Adrian Rodriguez, co-founder and CEO of Dreamlinks, tells the story of how a group of investors declined to fund one of his early startup ideas, and what it taught him about understanding business models.

Transcript

- I was extremely idealistic through group theory, and my dream actually was to basically have a consulting company that would have an internal tool for designing websites, basically like an internal IDE that would use tactile pieces and make it possible for people to go beyond templates and turn out hyper-accessible websites, 'cause there was a big demand in the market. It hadn't really been as operationalized yet. Now I think that making, you know, there's a lot of services for making accessible websites. And I came back to Stanford, and I pitched a group of investors called the Farmers. You guys may not have heard of them, but there is a group here of faculty and staff that together invest in very early stage companies. And so I came and I pitched them, and they sat me down, and they said, "The business model of what you're pitching is a consultancy, and in order for those economics to work out, here is how much you would need to build." And I realized I really had a lot to learn, and they were absolutely right, that I was not talking about a Ventures Club business whatsoever. And so I sort of just had to make peace and realize that this vision was not compatible with the economics of startups (claps). And this was my first lesson, I think, in balance, right? In that you ultimately really do need to find the midpoint between your personal journey and the reality of the world, of the systems that actually drive us...