, we could only satisfy one of them at a time, and some of our property owners were taking bookings two years in advance.. That was the level of like demand and the need that this community had, and what a shortage of supply there was.. And also at the time, you know, there's many engineers in the room, and I'm sure that you've come across this when trying to build things, just as products start to grow, they start to break.. And so, we were getting, you know, a lot of user on the site, and trying to build infrastructure to support that growth was beginning to be a really big challenge for us, and we were needing a lot more resource in order to scale much further.. So, early on in 2017, we'd started a series, a funding round.. So this is a funding round just after seed stage, where you look to raise sort of between two and three million, in order to take sort of initial, kind of a product, that has early product market, fit to scale it to a much larger area.. And for us as well, we were very driven and passionate about taking this solution that we had sorta prototyped and being able to take it to a much global audience.. And I think, you know, from the get go, we started this because we wanted to help people, and wanted to solve this problem for people with disabilities so they could travel everywhere.. So we would ask this question to ourselves, how do we take this to a much more global level? So, we started this funding round, and very early on, some of my advisors and investors said hey, why don't you talk to the big travel platforms and see whether, you know, there could be some tie up, or whether the infrastructure you need could be sourced from a big player, like Airbnb, for instance..

And so, one of my investors made an introduction to somebody at senior at Airbnb, I came out here in the summer of 2017, and started a whole series of conversations with 'em, completely open mind.. We had no, you know, we didn't really have a goal as to what any kind of partnership or collaboration could be, but very quickly the conversation moved to words on the Airbnb side.. Actually, if you wanna take this solution and be able to scale it to a global audience, the best thing would be to acquire Accomable and my team to work at Airbnb.. And so, in November 2017, we closed the acquisition.. So Accomable was acquired by Airbnb with very much the mindset that we would infuse accessibility within Airbnb on a much global level, and I would move from London to San Francisco to build out this new team and group.. So, I was the only one from my team that moved to San Francisco, the rest are still in London, working on other parts of accessibility at Airbnb...