

URL: <https://ecorner.stanford.edu/clips/go-beyond-academics/>

Connie Chan, general partner at Andreessen Horowitz, explains that while she was not a perfect student, her leadership experience in extracurriculars helped her stand out. She encourages aspiring entrepreneurs and venture capitalists to find unusual jobs and cultivate their interests so they can learn what draws people to products.



Transcript

- Did you have the perfect resume? 00:00:04,080 Was it just like check, check, check, check, Andreessen Horowitz? Was that? - They found me on LinkedIn.. 00:00:30,063 Again, going back to my need for experimentation, but I didn't have the perfect resume.. I've never had the perfect resume, I'd say.. I wasn't a straight A student until high school.. Luckily in the US your grades don't show up before high school.. But I was not a good student in junior high or elementary school At Stanford I had to retake Chemistry 31 'cause I had such a bad grade.. I was not a perfect student whatsoever.. Instead, I gravitated to lots of extracurriculars on campus.. I did Stanford Consulting, I did AKPsi, I did acapella.. I was really involved in the Asian American Student Association and that's where I found more of my confidence, to be honest..

My confidence didn't come from my academics, 'cause I was just an average student at best.. My confidence came from leading different teams in all these different extracurriculars.. And I think actually all that stuff has helped me tremendously in my career since then.. It's not always the academic piece that's gonna make your resume perfect, 'cause to be honest, like that first interview, you just have to pass certain bars.. As long as you're above like 3.7, 3.8, you're kind of good, right? Like, it doesn't matter to me if it's a 4 or 3.9 at all.. I'm not even noticing that.. So, it's also about what are the other experiences you bring to the table.. Sometimes people will ask me, what kind of internships should I take in college? And I do think it's good to have one that's very focused on business, whether it's consulting, banking, or a startup or a company.. But it's also pretty nice to have one summer where you're doing something really fun and unique.. I spent one summer selling Nerf-like toys, these foam toys for a very small toy company..

And I would go to these trade shows and sit in a booth for a week and sell these to random retailers that I was meeting for the first time.. When I had my banking interviews with Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley, that was the only thing they wanted to talk about.. They didn't ask me about any classes, they barely asked me about my interests.. They mostly focused on that experience 'cause it was so strange to them.. And I used that experience to show them that I'm good at sales, that I would be good interfacing with clients and that to them was what stood out.. So you just never know what these different experiences can bring to the table and help differentiate you.. Obviously, you don't force them.. They naturally should be things you're interested in, but I think it's so important to find things that you're naturally interested and likely to have fun in.. Because those are oftentimes places where you'll really stand out, you'll excel and more importantly you'll have also just

first principle thinking and ideas of how to improve it, of how to make it better, 'cause you're a natural user of the product or you naturally understand what it is or you enjoy it.. Especially now when I'm doing consumer investing, a lot of times I just think to myself, okay, would I use this? But then on top of that, would the average American use this? And then it's fun, because I end up using these products and then I can gauge from my own experience and my understanding of just human people if this is a good product or not...