

URL: <https://ecorner.stanford.edu/in-brief/painting-the-future/>

Stanford Management Science and Engineering lecturer and Floodgate founding partner Ann Miura-Ko explains why she made a crucial early investment in Zimride, which later became Lyft. Founders John Zimmer and Logan Green, she recalls, were able to paint a compelling vision of the future in which better transportation options would enable more efficient communities.



Transcript

- Back in, I think it was 2010 00:00:07,700 is when John and Logan came to pitch Floodgate on what was originally called Zimride.. And Zimride was a platform that enabled carpooling for corporations, as well as universities.. And the vision of the world that they actually painted, actually describes a lot of what Lyft does today.. And so this is sort of a good example of mission-driven founders who really believe in a vision of the future, and how that transcends different products.. So the message that John and Logan came to Floodgate with in the early days, was look, we believe actually transportation is about to change.. The fact that we have social networks now, and people can be connected to one another digitally actually implies something really fundamentally different.. And when transportation changes, actually the world changes.. And they demonstrated this in just the United States alone, if you look at the fabric of society, you would have canals, you would have railways, and then you would have highways.. And if you just look at the map of where cities developed, it was very true that waterways, railways, and highways were actually the ways in which cities were created.. And where big cities existed, existed because of these things..

And so their point was, if we can actually change the way transportation is done, we will actually have a significant impact on the economy and the way the society lays out its land.. And I thought, my goodness, what a tremendous vision for what the future can be.. And their future view was not just, you know, we're gonna enable carpooling.. Their future view was, we don't want cars to sit empty as they're going down the highway.. And look around you, you'll look at the car next to you and there's a single driver in there.. That means that there's all these seats that are empty.. And if you think about it from a throughput perspective, for any like operations research department or from a computing platform, that's a huge waste.. And so what if we figured out a way to fill those seats or made them a little bit more full, that could actually change the way parking is done, that would change the way rides are completed.. And that was the start.. And to me, that's the kind of founder I'm looking for is someone who paints a picture of a future that is very different from today..

And it's a future that I wanna see...