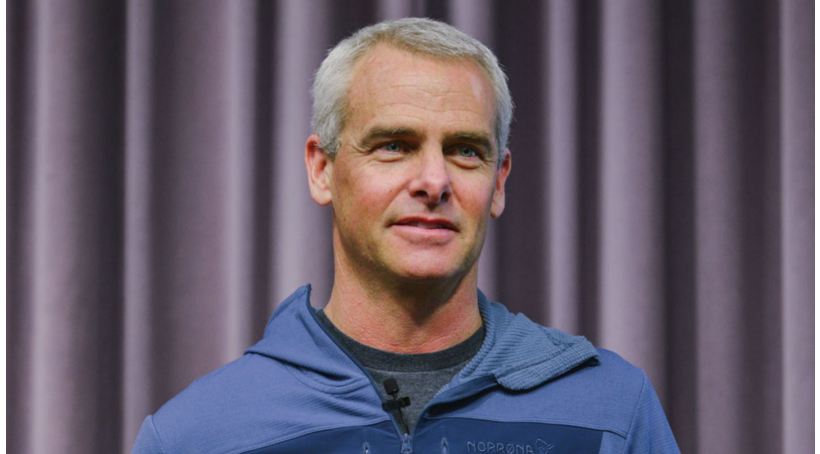


URL: <https://ecorner.stanford.edu/in-brief/inch-wide-mile-deep/>

Strava co-founder and executive chairman Mark Gainey has found that small niches sometimes represent massive opportunities. That was the case, he says, when he and his co-founder Michael Horvath started Kana Communications in 1995. Skeptical investors often told them the business they were proposing — a solution to the emerging problem of managing customer emails — was too small to justify a dedicated product, much less a company. Yet a few years later, Kana was a public company with over 1,000 employees.



Transcript

I caught the bug to be an entrepreneur.. And so in late 1995 I left that firm and with a good friend of mine, actually someone who is a professor here at Stanford in the economics department, a guy named Michael Horvath we founded what became Kana Communications.. Kana, a perfect example of going an inch wide and a mile deep, right.. And what I'm talking about there is picking a niche, something that to many people may look like too small an opportunity, but going really deep into that opportunity, trying to be authentic there, trying to develop leadership in that space with the hopes that then that opportunity leads to something bigger.. In the case of Kana what we did was we found this opportunity in customer email.. Again, this is 1995, companies are just beginning to go online needing to build their internet presence and they have this problem, which is as soon as they go online they start getting customer email.. And there weren't systems to actually answer those messages.. So we developed a company and with some folks other than me who wrote the software were able to come up with a solution.. Five years later we started Two Guys and a Dog in 1995.. By 2000 we were global company, 53 offices around the world, 1200 employees generating hundreds of millions in revenue, traded on NASDAQ, sort of your classic, we got very lucky right place right time..

But we picked that inch wide mile deep.. I can tell you when we were trying to raise capital we were accused of being a feature, not a product, not even a, definitely not a company.. But what we proved was by going deep into that one space, that customer email space it gave us that credibility that then allowed us to expand in our customer base and ultimately offer a whole bunch of other things to our existing customers...