

URL: <https://ecorner.stanford.edu/clips/vision-or-customer/>

Should entrepreneurial ventures be driven by a founder's vision or by customer feedback? In some ways, suggests Twitch co-founder Justin Kan, it can be both — particularly if the founder deeply understands the customer segment and is exploring an area that's inherently interesting to them.



Transcript

- Did you have a vision when you started Justin TV? 00:00:07,150 Or was it- I think there's also these two schools of thought one is that you have the entrepreneur that has the bold vision and then they manifest that through the art of entrepreneurship.. And then there's another, which is that no, entrepreneurship is really about the process and the vision will just unfold.. And you just need to focus on design thinking, iterations- - Yeah.. 00:00:24,046 - Working with people that you love 00:00:25,501 and let the future tell you what the future holds.. - I would say there's like two kinds of entrepreneurship, 00:00:29,780 like the, where the, the first time, you know, vision-based and the second, which is like, you are, you are you're on customer, right.. Or you really deeply understand the customer.. Maybe you're not your own customer, but you probably worked with your customer or like, are very close to somebody who's your customer.. That's how you know about the idea.. And with Justin TV, that's a perfect example where, you know, it sounds surprising, but I actually was, it was both of those things, right.. Like, when we pitched the idea for Justin TV to PG, you know, Paul Graham, in the very beginning, was the founder of Y Combinator..

We were saying, "Hey, you know, this could be a new form of entertainment on the internet.. And I think in a way we were right, like people, you know, my core, the core idea was like, people want to follow people.. This is in 2006 before social media, right.. Really happened.. So, we were like, people want to follow other people.. They're interested in other people's lives.. And I think that has been, that's a core insight that's been born out, actually.. And we thought, we said, the is the vision of this is like, it could be all these different types of people.. We didn't see it as like social media at the time, but like, where anyone could just sign up.. But like, we thought there would be hundreds of streams of different people where you could see live video of their life, right..

And people would want to watch that.. So, there was like a big vision around it.. And it was like a new form of reality TV.. Obviously like, it didn't play out exactly the way we thought.. Well, actually I would say it actually did play out exactly the way we thought.. Like 15 years later, we're now like, IRL streaming is huge on Twitch.. And, that is actually happening.. Where you have hundreds, if not thousands of people, they're streaming their lives in various ways on Twitch.. So, there was that big vision, but then the second thing, part of it was like, it was also what I wanted to do.. Right..

And what I mean is like, I was actually the customer.. I wanted to stream my own life because I wasn't very popular when I was a kid and I was always looking for the attention of other people as a way to like, get their approval.. And so, that was manifested as I was a young adult.. And I was like, okay.. This is, you know, I want to create, I thought like, if I could just stream my life to internet, then I'll be popular or something.. It was like a subconscious process.. Right.. So, I actually was my own customer.. Right.. Like I, we built that very first version of Justin TV, which was like a live video and chat with my own use in mind, right..

Like we were creating our own show.. And so, actually it did, it was, you know, both.. And I think that's why it was so successful in the beginning...