

URL: <https://ecorner.stanford.edu/clips/building-a-holistic-mission/>

Austin Russell, founder and CEO of Luminar, explains how his company's technology fits into its holistic, 100-year mission to save 100 million lives. He advises founders to build a big-picture mission and meaning as early as possible in order to attract better talent, make more impact, and derive more satisfaction from their work.



## Transcript

- Basically for the first time, 00:00:05,280 I think we're seeing this transformation in the autonomous vehicle space from all R&D into actual real production cars and we're effectively spearheading that.. And again, the important part is, is that it's not just about the self-driving part, it's also about the safety part.. And the holistic mission there is, and we can talk at some point about some of the longer term vision, but the mission there is to be able to dramatically improve collision avoidance capabilities on vehicles, which sometimes people take for granted.. But the reality is, is that the problem has never been worse.. Where more and more people, more and more cars are getting into more and more accidents, even despite all of the technology advancements that have happened on vehicles over the past couple of decades.. So, that's what we're really looking to be able to turn around and solve one of the leading causes of death globally and suffering.. So it's an important part of it as well.. - And you articulate that in a vision statement.. 00:00:56,970 I want you to share what your vision statement is, and can you share how early on in the journey you crystallize that vision statement and what recommendations you have to other founders in terms of how important it is to articulate a vision and when they should put focused attention on that? - Yeah, absolutely.. 00:01:12,030 And I would say the most recent iteration of this, and this is coming from a few years ago..

Basically we have this a hundred year vision for what's laid.. And our hundred vision is to save as many as a hundred million lives in a hundred trillion hours of people's time not on the road over the next a hundred years.. And every single thing that we do as a company all adds back up towards that vision.. And I think it's just really important of, you're gonna have amazing days as an entrepreneur.. You're gonna have horrible days that you wish you didn't exist.. And you're gonna have to go always back to that holistic mission and meaning for not just yourself, but that whole team around.. You know, what are we actually doing? What's inspiring in terms of the greater purpose around what we're building and why it's there.. And I think the more inspiring of a holistic mission that you can have, the better a talent that you're gonna be able to attract, the more impact you're gonna have.. And I think just frankly, there's gonna be just a lot more satisfaction with everything that you do.. But it doesn't always have to start out so grandiose..

It can even just be as, you know, I mean, the first part is just make the best lidar, make the best technology.. You can have, I mean, even that in itself was ambitious enough because you said we're basically competing with like, the Googles and Apples and every major automaker and every major tier one and other folks there.. But then, at some point you just have to

keep building and building and building on top of that until you can kind of have this bigger picture, holistic mission that everything can roll up under in everything that you do.. And I think identifying that as early on as possible, whatever that may be, is absolutely critical to the success of a new company that's looking to create great talent and up against incumbents that just don't have that same kind of direction...